

ACSO Con Flash Talks

Facilitated by Tara Aesquivel

August 7, 2026 at 10:30am

Tara Aesquivel
— ARTS CONSULTING —

Flash Talks Format

- 10 minutes, 5 slides each
- 5 speakers
- 1 Q&A session at the end
- By ACSO members, for ACSO members
- A range of projects and challenges
- Takeaways for everyone

A photograph of a man and a woman in a concert hall, both smiling and clapping. The woman is in the foreground, and the man is slightly behind her. They are both looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is blurred, showing the interior of a large hall with warm lighting.

UNLIMITED CONCERTS
UNMATCHED FLEXIBILITY

SYMPHONY PASS

Pacific Symphony's

Symphony Pass



The Problem

As with many symphony orchestras, Pacific Symphony faces an ongoing battle to slow and reverse a decline in subscription sales.

The problem we noticed:

- Acquisition Slowdown: Subscription rates are declining year over year
- Purchase Behavior: Younger audience members
 - Purchase later
 - Commit less
 - Prefer flexibility



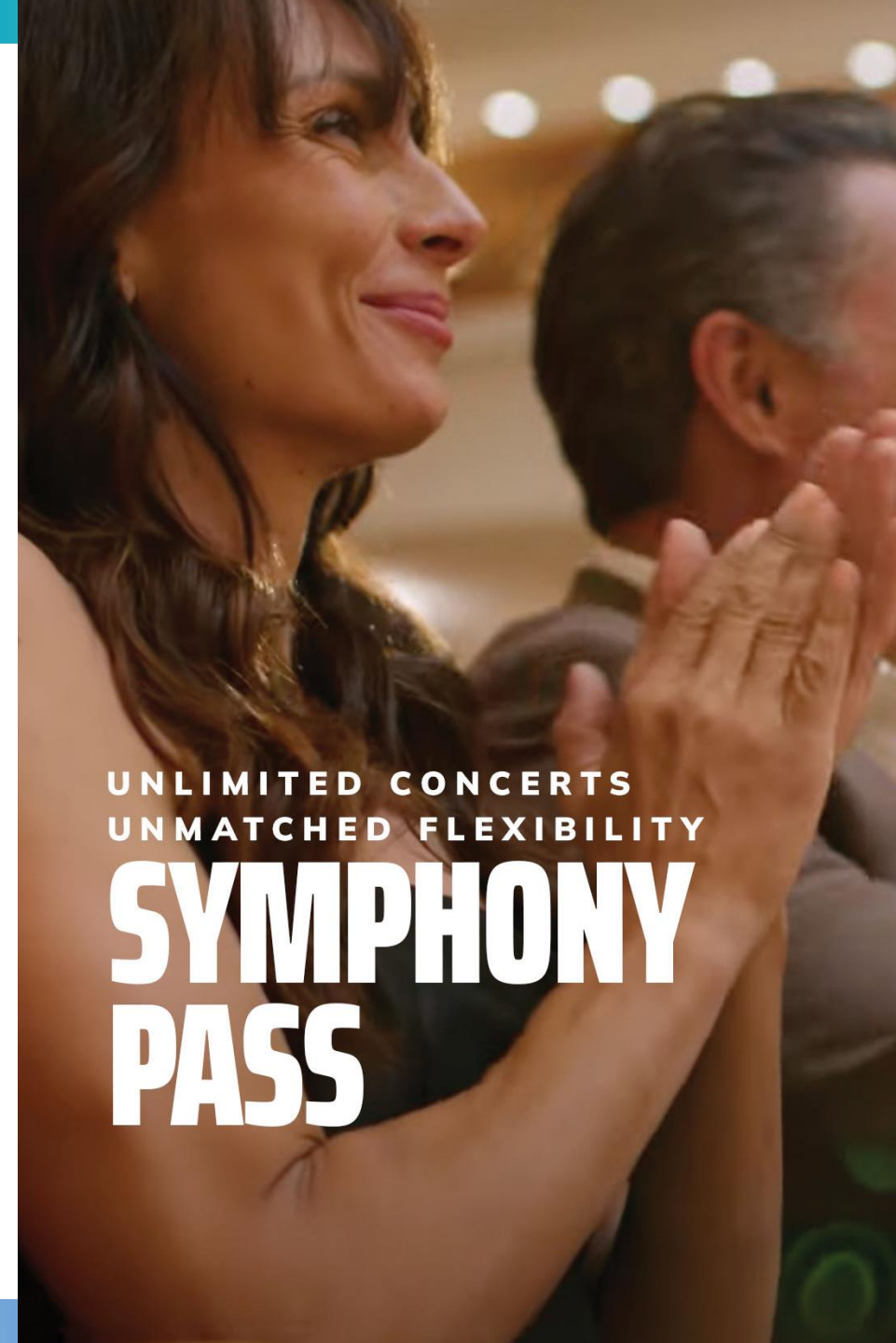
Symphony Pass

Symphony Pass is the bridge between single tickets and subscriptions.

