Grande Ronde Symphony

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

## Grande Ronde Symphony Association

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"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." — Plato

# PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY

## Strategic Highlights

As we conclude the 78th season of the Grande Ronde Symphony orchestra, I find myself once again being filled with awe and gratefulness. I am in awe of our new Music Director, Sam Ross, as he took the podium with confidence, interacting with both the musicians and the audience to create stellar performances at every concert. I am in complete admiration for the 40+ musicians that show up every Wednesday to rehearse for the orchestra, added to the many hours of personal practice time to which so many of them are committed. My esteem for the small village of dedicated instructors and parents that keep the Fiddle Club program through the La Grande School District thriving could not be deeper. The amazing performers that share their talents through the GRS Chamber Series and Concerto + Aria Competition, who have not only my respect, but my deep appreciation.

My gratefulness starts with you, the incredible patrons who continue to show up for performances, as donors, as corporate sponsors, and as contributors to our endowment. Without you, we simply don't have the strength to continue to bring this diversity of musical offerings to northeastern Oregon. You are the crescendo that builds us, the constant tempo that sustains us, and the rhythm that drives us forward into our 79th season.

On behalf of the Board of Directors…Thank You for keeping the music flowing!

*Alice Trindle, President of the Grande Ronde Symphony Association*

**HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS OF THE 78th SEASON**

Grande Ronde Symphony Orchestra

It is never easy to step into a new role as the music director and conductor of a small orchestra, but Sam Ross has risen to the occasion. Beginning with the November 2025 concerts in both La Grande and Baker City, plus interacting with 4th graders at the annual 'Children's Concert', Sam set the stage for relationship building. The musicians were challenged by his musical selections, several of which adhered to Sam's desire to bring little known composers and/or works to the people of northeastern Oregon. Concert attendance was down slightly over the previous season.

Grande Ronde Jr. Symphony & Fiddle Club

The youth programs supported by the Grande Ronde Symphony are continuing to expand or should we say they are 'stringing along'! The Jr. Symphony flourished under the direction of Sam Ross. They continued to expand their note reading and music theory skills and performed in a 'Side-by-Side' with the GRSO at the Spring concert, along with selected members of the Fiddle Club. In the upcoming season, the Jr. Symphony will be under the leadership of Jacie Sites, who brings a wealth of experience in working with youth in both the fiddle and orchestral settings.

Chamber Series

It's really quite remarkable the quality and diversity of performers and ensembles that are engaged for the Grande Ronde Symphony's 'Chamber Series'. This season witnessed the strange and enchanting instruments of the Oregon Renaissance Band at the October concert, moving on to the February concert featuring Grande Ronde Symphony musicians, Sam Ross and amazing oboist, Sammi Stone. In April we heard from Sam's friend and teacher, violist Arnaud Ghillebart, along with the incredible pianist, Andrew Cannestra. We wrapped up the Chamber Series with a rousing group called 'Celtic Connection' at the Haines Methodist Church. What a wonderful variety of ensembles! We look forward to an equally entertaining series for 2026-2027.

Concerto + Aria Competition

The selected musicians in the Grande Ronde Symphony's '*Concerto + Aria Competition*' continue to bring inspirational performances to our Fall and Spring concert stage. In November we were treated to incredible violist, Khaos Kook. Keeping with the tradition of showcasing the Young and Advanced Student category awardees during the Spring concert, we again heard from two extraordinary pianists: 15-year-old, Alexander Vollmer, followed by 19-year-old American pianist Nikita Istratov.

## Grants – Sustaining and Inspiring

Once again, the organization was greatly supported by various foundations. We sincerely thank the following:

- Baker County Cultural Coalition
- Oregon Arts Commission
- Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon Cultural Trust & Business Oregon
- Roundhouse Foundation
- Leo Adler Foundation

**"Music is the shorthand of emotion." — Leo Tolstoy**

## GRANTS RECEIVED & EXPENDED IN THE 2025-2026 FISCAL YEAR

| GRANT | TIMING/REC'VD | TOTAL AMT | CLASS/TAG |
|---|---|---|---|
| BCCC | 2025 | $ 1,000 | Baker Concert |
| Leo Adler | 2025-2026 | $ 2,500 | Baker Concert + Mileage |
| | | | |
| OCF-DE & Jane Clark | 09.14.25 | $ 2,250 | Music Director+ Library+Facilities |
| OCF-Lynn's Smile - Advised Fund | 07.10.25 | $ 10,000 | Youth Programs |
| Oregon Cultural Trust (OCT) | | $ 8,500 | GRS Orchestra Music Director |
| Roundhouse Foundation | | $10,000 | Music Director |
| Oregon Arts Commission - Sustaining Arts Program (SAP) | 09.18.25 | $ 2,368 | Chamber Series Performers |
| **Totals for Fiscal Yr 2025-2026: $37,618** | | | |
| I-10 Grants to GRSA: | $26,618 | | |
| I-11 Grants to Youth: | $11,000 | | |

# Looking Ahead

**Board Member Strategic Plan Development:**

The Grande Ronde Symphony Board of Directors met on a monthly basis over the course of the fiscal year. As we moved into the strategic planning process for 2026-2027 season, we reconfirmed the following:

**Primary Mission –** The Board reconfirmed that the primary mission of the Grande Ronde Symphony Association is to maintain the 78-year-old heritage of the symphony orchestra. To accomplish this mission, we acknowledged the following:

1) The importance of keeping the quality of the orchestra, through having a highly-qualified music director, and instilling a desire for the musicians of the orchestra to rehearse and perform creating a quality product for the greater community. This commitment must remain a critical over-arching goal for the organization.

*In keeping with this objective, in June of 2025, the GRSA selected Sam Ross as the new Music Director for the orchestra. Sam has a Master's degree from the Bard Conservatory in New York. He is a violist and has a Bachelor's degree in performance from the University of Oregon. He currently splits his time between conducting the Tilikum Chamber Orchestra, the youth programs in Pendleton for the Oregon East Symphony, and his time with the Grande Ronde Symphony Orchestra.*

2) The need for fostering the musicians of the future through support of the La Grande School District's 'Fiddle Club' and the Grande Ronde Junior Symphony is critical to sustaining the symphony orchestra
3) We must look at new and creative ideas for accompanying our generous granting foundations by encouraging giving from patrons and corporate support contributions
4) We need to continue outreach to encourage giving to the Grande Ronde Symphony Endowment as a long-term investment in future of the orchestra

**Moving into the 79th Season –** Out of the above commitments flowed the 2026-2027 Strategic Plan. We welcome suggestions. We hope that you recognize the effort and will continue to support the Grande Ronde Symphony.

Sincerely presented on behalf of the Grande Ronde Symphony Association Board of Directors by: *Alice Trindle, President, GRSA*

You can find the 2026-2027 Strategic Plan and Budget by visiting the website: GrandeRondeSymphony.org

## 2025 – 2026 Board of Directors

Alice Trindle, President

Heather Null, Treasurer

Lisa Davis, Assistant Treasurer

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cilla Coe | Janice Cowan | Sarah Fischer |
| Carl Riehs | Earl Davis | Anna Cavinato |
| Edie Englemann | Eric D. Brown | |
| Gracie King | Travis Rhyne | |

*Ex-officio: Sam Ross (GRSO Music Director)*

*Nate Lowe (EOU Liaison)*

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## GRSA 2025-2026 Financial Budgeting Summary

For budget purposes we started the year 2025/2026 with a total anticipated income of $79,380, of which $14,090 were funds carried forward from the fiscal year 2024-25.

As of June 30, 2026 our total spendable income was $114,230 and our expenses for the 2025-2026 fiscal year were $61,782.

Of the $52,448 balance:

- $15,000 has been deposited in the OCF-GRS Endowment Fund
- Amount transferred to Vanguard – Reserved Operating Fund – approx.. $24,268

For budgeting purposes, we will be carrying forward $13,180 into the 2026-27 fiscal year.

