



WICHITA FALLS
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FOUAD FAKHOURI, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024-25 SEASON **IMPACT REPORT**





**WICHITA FALLS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**
FOUAD FAKHOURI, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The WFSO's mission is to promote symphonic music in order to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences in the Texoma community.

940-723-6202 • www.wfso.org • 1300 Lamar St. Wichita Falls, TX, 76301

This report reflects the impact of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra during the 2024–25 fiscal year and concert season (June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025).

Inside, you’ll find highlights from the 2024-25 season’s performances, education and outreach efforts, audience engagement, and financial stewardship. Together, these stories and data points illustrate how the WFSO fulfills its mission to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences across the Texoma region.

Where appropriate, the report includes both qualitative insights and quantitative measures to provide a clear, transparent picture of the orchestra’s work and its broader impact. All figures reflect the most accurate information available at the time of publication and are presented using conservative assumptions.

CONTENTS

2..... Letters from Leadership	9..... 2024-25 Season in Review
2..... Alicia Deges, Executive Director	10..... Our Audience
3..... Elizabeth Yeager, Board President	11..... WFSO’s Economic Impact
4..... Fouad Fakhouri, Music Director	12..... Donor Impact
5..... Our Mission in Action	13..... Your Gifts In Action
6..... Enriching Lives	14..... Financial Overview: FY24-25
7..... Educating Minds	15..... Growing Our Reach
8..... Entertaining Audiences	16..... Conclusion

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

The 2024–25 season was a year of both transition and momentum for the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra. While performing away from our longtime home at Memorial Auditorium presented challenges, it also reaffirmed something essential: we are not defined by our venue, but rather our people, the community we serve, and most importantly the music we create together.

After completing our first season with performances outside of our traditional venue, WFSO leadership has taken time to thoughtfully reflect by bringing together data, stories, and outcomes that show how the orchestra navigated change while continuing to serve our community.

Within this report, you will find highlights from the 2024-25 season's performances, education and outreach efforts, audience reach, and key organizational milestones. These moments illustrate how your support translates into artistic excellence, educational access, and long-term sustainability for the orchestra. This report offers a clear picture of the organization's impact during a pivotal chapter in our history.

During this historical period of transition, which brought both opportunities and challenges, the WFSO continued to bring live symphonic music to audiences across the Texoma region—enriching lives through performance, educating students and lifelong learners, and creating meaningful moments of connection through music.

With continued focus on thoughtful stewardship and mission-driven decision-making and with the continued support of our community, the orchestra sustained its core programs and continued to invest in its people and future.

On behalf of our musicians, staff, board, and volunteers, thank you for your continued belief in the power of music and your role in sustaining this vital cultural institution.

We look forward to wrapping up the second season of being “on the go” with two incredible spring concerts, and welcoming you back to Memorial Auditorium in the upcoming 2026–27 season that starts this fall.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia Deges". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style.

Alicia Deges
Executive Director

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear WFSO Family,

The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra exists because of a shared belief: that music matters, and that a strong cultural institution strengthens the entire community. The WFSO's continued success is made possible by the dedication and generosity of individuals and partners who believe in the transformative power of live symphonic music.

The 2024-25 season underscored the vital role philanthropy plays in advancing the orchestra's mission. Despite challenges associated with the temporary closure of Memorial Auditorium, the WFSO remained resilient. Individual giving and local support provided a critical foundation, enabling the orchestra to continue presenting high-quality performances across Wichita Falls while sustaining its education and community engagement initiatives.

Throughout the season, our audience experienced inspiring artistic moments in a variety of venues. A highlight for me was pianist Alessio Bax's electrifying performance of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* at the Fain Fine Arts Theater at MSU Texas—an example of the artistic excellence and intimate connection the WFSO strives to deliver.

Looking ahead, the Board of Directors remains committed to strengthening the organization's financial sustainability while upholding its mission to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences. Continued growth in individual giving, strategic partnerships, and community investment will allow the WFSO to build on its momentum and expand its impact in the years to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support and for your role in ensuring that live symphonic music remains a vibrant and enduring part of life in Wichita Falls.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Yeager". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E".

