



May 22, 2023,

Dear Friends and Families,

It has been an incredibly inspiring and fulfilling first year for me, serving as your Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra Music Director and Conductor. Witnessing the raw talent of these young musicians from all over West Michigan in person, has been the highlight of my first year.

This year, we have experienced growth in the level of our playing, adding more new pieces into our repertoire. At the same time we continued the great tradition of the Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra which inspires these young musicians with a collection of the greatest music of all time. We continue to include coaching into our schedule while adding masterclasses. We have had special visits from guest artists who are either performing with the Grand Rapids Symphony or professors and fellowship candidates from MSU School of Music. This year, I also initiated a volunteer chamber program to add exposure to the talented musicians from the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony. These musicians performed in October at the Grand Rapids Art Museum, and in March at DeVos Performance Hall. We would like to continue including these valuable learning experiences in our regular curriculum, but they are an added expense. As you consider making a donation to support this unique group, I would like to share some sample costs that may help you realize our continued need for your support.

Rehearsal Space - We hope to continue using Northview Performing Arts Auditorium. This allows the Youth Orchestra to rehearse on a stage, which is more reflective of professional organizations, while also providing additional rooms suitable for sectionals and Classical Orchestra rehearsals. Cost - \$650 per rehearsal.

Sectionals - This year we continue to provide coaching through both our collaboration with MSU School of Music as well as special coaching from the professional musicians from Grand Rapids Symphony. We are hoping to have sectionals for every instrument three times a year. Cost - \$200 - \$800 per sectional.

Repertoire Expansion - Both the Youth Symphony and the Classical Orchestra are actively broadening their repertoire by gaining access to music produced by living composers as well as underrepresented minorities. Rental costs of music - \$1000.

Performance Space - We appreciate that the Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra have the opportunity to perform in several venues in Grand Rapids, including DeVos Performance Hall, which is a marvelous experience for our young musicians as well as our supporters. The price of renting the performance venues is one of the most significant costs in our budget. Your support will help allow us to continue to provide the best experience we can for these young musicians.

In addition to the expenses listed above, I would also like to point out that our general operating costs exceed what the tuition we receive is able to cover. As we are looking at different ways to expand and enrich the experiences of our young musicians, as well as serving the community with high level performances, we ask you to consider increasing your level of giving. With your continued support we are able to nurture and develop the next generation as supportive, compassionate and well-rounded community members just like you!

Sincerely

Duo Shen  
Music Director, Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra