

Walton Family Foundation Funds Symphony Matching Grant Will Result in \$555,100 for SoNA

By Becca Bacon Martin

BENTONVILLE — The Walton Family Foundation has awarded the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas a matching grant of \$277,550.

The orchestra must match the grant dollar for dollar, which means a major capital campaign, said Karen Kapella, executive director of SoNA.

“Right now, we are so focused on March 17,” Kapella said. “After that, we’ll shift gears into fundraising mode.”

The orchestra makes its debut at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Walton Arts Center. The performance is the culmination of rebuilding that started in the spring of 2008 when the North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra failed to fund the final concert of that season.

The organization since then chose a new name, paid its bills, created a three-year strategic plan, forged an alliance with the Walton Arts Center, raised enough money to fund the Thursday concert and hired Paul Haas as its conductor and music director, Kapella said.

“We had to have all our pieces in place before we asked the Walton Foundation for a grant,” she said.

Kapella said the grant plus the matching money, \$555,100 in total, would pay for fiscal year 2012, which will include five performances, and leave a little for 2013. The orchestra's fiscal year starts July 1.

“Our grant-making in Northwest Arkansas focuses, in part, on supporting cultural projects that enhance the quality of life in our community,” said Kevin Thornton, senior communications officer for the Walton Family Foundation. “We believe these types of projects will assist major employers in Northwest Arkansas in attracting and retaining a quality work force.

“A professional resident symphony would be a valuable asset to Northwest Arkansas,” he added. “We want our grant to be both a catalyst to get things off the ground and an encouragement to others to support the symphony.”

Northwest Arkansas Times, Page 5A on 3/13/2011
Springdale Morning News, Page 2A on 3/13/2011
Rogers Morning News, Page 5A on 3/13/2011
Benton County Daily Record, Page 5A on 3/13/2011

Used by permission of Northwest Arkansas Newspapers, LLC
www.nwaonline.com