

During the 2022-2023 season, the Marquette Symphony Orchestra increased our yearly full-orchestra concerts from five to six.

Our 2022-23 Season Opener, *Marquette at the Movies*, was another free, outdoor full-symphony performance beside the Superior Dome for the whole family featuring selections and highlights from popular movies. We estimate that about 1,500 people attended the free concert on July 9, 2022. Music Director Octavio Más-Arocas shared some entertaining stories, children blew bubbles, and amazing Marquette talent was displayed. One of our supporters described it as “quintessential community at its best,” and I couldn’t agree more. Based on this success, we are opening our 2023-24 season with another free, full-symphony performance of *Pops in the Park*.

The MSO’s October 15 concert featured *Flute Concerto No. 2 in D Major* by Mozart. Adam Sadberry was the soloist, and this was a joint venture with NMU's Siril Concert Series. He is the principal flautist of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. Matt Ludwig and Barb Rhyneer conducted the December 10 *Sounds of the Holidays* performance. It featured several guest vocal soloists and a local ensemble, The Lyra Eight. On January 14, MSU violin professor Yvonne Lam soloed with the MSO on *Violin Concerto in D minor* by Sibelius. On February 25, *Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and String Orchestra* by Ney Rosauero was performed by Britton-Rene Collins, our Youth Concerto Winner. She is pursuing her Masters at the University of Michigan. The MSO also performed *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The MSO also performed for the first time with the NMU Choirs on April 15 - the season finale - on *Chichester Psalms* by Leonard Bernstein and *Toward the Unknown Region* by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

The MSO is often touted as an asset by the city and an important reason people choose to work and recreate in this geographically remote location. We are very grateful for our audiences, and to reach a younger audience, this season, we provide two free tickets for children ages 6 - 14 with every adult ticket purchase. In 2022-23 we gave away 162 of these and 285 discounted student tickets because exposure to the symphony as a child sparks an interest to last a lifetime.

We mentor upcoming musicians as well. We hold an annual Youth Concerto Competition, with \$2,000 in prize money, and the winner becomes a featured performer in our next season, an outstanding opportunity of a lifetime for a young artist. We created two annual \$500 Marquette Symphony String Scholarships for high school students toward summer study. In April 2024, we will bring back our bi-annual Free Children’s Concert, two abbreviated shows for the entire county’s fourth and fifth-grade students.

We continued to host masterclasses by engaging local teachers to recruit students. MSO performers and guest soloists teach the classes in person and provide virtual school engagement. We also offer outreach concerts at the Besse Center in Escanaba and free “pop-up” chamber performances in non-traditional venues.

Our Summer Strings event for the Finnish Midsummer celebration for *Friendship Across Waters*, as part of the 2022 City of Marquette Art Week, celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the sister city friendship with Kajaani, Finland. The MSO Young Fiddlers held workshops in the teen and tween tents at the 2022 Hiawatha Music Festival.

Summer Strings 2023 features composers with Marquette connections at the Art Week celebration and *Broadway at the Harbor* on the opening night of Marquette West Rotary Club's 2023 HarborFest.

For all the wonderful work we do to enrich the lives of our community, in 2022, the City of Marquette acknowledged our contributions with an official proclamation, citing the MSO as a "keystone of Marquette's vibrant cultural life," and the symphony was inducted into the Marquette Music Scene Hall of Fame.

The organization's current financial position is favorable. Attendance is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels by October 2023. The banking accounts provide ample sources of potential liquidity for each scheduled performance. Audience retention is nearly 85%. Corporate support, grants, and private donations continue to sustain the MSO, so income YTD is greater than budgeted income projections. Expenses each year remain within the target for the fiscal year budget, including this FY, as we ran a calculated deficit last due to the addition of a free outdoor community concert with the full symphony in July 2022 to reach new audiences and to stay relevant (after the pandemic canceled so many of the previous season's indoor performances), plus a long overdue pay raise for the musicians. Thankfully, our Treasurer afforded a reserve drawdown from our investment account, which protects us from short-term risks. Donations this year were lower than in pre-pandemic years, and we are redoubling our fundraising efforts this year with more private events and a robust corporate sponsor campaign to replenish and grow the reserve for future stability.

Andrew LaCombe

MSO President