



Post Project Evaluation July 31, 2012

Accomplishment and Use of Funding – The Urbana Pops Orchestra (UPO) offered one concert entitled *Magical Tales* at the Vineyard Church in Urbana on Friday, June 15 for an affordable ticket price. This concert was geared toward families 1) by offering a special ticket price for two adults and up to 3 children, 3) by the selection of accessible music, and 4) by the collaboration with the Central Illinois Children’s Chorus.

A free concert was performed by the full orchestra inside Lincoln Square at noon on Saturday, July 7. This 90-minute concert entitled *Made in the U.S.A.* extended the patriotic character of early July by featuring music by American composers, including the world premiere of a work entitled *Images* by young, local composer Vaggelis Sotiropoulos. This original piece gave UPO the perfect opportunity to announce its new composition contest, the goal of which is to foster young local composers. The concert in the high court of the mall was attended by over 400 audience members. The concert included several patriotic selections such as the *National Emblem March* by Edwin Bagley. Another highlight was the preview performance of songs from the Urbana Park District Youth Summer Theater Program *Lucky Stiff*. Continuing their partnership with the Park District, members of UPO performed as the pit orchestra for the four performances of *Lucky Stiff* July 25 to 28 at Parkland College.

A small string ensemble consisting of UPO’s concertmaster and five student musicians performed at Urbana Adult Education’s High School Commencement Ceremonies on Friday, June 1 in the Urbana Middle School gymnasium. The live music enhanced the atmosphere of the graduation celebration 30 minutes before the beginning of the ceremonies and with a special selection during the program.

The two large-venue, full-orchestra concerts, the string ensemble, and the pit orchestra fulfilled UPO’s commitment to offering unique orchestral experiences that enrich the cultural experiences of Urbana residents of all ages.

Impact of Grant Funding – Obtaining the Urbana Arts Council Grant has enabled the UPO to accomplish its goal of providing a professional-level orchestra. UPO received a grant from the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois but the grant stipulated that it could not be used for salaries. UPO purchased musical scores and professional music folders with that grant, but

relied on the City of Urbana Arts Council grant to attract quality professional musicians who are accustomed to earning a stipend. Although the student musicians are not paid and the stipend per professional musician is small, multiplied by 45 to 65 instrumentalists, the sum is sizeable and more than local fundraising can accomplish.

The number of hours spent in completing the project – see attached Excel spread sheet

The number of participants in events or activities – The UPO consists of 65 to 85 musicians, depending on the specific orchestration for a concert, approximately 20 of whom are student musicians. There were approximately 500 audience members at the Urbana Adult Education's High School Commencement Ceremony and approximately 400 audience members at the Lincoln Square *Made in the U.S.A.* concert and the *Magical Tales* concert at the Vineyard.

This year's Urbana Park District's performance of *Lucky Stiff* included a cast of over 70 youth who sang with the orchestra at the free July concert and were supported by two professional and three student UPO musicians in the pit orchestra, assuring high-quality musical accompaniment that enhanced the production. *Lucky Stiff's* four performances entertained a total of approximately 1,200 audience members.

Community Collaborations – In addition to the continued collaborations with the Urbana Park District and Urbana School District #116, UPO collaborated musically with 30 members of the Central Illinois Children's Chorus at the *Magical Tales* concert who sang with the orchestra on two pieces. International Galleries in Lincoln Square helps UPO facilitate ticket sales and provided a gift certificate for a special drawing at intermission.

Additional Information – The UPO is very grateful to have received this year's Creative Mix grant. It was a tremendous help in creating several unique musical experiences in this community in 2012. There are many venues and opportunities for people to enjoy high school bands and orchestras, jazz combos, marching bands, blues, bluegrass, and other musical ensembles, but it is rare to hear pops music performed by a full orchestra for free or affordable ticket prices. The accessibility of UPO's programs allows listeners to experience familiar music in a new way. For example, Paul Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is recognizable due to its rendition by Disney in the cartoon classic *Fantasia*. Its familiarity is primarily due to the cartoon images associated with the music. But seeing the piece performed by an orchestra brings new understanding to audience members of all ages about how the music is created. As they watch the violinist's fingers move rapidly across the strings, the visual is not a cartoon; this seeing communicates a greater appreciation for the skills required to perform the music they recognize but understand it on a new level.