



Kansas City Symphony 2014-15 Season Results Reveal Thriving, Growing Success Story

KANSAS CITY, Mo. | Sept. 21, 2015 — With uncompromising artistic standards, rock-solid financials and inspired leadership, the Kansas City Symphony is a powerful role model as a highly successful, engaged American symphony orchestra.

After closing the books on its 2015 fiscal year (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015), the Symphony is proud to report a very strong season subscriber base, outstanding single ticket sales and record public exposure with no signs of slowing. Excellent financials accompany the impressive growth of the Symphony's artistic reputation under the baton of Music Director Michael Stern who begins his second decade with the organization for the 2015-16 season.

"I am very proud of all that we have accomplished together," says Symphony Executive Director Frank Byrne. "We are incredibly grateful to this extraordinary community for their attendance, their financial support, and, most of all, their passion for what we do. This community is excited about the Kansas City Symphony, and they sense our commitment to sharing great music with the widest segment of the population. Whether we are in our magnificent Helzberg Hall, in an area school, at Kauffman Stadium, or wherever we may perform, people feel the commitment and energy that our wonderful musicians invest in each performance. Kansas City is increasingly being recognized as a destination for the arts, and we are proud to be leaders in bringing artistic excellence to our hometown."

In the 2014-15 season, the Symphony brought in nearly \$2.8 million in subscription revenue and an additional nearly \$2 million in single ticket revenue. The Symphony's ticket sales were near capacity, with Classical and Pops Series both at 95 percent capacity and Family Series at 91 percent for the 2014-15 season. With more than 100 performances, these averages include multiple sold-out concerts. The Symphony also attracted ticket purchasers from 45 states, the District of Columbia and nine foreign countries, not accounting for additional out-of-town and foreign visitors attending as guests of others.

The Symphony continued its wildly popular free Happy Hour chamber music series, part of its ongoing effort to offer the public an opportunity to experience the excellence of Symphony musicians in solo and small ensemble configurations. These free Happy Hour performances attracted a substantial number of first-time Symphony-goers and seasoned patrons alike in 2014-15, making the demographic for these concerts the most diverse of any Symphony series. For 2015-16, the Symphony will offer seven free Happy Hour concerts, including a special solo

organ recital by Jan Kraybill, the conservator of Helzberg Hall's magnificent Julia Irene Kauffman Casavant organ.

The Symphony's annual calendar is packed with a wide range of other activities, including the acclaimed Screenland at the Symphony Series featuring films with live orchestral accompaniment, the vibrant Charles and Virginia Clark Inside Music Series events with distinguished guest artists, and the Symphony's 57 performances as the resident orchestra for the Lyric Opera and the Kansas City Ballet. In addition, the Symphony has a longstanding commitment to youth through its various education series, which experienced a 12 percent increase in student attendance in the 2014-15 season. In total, the Symphony's youth and community programs reached more than 54,000 people in fiscal year 2015.

The Symphony garnered extraordinary media exposure in the 2014-15 season through a range of high-profile public appearances, most notably its nationally-televised performance of the "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Kauffman Stadium before Game 6 of the 2014 World Series between the Kansas City Royals and San Francisco Giants. Together with an additional national anthem performance at the Royals 2015 home opener and public television broadcasts of its 13th annual Bank of America Celebration at the Station, the World Series appearance solidified the 2014-15 season as the best to date for exposing new audiences to the Symphony's excellence. The Symphony also furthered its connection between sports and arts when it performed the national anthem at the Kansas City Chiefs 2015 home opener.

Beyond remarkable revenue and record-setting exposure, the Kansas City Symphony has avoided the slump in enthusiasm and ticket sales often experienced by orchestras after their first years in a new hall. After four seasons in its acoustically superb venue at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts — with subscription sales for a fifth season already surpassing expectations — the Symphony has bucked trends in the industry through careful, strategic planning and growing artistic excellence.

