



**Santa Fe
CHAMBER
MUSIC
FESTIVAL**

The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus and The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival Collaborate To Support Arts Education in Santa Fe

July 17, 2025, Santa Fe, NM– The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus (SFS) and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival (SFCMF) announced a unique collaboration to support arts education in the Santa Fe community. “This collaboration reflects the strength of Santa Fe’s arts community and our collective dedication to nurturing the next generation of musicians.” says Jim Griffith, the Executive Director of Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. After Performance Santa Fe closed its doors in January 2025 after 88 years, the students and instructors that were a part of its Arts for Life program were left with an uncertain future. At this time, the leaders of The Symphony and the Chamber Music Festival stepped in to provide the instructors with stability and a place to continue to cultivate their relationships with their students. It was important that the organizations worked quickly to ensure there was as little interruption to lessons as possible. Callie Kent, Director of Education & Community at The Santa Fe Symphony says, “Transitions like this can be disruptive for students and instructors, so our goal was to make the handoff as seamless and supportive as possible.”



Graduating seniors with their Dream Big medals; Photo by Joseph Hohlfeld.



A student in Pasitos Clase de Mariachi; Photo by Greg Steiger

This collaboration brought two stalwart organizations together to make sure the students in the Santa Fe community continue to receive valuable arts education. SFS Executive Director Emma Scherer says, “...[the Symphony is] glad to be working with our colleagues at the Chamber Music Festival to meet the needs of these young musicians and we are excited to welcome the new students and instructors to our award-winning Mentor Program.” The students and instructors are now a part of The Symphony’s **Mentoring & Lessons Project** and the Festival’s **Dream Big Private Lesson Program**. The Symphony’s Youth Program has grown considerably in the last year, with its merger with the Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association in July 2024. The Mentoring & Lessons Project sends educators into the classroom, working with the Santa Fe Public School teachers and district leadership to identify areas of support needed. In the 2024-2025 school year, The Symphony served 10 schools across the district and approximately 150 students. In 2025-2026, The Symphony will serve 15 schools (all middle and high schools) and approximately 400 students. “As a longtime educator and former SFPS teacher, I know firsthand how crucial classroom support can be to a teacher’s success. When we heard of Performance Santa Fe’s closure, we made plans to double the size of our mentoring program next year so that these students and teachers would not lose support. With the addition of their Arts for Life mentors, we can provide comprehensive, equitable support to all middle and high school music classrooms in SFPS,” says Elizabeth Young, The Santa Fe Symphony Youth Program Director and Director of their Mentoring and

Lessons Project. The Festival's Dream Big Private Lesson Program is designed for students whose families cannot afford private lessons and matches them with professional musicians for free weekly private lessons at their school. This program currently serves approximately 50 middle and high school students at Ortiz Middle School, Nina Otero Community School, and Capital High School. In the 2025-2026 school year, the Dream Big Program will be expanding to partner with more schools in Santa Fe, including the Santa Fe Indian School, Milagro Middle School, and Santa Fe High School. "Our Dream Big Private Lesson Program is closely aligned with what Performance Santa Fe was offering in the way of individual lessons. We are delighted to be able to provide continuity for the PSF private lesson students and teachers." according to Ivy Ross, Director of Education and Engagement for the SFCMF.



Dream Big student Kenneth; Photo by Joseph Hohlfeld



The Santa Fe Youth Symphony Orchestra; Photo by Greg Steiger

Those interested in these programs can learn more by visiting the organizations' websites at santafesymphony.org/lessons-project/ or santafechambermusic.org/education-and-engagement/.

Additional Quotes:

"These are young musicians who rely on consistent, high-quality instruction to grow their talents and we are proud to ensure those lessons continue through our Dream Big program at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival...Even more meaningful is the way our two organizations, the Festival and the Symphony, have come together in a shared commitment to support these students."

— Jim Griffith, Executive Director, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival

"We are all committed to providing quality music education to the young people in our community, and each organization provides unique services."

— Ivy Ross, Director of Education and Engagement, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival

"This is just one example of how we are better together: collaborating for the good of our community and making sure great music is available to all."

— Emma Scherer, Executive Director, The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus

"By joining forces with the Chamber Music Festival to maintain this vital programming we're building a stronger foundation for music education in Santa Fe that can grow with our students for years to come."

— Callie Kent, Director of Education & Community, The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus

About The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus

The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus is dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community. Founded in 1984, The Symphony is one of the oldest collaboratively-operated orchestras in the United States. A group of dedicated musicians and music-lovers, led by Founder Greg Heltman, made the bold decision to establish a professional symphony orchestra in Santa Fe, founded with a model of cooperative governance. To this day, the musicians make up 25% of their Board, sit on committees, occupy staff roles, and maintain responsibility for the artistic vision and leadership of the organization. From thrilling classics to spirited pops presentations, The Symphony produces a wide array of concerts that excite and engage audiences of all ages. The SFS performs a regular subscription series at the 800-seat Lensic Performing Arts Center and free choral-orchestral concerts at the Cathedral Basilica and across the region. The Symphony is recognized as a vital, community-focused musical organization. The SFS is the only fully professional, full-sized symphony in Santa Fe, and employs over a hundred New Mexican orchestral and choral musicians each season. In 2024, SFS merged with the Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association (SFYSA), offering high-quality music education for 300+ children in Northern New Mexico. Together, SFS has flourished, growing education offerings for people of all ages and integrating the services and mission of The Symphony more fully with our community. This was not the first merger in its history. In 1986, The Symphony merged with the Chorus of Santa Fe, bringing together two esteemed organizations to even more opportunities for great music in our community. The Symphony's reach includes Santa Fe, Northern New Mexico, and beyond. It offers orchestral and choral concerts of the highest professional quality as well as comprehensive education programs for children and families. It believes a city's symphony should be a vital community resource and connect musicians, audiences, students, and families with each other. For more information, santafesymphony.org.

About the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival

The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival brings together the world's finest musicians to perform chamber music in all its forms, build a broad, knowledgeable audience of all ages, advocate for contemporary music through performances and commissions, provide diverse educational opportunities, and enhance the cultural environment of Santa Fe and New Mexico. The Festival launched its first season in 1973 with 14 musicians performing in six Sunday concerts in Santa Fe and additional concerts in other New Mexico and Arizona communities. Over the past five decades, the Festival has grown exponentially and become one of the world's preeminent music festivals. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Marc Neikrug, the Festival invites nearly 100 distinguished, seasoned musicians and acclaimed up-and-coming talents to perform in approximately 40 concerts over the course of its six-week summer season. Concerts are held in two intimate and historic venues—St. Francis Auditorium in the New Mexico Museum of Art and The Lensic Performing Arts Center. Guided by visionary dedication to both artistic excellence *and* serving the local community, the Festival offers 5 education programs year-round to enrich the lives of over 4500 young people in Santa Fe and northern New Mexico each year. The programs include free private and group music lessons, free concerts in the summer, as well as in-school chamber music concerts and educational support for teachers. Strategically structured for efficacy and reach, their educational programs provide powerful learning experiences over a period of many years, from PreK through high school graduation. The sequential, spiral, and research-based curriculum, coupled with intentional teacher-student interaction, has a transformative impact on students' school attendance, graduation rates, worldviews, career choices, and potential for success in life. For more information about the Festival, visit SantaFeChamberMusic.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT*

*Adam Wallman, Marketing Director | awallman@santafesymphony.org | 505.983.3530

*Brian Bixby, Director of Marketing and Communications | bbixby@sfcfmf.org | 505.983.2075 ext 127