

Assets of bankrupt Syracuse symphony go to Cultural Resources Council, Onondaga Historical Association and Syracuse University

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Melinda Johnson / Post-Standard arts editor
By

Syracuse, NY - M & T Bank has closed the books on what's left of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

The bank's regional president Allen J. Naples announced the dispersal of the SSO's assets to three community groups at a news conference this morning at the Onondaga Historical Association. The bank was the main secured creditor for SSO assets when it **filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in May.**

Naples said the orchestra's instruments, including a Steinway piano, and computer and electronic equipment would be donated to the **Cultural Resources Council** of Syracuse and Onondaga County. The SSO's sheet music, considered to be the most valuable asset, will be given to the **Setnor School of Music** at Syracuse University. **Onondaga Historical Association** will receive the orchestra's archives, albums and paintings.



File photo

Allen J. Naples of M&T Bank.

"M&T's intention all along was to keep these items in the community. We just had to figure out a way through the legal process to make sure we did that properly," Naples said.

In making his announcement, Naples was joined by Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney, CRC Executive Director Stephen Butler, Director of the Setnor School Patrick M. Jones and OHA Executive Director Gregg Tripoli.

"This is a very valuable donation to the community. It's in hundreds of thousands of dollars," said Mahoney in thanking Naples and **M & T.**

Naples said M & T developed plans for the SSO's assets long before the orchestra filed for bankruptcy. He conferred with David Ridings, chairman of the Syracuse Symphony Foundation, and Fran Nichols, SSO board president from 2005 to 2008, before making his decision. Naples said the bank could not act on its plans until after bankruptcy proceedings were done.

The final arrangements for donating the assets were completed in the last 10 days. Naples said the transfer of everything should be done within 30 days.

He confirmed M & T fielded offers from parties across the country interested in buying the SSO's sheet music or some

instruments. "We evaluated that and we made a decision as to where was the best value to the community and that was to stay here."



Peter Chen / The Post-Standard

The SSO's Steinway piano, worth about \$55,000, in storage at the John H. Mulroy Civic Center in Syracuse.

Naples all said these items must remain in the community. "It can't be sold; it can't be transferred," he said.

Directors of the organizations receiving donations said the instruments and sheet music would remain available to existing and future arts groups and to a new symphony. They did not specifically name Syracuse Philharmonic, the recently formed music organization that aims to continue symphony music in Syracuse.

The assets were divided among three organizations because of the logistical difficulties of any one group housing and preserving everything from

archives to sheet music and instruments. Butler said the CRC would establish rules for lending instruments to professional groups, which would include obtaining music insurance. He said the Steinway piano requires delicacy in moving and tuning, factors in determining who would receive approval.

Most of the instruments remain in storage at the John H. Mulroy Civic Center. In the SSO's musical collection is the 9-foot-long Model D Steinway piano, worth about \$55,000, about \$40,000 in percussion instruments, including drums, chimes, cymbals, cow bells and gongs and a Yamaha Celeste piano with a value of \$12,000.

The SSO's music library will be maintained by SU's **College of Visual and Performing Arts** and the **School of Information Studies**. Butler said the sheet music is about a "room full."

Jon Garland, spokesman for the former SSO musicians, is encouraged by the placement of the instruments and music library.

"I think it's positive all the assets are remaining in the community," he said. Garland expects the SSO sheet music will be available to Symphony Syracuse, a temporary orchestra former SSO musicians started in late spring.

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Earlier today after the morning news conference: **M & T Bank donates assets of bankrupt Syracuse Symphony.**

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