

TACOMA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SARAH IOANNIDES | MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Classics series sold out during Ioannides inaugural season Individual donor support up 30%; corporate support up 20%

Music Director Sarah Ioannides' inaugural 2014-2015 Season raised both the Tacoma Symphony's visibility and service revenue to its highest level in years. Bold programs with top tier soloists—including a world premiere performance with percussionist Evelyn Glennie and a memorable engagement with violinist Vadim Gluzman—revitalized both the audience and the ensemble. Attendance at the Classics series climbed by more than 18% with all four Classics concerts selling out. November's performance, featuring young pianist Charlie Albright in Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, experienced such strong advance ticket sales that TSO management shifted it from the Rialto Theater to Tacoma's larger Pantages Theater, which then went on to sell out!

The audience reflected back this excitement with such comments as: "You have definitely made the right choice in a music director!" "I will remember tonight for the rest of my life!" "Sarah was beyond my greatest hope!" And, "That was the BEST concert I have ever been to." Unexpected elements at concerts—performers stationed throughout the hall during *Pines of Rome*; a "surprise" appearance by the Tacoma Symphony Chorus during Sibelius' *Finlandia*; Hubble images projected during *The Planets*—are generating buzz and changing perceptions about the concert experience. As *The News Tribune* noted, "Ioannides' five-year term promises good things for the city."

In 2011, as part of a five-year Strategic Plan, the Tacoma Symphony Board adopted a new business model that emphasized growth in reliance on *Patron Revenue* (ticket sales and individual donations). This strategy placed the focus on relationship building with core subscribers and donors—those who, concert by concert, are served, touched and affected by the orchestra's mission. As a result, over three seasons Patron Revenue has increased from 38% to 44% of total annual revenue.

The 2014-2015 season alone saw the following growth in attendance revenue:

- 30% growth in subscription revenue
- 22% increase in single ticket revenue
- 33.7% growth in overall ticket revenue
- 80% average house sold (compared to 68.5% in 2013-2014)

A new program called "Super-Subscribers," implemented in 2014, was created to boost the number of subscribers who donate through a series of benefits and incentives. This resulted in a jump from 25 to 45%. Nor is the Tacoma Symphony ignoring its Corporate Giving program; 2014-2015 saw a 20% growth in revenues from sponsorships.

"We deeply appreciate the way the community has stepped up to the podium to support the new vision of Sarah Ioannides, the Board and the Orchestra," stated Executive Director Andy Buelow. "With continued strong support, expect even more remarkable growth to come, as we focus on our mission of building community through music."

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