Elizabeth Yeager
Board President

A LETTER FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of the WFSO,

The 2024–25 season brought both challenge and creative opportunity for the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra. Performing outside of Memorial Auditorium required us to think more imaginatively about how music is experienced, and to approach each program with heightened awareness of space, acoustics, and audience connection.

Each concert during the season was intentionally designed to reflect the idiosyncrasies of its venue, from repertoire choices to ensemble balance and pacing. Our Going Places season allowed us to highlight the versatility of our musicians, explore works that resonated uniquely in each setting, and create programs that felt personal and immediate.

One especially memorable example was our February 1, 2025 Akin concert, *Global Voyages*. From Claude Bolling's *Suite for Chamber Orchestra and Jazz Piano Trio* through Michael Torke's *Tahiti* and Takashi Yoshimatsu's *Saxophone Concerto, Cyber Bird, Op. 59*, the intimacy of the venue offered audiences a rare and compelling opportunity to experience the WFSO in a completely new way. The connection between musicians, music, and listeners was immediate, and the response from our audience was deeply affirming.

At the heart of every artistic decision was a desire to honor both the music and the listener. Whether welcoming longtime patrons or first-time attendees, our goal remained the same: to create performances that were thoughtful, engaging, and true to the WFSO's artistic identity.

I am deeply grateful to our musicians, staff, and supporters for their flexibility, trust, and enthusiasm throughout the 2024–25 season. Thank you for joining us during a year of transition and for meeting us in new venues to share music beyond the walls of Memorial Auditorium. Your commitment made the season both meaningful and rewarding.

Now, midway through the current 2025–26 season, I am thankful for the continued engagement of our audiences and I look ahead with great anticipation to our return to Memorial Auditorium in our 2026–27 season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fouad Fakhouri". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Fouad Fakhouri
Music Director



ENRICH. EDUCATE. ENTERTAIN.

OUR MISSION IN ACTION

To promote symphonic music in order to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences in the Texoma community.

During the 2024–25 season, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra lived this mission far beyond the concert hall. Through community partnerships, in-school education, and innovative programming across multiple venues, the WFSO connected people to live music in ways that felt accessible, relevant, and deeply human. Whether welcoming first-time listeners, nurturing young musicians, or offering moments of shared musical joy, each interaction reflected a belief that symphonic music belongs to everyone, and that its impact reaches far beyond the stage.



ENRICHING LIVES.

The WFSO expanded how and where audiences experience live music during the 2024–25 season, bringing performances into familiar community spaces and continuing to invite others to share our celebration of arts and culture.

Three free community concerts placed symphonic music at the heart of Wichita Falls' vibrant monthly downtown Artwalk event, inviting new listeners to engage with performances in an informal, welcoming setting and lowering traditional barriers to experience live music.

A defining highlight of the season was the inaugural Estrellas y Sinfónicas event, a collaborative concert with Con Potencia and Zavala International Dance created to honor arts and culture during Hispanic Heritage Month. Featuring the WFSO Jazz Ensemble and student musicians from UNT, the program blended music inspired by Los Ángeles Azules, tributes to Selena, Mariachi traditions, and Latin jazz with traditional choreography—offering a powerful fusion of sound and movement that celebrated the vibrant arts community here in Wichita Falls and strengthened local cultural partnerships.

Alongside these performances, the WFSO continued its investment in long-term audience development through The Continuo Circle, its young professionals group, engaging emerging community leaders and expanding pathways for future arts support.

In recognition of the impact of these events and initiatives, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra was named the 2024 Distinguished Cultural Organization at the Arts & Culture Empowerment (ACE) Awards, affirming its role as a vital cultural leader in the Texoma region.





EDUCATING MINDS.

Education remained central to the WFSO's mission, supporting students, teachers, and lifelong learners across the region.

Through its Artist-in-Residence program, the WFSO dedicated over 600 hours inside WFISD classrooms, embedding professional musicians directly into school orchestra programs. Working alongside directors, WFSO artists work helped strengthen instruction and elevate student musicianship, investing in both educators and young performers.

