

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

For More Information Contact:

Matthew Herren, SoNA Executive Director
matthew@sonamusic.org / (479) 521-4166

Media Contact:

Michelle Bradford, Vantage Point Communications
michelle@vpointcommunications.com / (479) 871-9513

SoNA's Endowment Fund Hits \$1 Million Mark ***Symphony Embarks on Revised Strategic Plan with Top Influencer*** ***To Ensure Mission Thrives Far Into Future***

FAYETTEVILLE, ARK. (July 25, 2018) — Thanks to the growing generosity of steadfast donors along with forward-looking board leadership and sound financial management, the **Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA)** has reached an important milestone in the organization's history: its endowment fund has reached \$1 million.

SoNA Executive Director Matthew Herren reports that the organization has raised approximately \$400,000 in its Maestro's Circle Fund, which funds the symphony's Concertmaster's Chair, and an additional \$600,000 has accumulated in its unrestricted General Investment Fund.

The draw on these funds will provide SoNA with an increasingly solid base of support to further its growing mission of bringing quality, diverse programming and education to Northwest Arkansas.

"We are deeply grateful to the generous donors who have made this milestone possible," Herren said. "An endowment is essential to a healthy nonprofit, and we are fortunate to have built a fund which will provide stability and continue to grow as we grow, building on and extending our reach into more and more Northwest Arkansas communities."

The endowment milestone was announced on July 19 at a private event at the Benton County home of SoNA board advisor Cynthia Coughlin.

The announcement comes as SoNA also embarks on a revised strategic plan. With the help of a grant from the Walton Family Foundation, SoNA has engaged Alan Brown, principal of the San Francisco-based WolfBrown, who is a leading and influential researcher and management consultant in the nonprofit arts industry with extensive knowledge of NWA.

Brown and SoNA leadership will examine the symphony's existing programs, governance structure and finances, as well as the landscape of classical music participation in the region, including everything from early childhood programs to school training programs and public concerts.

Now in its 64th year, currently under the baton of acclaimed Maestro Paul Haas, SoNA performs seven mainstage concerts each season at Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville, in addition to a July 4th concert spectacular at the Walmart AMP and other regional performances. SoNA's ImagiMusic interactive arts-integration program reaches 800 students in eight area elementary schools.

Brown's work will also focus on understanding consumer demand for cultural experiences in NWA, and helping SoNA recognize new opportunities amid changing conditions.

Continues, next page

“We thank the Walton Family Foundation for both their ongoing support and for this important opportunity,” Herren said. “Northwest Arkansas enjoys a uniquely rich and rapidly changing arts landscape, which Alan Brown has an extensive knowledge of. Together, we’ll meet with our regional partners to explore both shorter-term goals as well as ideas for longer-term goals such as capitalization priorities and evolving programming initiatives.”

Reaching the \$1 million mark in its endowment is a major achievement, but it doesn’t mean SoNA will rest. As part of upping its commitment to bring more music to more NWA communities, SoNA seeks to raise an additional \$3 million to \$4 million over the next three years.

Thanks to the generous support of the Maestro's Circle donors, as well as corporate and foundation partners, SoNA is able to bring high quality music and education opportunities to the community while also keeping ticket prices to its mainstage performances accessible. Gifts of all types, not only to the endowment fund, but also to the Annual Campaign, as well as Chair Sponsorships and legacy or planned gifts, help SoNA build financial strength and ensure the symphony’s mission thrives far into the future.

To learn more about the various ways to support SoNA, please visit sonamusic.org/donate, or contact Herren at (479) 521-4166 or matthew@sonamusic.org.

About SoNA

Founded in 1954 as the North Arkansas Symphony and rebranded as the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA) in 2011, the not-for-profit organization has provided over 60 years of musical performances and educational opportunities. Under the musical direction of Paul Haas, SoNA presents classical and pops performances for symphonic music lovers in Northwest Arkansas. SoNA is a resident company of Walton Arts Center. Mission: “SoNA brings great music to life in Northwest Arkansas!” For more information about SoNA, visit sonamusic.org.

###