

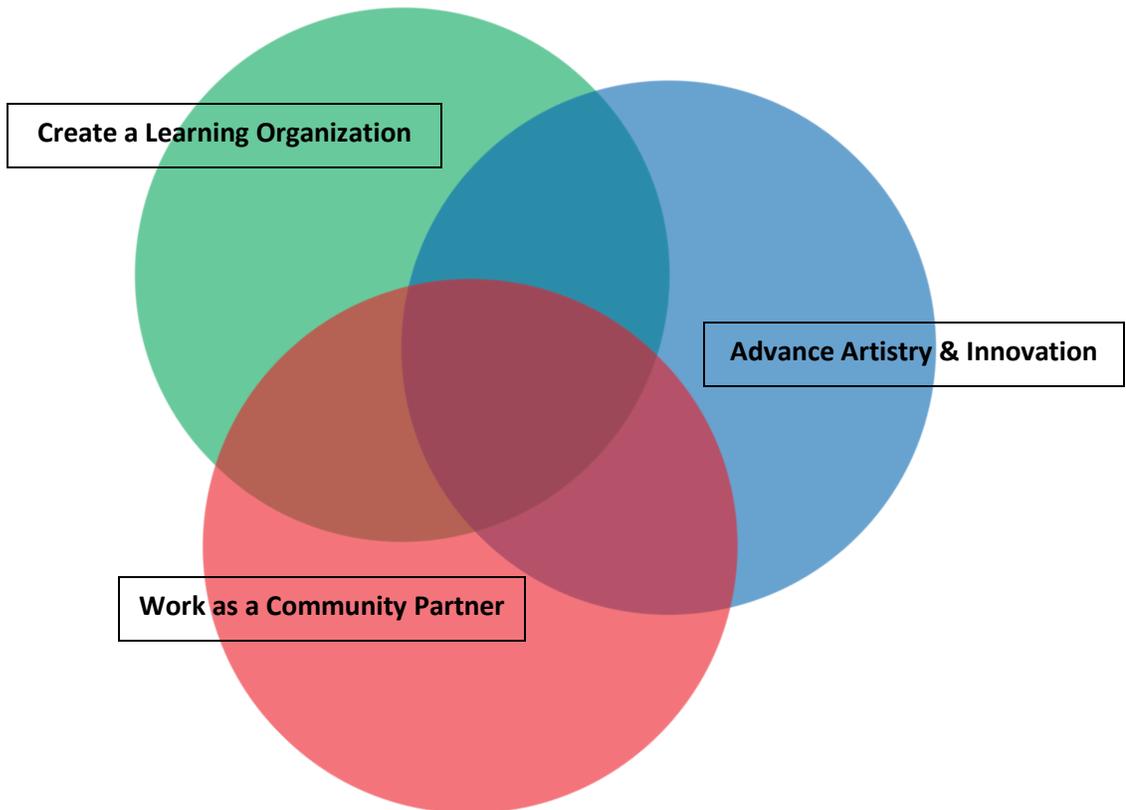
**PROPOSED GOAL STATEMENT (draft 2/7/22)**

**RICHMOND SYMPHONY, SYMPHONY CHORUS & YOUTH ORCHESTRAS (“RICHMOND SYMPHONY” OR “SYMPHONY”)**

**The Richmond Symphony celebrates the unique vitality of our city and the surrounding region by making music a central part of the lives of those living, learning, and working here.**

To fulfill the Goal Statement above, this plan establishes the following three interdependent commitments. To achieve these commitments, the Symphony’s Board, staff and musicians must work together to identify and commit to the human and financial resources required. Only by communication and collaboration within and outside of the Symphony can these commitments be realized.

This plan includes and dedicates resources and attention to engage specific neighborhoods by actively seeking opportunities to listen to and learn from Black voices, artistically and otherwise, and to work in collaboration to provide opportunities that musically celebrate and enrich those neighborhoods and residents. Expansion of these engagement opportunities will follow. In these endeavors, the Symphony will seek opportunities to actively listen to, learn from and collaborate with the individuals and communities we serve. Active listening to outside voices is not only enriching, fulfilling and informative, but vital to the building a more inclusive Symphony experience.



\* The Richmond Region consists of the City and the surrounding counties of Henrico, Hanover and Chesterfield.

## I. Work as a Community Partner

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Richmond sits at a unique crossroads of history and social movements. Music has the special ability to tell stories, to evoke emotion, and to connect people. This power is enhanced when we work with community leaders to co-create programming, methodology and metrics to meet community-determined needs. The Symphony will work in a similar fashion to develop programming and educational initiatives that increase access and participation throughout the region and that utilize music to activate more community spaces and serve more residents.