Students also gained meaningful opportunities beyond the classroom. Youth Symphony Orchestra members performed in the lobby before three WFSO concerts, building real-world performance experience, while WFISD high school orchestra students participated in a hands-on masterclass with guest saxophonist Maria Torres-Melgares, receiving direct mentorship from a professional artist.

At the elementary level, the WFSO welcomed 1,500 students from across the Texoma region to the Young People's Concert, *The Conductor's Spellbook*—many experiencing a full professional orchestra for the first time. Twenty-one schools attended this special concert, 90% of which designated as Title I campuses (>40% of students are from low-income households), ensuring access to live symphonic music regardless of circumstance.

Educational engagement also extended to adult audiences. Listeners deepened their understanding through the WFSO's *Behind the Music* podcast, hosted by Music Director Fouad Fakhouri, featuring guest artists and program insights as well as KCCU's pre-concert radio shows. In addition, a free Lunch & Learn event prior to the March 2025 concert offered an in-depth look at the repertoire, composers, and artistic vision behind the performance ahead.

Together, these efforts reflect an approach to education that not only supports teachers and inspires students, but also invites lifelong learning through music.





ENTERTAINING AUDIENCES.

The temporary closure of Memorial Auditorium provided new opportunities for the WFSO to perform outside our home venue. The challenge of performing in new venues allowed the WFSO to demonstrate resilience, creativity, and an unwavering focus on audience experience.

Across four *different* venues, the WFSO curated five concert programs that balanced artistic excellence with approachability—highlighting the talents of local musicians while welcoming guest artists audiences enjoy. Each performance was shaped not only by music, but by place, creating meaningful experiences wherever the orchestra traveled.

Together, these concerts reaffirmed the power of live symphonic music to entertain, inspire, and unite our community even amid change.

Read a full recap of the 2024–25 season, “Going Places,” on the next page.





FIESTA SINFÓNICA | OCTOBER 19, 2024

The season opened at First Baptist Church with *Fiesta Sinfónica*: a high-energy program inspired by Latin rhythms and bold orchestral color. Featuring works by Ortiz, Piazzolla, Ginastera, and Ravel, the concert also highlighted WFSO Principal Harpist Jaymee Haefner, showcasing the exceptional talent within the orchestra.

"A+ performance, as always, from all the performers. Always like when you all think outside of the box and bring in variety and new composers to shake things up."



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS | DECEMBER 14, 2024

Performed in the beautiful sanctuary of First United Methodist Church, along with the Chancel Choir, *Home for the Holidays* featured cherished seasonal music and traditional carols that reflected the warmth and joy of the season.

"Fouad selects music that is appropriate for these smaller venues and the audience can see and hear parts of the music that make the whole experience amazing. I sincerely thank each of you who have worked so hard to continue our amazing heritage through difficult times."



GLOBAL VOYAGES | FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Presented in MSU's Akin Auditorium, *Global Voyages* blended vibrant global influences with a distinctive jazz sensibility, featuring colorful orchestral textures, rhythmic energy, and moments of improvisatory spirit. Guest Artist Maria Torres-Melgares brought the saxophone to the forefront, adding warmth and expressive nuance to a program shaped by musical traditions from around the world.



ROMANTIC JOURNEY | MARCH 8, 2025

An enchanting evening at MSU's Fain Fine Arts Center with guest pianist Alessio Bax, *Romantic Journey* showcased Beethoven's stirring *Coriolan Overture*, Tchaikovsky's passionate *Piano Concerto No. 1*, and Sibelius's evocative *Symphony No. 3*. This program brought listeners into the heart of Romantic expression with powerful, expressive orchestral writing.

"We were awestruck that rural Texas WF could get such a world-class violinist!!! Clearly the audience was overwhelmed by her talent and grace. There are simply no words for how much we enjoyed this one."



