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To the Region of Waterloo Council,

My name is Evan Mitchell and I am the former Assistant Conductor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra.

When I was nine years old, I attended my very first symphony concert at Centre in the Square. This was an educational engagement program with the KW Symphony. It served as an introduction to the orchestra for young people, and culminated in a performance of Peter and the Wolf, a classic children's symphonic tale.

This had a formative experience on my life which initially manifested itself as simply a great love for the orchestra, and for the endless wondrous music it performs, live in concert, week after week. As I learned more, and grew as a person, an orchestral career came to be my goal. Imagine my pride as I became this fine orchestra's Assistant Conductor, enjoying the privilege of introducing literally thousands of children to shared live experiences of truly great art.

I was, in fact, scheduled to perform several concerts with the KWS this season, our first rehearsal mere hours before the initial notice to musicians of suspension of operations in September. My most sincere hope is that my shock and despair matches your own, at this tragic turn of events.

Currently I serve as Music Director of the Kingston Symphony, a position I won while I was still the KWS' Assistant Conductor. My time in this position has come to reinforce my certainty that a robust arts scene is one of the true hallmarks of a city considered to be a magnificent place in which to live and thrive.

Orchestras are overwhelmingly named after the cities in which they serve. Live orchestral performance is a civic duty for the citizens it represents. Nowhere was this truer than with the KWS. Whether it be to nurture the growth of young, inquisitive minds, to entertain after a weary work week, or to lift up and nourish the souls of people looking to be inspired, to be captivated... this orchestra served the region with distinction for decades, and touched the lives of hundreds of thousands.

It is my experience that having an orchestra of the calibre and resplendence of artistry as the KWS is not only exceedingly rare and precious, but virtually irreplaceable once it's gone.

Right now, this very moment, represents arguably the most critical moment for the possibility of this organization's future. I cannot stress enough the importance of your support, financial and otherwise, for the Players Association of the KWS, who are working tirelessly to find a

path forward to continuing the great legacy of the orchestra. In partnership with the AFM union, they are exceedingly confident that they will soon have an organization in place for this very purpose. It is imperative that you continue to fund this association as it represents the future of orchestral music in the region.

The announcement of the insolvency of the KWS was one of the great civic losses of Kitchener-Waterloo's history. It is a staggering defeat for quality of life, and for cultural service for KW's citizens. As council, you have the power at this critical moment to claw back this loss, to rescue the orchestra from the absolute brink. I urge you in the strongest terms to voice your full-throated support, and commit to continuing funding for the KWSPA in order to begin the process of resurrection, and save the largest arts organization in the region.

It goes without saying that these are challenging times. Hope, fulfilment, and wonder are in unbearably short supply. Ironically, these are the currencies an orchestra deals with in its daily stock and trade. I am begging you to not let the book close on the KWS. You can help turn this situation around, and help restore the quality of life of all the region's citizens. The power is yours.

With humility, and no small measure of hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Evan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Mitchell".

Evan Mitchell  
Former Assistant Conductor, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony