



7 April 2024

Dear Montgomery County Council members,

Thank you so much for your work on behalf of our county. I am fortunate to have grown up in Montgomery County and am a graduate of our public schools. The State's and County's arts programs have been central to my own, my siblings', and my children's development, and I write to advocate for the County's funding of our own National Philharmonic Orchestra through the proposed budget line item of \$300,000.

Today I am a professor of leadership, business, and global organization, as well as an investor, director and advisor to multiple companies. I have taught all over the world and served as Dean of business schools in the US and UK, most recently at George Mason University. But I am still Montgomery County-rooted: I have a house here, my family are based here, and I spend a lot of time in Silver Spring and Rockville, including at the wonderful Strathmore Arts Center and working with the outstanding NatPhil.

We learn music not so much by teaching and testing, though these methods still persist. The music my family and I experienced in MCPS was fantastic because it went far beyond those things: doing, sharing, having a chance to play; to sing; to come together in what really is a core part of our human experience. Music connects us to everything else. It is part of how we express, and also fortify and build, our core selves and our relationship to others.

This is my point of view not only as an arts person and a musician, but also as a businessperson and a business instructor. I use music every time I teach, not just because I like music but because there are so many examples—pieces, composers, musicians, soloists, and groups—that connect with each lesson, whether it has to do with leading, collaboration, working across cultures and nations, developing others, handling conflict, or developing oneself.

Unlike many other musical organisations, the National Philharmonic Orchestra is all about building that learning and growth; it is about a cross-cultural approach and, fundamentally, the inclusion of as many people from as many different backgrounds as possible. They do this while continuing to raise everyone's sights, with top quality work from composers and performers old and new, and particularly those from underrepresented groups. All the while, they focus on helping students, particularly MCPS students, to develop their whole selves through music via sessions with orchestra members. It's a wonderful experience for them and they turn out very much to be interested when they engage directly—hearing, seeing and feeling, rather than merely reading and listening. One of my friends (an NHS classmate) now teaches for MCPS and describes these sessions as a great highlight.

The broadest scope of music and of musical excellence, and the joy that students—and indeed, most of us—experience from being a part of composition, learning from the past, the present, and from persons of different backgrounds—this is a key part of what NatPhil does and they do it really, really well. Just ask some of the students that have been part of the program or some of the teachers from MCPS who have brought them. Listen to the recordings of any of NatPhil’s concerts. As a lifelong musician I continue to be powerfully impressed by the depth, breadth, and quality of what Nat Phil—with significantly limited resources—is able to present. In fact I have been blown away by it, which is why I have become and stayed involved over the last few years.

So I simply want to say to you who are shepherding the budget but also the present and the future of our county, NatPhil is Montgomery County's orchestra. It grows out of years and years of work in Montgomery County, for Montgomery County, and I hope that you will decide along with those of us—a growing number who are supporting NatPhil regularly—that it is worth our county’s support.

Thank you and kind regards,

Prof. Maury Peiperl