TIMELESS PASSAGE | APRIL 26, 2025

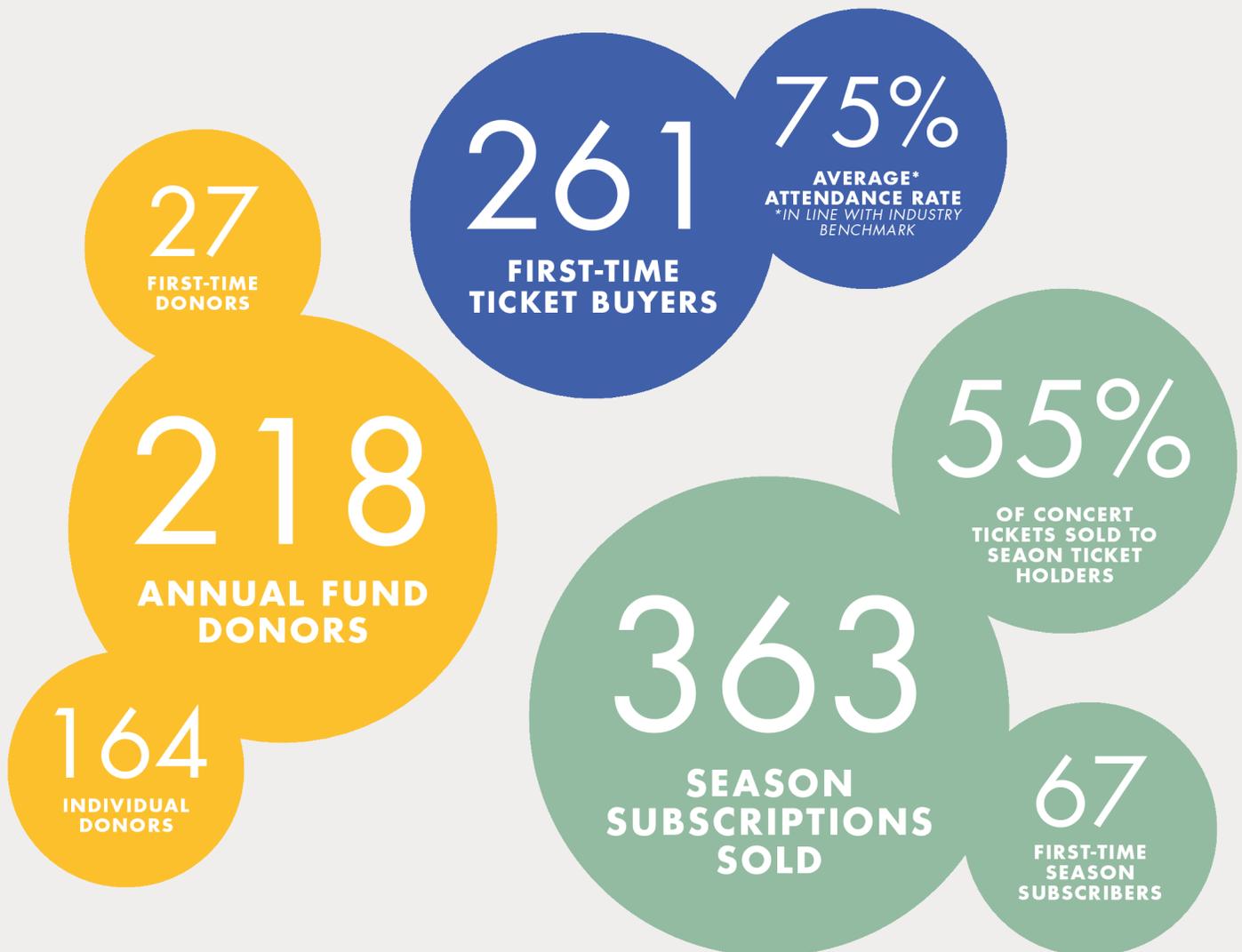
Timeless Passage closed the season at First Baptist Church with a dynamic program spanning generations of orchestral music, featuring contemporary composer Gala Flagello's vibrant *Bravado*, Mendelssohn's beloved *Violin Concerto in E minor*, and Rachmaninoff's sweeping *Symphonic Dances*. Guest Artist Elizabeth Pitcairn performed Mendelssohn's concerto on the legendary Red Violin, bringing both visual drama and expressive brilliance to the season finale.

