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NEWS RELEASE

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Rogue Valley Symphony Concludes 2022-2023 Season With Record Crowds

The Rogue Valley Symphony concluded its 55th season last week with performances of Gustav Holst's *The Planets* in Grants Pass and Medford. In their first complete season since the pandemic, the symphony ultimately surpassed pre-pandemic levels of attendance, an encouraging bellwether for the cultural and economic vitality of the Rogue Valley and southern Oregon.

Rogue Valley Symphony Executive Director Joelle Graves feels the momentum: "I'm optimistic we'll get back to our 2019 subscriber levels by Fall and the start of next season. It's an exciting time. 2022-2023 was a rejuvenating bounce-back year for us, as we saw attendance in all three cities we play (Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass) consistently rise throughout the season. Attendance and enthusiasm go hand in hand; you could feel it this year."

RVS observed an average 9 percent increase in attendance between each of their six Masterworks concerts, with audiences in Grants Pass growing at the fastest rate of 14 percent. Half of the six performances held in Ashland were sold out, while the other half were at least 76 percent full. Between our subscribers and single ticket buyers, RVS served over 7,500 concertgoers in southern Oregon, surpassing the number served in 2019.

RVS Music Director, Martin Majkut, said, "This past season was our boldest endeavor to date, and audiences responded enthusiastically to our stellar guest artists, incredible orchestra, and engaging programs. I couldn't be prouder of what we accomplished!"

The 2022-2023 season's final concert saw record crowds in Grants Pass and Medford. For Holst's *The Planets*, audience members were treated to a multi-media performance that included spectacular original animations and NASA media of the solar system to accompany Holst's compelling score. Graves believes interactive and new partnerships will be a part of the symphony's long-term success: "Concerts that incorporate visuals tend to bring in people new to classical. That's important, because once they're here, they realize live classical music is much more engaging than they thought. First-time attendees often tell us they can't wait to attend again. We're seeing more and more young people too."

New community partnerships have also increased the influx of younger groups to the Rogue Valley Symphony, including Scienceworks Hands-On Museum in Ashland for last week's *Planets* performance. Ashwin Vasavada, who is the Senior Scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Caltech, spoke at several locations in our region, including Scienceworks and North Medford High School. Vasavada also participated in our pre-concert talks with Maestro Majkut, giving our audiences a different look at the music they experienced. RVS partnered with several other groups in our community, including Britt Music & Arts Festival's Education and Engagement department for educational activities in regional schools, the Ashland Library for monthly informal performances with members of RVS, and the Jackson County Library Services for a free children's concert as part of the Rogue Reads Challenge.

RVS's Graves says: "Classical music is for everyone. It's not some kind of elite club. To that end, we enjoy creating upbeat activities to make the concerts and the experience more accessible. Coffee socials at museums, new subscriber meet and greets, and pre-concert discussions are fun ways to meet others interested in the arts and learn how to enjoy the music. You'll find a lot of friendly people at our concerts."

Under the direction of Music Director Martin Majkut, the Rogue Valley Symphony will kick off its 56th season in August with a special performance with pianist Jeffrey Biegel playing George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in celebration of the work's centennial. RVS will also present six Masterworks performances from September through May in Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass. Some highlights for the 2023/24 season include:

- Works by newly appointed Composer in Residence, David Ludwig, who RVS will commission for a new orchestral work for the 2024/25 season
- More incredible guest artists, including pianist George Li, violinist Bella Hristova, trumpet virtuoso Mary Elizabeth Bowden, and more
- Some of the most beloved works from the orchestral repertoire, including Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony, and a program of all Czech music, including Bedřich Smetana's *Má Vlast* and Antonin Dvořák's Symphony no. 9, *From the New World*

For more information or to subscribe to the 2023-2024 season, visit www.rvsymphony.org, email tickets@rvsymphony.org, or call 541-708-6400.