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CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY LAYS OUT AMBITIOUS FUTURE

May 9, 2013 | CHARLOTTE, NC – An encouraging report card paired with an ambitious plan for the future was laid out by the Charlotte Symphony's Board Chairperson Emily Smith, Music Director Christopher Warren-Green, and newly named President and Executive Robert Stickler at the Symphony's 2013 Annual Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 8.

In her remarks Board Chairperson Emily noted that the past year was one of change for the organization. She called attention to "two game-changing events": internationally renowned Music Director Christopher Warren-Green renewed his contract through 2016, and Robert Stickler, who jumped in to help as Interim ED upon Martin's departure in August 2012, recently dropped the interim part of his title and was hired by the Charlotte Symphony Board of Directors as President and Executive Director. "He as chief administrator and Christopher as artistic director work well in tandem and together will lead our symphony to new heights," she said.

"Our job is to provide Maestro Warren-Green with the resources he needs to realize his artistic and educational vision for our Orchestra and our community. He has ambitious goals, as do I. Neither can be achieved without dramatic financial improvement," said Stickler.

In his financial report, Stickler noted significant new investments by contributors. The number of donors to the Symphony has increased by 14% year-to-date over last year, and the number of League members who contribute \$2,000 and above has increased 26%. Multi-year pledges far exceed any amount the Symphony has achieved in memory (\$3.3 million in pledges are already on the books for next year). Another bright spot was the success of the Symphony Yes receptions. Led by Chris Teat, a director, and Chairperson Smith, a series of fundraising gatherings hosted in personal homes of the Board and other supporters brought in more than \$400,000 in pledges for the next three years.

In all, gifts to the CSO have already exceeded by more than \$300,000 last year's total.

Stickler noted that the Symphony still needs to significantly improve financial performance, citing in particular a need to increase ticket sales and corporate contributions and sponsorships.

As might be expected, Stickler reiterated to members the importance of their continued investment in the Symphony, reminding them that, as is the case with most major orchestras across the country, two-

thirds, or about \$6 million of the approximately \$9.3 million annual budget, must come from contributions .

Stickler remarked that the lack of a significant endowment was the biggest challenge the Symphony faces. Currently, it sits at \$6 million, and the new ED said it needs to approach \$40 million. The Symphony hopes to begin an ambitious endowment campaign next season.

As a membership organization, the Symphony holds its Annual Meeting in the spring of each year for the purpose of electing members to the Board of Directors and addressing the business of the organization. At Wednesday's meeting, four current members, Catherine Connor, Janet Haack, Rich Osborne, and George Simm, were re-elected, and five new directors, Frank Bragg, Ulrike Miles, Lisa Phillips, Jackie Slaugenhaupt, and Jette Campbell were elected for three-year terms.

An individual can become a member of the Charlotte Symphony and attend the Annual Membership Meeting, among other benefits, if he or she is a subscriber to one or more concert series or annually donates \$250 or more.

About the Charlotte Symphony

Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony serves the whole community through music that educates, entertains and enriches. As the largest arts organization in Charlotte, the symphony plays to over 130,000 audience members each year in nearly 100 concerts featuring classical music to pops. The symphony also reaches more than 15,000 students throughout the area in pursuit of its mission to provide musical education. The symphony welcomes contributions; as with most performing arts organizations, ticket revenues cover only about one-third of expenses. The CSO family also includes the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte, The Symphony Guild , and two youth orchestras.

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