OUR AUDIENCE IN 2024-2025

Throughout the 2024–25 season, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra balanced strong support from its loyal audience with continued growth among new concertgoers. While single-ticket sales declined amid a year of venue transition, strong season subscription engagement, steady attendance rates, and increased first-time ticket buyers demonstrate sustained community commitment to live symphonic music.

Audiences included longtime subscribers alongside first-time attendees discovering the orchestra for the first time. This balance of continuity and new engagement positions the WFSO for sustainable audience growth as the organization looks ahead.

These audiences play an active role in sustaining Wichita Falls' economic and cultural vitality.



Together, these figures reflect both strong audience loyalty and continued growth in new ticket buyers and donors.

WFSO'S 2024-2025 ECONOMIC IMPACT IN WICHITA FALLS

Based on actual FY24 expenditures of \$867,000, ticketed attendance of approximately 2,200 patrons, and free concert attendance of more than 2,000 individuals (totaling approximately 4,200 attendees), the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra generated meaningful economic impact during the 2024–25 season. In the Texoma region of just over 100,000 residents, WFSO's concerts and programs support local jobs, small businesses, and tax revenue which extends the orchestra's impact well beyond the stage.

In FY2024–25, WFSO generated an estimated \$1.5 million in total economic activity across the Texoma region.



\$1.5M

WFSO'S ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT IN FY24-25

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Direct Organizational Spending = \$867,000

Investment in professional musicians, artistic leadership, administrative staff, venues, production, education initiatives, and outreach programs—supporting both local and visiting artists and a wide range of regional service providers.

Audience-Driven Local Spending ≈ \$126,000

Estimated event-related spending by concertgoers on dining, beverages, parking, childcare, and retail purchases in Wichita Falls and surrounding communities.

Jobs Supported ≈ 14 full-time equivalent jobs

The WFSO's staffing including full-time and part-time staff, contracted musicians and professionals, and additional employment supported through vendor partnerships and indirect economic activity.

Local & State Tax Revenue ≈ \$45,000

Generated through WFSO operations and audience spending at area restaurants, shops, hotels, and service businesses.

These results highlight the importance of investing in local arts organizations like the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra not only for their cultural contributions, but for their role as steady, long-term contributors to the economic health and vitality of the Texoma region.

Economic impact estimates are based on WFSO's FY 2024–2025 operating expenses, attendance of approximately 4,200 people across all concerts and programs, a moderate event-related spending average of \$30 per person (below national AEP6 averages), and standard economic multipliers derived from Americans for the Arts' Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study for small metro regions.



DONOR IMPACT

Through individual giving, donors raised \$162,031 toward the 2024 Annual Fund,* providing essential support for the WFSO to deliver its mission with consistency, creativity, and resilience during the 2024–25 season.

Your investment ensured that performances, education initiatives, and community programs remained accessible — even as the orchestra navigated a year of transition and performed across multiple venues. Contributions directly supported professional musicians, guest artists, and the behind-the-scenes work required to bring high-quality symphonic music to the Texoma region.

Just as importantly, donor generosity provided the flexibility to respond to challenges, pursue new partnerships, and expand opportunities for audiences and students alike, strengthening the WFSO's role as a trusted cultural institution.

This support sustains more than a single season. It helps ensure that symphonic music continues to enrich, educate, and entertain our community for years to come.

*The 2024 Annual Fund represents gifts received between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024 that fund the operations of the 2024-2025 season.

YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION

Every gift, at every level, helps bring symphonic music to life by supporting the musicians, programs, and experiences that make live music accessible across the Texoma community.

