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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Music You Love. Musicians You Know.  
Phil the Cello Joins  
The Valley Symphony Association's 53rd Season of PLAY!**

**Montrose, CO** – The Valley Symphony Association (VSA) Orchestra and Chorus proudly kicks off its 53rd season with an exciting theme: PLAY! This year, the all-volunteer performing arts group is ready to bring vibrant, engaging performances to the Western Slope community.

Supported by season partners Cimarron Wealth Management and the David Mize Family, along with a roster of concert partners and dedicated advertisers, VSA is also reaching out to the regional communities that they serve for additional financial and volunteer support. This is crucial for expanding their mission of connecting generations through live musical experiences.

“The theme PLAY! is all about celebrating the joy of music and presenting a variety of familiar works that resonate with everyone,” VSA Artistic Director and Orchestra Conductor Troy Raper said. “From the playful energy of cartoon themes and video game soundtracks to the dramatic flair of iconic opera pieces, we’re set to offer something for everyone in our community.”

In a creative twist, Raper has introduced a unique fundraising initiative involving a special donation box—“Phil the Cello.” Inspired by a cherished cello from his days as a high-school strings educator, Raper transformed this well-loved instrument into a donation box, cleverly named “Phil” to echo both “philharmonic” and the idea of filling the box with contributions.

Phil the Cello made its debut at the VSA’s four free September “community giveback” concerts. Throughout the season, audience members will be invited to “stuff the cello” and then guess how much has been collected in Phil. The final tally will be revealed at the March concert, with a family season pass for the following year awarded to those who guess correctly.

“We encourage everyone to come to our concerts and help us ‘fill Phil the Cello’ to support our mission of connecting communities through transformative live music,” Raper said.

Since its inception in 1970, the VSA has enriched the Western Slope with exceptional live music, bringing together musicians from teens to nonagenarians across the Uncompahgre, Grand, Gunnison, and North Fork Valleys.

“Music is a universal language that brings people together,” VSA Communications and Development Director Stacey Ryan said. “Our concerts are designed to be fun for all ages and offer something for everyone—not just classical enthusiasts. We’re musicians you know performing music you love.”

To enhance accessibility, VSA is offering new pricing options this season. The season pass includes a “Buy Four, Get One Free” deal, with options priced at \$80 for adults, \$20 for students, and a family package at \$200 (two adults and two students). Single concert tickets are available for \$20 for adults and \$5 for students.

For more information, visit VSA on Facebook @valleysymphonyassociation or online at ValleySymphony.net. Tickets for the October-April series can be purchased online or at local vendors: Clubb’s in Delta (417 Main St.), Cimarron Wealth Management in Montrose (1731 E. Niagara Road), and Colorado Smiles (1801 E. Pavilion Pl.). For additional inquiries, contact 970-765-8323 or email [info@ValleySymphony.net](mailto:info@ValleySymphony.net).

#### **About the Valley Symphony Association**

***Music you love. Musicians you know.*** Bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians from the Uncompahgre, North Fork, Gunnison, and Grand Valleys since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association connects our communities through transformative, live, musical experiences for all generations of musicians and audiences.

#### **About Our Season Co-Partners**

***Cimarron Wealth Management*** strives to simplify your financial life and give you confidence about your future so you can focus on your passions. It starts with the foundation of investment, estate and tax planning discussions, but our passion is honest conversations about purpose, legacy and generosity.

***The David Mize Family*** has quietly and generously supported all types of Western Slope non-profit organizations for decades and is a longstanding donor to the VSA.