1. Expand the Richmond Symphony School of Music into a robust and inclusive community institution.
  - Secure resources to provide reduced cost/free instruction, music appreciation, and ensemble performance opportunities.
  - Establish educational programming by working with leaders in specific communities, beginning with Richmond's Jackson Ward, North Side and East End neighborhoods, to meet community needs\*.
2. Co-Create community-based projects that use music to tell stories of Richmond's unique past, present and future and of the people who shape(d) the city we know today, working directly with those communities to establish shared outcomes and metrics.
3. Select venues and related programming that reduce barriers to participation and build beyond the performance in that neighborhood or venue by considering additional programming, engagement or educational opportunities to enhance the musical-ecosystem of those specific neighborhoods.

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## II. Advance Artistry and Innovation

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Artistic Growth and Innovation fuels connection and resonance between listeners, learners, and artists. Music has the power to evoke a range of emotions and to transport the artist and listener beyond their everyday experience. Performance is a communal experience. It takes artists as well as listeners, art makers and interpreters. The Symphony strives to grow artistically in a way that not only creates a stronger musical presentation but that encourages and builds relationships and connections between listeners, learners, and artists. Artistry is at the heart of the Symphony presentation, but it does not exist in a vacuum. The Symphony strives to present innovative and vibrant performances, and other initiatives, that celebrate the power of music as a central part of the Richmond region.

1. Empower our artists as full stakeholders in making music a central part of the lives of those who live and learn in the Richmond region
  - Commit to shaping the sound of the Richmond Symphony and Richmond Symphony Chorus, building on the artistic vision of the Symphony's Music Director.
  - Invest in the artistic growth and professional development of our artists as musicians, program designers, teachers, and coalition builders
  - Build relationships between orchestra members, audiences and school participants, utilizing expertise of musicians in as many capacities as possible
  - Develop artistic talent in the orchestra, chorus, and youth orchestras through collaborations with artists in residence, composers, and creative directors
  - Invest in hiring, onboarding, recruiting, and retention policies and practices that create and maintain an inclusive space full of diversity of thought and experience, on stage and off. A culturally diverse organization is an artistically rich organization.
2. Share the power of orchestral and choral music as a living art form that continues to evolve and impact the lives of artists and listeners alike through (i) a robust commissioning plan for the Symphony, Chorus and Youth Orchestras and (ii) the connection of composers and their music to the lives of our performers and audiences.
  - Commission works by Virginia composers to tell stories of Richmond and Virginia.
  - Commission works from a diverse pool of composers, consistently working to expand the orchestral, choral and chamber repertoire to include voices of black, female, and other marginalized artists .
  - Establish the Richmond Symphony as an innovator by performing, recording, and publishing works that provide us with a digital presence to highlight our commissions and works of living composers.
  - Program diverse composers and guest artists throughout all series and educational initiatives; establish media and marketing practices that lift these voices and tell their stories in and around Richmond.
3. Create relationships between our musicians, performers, and audiences by building upon each performance as an engagement opportunity.

### III. Create a Learning Organization

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When going into new territory and new communities, our legitimacy hinges on our *willingness* to learn about the aspirations, needs, and priorities of those communities, and on our *commitment* to shape together a strategy that serves those needs and advances our shared vision.

Internally, learning is now more important than ever. Things will not work out as planned. The next three years will be the most unpredictable and dynamic period in the organization's history. Effective plan implementation will require us to be *agile, adaptive, and responsive* to new scenarios as they present themselves. These skills are developed only through the ongoing evaluation of the Symphony's work and the community response to it.

The Symphony will work with community leaders and partner organizations to dismantle historic barriers, to challenge preconceptions, and to invite authentic connection, especially across racial and ethnic lines, through conversation, education and listening.

1. Become an informed and vital partner by learning more about the neighborhoods we strive to serve.
2. Devote time and resources to ongoing listening sessions with business owners, teachers, students, and other community leaders, working to specifically engage leaders of Black communities in Richmond.
3. Embrace every member of our organization as a stakeholder and participant by hosting cross constituent (musicians, Board, staff) Town Hall sessions twice per year.
4. Learn through the experiences of other orchestras and arts organizations across the country by inviting speakers and provocateurs to Board, staff & orchestra meetings.
5. Better serve our audiences by creating opportunities for feedback and conversation to better understand and respond to audience perceptions, preferences, and expectations.
6. In all performance and education activities, continually ask "who is not here?" and assure that responses inform marketing strategies, community engagement activities, venue choices, pricing strategies, etc.