\$100

SENDS FOUR STUDENTS TO EXPERIENCE THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT

\$500

SUPPORTS A WORKSHOP OR MASTERCLASS FOR HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC STUDENTS

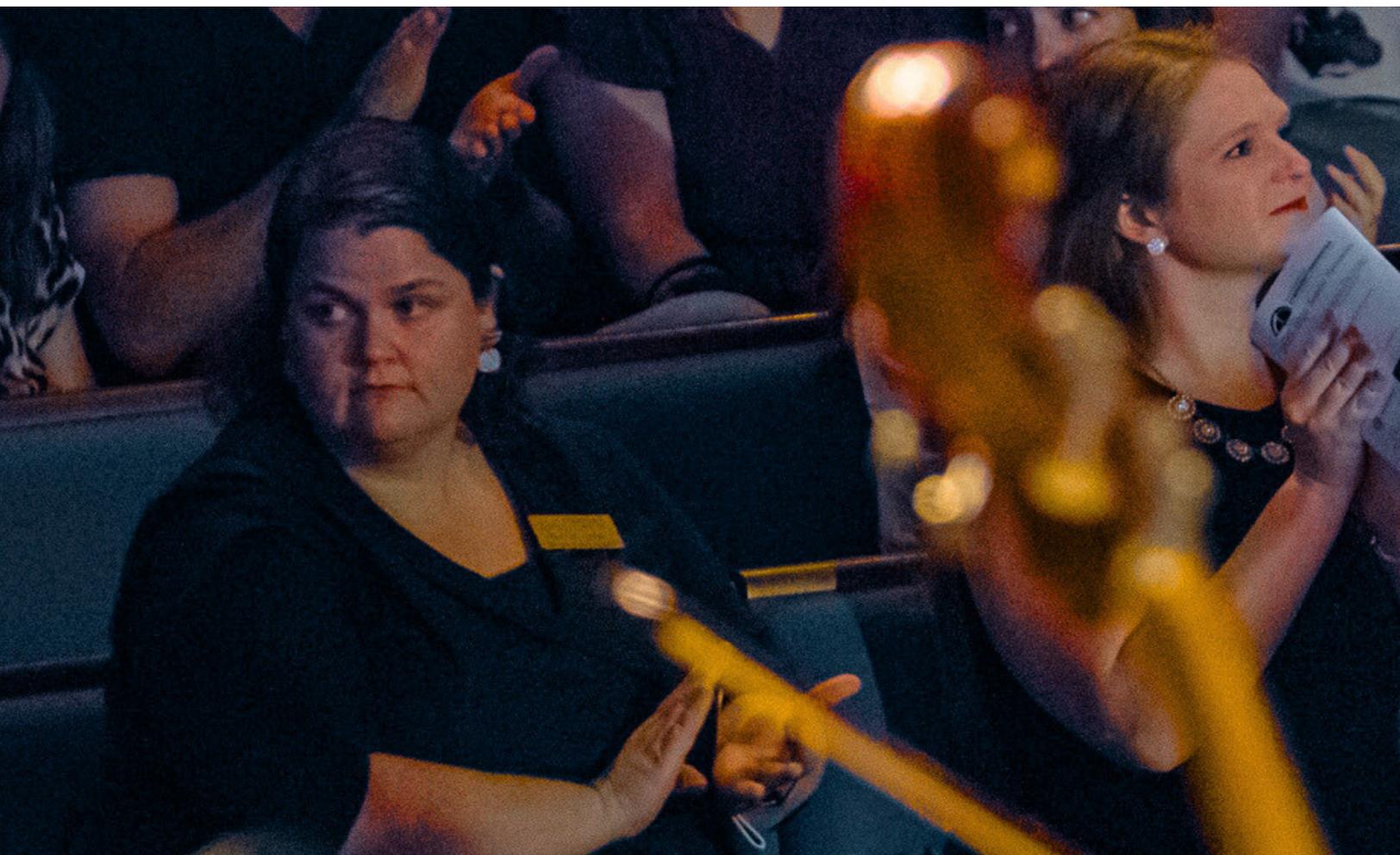
\$1000

COVERS GUEST ARTIST TRAVEL AND LODGING TO WICHITA FALLS

\$5000

UNDERWRITES HALL RENTAL AND PRODUCTION FOR A POPS CONCERT

"I choose to support the symphony because of the role it has played in my own life. I have vivid memories of going to the Utah Symphony with my dad in middle and high school, and those experiences sparked my lifelong interest in music. Here in Wichita Falls, the WFSO makes that same kind of live, symphonic experience accessible to our community, offering music across genres and giving people the chance to grow in their knowledge and appreciation. I also value the symphony's commitment to education—supporting young musicians and helping them develop both skill and passion for symphonic music. For me, supporting the WFSO means helping preserve and share a rich musical tradition with the community I call home."



