



Hawaii Youth Symphony

April 8, 2009

The Hon. Todd Apo, Council Chair
The Hon. Nester Garcia, Budget Committee Chair
Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, HI 96813

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CITY CLERK
HONOLULU, HAWAII

RE: Restore MOCA's Proposed Budget Cuts

Dear Council Chair Apo and Budget Chair Garcia:

We have just been informed of the efforts to remove more than \$172,000 from the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts's budget. While we understand the need for our city's leaders to make difficult decisions regarding the budget, we are asking that you please not take such drastic measures that will irreparably harm to the arts community.

With such a significant cut to MOCA's budget, the grants programs will certainly be cut. As a recipient of a grant from MOCA, I can tell you that the small investment that the City makes in the Hawaii Youth Symphony is well worth the value. With assistance from the City, HYS is able to accomplish the following:

- Service more than 600 students a year, providing high quality music education that is filling the gaps left by our under-resourced school system;
- Produce free, educational concerts, targeted at school children, and reaching nearly 10,000 students a year;
- Through the HYS Academy, offer free general music and beginning band classes at the Boys and Girls Club for any interested student.

Our programs are providing jobs for some of Hawaii's finest music educators, and they are providing educational opportunities that our young people cannot find elsewhere due to cuts from every sector.

As you both know, we have extraordinary creative talent in our small state. The arts is a sector that deserves to be supported and protected to ensure the health and well being of our communities. The loss of an arts organization as a casualty to these economic times will have greater impact than most people calculate because the possibility of resurrecting an arts organization, once the economy rebounds, will be incredibly challenging, if not impossible. It takes tremendous talent, dedication, sweat equity and lots of luck to build an arts organization. The right combination of all these conditions is not easy to find. And those have to be in place before we can even address the funding aspects of rebuilding. Please do not let our arts organizations wither and disappear.

We are asking for continued support for MOCA to help the art sector preserve jobs and continue to offer programming for our young people that will complete their education and keep our communities healthy.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Selena Ching
Executive Director

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