- Monthly Membership Fee (\$29.99-\$80.00)
- \$10-\$15 tickets (Best available based on membership level)
- Access to purchase single tickets at Member price up to 90 days in advance
- Minimum 3-month commitment
- Membership does not expire or cycle with each season
- Concierge for personalized customer relationships and service

UNLIMITED CONCERTS
UNMATCHED FLEXIBILITY

**SYMPHONY
PASS**



ENJOY ULTIMATE FLEXIBILITY WITH SYMPHONY PASS

	STANDARD \$29.99/month \$10 Ticket per concert	PREMIUM \$49.99/month \$15 Ticket per concert	FAMILY \$69.99/month \$10 Ticket per concert (up to 5 tickets per concert)
Access to all concerts (excludes Specials, Cafe Ludwig & Nutcracker for Kids)	✓	✓	✓
VIP Experiences	✓	✓	✓
Exclusive Box Circle Club Experience (\$100 value)		✓	
Best Available Seats (see website for more information)	Price Levels 2 through 5	All Levels plus select Box Circle	Price Levels 2 through 5
Free Guest Passes (one-time use each pass, per season)	2 per membership	4 per membership	2 per membership
Free Parking Pass(es) (one-time use each pass, per season)	1 per membership	2 per membership	1 per membership
20% off Additional Concert Tickets for Friends & Family	✓	✓	✓
Symphony Rewards Card	✓	✓	✓
Welcome Packet	✓	✓	✓
Monthly Newsletter	✓	✓	✓

Tradeoffs and Constraints

Tradeoffs

- Flexibility vs. Commitment
- Discount depth vs. Revenue Protection
- Concierge service vs. Scalability

Constraints

- Budget limitations
- Staff Capacity
- Inventory constraints

Risks

- Cannibalization of subscriptions
- Discounting perception
- Sustainability of the model

