

## Long Range Plan: 2025–2030

### Mission Statement

To continue a tradition of excellence in musical entertainment and education; to enrich the arts experience of audiences of all ages and socioeconomic circumstance throughout the Appalachian Highlands; and to maintain a deep-rooted culture of community engagement in support of these goals.

### Vision for 2030

Symphony of the Mountains will be recognized as a cultural leader, uniting diverse audiences through exceptional performances and educational initiatives.

### Strategic Priorities

#### 1. Artistic Excellence

- **Goal:** Maintain and expand our position as the standard for orchestral and vocal performance in the Appalachian Highlands.
- **Action:** Present diverse, world-class programming, including new commissions and collaborations with renowned guest artists. Showcase works ranging from those reflecting the cultural heritage of the Appalachian region to internationally recognized Masterworks.
  - Present at least one concert annually with a memorable/famous guest artist.
  - Expand the capabilities of our musicians and singers through the preparation and performance of ever more challenging works.
  - Continue to seek collaborations with other educational and performance arts organizations in the Appalachian Highlands.
  - Continue to improve the quality and depth of talent throughout the organization.

#### 2. Regional Leadership and Community Engagement

- **Goal:** Deepen community and cultural connections and provide accessible musical experiences.
- **Action:** enhance outreach programs for audiences who would otherwise have little or no exposure to classical music; engage volunteer base to assist with achieving organizational goals.
  - *Paths to Dignity* concerts
  - Free performances for underserved audiences and regions
  - Expand performances to key cities; partner with regional organizations; increase visibility in cultural, civic, and community-focused events that reflect our regional values.

- More substantial involvement with the Women’s Symphony Committee including inviting their president to sit as a voting member of SOTM’s board of directors.
- More substantial involvement by the Voices of the Mountains as SOTM Ambassadors
- Expand our networking efforts through membership in a wider selection of Chambers of Commerce.
- Recruit Board members from across the Appalachian Highlands and equip them to be ambassadors for SOTM in their communities.

### 3. Education and Youth Development

- **Goal:** Inspire and enable the next generation of musicians and maintain strong ties with schools and other musical education organizations.
- **Action:** Expand youth orchestra programs and offer educational concerts and workshops across the region
  - Rebuild a full youth orchestra both to fulfill our education and entertainment goals as well as to establish a pipeline of future talent for SOTM
  - Program side-by-side concerts with our youth orchestras as well as with private music education institutions and public-school bands and orchestras
  - Continue the “free tickets for students” program through grant solicitations

### 4. Financial Growth and Sustainability

- **Goal:** Secure long-term financial stability to support expanded initiatives.
- **Action:** Maintain a functional annual budget while planning for sustainable, long-range financial health.
  - Launch a \$1.5M endowment campaign
  - Grow sponsorships from regional businesses
  - Seek out new local, regional and national grant sources
  - Diversify income through innovative programming and fundraising events
  - Target development of new (primarily younger) audiences while continuing to support our core audience
  - Build and maintain competitive salaries for staff and service rates for musicians

### 5. Visibility and Branding

- **Goal:** Build upon and aggressively promote comprehensive recognition of our existing position as the prima symphony in the Appalachian Highlands.
- **Action:** Dramatically increase the visibility of SOTM throughout our region
  - Invest in digital marketing
  - Expand social media presence
  - Produce professional recordings of performances
  - Seek partnerships with national organizations to elevate the orchestra’s profile.
  - Expand our chamber music efforts to utilize small groups of musicians and singers as ambassadors for SOTM.
  - Expand our performance footprint both within the greater Tri-Cities area and beyond.

- The Martin Center for the Arts and other Johnson City venues; Hard Rock Casino in Bristol; Warriors' Path State Park (and other outdoor venues)
- Collaborations with existing community and music festivals (Fun Fest, Rhythm and Roots, Blue Plum, Appalachian State University's An Appalachian Summer Festival, etc.)
- Targeted expansion into Western North Carolina (including educational institutions, performance venues and festivals)
- Explore smaller, unique venues for specific presentations
- Create an annual marketing campaign in line with planned events and programming in conjunction with the creation of the annual budget.

## 6. Administration and Personnel

- **Goal:** To foster a supportive, inclusive, and sustainable work environment that promotes professional growth, well-being, and retention, ensuring staff and volunteers are equipped and motivated to advance SOTM's mission.
- **Action:** Continue to define and refine a structure of roles and responsibilities to provide for efficient operations and delivery of services.
  - Create a "Safety Net" for all key personnel and volunteers. (Note: This is less of a succession plan and more of a plan for coverage of duties in the event a member of staff or a volunteer is unable to perform for an extended period.)
  - Hire/engage a marketing and audience development manager.
  - Hire/engage an education coordinator.
  - Hire/engage a financial development officer.
  - Investigate opportunities for interns both as interim and long-term solutions to administrative and office needs.
  - Provide annual board of directors' orientation and training sessions.
  - Actively seek out volunteers to assist with organizational needs.
  - Conduct biennial 360° personnel discussions covering performance, workloads, barriers, etc. between a representative of the board of directors and the executive director, between a representative of the board of directors and the music director, between the executive director and office staff and between the music director and performance staff.

## Key Performance Indicators

- Growth in regional attendance and ticket sales. (Initial target of 15%-25% will be reviewed and adjusted as needed annually)
- Growth of education and outreach program participation.
- \$1.5M endowment fund secured.
- Recognition as the premier cultural organization in the Appalachian Highlands through media, partnerships, and community surveys.