Racine Symphony
ORCHESTRA

Racine Symphony Plans for Future
in Difficult Economic Times

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RACINE – (February 23, 2009) – In order to meet current economic challenges, the Racine Symphony Orchestra has made changes in its spring concert schedule, according to RSO Board President Nancy DeKraay.

In a letter sent Saturday to more than 300 RSO patrons, advertisers and sponsors, DeKraay said, "Like other arts organizations, we are facing economic struggles and find ourselves with two choices: wait and see what happens or take bold steps to protect our future. We have decided on the latter."

Rather than incur debt that would put the symphony's future in serious jeopardy, DeKraay continued, "the board made some very difficult decisions affecting this spring's program schedules. We are holding RSO's traditional concert for the fifth graders, as well as the Youth Artist Competition, both in March. But, we have had to cancel the third grade concerts, the chamber concert with the Choral Arts Society on March 21 and the classical concert on May 9." The Choral Arts Society does intend to hold their concert on March 21. The RSO's flex pass tickets will be honored at the door.

DeKraay explained that when the budget for the current fiscal year was established by the board, "we had every reason to believe that income projections were reasonable and attainable." By the middle of the fiscal year, January 2009, however, expenses were on target but income was not meeting budget expectations in all areas: grants, patron donations, concert revenue, underwriting and sponsorship.

DeKraay discussed the organization's commitment to the future, emphasizing its strong history. The Racine Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1932, is the oldest symphony orchestra in Wisconsin. She said the board is now "leading an extensive strategic planning process designed to address the changed economic climate in which we find ourselves today.

"We will look at programming to accommodate the needs of the community," she continued, "while fulfilling the organization's mission of 'being dedicated to preserving our musical heritage by entertaining, educating and enriching audiences and musicians in our community.'"

DeKraay concluded by saying, "Above all, the board will do all it can to continue the rich tradition of the 77-year history of the Racine Symphony Orchestra, while operating within the critical constraints of today's economic challenges."

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