

February 11, 2020

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative DiMassa, Representative Horn, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to appeal your intention to remove Music Haven from the state budget for next year. It may seem peculiar that I, the marketing director for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, would write to advocate on behalf of another classical music organization (who theoretically competes for funding from the State), but I believe that Music Haven is the heart of classical music in our city and must be supported.

I personally support Music Haven as a community member and donor because I know it to be a life-changing organization. It provides after-school music instruction (and academic and social support programs) for children who reside in New Haven's most at-risk neighborhoods.

Their students are given a safe haven for excellence – where they can create, perform, learn and grow. Music Haven students regularly attend New Haven Symphony concerts and our conductors and musicians frequently visit their rehearsals and lessons to enrich the offerings of their world-class teachers. These children are surrounded day in and day out with the best that our industry has to offer – and it is by holding them in these highest standards that they rise to the occasion and exceed what society has neglectfully taught us to expect of them.

Eliminating Music Haven's funding from the state's budget is a decision to directly, negatively impact the children in our state who need your help the most. Music Haven successfully improves the lives and future outlooks of New Haven's children; make the choice to stand behind the best that your state has to offer.

I urge you to keep Music Haven's funding in this year's budget and future budgets.

Sincerely,

Katie Bonner Russo
Marketing Director, New Haven Symphony Orchestra