

Support is instrumental in keeping arts groups a tempo



*Anu Tali,
Music Director, Sarasota Orchestra
photo by Kadri Tali*

WP Why are arts important to a community in the first place; what's the bigger picture?

A: Arts are the last and most unique communication between people that aims to touch profoundly. The dialogue is subconscious, and therefore deeper than [what can be said aloud]. An orchestra, in my opinion, is the most ideal harmony that can be achieved among people that are otherwise unrelated. Here we search for perfect nuance in sound, color, a unity in rhythm and tempo. We actually listen to each other! Moreover, we search for understanding and aim to connect with our audiences. So, literally, and without a threat of sounding naive: the arts make the world a better place.

WP Do you think there's enough support for the arts in today's society?

A: Generally, the situation can be improved everywhere. However, complaining is one of the most unattractive features of a human being. It pushes away rather than invites to join. So, I prefer to look at the bright side and stay hopeful. There is a lot to be happy about and for which to look forward. Many companies and private donors work together with us on a daily basis. We are not going to let them down. Ever.

WP What about in Sarasota? How do you think Sarasota's philanthropic and charitable community compares to the rest of the world?

A: There are daily devastating news about closing down and cutting off. This is happening in U.S. as well as in the rest of the world... We are very privileged in Sarasota as there are high concentrations of intelligent people that have ended up here. Those people see clearly the value of arts and culture. They identify themselves with arts being a natural part of our life, part of the country's future. That is very appealing for me. That gives me hope.

WP What kind of support do art organizations need to thrive—what's the best or most ideal economic model?

A: Orchestras need multilayered support where all the factors of sponsorship, grants, and donations come together. Only then do we have the creative freedom to develop into a leading group.

WP Could you break down each layer of support—who plays the most integral roles?

A: [Patrons are a] part of our team, the so-called triangle of communication in music [among] conductor/orchestra/patrons. We play for the patrons, and they give us the feedback and assurance that we are needed. They also share what goes well or not. Patrons and individual donors will always play the largest role. For six decades, countless contributors have helped the organization evolve into the thriving, cultural asset and superb orchestra it is today. Philanthropists play a huge role. They enable us to have artistic expression. One can create only knowing that there is a tomorrow; one can look longer ahead because of the help they offer. Granting organizations are another factor that cannot be underestimated. Together with the philanthropists they build a firm wall for us to stand on. Corporate sponsors are another source of help for the arts that can make it all possible. I would also call these a friendship because we can help each other. When combined carefully and well, the arts and corporate sponsors can reach remarkable heights together where both will benefit. [The government's role is also integral, but] I have noticed the governmental support declining over years. This tendency concerns the whole world. And this is a pity because as true members of society, citizens and people, it is important for us to be noticed and approved by our leaders. A country stands strong only when it notices its richness in culture.



*Anu Tali,
Music Director, Sarasota Orchestra*