Memberships to Goal



Potential Participants

Potential Participants
369

Membership Fees to Date

All-Time Membership Fees
\$23,303

Membership Fees to Date

Monthly Membership Fees
\$8,834

Member Tickets

Total Ticket Paid Amount
\$16,444

Total Ticket Count 981

Active/Inactive

Active
151

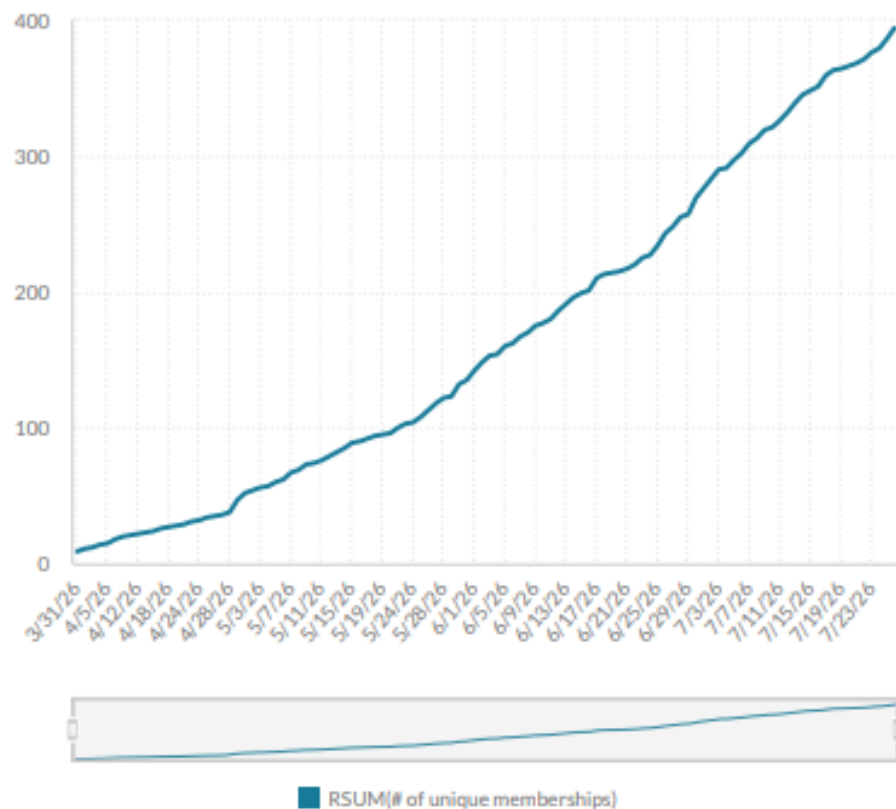
Inactive 2

Member Donations

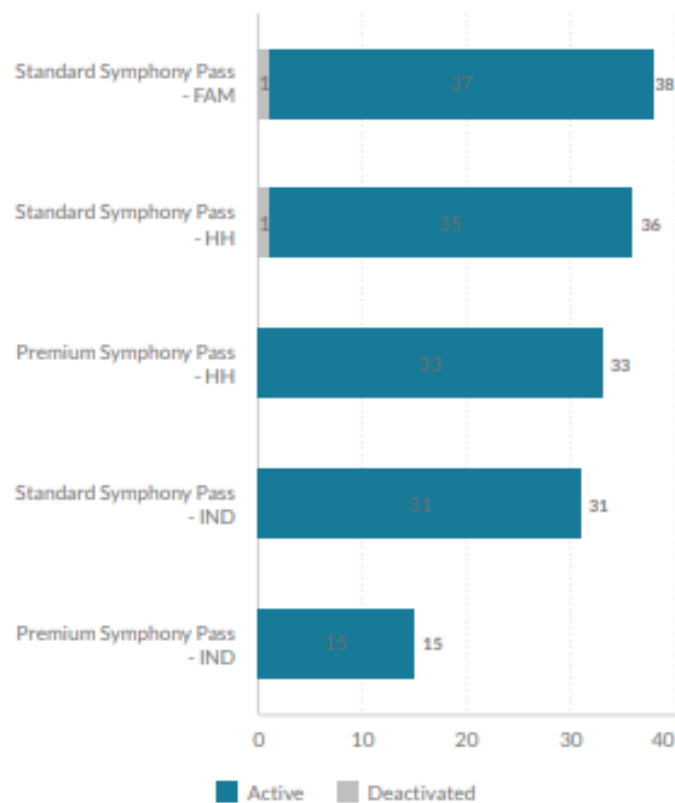
Membership Contributions
\$9,154

Donating Member Households 11

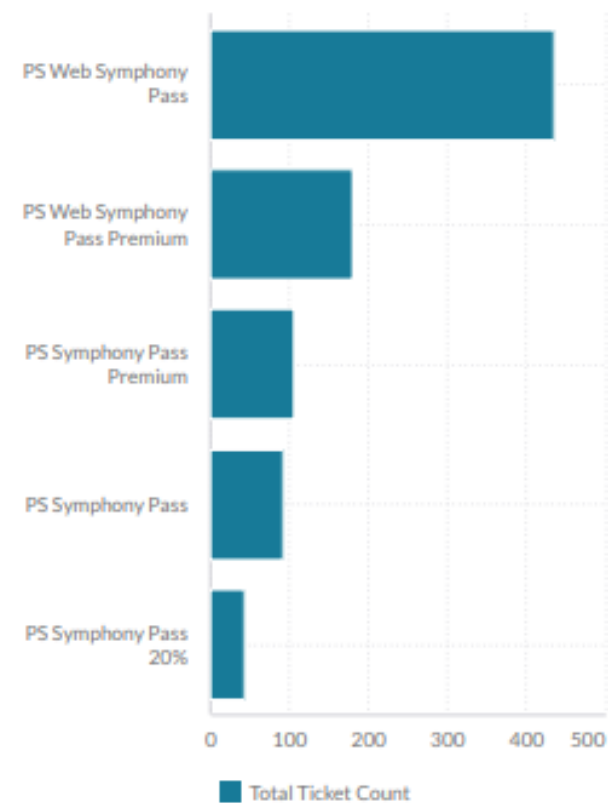
Daily Membership Sales (Cumulative)



Status by Membership Level



Member Ticket Price Types



Takeaways

- A “bridge product” can:
 - Reduce friction
 - But may not fully replace subscriptions
- Audience development now requires:
 - Behavioral design (not just traditional marketing tactics)
- Identify your “missing middle” like the audience that occasionally attends but doesn’t subscribe
- Testing a low commitment membership > redesigning subscriptions altogether
- Pair pricing with relationship building
- Measure success by engagement over time, not just conversions.



THANK YOU

Additional questions?

