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## **ACG Congratulates CLASSICAL KIDS MUSIC EDUCATION on the Completion of its Strategic Planning & Community Engagement Process**



Arts Consulting Group (ACG) congratulates Chicago's Classical Kids Music Education (CKME) on the recent completion of a comprehensive strategic plan that will guide the organization's direction, program priorities, and collaborative partnerships over the next five years.

The strategic planning and community engagement process, facilitated by ACG, was led by a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of CKME board members and staff with tremendous support from its Community Advisory Group of local arts and education leaders. The process, generously supported by The Arts Work Fund, involved an in-depth market analysis nationally, regionally, and locally including discussions with CKME's existing orchestra clients from across the country and a focus on how CKME could best serve the Chicago music education community.

Best known for its *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* curriculum and performance programs, CKME has already moved forward on implementing its plan, which addresses artistic, financial, and structural issues, as well as branding and community impact. Current projects include developing specific plans for increasing local arts education partnerships and programming, lowering booking fees for collaborating national orchestras in need, and creating new programs and artistic enhancements to grow its repertoire.

Looking forward, the plan includes new program strategies for the organization's Symphony Concert Series which will allow its productions to reach more children and families around the world. Funding from foundations, government agencies, corporations, and individuals will be directed in ways to make the CKME concert series and educational curriculum materials more affordable to symphony orchestras and to positively impact under-privileged communities.

At the completion of the strategic planning process CKME identified and agreed to pursue five initiatives:

1. Establish a strong Chicago-area presence benefitting local communities, schools and organizations
2. Establish a community home with space to offer early childhood music education classes and music resources
3. Increase national programming collaborations with more orchestras to reach more children
4. Develop a comprehensive distance learning opportunity that will allow all children, especially those in rural areas, to participate in CKME programming
5. Create new programming offerings while adding artistic enhancements to current productions.

These strategic initiatives have already been met with enthusiasm from many orchestral organizations across the country as well as local grant foundations and Chicago arts and arts education organizations.

Paul Pement, CKME's Executive and Artistic Director, highlighted ACG's role in developing the plan, saying, "Bruce Thibodeau and Dan Zanella of the Arts Consulting Group provided excellent services throughout the process, balancing a wonderful mix of friendly professionalism and knowledgeable guidance along the way. They helped us engage our community in a variety of ways that helped us identify critical needs in music education locally, regionally, and nationally."

"Classical Kids Music Education is an amazing organization that has achieved outstanding results with a thorough exploration of its market needs, stakeholder perceptions, and funder priorities to refine and refocus the organization's mission and vision," said Bruce Thibodeau, ACG President. "Their success is a direct result of the thoughtful way that board, staff, and community leaders worked to engage their people both intellectually and emotionally while pursuing a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the organization. We are honored to have played a role in advising on CKME's bright future."

*Classical Kids Live! is the leading provider of school and family concert series programming for major symphony orchestras throughout North America. Each year, nearly 100,000 children and their family members enjoy these magically staged concerts designed to bring to life the extraordinary lives and the musical masterpieces of the great classical composers.*



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