

The Folsom Symphony

We're committed to bringing the gift of music to our youths

The earliest musical instrument ever found is a flute carved – probably by Neanderthals – from the bone of a bear more than 43,000 years ago, before agriculture and domesticated dogs. Most remarkable, this flute's holes are positioned to play the diatonic scale – our familiar “do, re, mi.”

Are we hard-wired to love music? Perhaps, say various experts. Even fetuses react to musical sounds and rhythms. We know that music releases endorphins in the brain, producing feelings of elation similar to opiates – the caveman's “high,” perhaps?

In this century and the last, scientists have discovered a characteristic of music that to our orchestra is even more important: It enhances learning. The research is strong. The following conclusions are based on studies by or reported by the National Association for Music Education, the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, the Journal of Research in Music Education, the Journal of Neuroscience and others. These studies reveal that exposing youths to music correlates with:

- higher lifetime earnings
- increased academic performance
- enhanced creativity and ingenuity
- reduced school absenteeism
- lower use of illegal substances
- better skill-building
- greater likelihood of earning a high school diploma
- significantly higher standardized test scores
- increased IQs
- improved sensitivity to the sounds of speech
- deeper cultural literacy

In addition, Vanessa Sluming et al reports in the Journal of Neuroscience (2007) that studying music from a young age actually increases the gray matter in the Broca area, the part of the brain involved in speech and language processing.

Despite the studies' convincing results, school districts facing budget cuts – as most are today – often choose to reduce or eliminate arts courses. This means students lose classes they not only enjoy but which enhance their learning ability as well. The Folsom Symphony is looking to step in where schools have been forced to step out. Donations we receive go to support music enrichment for this region's youth, specifically through the following five programs:

- Family concerts.
- Student Night at the Symphony
- Music in the schools
- Student performers
- STARS

Descriptions of these programs are on the next page.

The musical experiences we offer young people

Your generous financial support will help the Folsom Symphony improve and expand these youth outreach programs:

- **Family concerts:** At the opening of each season, we play one free concert at Town Center in El Dorado Hills. These concerts give all families the opportunity to attend a symphony performance and allow their children the experience of hearing quality classical music. Our goal: to add a second free or low-cost concert, this one at the exquisite Harris Center theater.
- **Student Night at the Symphony:** Nothing brings music alive for kids more than a real musical performance! To engage young people in live music, once each season we invite students in grades 3 through 12 to attend a dress rehearsal for a small fee. Besides enjoying a full performance of classical music, the youngsters are given the opportunity to interact with the maestro, ask questions, meet musicians and the crew and get to know the instruments. This program has become very popular, and we want to expand it to more nights and perhaps add school-day concerts in cooperation with schools and the theater.
- **Music in the schools:** As budget cuts have decreased or eliminated arts education, we are looking to bring music back into the schools by funding small ensembles to visit classrooms and acquaint students with orchestra instruments and classical music.
- **Student performers:** Each year we conduct auditions to offer talented young musicians the opportunity to perform with the symphony for a full season. This program is especially welcomed by children who are home-schooled or whose high schools do not have orchestras. Since our inaugural performance in 2004, nearly 50 students have performed with the symphony. In addition, we invite music groups from local high schools and colleges to partner with the orchestra for some concerts. We are looking to increase these opportunities to nurture promising young musicians.
- **STARS:** In partnership with the Folsom Cordova Unified School District, we host low-income, underprivileged kids in the district's Students-at-Risk program to a free night at the symphony. In past years, we also provided volunteers to hold well-received after-school music classes for these kids. We want to make concert opportunities and classes available to more school children of all income levels

Many of history's successful and prominent adults are or were accomplished musicians: Thomas Jefferson played violin and cello; John Quincy Adams, flute; Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy, accordion; Thomas Edison, piano; Louis Braille, organ; Nobel physicist Donald Glaser, violin; Benjamin Franklin, the glass armonica, an instrument he invented. Albert Einstein not only played piano and violin but credited his musical training as the "driving force" behind the intuition that led him to form his theory of relativity, according to the March 31, 2010, issue of Psychology Today. The discovery, Einstein said, was "the result of musical perception." In what became a famous quote, he observed: "The greatest scientists are artists as well."

The Folsom Symphony is committed to bringing all the benefits of music – pleasure, cultural enrichment, enhanced learning – to the young people of the Folsom Lake region. In supporting the symphony, you also help these youngsters achieve the power of music.

The mission of the Folsom Symphony is to present high-quality symphonic performances for the enrichment and enjoyment of the people of the Folsom Lake region.