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**AUBURN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT WINDFALL  
ASSURED OF A STRONG FUTURE**

**Auburn, WA, March 2, 2006:** On the eve of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Auburn Symphony Orchestra received a \$75,000 bequest last week from long time supporter Gertie Sprenger, assuring this fully professional orchestra a positive financial future.

“Arts organizations struggle even in good economic times, and a year ago we set some ambitious fiscal goals. This windfall, together with the substantial support we received last year from King County and a major bequest from another big supporter Jane Gattavara, will ensure ASO has the financial stability to enter our second decade with confidence,” said ASO president Barbara Gehrett. “How typical of Gertie Sprenger’s generous nature to leave a wonderful legacy to her community – the gift of music.”

The check was presented by Gertie's son Jim Sprenger at a reception honoring founding member Herman Ansingh for his support over the past ten years. His leadership and fundraising efforts helped jumpstart the ASO, bringing reality to the founders’ dream of a professional orchestra of the highest caliber for South King County.

Gertie Sprenger, who died in April last year at 91, began her love of classical music in the railroad camps of Alaska, where her father worked. She loved Auburn, living there for more than 60 years. In 2002, she was declared an Auburn Hometown Hero, for helping make Auburn a better place. She was a vital force in forming the Auburn Symphony and never missed a performance.

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According to Jim Sprenger: “From the beginning, my mother was thrilled with the idea of a professional symphony orchestra in Auburn, especially with Stewart Kershaw, Pacific Northwest Ballet music director, at the reins. She rooted for ASO throughout its first ten years and so badly wanted them to succeed. She was well aware of the financial challenges of starting a fully professional orchestra. That is why she left money to the Auburn Symphony.”

Classical music lover Jane Gattavara, who died last September, made a generous gift of \$25,000 to the ASO. She was an avid collector of the ASO’s performance CDs and made regular donations to the orchestra.

In 2005 King County allocated \$80,000 to the ASO in recognition of its mission to foster the joy of music in the region through performances of unsurpassed quality

The ASO’s next symphony performance is Saturday & Sunday, April 29 & 30, 2006 at the Auburn Performing Arts Center. The next chamber concert for winds is on Sunday, May 21 at the Auburn Mountainview High School auditorium. For further information visit [www.auburnsymphony.org](http://www.auburnsymphony.org), e-mail: [auburnsymphony@trillium.org](mailto:auburnsymphony@trillium.org) or call 253-939-8509 to reserve tickets.

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**Photo attached:** Taken at the moment when realization of the bequest’s extent set in – it was sheer joy. From left music director and co-founder Stewart Kershaw, current president Barbara Gehrettt, and incoming president Jim Blanchard.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Auburn Symphony Orchestra (ASO), a 501C3 not-for-profit corporation, was founded in 1996, spearheaded by Stewart Kershaw, music director of Seattle's Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB), and Josie Emmons Turner, then cultural director for the City of Auburn. Its purpose was to provide professional musicians from the PNB’s orchestra and related organizations an opportunity to give concerts on stage.

The ASO is a fully professional orchestra, now comprised of more than 60 musicians from PNB, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Northwest Sinfonietta and other orchestras. It is conducted by co-founder Stewart Kershaw and is managed by a Board of committed music lovers. The ASO currently presents three programs a season, two in collaboration with the City of Auburn’s Arts Commission’s Bravo! Series\*. Performances are held at the Auburn Performing Arts Center and free educational lectures are provided pre-performance. Each year the ASO invites aspiring young musicians from local schools to audition to play with the orchestra. Free parking is available.

In January 2006, ASO launched a Chamber Ensemble with the intention of presenting at least two Chamber concerts a year. Performances are held at the Auburn Mountainview High School auditorium.