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

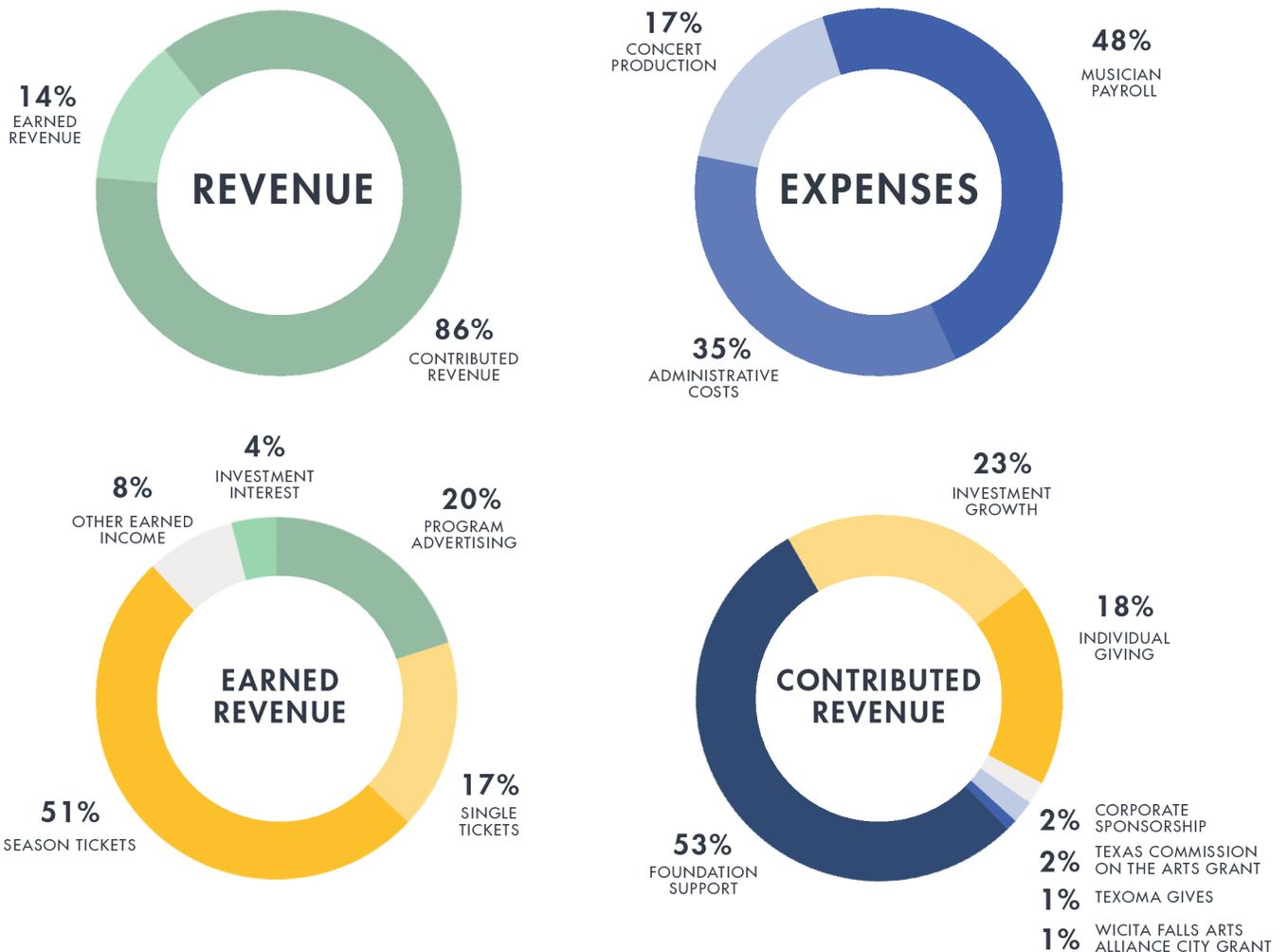
FY24-25 (JUNE 1, 2024 – MAY 31, 2025)

The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra remains committed to responsible financial stewardship, transparency, and long-term sustainability.

