

MAKING A REAL

IMPACT

ON  
MUSIC



**The Question:** What does Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia do for music?

**The Answer:** Whatever You do for music.

For many years, a concern has been voiced about the Fraternity: a perceived loss of our focus on advocacy for music in America. Some have lamented the absence of Fraternity headlines reporting news such as musical commissions in the name of Sinfonia and financial support for scholarly research in musicology. As the Fraternity has worked to restore its founding mission—one that focuses on the character and leadership development of the individual—the Fraternity has suffered some criticism based on the misperception that it has strayed from focus on its direct connection to music.

It's time to **resolve** this issue.

#### **SINFONIA'S IMPACT**

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia promotes social contact among male musicians, with the cultural objective of advancing music. Some may find this description disjointed, asking, "How does social contact advance music?" The very significance of Sinfonia lies in the fact that it was the first organization to unify fraternal and musical objectives. Not sociability for sociability's sake, nor music for music's sake, but the two in union. This union of fraternal and musical objectives made—indeed, *still makes*—Sinfonia a unique entity in the musical world, and this combination must be understood and embraced if our Fraternity is to succeed in its mission.

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia is not a Fraternity of professional musicians. Throughout our

history, the opportunity of becoming a Sinfonian has been open to any man, regardless of his major, as long as he is prepared to make a lifelong commitment to advance music, either as a profession or an avocation. Whether a Sinfonian is a music educator, accountant or engineer, he has committed himself to music for life—not just to the existence of music education and organizations, but to a specific perspective with regard to music. That perspective was eloquently articulated in 1948 by the "Father of the Ritual," **Rollin Pease**, *Iota (Northwestern)* '17, when he said that Sinfonians use music "not only for personalized display and for winning championships, and for acclaim and wealth, but also... for saving lives—our own lives and the lives of others."

#### **ATTAINING SUCCESS**

Sinfonia's power is in its numbers. At this time, Sinfonia has over 220 chapters and over 100,000 living members, and these numbers continue to rise. As active musicians and advocates for music, Sinfonians represent a massive force in the world of music. This force does not need to be organized behind just one or two principal initiatives; with 100,000 Sinfonians living and working throughout the country, Sinfonia's ideals are represented in nearly every musical outlet. In each of these outlets, Sinfonians positively influence and support music in a manner consistent with the Fraternity's teachings: using music for the uplift of mankind, and standing for the highest quality in music.

The Fraternity's primary method of music advocacy is the making of music advocates. Sinfonia provides the structure, philosophy, inspiration and education to develop true brotherhood between musicians, which in turn creates a network of brothers united in the common pursuit of the Object. Put another way, the Fraternity provides the means of organization and the encouragement to advocate for music, but brothers must do this work themselves.

Sinfonia's role in music advocacy is manifested in three forms:

- The bonds of brotherhood formed in Sinfonia provide a network of support for our individual advocacy for music.
- The Fraternity's ideals teach and inspire Sinfonians to strive for the best in music.
- Sinfonia's chapters and alumni associations undertake musical projects having a direct impact on their communities.

It is only through this last manifestation—special projects of chapters and alumni associations—that Sinfonia has a direct impact on music. Around the country, chapters and alumni associations undertake projects that show the power of a group committed to making a difference. Some recent examples include Beta Pi Chapter (University of the Pacific; Stockton, Cal.) and its "Music in the Schools" program, which raised over \$5,000 in

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cash and instruments for donation to the local schools' performing arts program. The Rho Kappa Chapter (Rider University; Princeton, N.J.) recently preserved and cataloged over 1,100 pieces of children's music for the Talbot Library at Westminster Choir College, the largest collection of choral music in the U.S. Perhaps most impressively, Sinfonia's chapters and alumni associations have visited nursing homes and hospitals over 900 times in the last two years as part of the Mills Music Mission, enlivening the spirits of approximately 30,000 patients with music.

Of course, only a small fraction of the 100,000 living Sinfonians are current members of a chapter or alumni association. Apart from the beneficial projects of these groups, it is the work of individual Sinfonians that makes up the vast majority of Sinfonia's impact on music.

In order for Sinfonia's impact to flow through individual brothers, we must all resist the temptation to believe that our individual efforts are too small to make a real difference. For example, many brothers hear the phrase "music advocacy" and think only of stuffy school board meetings and letters to legislators. Advocacy is also dependant on involvement, and other ways

of advancing music include playing or singing in a community ensemble, supporting the local orchestra, volunteering for a nearby school music program, giving free music lessons to underprivileged children, and countless others. The Fraternity invites all brothers to spend their lives with music in their own way, and in fact, it counts on it—a longstanding clause in the Fraternity's *National Constitution* requires that we individually work "to advance the cause of music in America." Sinfonians cover the full spectrum of music, and it is through this diversity of advocacy and involvement that the Fraternity's ideals have the greatest impact on society—one brother at a time.

As an organization devoted to advancing music, Sinfonia's success or failure rests on the work that each of us does to advocate for, participate in, lead and support music. If we succeed in spreading the Fraternity's ideals throughout all the musical realms—as professionals or volunteers—then Sinfonia succeeds.

So what is the Fraternity doing for music? *You would know best.* 