End of Year P&L Reports available in August 2026

*Submitted by Heather Null, GRSA Treasurer*

| GRSA Fiscal Year 2025-2026 | Sub Total | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **INCOME:** | | **114,230** |
| GRSO Concerts | 9,704 | |
| Grants to GRSA | 26,618 | |
| Grants to Youth Programs + other income | 11,746 | |
| Chamber Series & Non-GRSO Perform | 4,770 | |
| Corporate Support | 3,000 | |
| Fundraising | 2,702 | |
| Transfers from Investment Accounts | 7,498 | |
| Patron Contributions | 33,192 | |
| Contributions to OCF-GRS Endowment | 15,000 | |
| | | |
| **Total Expenses** (As of 06.30.26) | | **61,782** |
| **Balance – Net Ordinary Income** | 52,448 | |

# CORPORATE SUPPORT

Once again, the GRSA was very well supported by businesses from the region, stepping up to keep music in our lives. We are so thankful for this support, as it allows us to remain vibrant in our communities.

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors!

# INVESTMENT SUMMARY WITH VANGUARD

## Grande Ronde Symphony Association Investments held with Vanguard Investment Group

2025 and into the first quarter of 2026 (through March 2026) the Vanguard Investment Fund accounts of the Grande Ronde Symphony Association are showing an over-all increase in value. To recap this investment portfolio, there are three silos of designated purposes held with the Vanguard Investment Group:

- Scholarship Fund – Which is restricted to use for scholarship activities. It is through this fund that we are able to support the Lorna Spain Scholarship administered through the EOU Foundation, along with funding the monetary award for the Youth and Advanced Student winners in the *Concerto + Aria Competition*, and lesson reimbursement for local string students.
- The Reserve Operating account is with the Wellesley Income Fund Group. The purpose of this silo is to be an emergency fund for operating expenses. The goal of this account is to build the level up to equal at least two-year's worth of operating expenses.
- The Endowment silo or Memorial Fund is permanently restricted for the support of GRSA related functions.

*NOTE: The GRSA will continue to manage the 'Endowment Silo' through Vangaurd Investments. These funds are permanently restricted for use by the organization utilizing 5% of the annual trailing balance to be applied to general operating expenses of the current fiscal year and withdrawn in July of each fiscal year.*

As of the first quarter report for 2026, the combined silos equal over $500,000 for the future investment in the Grande Ronde Symphony Association.

*Respectfully Submitted by the GRSA Investment Committee*

*July 27, 2026*

# GRANDE RONDE SYMPHONY ENDOWMENT FUND … FILLING THE VALLEY WITH MUSIC

The Andante Circle
Grande Ronde Symphony Fund Endowment

The Grande Ronde Symphony Association (GRSA) is proud to announce that the goal set forth by Dale and Ginny Mammen during the 2024/2025 season with their initial $50,000 contribution of seeing over $100,000 in the GRS Endowment Fund has been met and exceeded! Now as we move into the 79th season, we hope to see this tremendous commitment continue to grow.

*Our Generous Supporters OCF - GRS Endowment*

*Andante Circle Members*

Dale & Ginny Mammen $50,000

Robert Delve $40,000

Lisa & Earl Davis $10,000

Anonymous $10,000

Meredith & Jack Wilson $10,000

*Allegro Members ($5000+)*

Matt Cooper & Sharon Porter

## Dale and Ginny Mammen

Testimonial:

*"The Grande Ronde Symphony has been filling this valley with music for over 75 years. As they celebrate this history, the Grande Ronde Symphony Association is also looking toward and planning for the future. We hope our gift to the Grande Ronde Symphony Fund Endowment will encourage others to give and ultimately grow the fund to sustain the symphony for generations to come."*

The Grande Ronde Symphony Fund Endowment is managed by the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) through their Endowment Partners Program. The mission of OCF is to improve lives for all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy. Our fund will continue to grow over time, preserving and enhancing its value for future needs. Your gift will allow the Association to build the resources to help sustain orchestral music well into the future!

PROUD PARTNER WITH
Oregon Community Foundation
BUILDING A BETTER OREGON, TOGETHER

~ Please contact us if you are interested in leaving a legacy of music ~

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