During the 2024–25 fiscal year, the WFSO operated with total expenses of **just under \$867,000**, supporting professional musicians, educational programming, community outreach, and essential operational needs. Contributions from donors, along with ticket revenue, grants, and sponsorships, were carefully allocated to advance the orchestra’s mission while maintaining fiscal discipline.

The non-profit organization continues to balance artistic ambition with financial responsibility: prioritizing mission-driven programming, investing in education and access initiatives, and managing resources prudently during a period of venue transition and audience growth.

Detailed financial information is presented here to provide clarity and accountability, reflecting the trust placed in the WFSO by its supporters and community.



As revenue streams continue to evolve, **expanding individual philanthropy and local corporate sponsorships** is a key strategy in building a balanced and sustainable funding model: one that supports both current operations and future growth.

GROWING OUR REACH

Since June 2025, and the start of the 2025-26 current fiscal year, the WFSO has engaged in a strategic planning process to guide its next phase of growth, with recommendations scheduled for implementation beginning in 2026. During this period, the organization also strengthened its internal capacity through key staffing investments.

The WFSO welcomed Chelsea McKee as Director of Marketing and Audience Development, a new role focused on deepening relationships with audiences and patrons, marking the first time the WFSO has employed a full-time marketing professional. In addition, the orchestra brought on a new Director of Operations and Education, Caroline Skeels, who has focused on reinforcing and streamlining the systems that support concert operations, musician personnel management, and the successful delivery of educational programming.

Together, these efforts reflect a commitment to thoughtful leadership, responsible planning, and continued investment in the people and systems that allow the WFSO to serve Texoma with excellence.

CURRENT MOMENTUM SNAPSHOT*

Early growth indicators from our current season (2025–26).

AUDIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

+24% **TICKET SALES SO FAR FOR THE 2025-26 SEASON**
(AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2025)

3,477 **TICKETS SOLD, INCLUDING 1,800**
SUBSCRIPTION TICKETS

405 **SEASON SUBSCRIPTIONS HELD BY 191 SUBSCRIBERS,**
INCLUDING 44 FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

444 **NEW FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS & EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS**

DONOR PARTICIPATION

\$213,690 **RAISED IN OUR 2025 ANNUAL FUND GOAL**
(**\$200K GOAL WAS SURPASSED**)

252 **ANNUAL FUND GIFTS RECEIVED BY 193 TOTAL DONORS,**
WHICH SUPPORTS THE CURRENT 2025-26 SEASON.

50 **FIRST-TIME DONORS GAVE TO THE WFSO**

*Figures reflect early-season and calendar-year fundraising activity for FY25-26. Early indicators from the 2025–26 season show continued growth in audience engagement and donor support, reinforcing the impact of recent investments in outreach, planning, and capacity.

As highlighted throughout this report on the 2024–25 season, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra continues to build from a strong foundation of artistic excellence and community connection. As we continue the 2025–26 season and plan for the next season, our focus remains on expanding access, strengthening engagement, and pursuing new opportunities for growth.

The 2026–27 season will mark a meaningful milestone with the return to Memorial Auditorium, along with the introduction of a family and children’s concert. The WFSO will also continue growing its audience—both digitally and in the concert hall—while developing new partnerships with local businesses and community organizations.

None of this work is possible without the generosity and trust of our supporters. To our donors, sponsors, volunteers, musicians, and audiences: thank you for helping ensure that live symphonic music remains a vibrant and accessible part of life in Texoma.

If you have questions or comments about this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alicia Deges, Executive Director at wfsoed@wfso.org

Thank you TO OUR 2024-25 SEASON SPONSORS



WFACF- Aurora S. Bolin Memorial Endowment
Fain Foundation
J.S. Bridwell Foundation
Bryant Edwards Foundation
Conley Foundation
The McCoy Foundation
Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation
The REA Charitable Trust
Harl & Evelyn Mansur Foundation