Liz Butler

lbutler@pacificsymphony.org





Women's Philharmonic Advocacy

Since 2008: demanding equity for women composers and celebrating the legacy of The Women's Philharmonic (1980-2004)

Dr. Liane Curtis

Liane.Curtis@wophil.org

www.wophil.org

www.amybeach.org

Our Score Publications: <https://shop.wophil.org/>



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THE LATEST FROM OUR BLOG *FEMINIST IN THE CONCERT HALL*



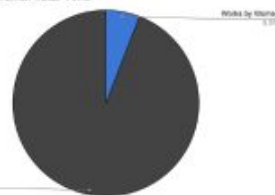
Review: Highly Effective Recording of Louise Bertin's 1836



WPA News Digest – July 13, 2026

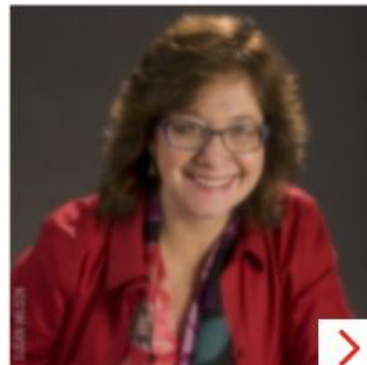
Jul 13, 2026

2026 BBC Proms: Total Time



2026 BBC Proms: By the Numbers

Jul 13, 2026



WPA News Digest – July 6, 2026

Jul 6, 2026

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Symphony in E minor op. 32 "Gaelic" (1896)



PROBLEM: Lack of access to quality, edited materials. Orchestral parts in use were copies of 1896 materials.



Marion Bauer

(1882-1955)

Symphony, op. 45 (1950)

- PROBLEM: Despite her successful career as a composer, critic, author and educator, her Symphony had never been performed.
- Our edition raised awareness about the piece, made it available, and we reached out to conductors and artistic planners about it.



Premiere of
Marion Bauer
Symphony, op. 45
Nov 15, 2022



Seattle Collaborative Orchestra,
dir. Anna Edwards

Premiere of
Marion Bauer,
Symphony op. 45,
Oct 15, 2022



Syracuse Orchestra,
dir. Heather Buchman



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SF SYMPHONY

Preparing Musicians to Engage, Entertain, and Educate the Community

Santiago Valenzuela,
Education Programs Manager

Community performances require a different skill set than concert-hall performances, yet musicians are often expected to learn those skills on the fly.

The Challenge: Great Musicians Are Not Automatically Great Presenters

Performance Skills

- Technique
- Rehearsal
- Interpretation



Community Presentation Skills

- Speaking
- Audience interaction
- Educational Design

Administrative Support

- Structure
- Coaching
- Logistics



A Practical Framework:

Audience => Music => Script



There are many ways I can make sounds on the harp:

- I can pluck one string [demo]
- I can pluck many strings [demo]
- or I can play a glissando! [demo]

Can you say glissando? (Glissando!)

Who is the audience?

Write out the script + participation

Choose music intentionally



What Changes When We Support the Process?

Before

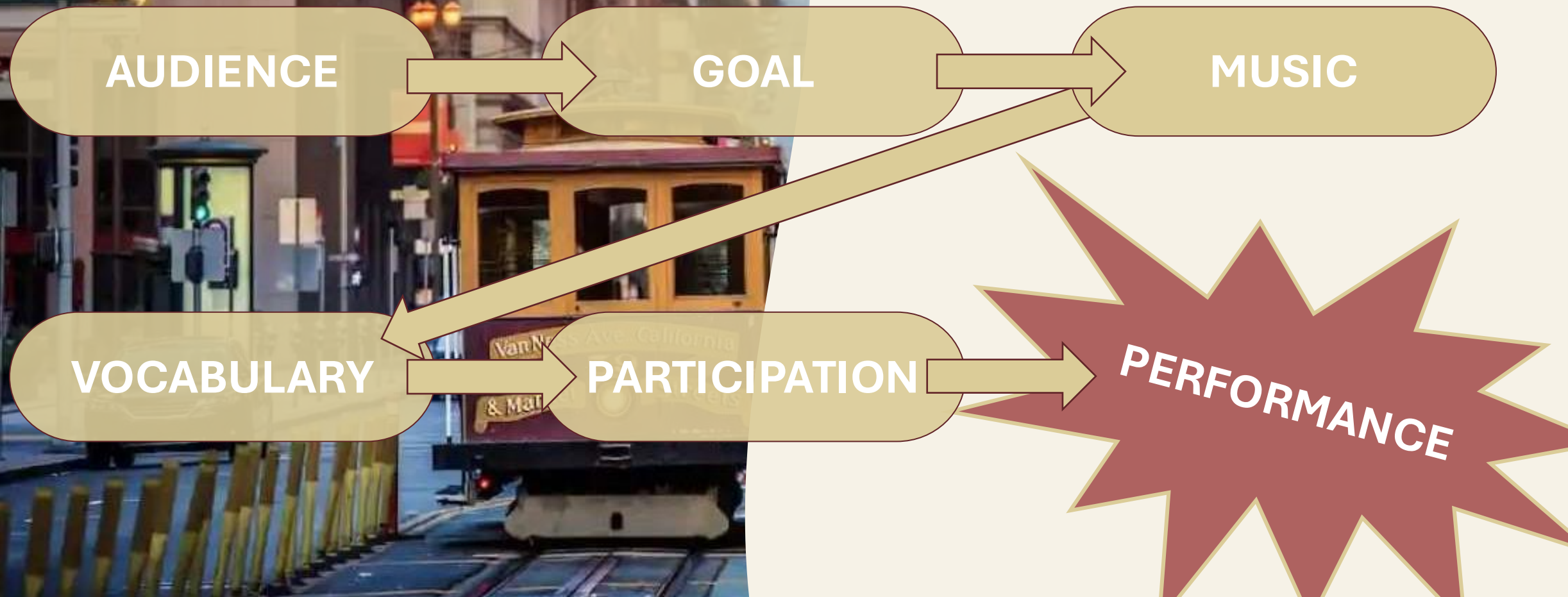
- Different quality every program
- Unclear educational goals
- Musicians create everything themselves



