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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Classical Music to Life: VSA Announces New Board Member

Montrose, CO – For over 50 years, the Valley Symphony Association has supported volunteer musicians of all ages and walks of life who hail from throughout the Western Slope, including the Uncompahgre, Grand, and North Fork Valleys.

The organization recently announced that Stephanie Helleckson of Paonia has been elected to the VSA Board.

Helleckson took her first violin lesson at age 5 from former VSA concertmaster Lu Vorys and has loved music ever since. Helleckson has been singing and playing with her family (Brent, Karen, and Jacob Helleckson) in concerts around the area since 1997.

Helleckson has been involved with the VSA for almost 20 years and has periodically played in the orchestra as a violinist since 2006 and sung with the chorus under the direction of Jan Tuin. She now teaches music locally and joined the VSA Board of Directors in late 2022 to assist with the orchestral conductor transition and support the continued success of the VSA. “My reasons are a bit selfish: I want to continue playing in the orchestra with my dad and brother for many years to come!”

In 1998, Helleckson joined what would become the Valley Youth Orchestra, playing chamber music in a dirt-floor cabin in Paonia. She consistently performed with the VYO and VSA until graduating from high school in 2010, after which she obtained bachelor's degrees in music and anthropology at the University of Colorado Boulder. She also holds a masters in arts administration from Florida State University, where she studied under internationally recognized conductor André Thomas and Met Opera Soprano Marcy Stonikas.

Helleckson has also founded the North Fork Community Choir, published original research on the acoustics of kivas at Mesa Verde National Park, worked at a humane society on Maui, and spent a summer working at the Sitka Music Festival in Alaska. She has served on the boards of three music organizations, created four organizations, and worked in several nonprofits in positions ranging from intern to executive director.

“We welcome Stephanie and her youthful energy to the board,” VSA Board President Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., said. “Along with her background and education, she has already made the board stronger for her considerable experience with nonprofit organizations, which we’re looking to

harness to assure the longevity of the VSA.” Clubb said that, “Stephanie also brings her perspective as a long-time VSA volunteer musician into our mix. This is an additional and important asset for us as we shepherd and grow the organization into its next 50 years.”

Bringing classical music to life since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association has culturally enriched the community and its members by bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians of all ages from the North Fork, Grand, and Uncompahgre Valleys to discover and perform works of great composers, past and present. Concerts range from classical orchestral to upbeat pops, from purely instrumental to purely choral, to a combination of both.

For information, upcoming concerts, tickets, and the audition process, visit the VSA on Facebook @ValleySymphonyAssociation and online at ValleySymphony.net. Tickets are also available in Delta at Clubb’s (502 Main St), in Montrose at Colorado Smiles (601 S 3rd St) and at season partner Cimarron Wealth Management (1731 E Niagara Rd), and at the door on event days. Other inquiries may be directed to 970-765-8323 or info@ValleySymphony.net.