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## **A Tacoma classic has a new name**

### ***Symphony's rebranding sets new tone for the future***

TACOMA, WA—It was christened the “College of Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra” at its first concert back in 1946. It was renamed the “UPS-Tacoma Symphony” some 13 years later, then the “Tacoma Symphony Orchestra” in the ‘60s. Inevitably, to most of its core patrons and stakeholders, it has been known for years as just plain “the TSO” or “the Symphony.”

This fall, in conjunction with its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the organization formerly known as “TSO” will receive a new name. Ladies and gentlemen, may we present... *your Symphony Tacoma!*

The name change is in fact part of a completely new brand presentation that includes *au courant* logo, messaging and color palette. The refreshed brand as a whole is intended to graphically embody the significant transformation the organization has undergone in recent seasons—particularly since the introduction of Music Director Sarah Ioannides in 2014.

“At Symphony Tacoma, we welcome people in, going beyond tradition to surprise and captivate,” explains Ioannides. “The brand reflects a balance between tradition and innovation.”

Board President Clark D’Elia states: “Symphony Tacoma is devoted to keeping musical performance alive in the heart of our region. We believe our community is stronger and more vibrant as we experience great music together.”

The name itself is intended to signal a more dynamic, contemporary direction, while still maintaining a connection with the organization’s history and community focus. It replaces the “TSO” acronym featured in the previous logo that has been in use since 1997—widely familiar to core stakeholders but, according to marketing experts, detracting from brand awareness beyond them. In addition, it differentiates the organization from the plethora of arts organizations whose names begin with “Tacoma” (Tacoma Opera, Tacoma City Ballet, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, and Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, to name a few).

The new logo—designed by JayRay—derives from the conducting beat patterns for the 4/4 and 2/4 time signatures. Interestingly, during the “testing” period it evoked different images for different people: birds in flight, dancers, and sailboats, to name a few.

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“Touch the Sound,” the new brand theme, was conceived by Sarah Ioannides herself following a 2014 welcome party at a Board member’s home overlooking Puget Sound—during which the staff had the unprecedented experience of throwing pebbles and wading in the cold shallows with their new artistic leader! The phrase is a deliberate double play on the word “sound,” with its obvious reference both to the art form and to the region’s most prominent natural resource. It describes the immediacy and impact of the Symphony Tacoma live concert experience.

“The desired outcome of the new brand launch will be to sharpen messaging to the community in order to maximize results, both artistic and financial,” says Executive Director Andy Buelow. “It’s the visible expression of a new era of growth and community service.”

Beneath the surface, the roots of this outward expression run deep and wide, reflected in numerous organizational initiatives over the past five years, including:

- An innovative patron-centered business model first adopted in 2011
- Appointment of the dynamic and community-minded Sarah Ioannides in 2014
- The restatement, in 2015, of the mission as *Building Community Through Music*
- The 2025 Vision and Strategic Plan, completed last season in response to the city’s “Tacoma 2025” Plan

Pierce County’s largest resident performing arts organization, Symphony Tacoma serves an audience of 18,000 annually, more than 30% of whom are children and students participating in its education and engagement offerings. Its core concert season includes 10 performances held at the Pantages and Rialto theaters and at St. Charles Borromeo in Tacoma and Chapel Hill Presbyterian in Gig Harbor; with additional concerts presented annually at Washington State Fair, the Tacoma Dome, and elsewhere. The five-concert Classics season is rebroadcast on Classical KING FM 98.1. With a budget of \$1.2 million, the not-for-profit organization is governed by a volunteer board of directors, employs 84 union-contracted musicians on a per-service basis, and maintains a 60-voice volunteer community chorus.

The brand will be publicly unveiled at TSO—er, *Symphony Tacoma*’s annual Gala, held on Friday, October 21, and during the following night’s Season Opening Concert.

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