After

- Consistent audience experience
- Easier adaptation for multiple audiences
- Stronger organizational alignment

ROAD MAP



Sustainable Growth

How SoCalPhil Adapted Its Young Artists Competition

- All-volunteer community orchestra in Orange County
- Approx. \$50K annual budget
- Young Artists Solo Competition:
3 categories, 3 age groups, 9 winners

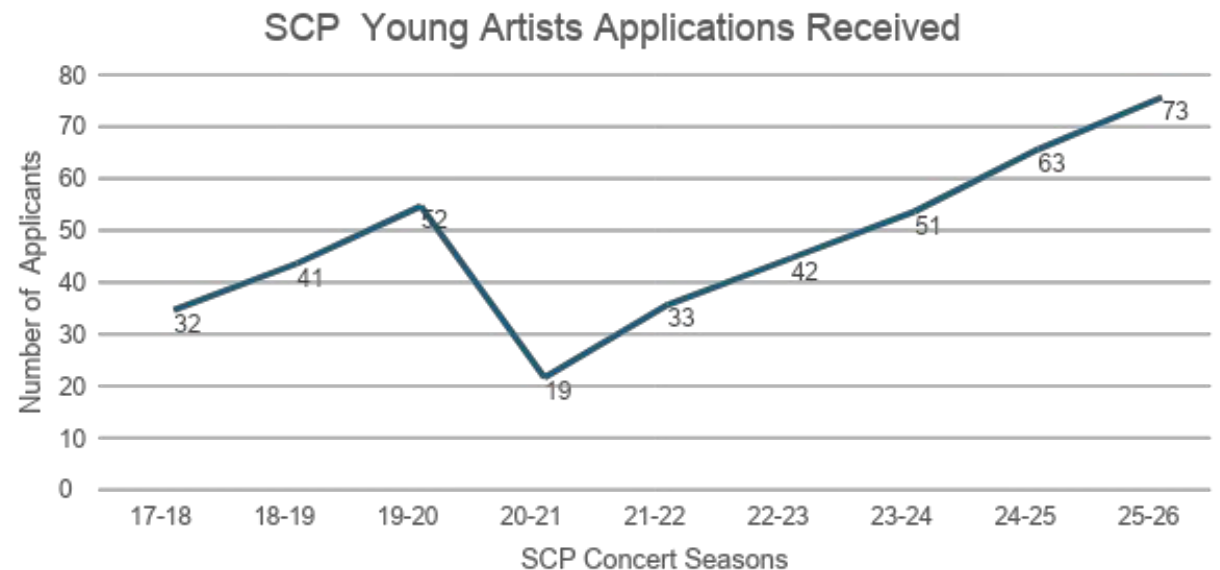


**SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA
PHILHARMONIC**

Jessie Keller
**Chair, Young Artist Competition Planning
Committee**

The Problem - Success outpaced Resources

- Applications kept rising, stretching volunteer capacity
- Two judges, two venues, and two audition days had become unsustainable
- We chose **not to cap applicants**, so we needed a new process



