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Orchestra Kentucky and SKyPAC unite to ensure future of performing arts and entertainment in South Central Kentucky

October 29, 2020 Bowling Green, KY – Orchestra Kentucky and the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center (SKyPAC) will operate as a single organization in service to a common mission under a plan approved by the unanimous vote of both boards of directors. South Central Kentucky's two largest performing arts organizations are unifying as Arts of Southern Kentucky to overcome the challenges posed by the current global pandemic and to ensure access to arts and entertainment for future audiences.

Warren County Judge-Executive Michael O. Buchanon conceived of the idea to assist SKyPAC and Orchestra Kentucky by leveraging funds from the CARES Act passed by Congress earlier in the year. "I knew the global pandemic was significantly hurting both organizations, as it is the entire arts and entertainment industry across the world," said Buchanon. "SKyPAC, which is owned by the county, was effectively closed, with no ability to generate ticket revenue. With the closing of SKyPAC, Orchestra Kentucky lost access to its home venue. The situation posed an existential threat to the arts in our region and the CARES Act was passed to keep this temporary crisis from doing permanent damage."

President of the Orchestra Kentucky Board of Directors, Steve Wheeler, credits Judge-Executive Buchanon and the Warren County Fiscal Court for displaying visionary leadership under difficult circumstances. "I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that when the community is enjoying great performances in our area 20 years from now, citizens will have Judge Buchanon and the magistrates to thank. They not only stepped up with funds to sustain Orchestra Kentucky and SKyPAC, they urged us to chart a new way forward."

Orchestra Kentucky Founding Music Director, Jeffrey Reed, echoed Wheeler's praise of Judge Buchanon and the Court, adding "As a result of the foresight of Judge Buchanon, the magistrates, and members of the Orchestra Kentucky and SKyPAC boards of directors, audiences, now and in the future, will be able to enjoy the performing arts and high-quality entertainment."

Wheeler, a partner with the accounting/financial planning firm Carr, Riggs & Ingram, noted the importance of a thriving arts and entertainment scene to a healthy business environment. "Bowling Green is one of the fastest growing markets in the country, and quality of life is key to that. This decision to secure the future of SKyPAC and Orchestra Kentucky will have a profound economic impact."

Arts of Southern Kentucky will have a 45-member board of directors, comprised of 23 current Orchestra Kentucky board members and 22 current SKyPAC board members. Daily operations will be managed by Jeffrey Reed, serving as President & CEO. "I am looking forward to the synergy that will be created by such a talented group of community leaders coming together to form one board," said Reed. "I really think we have a great team assembled."

"For many years, Orchestra Kentucky has been SKyPAC's single largest user of performance dates," said SKyPAC Board Chairwoman Elizabeth Sigler. "Their concerts are always well-attended, they operate with integrity and creativity, and consistently deliver strong artistic and financial results. Jeff Reed has been a pillar of the arts community in South Central Kentucky for more than two decades. Under his leadership, we are confident the artistic value SKyPAC provides will be strengthened."

Though behind-the-scenes changes will be significant, current patrons of SKyPAC and Orchestra Kentucky are unlikely to notice much difference. SKyPAC will continue to present high-quality entertainment, including country and contemporary musical acts, Broadway, and comedy, and will continue as the home of Orchestra Kentucky's Variety and Retro Series.

"We will have a common box office and explore some collaborative programming options, and we will certainly redouble our commitment to providing all patrons with a superior experience and customer service," said Reed. "Patrons of SKyPAC and Orchestra Kentucky will continue to have the opportunity to enjoy a broad variety of arts and entertainment. I am excited about the future of the arts in our region."