

I. INTRODUCTION

Like so many businesses, the performing arts industry is at a standstill. When our organizations are unable to perform or engage in the arts with our audiences in person, our community is missing not only its cultural soul, but also a critical engine to our local economy. We cannot wait for the day when we can welcome audiences back to enjoy the laughter, love and transformation that only live engagement through the arts can provide.

II. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND THE CHALLENGE OF “PHYSICAL DISTANCING”

There are specific challenges to getting our organizations engaged with the community again. Of primary importance is ensuring the health and safety of everyone onstage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. The simple truth is that the very thing that makes going to a performing arts event so thrilling – the shared, communal experience – is the reason it doesn’t mix well with the concept of “physical distancing.” This is true for the audience as well as for the cast, crew, artists, musicians, and staff. Your Fox Cities arts community is working closely with local health and safety experts to determine how to create a safe environment when we are able to reopen.

III. ECONOMIC IMPACT

When we are open, our organizations support jobs in every sector of our economy – teachers and directors preparing the performance, dressers preparing the costumes, cashiers selling tickets, merchandise and concessions, designers creating posters and advertisements, carpenters readying the sets, lighting and sound crew setting the lighting grids and sound boards, hair and makeup artists transforming the actors into characters, ushers assisting patrons to their seats, and performers playing instruments, singing, dancing, and acting. On performance dates, our audience members fill restaurants, hotels, and parking garages and patronize local shops and vendors.

It is rare to have a community of our size with so many well-established arts organizations: a professional symphony orchestra; more than one visual art museum; a performing arts center that offers touring, educational, and local productions; a large community music school; several community choirs for adults and youth; and a youth ballet. The economic ripple effect of the shutdown is powerful because the members of our arts community live here. Your neighbor, friend, coworker, or child is likely a participant in one of these Fox Cities performing arts organizations. We are all negatively affected if any one of them is unable to survive the shutdown.

The reopening of arts events will be a vital component to restarting our local economy. According to the Americans for the Arts, in 2016 this meant \$58.4 million in economic activity for the greater Fox Cities region nonprofit arts and culture industry, including 1,613 full time equivalent jobs and \$5.5 million in local and state government revenue.

IV. WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE MEANTIME?

During this intermission, our organizations continue to enlighten, educate, and uplift the spirit of our community. We have developed online programming with local and national arts supporters to help give behind-the-scenes experiences and online teaching platforms to continue to educate in and through the arts.

But now we need your help. Without your continued financial support, your Fox Cities nonprofit performing arts organizations may not survive the shutdown. Please consider making a donation or purchasing a gift certificate for a future program or performance. Just like your favorite locally owned restaurant or small business, we are struggling. Unlike them, it will be months before we can return to in-person programs and performances.

We look forward to the day we can welcome our audiences back. We want you to experience the artistry of actors, musicians, artists, educators, and crew that have been assembled to create a world of imagination and discovery. Thank you for supporting your local nonprofit performing arts organizations now and in the months to come. We can’t wait to be with you again.

Appleton Boychoir

Fox Valleyaires

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

Makaroff Youth Ballet

Fox Valley Chorus of Sweet Adelines International

Fox Valley Symphony

newVoices

Lawrence Community Music School Gamelan, Girl Choir, String Orchestra, Symphonic Band, and Wind Ensemble

On a Positive Note Chorus (Fox Valley Memory Project)