What We Changed

Video first round

Remote judges reviewed submitted videos



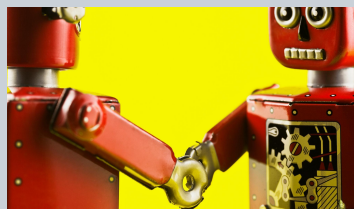
27 finalists in-person

Final auditions moved to one day, one venue



JotForm + repertoire changes

Streamlined administration, expanded options



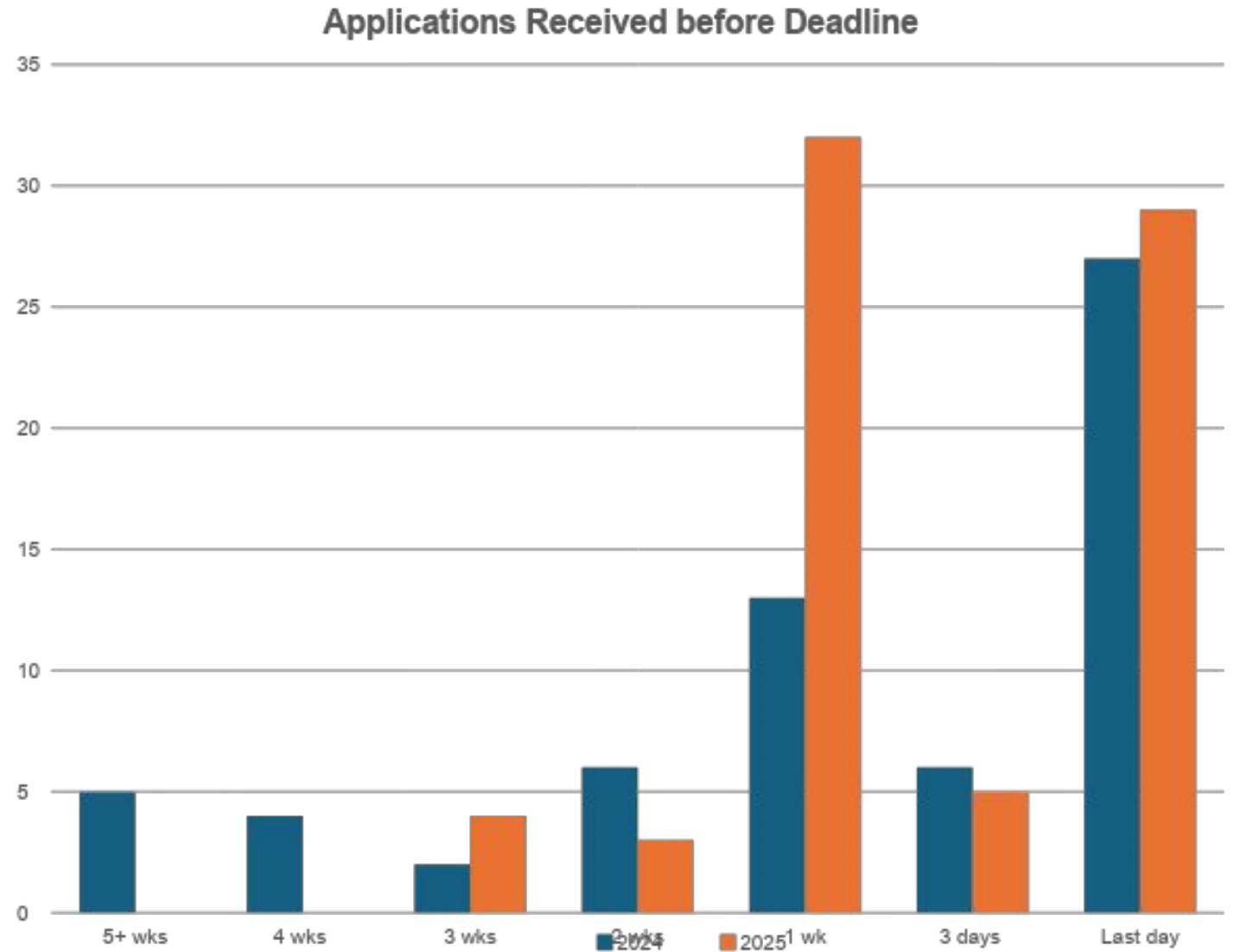
Early Bird fee

Encouraged earlier application submission



Outcomes

- One venue and one day made finals more manageable
- Broader judge pool improved flexibility, reduced judge overload, and reduced bias risk
- “Early Bird” pricing shifted some application submission earlier
- More instrument types and wider repertoire are now represented



The Takeaway for Other Orchestras

Growth is a good problem but requires process decisions

Technology can expand capacity without adding staff

Remote expertise can strengthen adjudication

A dedicated committee was essential

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PHILHARMONIC



Scan this QR code to go
to the presentation script
info@socalphil.org

Thank you!

Jessie Keller
VP, Artistic & Educational Programs
Chair, Young Artists Competition Planning
Committee

What a Thumb Drive Taught me about Donor Stewardship



Laura M. Goodall
Assistant Director of Development
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra



I inherited a legacy commissioning program ready for new momentum as its 25th anniversary approached.

- Sound Investment is a crowdfunded commissioning program. Each season, "Investors" get a front row seat to composer's composition process from first notes to world premiere.
- Founded in 2001 by our Board Co-Chair, 2026 marked its 25th anniversary.
- Central to our mission of innovation but under the radar with subscribers.
- Support had plateaued at ~\$25,000 annually for nearly a decade.

