

Staunton's Classical Music Scene Receives Virginia Tourism Corporation Grant

Richmond, VA (June 1, 2023)

Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that the **Heifetz International Music Institute**, partnering with **Staunton Music Festival**, received \$15,000 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation's (VTC) Marketing Leverage Program (MLP). In total, VTC awarded more than \$3.2 million for 236 local and regional tourism marketing programs across the state to help increase visitation and revenue for Virginia's localities through tourism.

Staunton Music Festival and the Heifetz Institute will share a \$15,000 grant for their "Mozart in the Mountains" campaign, aimed at increasing Staunton's visibility as a national destination for summer music tourism. This is a matching grant awarded by VTC, thereby doubling the marketing power available to the Staunton entities. Under the grant proposal, the two music festivals will combine promotional efforts and share advertising and marketing expenses. As overnight tourism visitation is the primary outcome, the campaign will focus its message on three non-local markets: Norfolk/Hampton Roads, Baltimore/Chevy Chase, and New York City. The project involves purchasing both digital and radio advertisements in those target markets.

"We're very excited to receive this funding," said **Andrew Green**, marketing director for the Heifetz Institute. "On our own, neither SMF nor we could devote enough resources to really make an impact in these big target markets. The beauty of the VTC marketing match is that all of our efforts will now be doubled, so we can run radio spots, for example, nearly the entire summer season on major classical music stations."

Sheryl Wagner, the City of Staunton's tourism director, offered her support to the "Mozart in the Mountains" campaign throughout the process. "Music tourism is a significant revenue generator, particularly during the summer months. Heifetz and SMF have shown how effectively they can bring audiences from great distances, and their efforts have only increased our city's reputation as an arts hub. We're excited to watch the results of this campaign." Tourism will also host the campaign's landing page on its website, so that all digital traffic can be tracked as potential visitors explore Staunton's vibrant arts scene.

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Using the hub and spoke tourism partnership model, Virginia entities partner to apply for funding. Partners may consist of Virginia cities, towns, counties, convention and visitors' bureaus, chambers of commerce, other local or regional destination marketing organizations, private businesses, museums, attractions, cultural events, and other tourism-related businesses. "VTC's tourism marketing and sponsorship programs are designed to increase visitor spending by leveraging limited marketing dollars, to stimulate new tourism marketing through partnerships, and to extend the "Virginia is for Lovers" brand to drive visitation," said **Rita McClenny**, VTC President and CEO. More information on VTC's Marketing Leverage and Regional Marketing Programs can be found at vatc.org/grants.

"VTC's marketing and sponsorship programs are powerful incentives creating tourism partnerships across Virginia that are a robust part of Virginia's economic ecosystem," said **Governor Glenn Youngkin**. "From first-time applicants like Foxfield Races and Paradise Springs Winery to large music festivals in Hampton Roads and Southwest Virginia driving inbound overnight visitation, these programs show that tourism and tourism partnerships help Virginia's vibrant communities grow and thrive."

"Driving inbound out-of-state overnight visitation is a key economic strategy and the VTC grant and sponsorship programs help create unique partnerships that have tangible economic impacts across Virginia," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade **Caren Merrick**. "Many of these programs also support regional marketing initiatives designed to encourage Virginians to explore their own state."

About the Heifetz International Music Institute

The Heifetz International Music Institute, renowned for its dedication to the artistic growth and career development of the most promising young string players in the world, returns for its 27th Season in the summer of 2023. Through intensive instrument study and the innovative training method, the Institute guides musicians to explore their full creative potential, express their individuality, and redefine the concert experience. The diverse and ambitious Festival of Concerts features the Institute's renowned faculty, special guests, and of course, its world class students — comprised this year of 163 exceptional young musicians ranging in age from 7 to 26, representing 15 countries internationally and 22 US states. Details at heifetzinstitute.org.

About Staunton Music Festival

Acclaimed for its eclectic programs and international roster of musicians, Staunton Music Festival presents ten consecutive days and nights of concerts in historic

downtown Staunton, Virginia. Hailed as "Virginia's world-class music festival" by Travel + Leisure, the festival brings 90 musicians from around the world to present a dynamic slate of programs of opera, chamber and orchestral music — ranging from the Middle Ages to newly commissioned world premieres. This year's festival opens with a newly staged production of Handel's Orlando, featuring countertenor Daniel Moody and directed by Timothy Nelson. Over 100 works will be performed during SMF's immersive European-style music festival. Visit stauntonmusicfestival.org.

About Virginia Tourism Corporation

Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world. Using that powerful brand equity, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is charged with promoting the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Virginia vacation. The dollars spent by travelers fuel the economy, provide jobs for Virginians, and improve communities across the state. Simply put, tourism helps make Virginia a great place to live, work, and vacation. Learn more at virginia.org.