

Friends of Music Overview

Mission - Founded in 1999, Friends of Music, Inc., is a local non-profit organization that promotes musical excellence and performance of chamber music in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. We pursue this mission first by sponsoring the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra as well as smaller ensembles. We have also put a strong priority on boosting music education in our local elementary and secondary schools by assisting music programs at those schools and providing scholarships to their students.

Concert Programming - Our concert seasons run from September through May and include five concerts. The Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra, our flagship ensemble, currently performs three times each season. Our remaining concerts feature performances by smaller ensembles. The orchestra and smaller ensembles are comprised of gifted, professional musicians drawn not only from the local region but from as far away as Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Our Music Director, [Jed Gaylin](#), also directs the Hopkins Symphony Orchestra (MD) and Bay Atlantic Symphony (NJ), and has served us with great distinction since 2012. Thanks in no small part to his efforts, our concerts are very well attended and the reviews by concert-goers are consistently positive and enthusiastic. The musical performances we offer have become an important part of the cultural landscape of the region.

Music Education Support - Friends of Music believes that support of music education in our P-12 schools is imperative to the survival and growth of music in our local community. We do this mainly through grants that typically involve instruments and musical supplies not covered by regular school budgets. Since 2016 we have provided cash grants and equipment donations totaling more than \$32,537 to assist music programs and students in Berkeley County and Jefferson County schools. We also offer college scholarships to talented graduating high school seniors who are pursuing musical interests, as well as other scholarships to enable P-12 students to take advantage of special music education opportunities. So far, we have awarded 23 such scholarships totaling \$12,500.

Finances - Like most arts organizations, Friends of Music relies on ticket sales, fundraising events, individual and corporate donations, as well as state government and private foundation grants. Membership subscriptions provide significant revenue. We are committed to good stewardship of the funds entrusted to us, and we have kept our finances sound by holding overhead expenses to a minimum while building substantial financial reserves.

Governance - Friends of Music is governed by a Board of Directors whose members serve renewable one-year terms. There is an annual meeting of the organization's members in late June at which time the slate of Directors for the coming year is chosen and officers elected.

Responsibilities of Board Members - We are a working Board. Board members are expected to attend monthly board meetings, concerts, and special events; participate on committees, and be actively involved in the organization's governance. Knowing that Friends of Music depends heavily on active volunteer work and financial contributions, Board members are expected to become members of FOM and pledge in kind and actual dollars to support and promote our mission. We understand the wide range of circumstances for each Board member and welcome and appreciate what each is able to contribute in time, in talent, and financially.

Friends of Music's Strengths - Our strengths include the following:

- A solid financial position
- A committed, experienced Board of Directors
- High name recognition and a solid brand for both Friends of Music and the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra
- A committed group of over 100 Member-supporters
- A top-tier, creative Music Director
- A seasoned core of professional musicians who enjoy playing with the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra and our smaller ensembles
- A portfolio of well-attended and successful fundraiser.
- Excellent subscription and marketing materials, both printed and online.

Legal Status - The Friends of Music is a Shepherdstown-based West Virginia not-for-profit corporation. We have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.