What I tried



Grow membership

Student membership program

Bring-a-friend program

Monthly giving

Membership pins

Emeritus board member campaign

Include in subscription brochure



Improve visibility

Publicly available archive

Program “stat” sheet

Social media campaign



Update program

Inviting back past commissioned
composers to salons

Bringing past works to the stage

What worked & what didn't

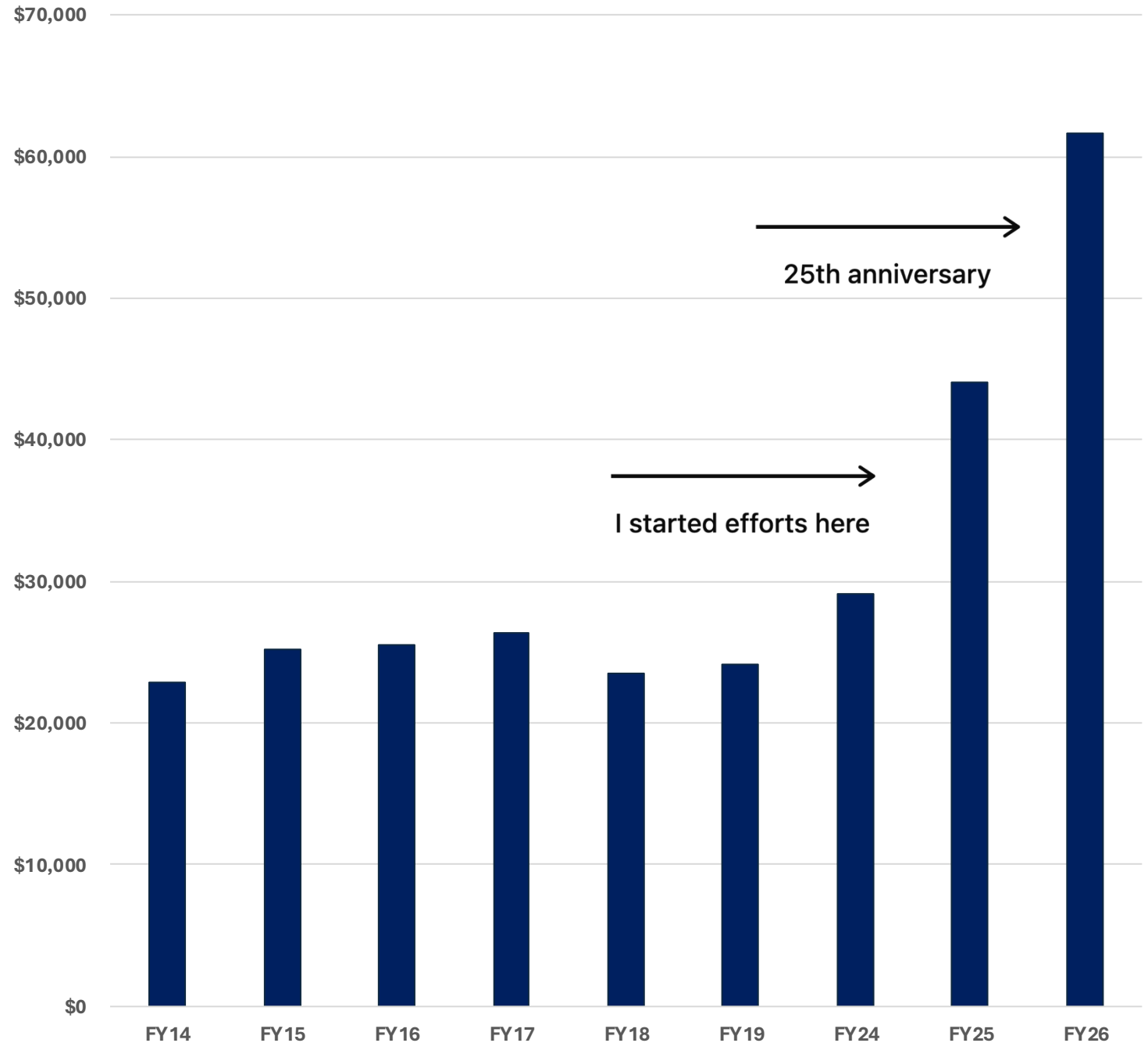
For growing membership, word of mouth trumped the algorithm and reaching out to institutional partners.

