



## MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS

### OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

The mission of the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras is to encourage, promote and assist in the maintenance and development of musical programs of highest quality throughout Montana. MASO is a member organization that serves the staff, volunteers and board members of the orchestras of Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glacier, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula. MASO benefits the state of Montana as a model of statewide cooperation and synergy that is rare or even non-existent in other states. MASO supports members and their constituents by reducing the cost of services through shared costs and direct programs. As one Executive Director wrote, "MASO benefits its member by helping them make the best use of scarce resources. MASO fosters cooperation and collaboration between orchestras, encouraging a sense of statewide pride and professional collegiality. Creative ideas are shared, artistic visions are compared and audience trends and demographics are discussed."

MASO provides a number of direct services and programs for its members including:

1. **Young Artist Competition:** Recognizing the need to encourage the next generation of musicians, every 2 years, the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras recognizes talented young Montana musicians between the ages of 13 and 22 through its Young Artist Competition. Students who play an orchestral instrument are invited to enter and compete for cash prizes and the unique opportunity to perform with one or more Montana orchestras. Participants must be Montana residents. Finalists are invited to the Live Competition to perform before 3 out-of-state judges in the Junior High, High School and College categories. Whether a student wins or not, the experience of competition builds stronger musicians, encourages them to strive for excellence, grow qualities of leadership and become more confident in their performance skills.
2. **Sharing of Music Libraries:** The cost of orchestral & choral music is a significant expense for symphonies everywhere. To address this, several years ago MASO established a music lending library for members and the commitment to invest \$3,000 a year for the purchase of orchestral and choral music. Purchases are sometimes made to replace parts in an orchestra's library that have become too old and worn to be used. Other times Music Directors suggest certain works which if purchased, will save orchestras the cost of renting music they would like to perform. MASO enlists the services of a music librarian to organize purchases, file music and fill requests from member orchestras to borrow music. In addition, all MASO member organizations make the contents of their own music libraries available to each other and MASO provided the resources to create a combined catalog of all music available throughout the state. It is estimated that cumulatively, this service saves Montana orchestras over \$30,000 a year – savings that can be passed on to the public through reduced cost of goods and services.

## OVERVIEW OF MASO SERVICES, cont...

3. **Opportunities for Networking:** Another important benefit for MASO members is the information sharing that takes place at semi-annual meetings and workshops. This networking provides professionals and volunteers with resources to make them more effective in fulfilling their role, benefitting the organization and their local constituency.
4. **Recognizing Volunteers:** Volunteers are the life blood of any non-profit organization, and so for Montana symphonies. In an effort to recognize the impact that volunteers make, each year MASO recognizes the work of one orchestra's outstanding volunteer who is publically honored and acknowledged at a concert. Recognizing and thanking volunteers in this way is beneficial to MASO members in building public awareness for the importance of volunteer involvement.
5. **Access to Educational Conferences:** In addition to setting aside time for networking at all MASO meetings, members are able to take advantage of significant training opportunities. Nationally known consultants are engaged on a regular basis by MASO to provide resources to improve skills and increase productivity for staff and board.
6. **Re-granting:** Of great importance to MASO members is the cumulative impact of the MASO re-granting program for outreach and educational programs in smaller rural communities and regions surrounding their base of performance. A significant portion of the MASO annual budget is ear-marked for such grants to orchestras to further their mission of education and outreach. Income earned annually from Montana Symphony license plate sales is earmarked for music education and distributed annually among members for investment in outreach to underserved schools and communities.
7. **Website:** The purpose of the MASO website is to provide an informational resource for members and the public and particularly to drive traffic to member orchestra's websites. The MASO website is a simple yet professional and informative website with easy access links to each orchestra's website.
8. **Symphony vehicle license plate:** The revenue from new purchases and renewal of the "Montana Is a Symphony" license plate is equally distributed between the seven orchestras who hold a full membership in MASO. MASO receives \$20.00 from every new and renewed plate, which brings in an average of \$15,000 annually.