

Chamber Music America

April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

Chamber Music America (CMA), the national organization for the chamber music profession, is pleased to serve as a co-sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2010. CMA's membership of more than 6,000 includes musicians, ensembles, concert presenters, festivals, composers, training institutions, managers, music businesses, and enthusiasts who create, perform, and present numerous styles of small ensemble music from Western classical to contemporary, jazz, and world music genres.

Chamber Music America serves as the hub of this national community by providing direct financial support through our grant programs, offering ongoing career development services, and providing resources and information to this artist-centered field. Chamber musicians are largely part of the self-employed, freelance workforce of the U.S., with the same concerns that other self-employed workers face such as lack of health insurance and sporadic wages from seasonal or project-specific employment. Concert presenters are as challenged as many small businesses with few lines of credit currently available and high health insurance costs for staff.

On behalf of the national chamber music field, Chamber Music America respectfully urges Congress to:

- ❖ enact the FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act, setting a uniform national policy for all airlines regarding musical instruments as carry-on luggage. Airlines currently have a 45-linear inch limitation for carry-on baggage; violins and violas exceed this limit by more than 10 inches. It is not feasible for valuable and highly fragile instruments to be transported as checked baggage.
- ❖ support a budget of \$180 million for the NEA in the FY 2011 Interior Appropriations bill. Foundations and corporations have dramatically reduced their funding for the arts over the past two years. Funding at the national level is essential for the vitality and longevity of the cultural sector.
- ❖ increase funding by \$10 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges in the FY 2011 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. Chamber groups would not only benefit from the increased residency, performance, and mentoring opportunities that this funding would provide, but would be outstanding ambassadors for American culture and cultural exchange.
- ❖ improve the artist visa process by enacting the Arts Require Timely Service Act, which will reduce the total processing time for petitions filed by non-profit arts-related organizations to a maximum of 45 days. The performance postponements and cancellations that have resulted because of current practices have caused concert presenters to lose revenue, adversely affecting their annual bottom lines.

Chamber Music America encourages you to support policies and legislation that will benefit the thousands of chamber music professionals whose work impacts the cultural landscape of America.

Cordially,



Margaret M. Lioi
Chief Executive Officer

305 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001-6008
(212) 242-2022 phone (212) 242-7955 fax
www.chamber-music.org