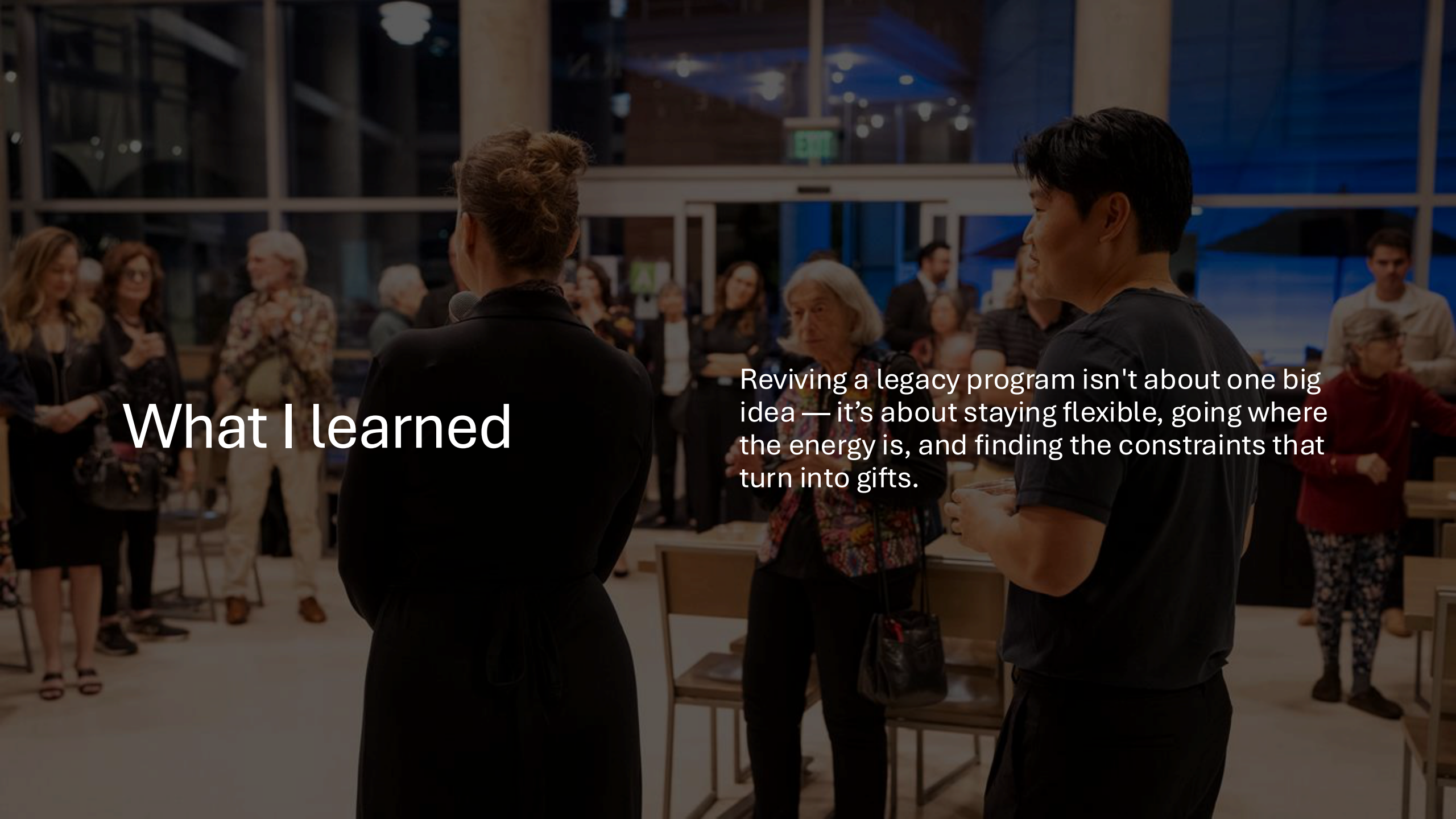
A canceled premiere opened the door to programming a past commission & the opportunity to give curtain speech.

Royalty costs made an online archive cost-prohibitive but pivoted to creating thumb drive containing the entire archive as a donor gift.



A revitalized
Sound Investment
program for its 25th
anniversary season!



A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a dark blazer, stands with her back to the camera, holding a microphone and addressing a group of people. The audience, consisting of men and women of various ages, is standing and listening in a room with large windows. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the windows and interior lights. The text "What I learned" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

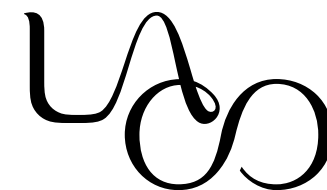
What I learned

Reviving a legacy program isn't about one big idea — it's about staying flexible, going where the energy is, and finding the constraints that turn into gifts.



Thank you!

Laura M. Goodall
Assistant Director of Development
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
lauragoodall@laco.org



Q&A

- **Liz Butler**, Pacific Symphony
- **Liane Curtis**, Women's Philharmonic Advocacy
- **Santiago Valenzuela**, San Francisco Symphony
- **Jessie Keller**, SoCal Phil
- **Laura Goodall**, LA Chamber Orchestra