

# Symphony from page B1

in schools and want to come to the concert.

"We're also partnering with service groups to assist our users. For our Feb. 3 benefit concert we'll have the Birmingham Community Coalition which works to prevent substance abuse in kids. In addition to helping our users, they'll display their material on a table. We're trying to show the community we're all here together trying to help each other. Today we have to create new situations for our own groups to survive."

Layoffs led to a decline in corporate giving for all of the local orchestras. Lamphere directs the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony's efforts to raise the annual \$180,000 in operating expenses.

State grants, corporate and individual giving, ticket sales, three fundraisers a year, and program ads all count when it comes time to put on a concert.

"This week I'm starting to make cold calls to give," said Lamphere. "We can't depend on the corporate world. Last year at this time we had a wonderful commitment from corporations and businesses. By June or July, some people pulled back because they were having to lay off people."

"We lost \$10,000 to \$15,000. We had to raise ticket prices to \$25 and began offering free admission for kids. If kids are interested in music we bring in adults. We try to stimulate students in the schools. Approximately 20 percent of our orchestra members are music teachers

so they're ambassadors in the schools."

## Pontiac-Oakland Symphony

Education plays a major role at several local community orchestras including the Pontiac-Oakland Symphony.

Music director Greg Cunningham believes young people would develop a love of classical music if they only heard it. That's why he works tirelessly to raise their \$150,000 operating budget from corporations and season subscribers.

A fundraiser and Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs grant supplement the donations.

Unfortunately, this year's grant money is late and the Feb. 9 concert had to be canceled but the Feb. 24 program will go on as scheduled.

"Students need to be exposed to music. We had a petting zoo to introduce children to the different instruments before our Christmas concert," said Cunningham, an assistant music professor and coordinator of instrumental music at Oakland University in Rochester.

The university contributes in-kind services to the Pontiac-Oakland Symphony and pays his salary.

The partnership benefits both groups as well as several students who play with the POS.

## Livonia Symphony

Like the rest of the local orchestras, the Livonia Symphony had to institute measures to

make up for losses in giving. LSO president Bob Bennett has lots of experience with budgets as former Mayor of Livonia but the effects of a recession and lack of volunteers present an uphill battle.

This season the orchestra cut back its seven season concerts to six. Even so, costs mount fast when fees for a single concert run \$16,000.

To help raise money for their \$135,000 budget the LSO will hold a Feb. 8 benefit that begins with a 6 p.m. dinner, followed by a concert and silent auction. Tickets range from \$50 to \$200. Call (734) 425-4855.

"It's looking dim for the annual golf outing. There's no one to chair the event - Chip in for the Arts," said Bennett.

"We lost the opportunity for our fall fundraiser because the local mall was flourishing itself. We're trying to cut expenses in other areas, canceling membership in the American Symphony Orchestra League and subscriptions to related publications but while you're doing that costs go up for printing, auditorium rental, postage, insurance and union wages for musicians."

"We sent out 10,000 fliers to schools last year for The Nutcracker but the schools

wouldn't allow us to do it this year. We did place fliers in Target, Kroger and Tru Value Hardware as big stuffers to attract audiences."

"Still it's difficult finding local businesses and corporate sponsors. Ford is the largest supporter followed by Target. We've also had help from nonprofit organizations like Livonia Town Hall, Livonia Arts Commission and Livonia Community Foundation. Individual contributions are growing mostly as our reputation as a good orchestra has grown but there's a cutback of corporate givers. Frankly, I don't see a future for community orchestras. The main reason is the volunteer base just gets smaller and smaller. Even service clubs are struggling just to keep warm bodies."

## Rochester Symphony

Keith Hale relies on the Rochester Symphony's Women's Guild to help keep the orchestra solvent as does the Plymouth Symphony with its League which raises \$25,000 annually through home tours and lunary sales.

When Hale took over two years ago as president, the Rochester Symphony was \$30,000 in the red. The Women's

Guild raised \$20,000. Last year they ended up \$2,000 in the black. This year budget comes in at around \$90,000 and includes a search for a new conductor. After 20 years, music director Jim Hohmeyer is moving to Midland to direct the arts center there.

"Community orchestras are a dying breed," said Hale. "It takes a lot of support to get it done. I can't say enough about our Women's Guild who've been the salvation of the orchestra."

"Advertising helps too. We place concert information on a billboard on the main road coming into town and offer two free tickets in a newcomer's book. We present six performances on less than the first violinist of the DSO gets paid."

Nearly 40 years old, the Rochester Symphony is composed of 20 to 30 musician union members and the rest volunteers, just as most of the semi-

professional community orchestras. Their Feb. 22 concert will feature one of the conductors vying for Hohmeyer's position. Afterwards, Hale will hand out surveys to the audience and musicians to help select a successor.

"Our programming is standard classical repertoire, accepted tunes from the last 100 years from Mozart to Stravinsky," said Hohmeyer.

"We have a core of people who love classical music and want to see something on the program they like."

Community orchestras providing community concerts tailored to the community - no one else is capable of providing that. It would be a shame if we didn't all support our symphonies in whatever way possible.

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