

THE SYRACUSE ORCHESTRA

Community Impact Report | Spring 2026

Presented to the Onondaga County Legislature

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Season at a Glance: 2025 Impact

25,230 Tickets Sold	49 Regular Season Concerts	4,620 Minutes of Music Played
3,072 Free Kids Tickets	2,087 First-Time Attendees	1,610 College Students Attended

Partnership with Onondaga County

The Syracuse Orchestra is grateful for the ongoing support of Onondaga County and the County Legislature. County funding, administered through CNY Arts with the support of County Executive Ryan McMahon, enables the Orchestra to deliver free and low-cost programming across Onondaga, Oswego, and Cayuga Counties — keeping live symphonic music accessible to all residents.

The Orchestra's programs are made possible in part by a General Support grant and a Marketing for Economic Development grant from the County of Onondaga.

Spotlight on Legacy: STEAM High School at the Micron Lincoln Auditorium

On May 14, 2026, The Syracuse Orchestra joined Syracuse STEAM High School for a historic milestone — the first major student performance at the newly restored Micron Lincoln Auditorium in more than 50 years. This extraordinary evening united the Orchestra's musicians with STEAM High School's inaugural freshman class for a celebration of music, community, and shared history.

The event carried deep resonance: the Lincoln Auditorium, built in 1903 at the heart of the former Central High School, was the very venue where the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra — predecessor to today's Syracuse Orchestra — performed its first subscription concerts in the 1960s. Bringing professional musicians back to this historic stage alongside the newest generation of Syracuse students created a powerful bridge across generations.

For STEAM's first freshman class, performing on this stage for the first time in their school's history — and in an auditorium now bearing the name Micron Lincoln Auditorium — was a milestone they will carry throughout their lives. The evening featured music, dance, and storytelling, with the Orchestra providing a professional artistic presence that elevated the students' own performance. Collaborations like these embody the Orchestra's mission to make music a living force in the community.

Community Programs

Healing Harmonies: Music that Mends

In 2025, 14 Orchestra musicians delivered 27 in-person performances to an estimated 2,215 patients, families, and healthcare professionals at hospitals, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and adult day centers across Onondaga, Oswego, and Cayuga Counties. This program continues into 2026 with generous local support.

Youth Education

- The Wellwood Middle School Chamber Ensemble performed in the Crouse Hinds Theater lobby, bringing 35 additional students and 50 adults to a professional concert.
- The Solvay High School Saxophone Ensemble was featured at the April Masterworks concert.

- The Syracuse Youth Artists Orchestra (SYAO) joined a side-by-side performance at Popcorn Night at the Movies, performing film music from Ant-Man and Spider-Man alongside professional musicians.
 - 3,072 free kids' tickets were provided in 2025, ensuring cost is never a barrier to experiencing live music.
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Financial Performance (FY26, Through April 2026)

The Syracuse Orchestra is tracking significantly ahead of budget for FY26, with total revenue of \$2,668,471 against a budget of \$2,433,162 — a positive variance of \$235,309. Contributed income exceeded budget by nearly \$257,000, driven by outstanding individual, corporate, and grant fundraising. Total expenditures are \$43,238 under budget, reflecting disciplined management. Net operating loss has improved by \$278,547 compared to budget.

- A \$100,000 Market NY grant from Empire State Development and a \$20,000 NEA grant were secured to support summer programming and fall 2026 concerts.
 - Subscription revenue reached 122% of goal, providing a strong foundation for the 2026–27 season.
 - Star Wars performed at 95% of its \$160,000 budget, a strong result for a high-stakes special event.
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Looking Ahead

The Syracuse Orchestra is preparing for its most exciting chapter yet. A new Music Director will be announced in mid-June 2026, bringing fresh artistic leadership to the region. Subscriptions for the 2026–27 season are now on sale, with tickets starting at \$15 per concert. Permanent staging at St. Paul's Church, approved in February, will be completed by August 2026 — improving concert experiences and generating long-term savings.

The Orchestra looks forward to deepening its partnership with Onondaga County, expanding community programs, and continuing to make Central New York a place where world-class music belongs to everyone.