In addition to strong sales, the Symphony also depends on strong fundraising. For fiscal year 2015, the Symphony saw unprecedented growth in gifts from individual donors to its annual fund. Individuals gave \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2015. In the previous fiscal year, that same figure was \$2.33 million. Overall, the Symphony recorded nearly \$8.5 million in donations for the 2014-15 season. The total number of donors increased from the previous season by 24 percent, with more than 1,230 gifts originating from first-time donors. With one of the most effective volunteer forces in the nation, members of the Symphony's five auxiliaries also raised nearly \$1.2 million for fiscal year 2015.

"As a direct result of many years of hard work by our dedicated musicians, staff and Board, we find ourselves in a very healthy and enviable position," says Board Chair Bill Lyons. "Our priorities are clear: exceptional artistry; a financial foundation that is built to last; and a culture within the organization that is positive, forward-looking and transparent. I'm convinced there are great things ahead of us."

Stern concurs, noting that the organization's top-to-bottom commitment to music, audiences and the community are keys to its success.

"I cannot imagine a more unified team," Stern says. "What gratifies me most about this past season is how all of us at the Symphony recognize what we have accomplished together. As I reflect on my 10 years here, I am thrilled that none of us — whether musician, staff, volunteer or board member — considers our previous season as an arrival, but rather as a springboard to launch us even more excitingly toward future programming, projects and recordings.

"We always strive to make the best possible case for music and the arts in our city, region, and country, and that means much more than simply playing dynamic concerts. But, in the end, everything we do must emanate from what happens on stage, and I am very proud of the consistency and the depth our musicians have brought to their playing this past year. Our audiences — in Helzberg Hall or wherever we perform — motivate us to be our very best selves, and as we work to do justice to this great music we play, they remain our true inspiration."

The Symphony also added another critically-acclaimed recording to its discography with Grammy® Award-winning Reference Recordings. This past June, Reference Recordings released a new CD of works by Camille Saint-Saëns including the thunderous Symphony No. 3, as well as two additional works highlighting the exceptional solo playing of Kansas City Concertmaster Noah Geller and Principal Cellist Mark Gibbs. Critics have praised this new recording, writing "The Kansas City Symphony is one of America's finest ensembles" (Classical.net), "I've never heard such a well-rounded account of this impressive work" (Classical Music Sentinel), and "The Kansas City Symphony under Michael Stern withstands comparison to any of the competition." (Classicstoday.com). Gramophone Magazine also named the CD as Editor's Choice for the month of September.

To learn more about all the 2015-16 concert offerings, including Classical, Pops, Family, Holiday and special programs, visit kcsymphony.org or call the Symphony Box Office at (816) 471-0400.

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About the Kansas City Symphony and Chorus

Founded in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has established itself as a major force in the cultural life of the community. Praised for performances of uncompromising standard, the orchestra is the largest in the region and enjoys a national reputation under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern. The Kansas City Symphony Chorus is a volunteer, 160-member ensemble led by multi-Grammy® award-winning conductor, Charles Bruffy, that continues its long tradition of excellence as the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony. The Kansas City Symphony performs more than 100 concerts each year, while also serving as the orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and it often welcomes guests of international acclaim as part of its Classical and Pops Series.

Complementing its full schedule of concerts, the Symphony enriches the lives of Kansas City residents by providing music education opportunities for children and adults, such as KinderKonzerts, Young People's Concerts, an instrument petting zoo and concert comments. Highlights each season include a range of free masterclasses, events and concerts reaching more than 200,000 community members, including the annual Bank of America Celebration at the Station concert each Memorial Day weekend and Symphony in the Flint Hills every summer.

Additionally, the Symphony has released five CDs with Reference Recordings — *Shakespeare's Tempest*, the Grammy®-winning *Britten's Orchestra*, an Elgar/Vaughan Williams project, *Miraculous Metamorphoses* that highlights composers Hindemith, Prokofiev and Bartók, and most recently, the Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3, "Organ." Two additional projects have been recorded and slated for future release, including the music of contemporary composer Adam Schoenberg (recorded June 2014) and Holst's *The Planets* (recorded January 2015). The Symphony and Michael Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. Kansas City Symphony performances can be heard locally each week on KCUR 89.3 FM, Kansas City's NPR affiliate. More information on the Kansas City Symphony is available at kcsymphony.org.