



May 6, 2024

Dear Friends and Families,

Time flies! That's a great sign when I can tell I am enjoying working so much with the young musicians of the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra. This is the second year I have served as your GRYS&CO as Music Director and Conductor. Getting to know new members of this thriving organization, seeing them not only every Monday during our rehearsal, but visiting some of them at their school, meeting them after the GRS concerts has been a joy for me!

This year, we have experienced growth in the level of our playing. We performed one entire suite of the Firebirds by Stravinsky! In addition to all our achievement in our performances, we performed a side-by-side concert with the Grand Rapids Symphony on one of their subscription concerts. This hasn't been done for over a decade and we are so proud to strengthen our connection with the musicians of the GRS! We continue to include coaching in our schedule. Members of the GRYS students performed at Grand Rapids Symphony Gala as featured artists. We would like to continue including these valuable learning experiences in our regular curriculum, but we need your help to support us! 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 provides 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 exploring different ways to expand and enrich the experiences of our young musicians, as well as to serve the community with high-level performances, we ask you to consider increasing your level of support. 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