

April 22, 2024

To: Montgomery County Council
From: Bill Catherwood and Jean Sperling
Subject: Support for the National Philharmonic

As long-term Montgomery County residents (almost 50 years) and active champions of local musical and choral arts, we are writing to you to support the National Philharmonic's (NatPhil's) request for a one-time County investment of \$400,000 in NatPhil's future as Montgomery County's pre-eminent symphonic organization. With your support, NatPhil can be confident that it will continue to bring its excellent concerts, educational programming, and community outreach to all County residents.

The musical arts landscape in Montgomery County is rich – in addition to local programming, we have organizations from elsewhere in Maryland who are eager to travel to perform for us (and profit from the tickets purchased by County residents). For example, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Annapolis Symphony both perform parts of their seasons in Montgomery County, at the Music Center at Strathmore.

Our own less well-known “gem”, the National Philharmonic, is a Resident Partner with Strathmore, delivering powerful programming featuring works from both traditional and less-recognized composers, and reaching out to the musically talented youth of Montgomery County with the Youth Mentorship Program and Summer Strings Institute. We have enjoyed taking advantage of NatPhil's All Kids. All Free. All the Time. Program to introduce our grandsons to NatPhil's collaborations with NASA.

Please help us to grow and celebrate our “musical gem” by providing the National Philharmonic's requested grant of \$400,000 so that the organization can complete its recovery from the disruptions of the pandemic.

In addition, please consider formally recognizing NatPhil as “Montgomery County's Own” symphonic orchestra, so that local audiences know that NatPhil is our own homegrown and sustained “gem” that can compete with and outshine the orchestras from outside our County.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Catherwood and Jean Sperling