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Photo: Steve Downing

Photo caption: Emma Frey flamenco dances to the music of the Quincy Symphony Orchestra during the Fiesta Family Concert in November, 2009.

Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association Awarded State-wide Honor

The Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association (QSOA) has received the 2011 Illinois Council of Orchestras (ICO) award in the category Community Relations of the Year. These highly sought-after awards provide statewide recognition to both individuals and their organizations. The Community Relations Award is for outstanding collaborative efforts with other entities in the 2009-2010 season.

“It’s fantastic for the QSOA to be recognized at the state level for the depth of community involvement within our programs” said Jane Polett, QSOA manager, and winner of the 2008 ICO General Manager of the Year award.

The QSOA regularly collaborates with other arts and non-arts organizations in the community. However, the ‘09-10 season included three projects of special merit: the *Fiesta!*

Family Concert, the *Stories, Tales, and Fables* Young People's Concerts, and the *Chichester Psalms* Finale Concert.

The *Fiesta! Family Concert*, a celebration of Hispanic culture, included pre-concert games and crafts in conjunction with the Quincy Junior High Spanish Club. All activities were provided free of charge and children attended the concert for free. During the intermission, Hispanic women from the community provided Mexican sweets for the audience. The Quincy Area Youth Chorus performed Spanish songs in the lobby while the audience enjoyed the treats. Collaboration with the St. Louis Cultural Flamenco Society showcased Emma Frey in an original choreography of Manuel De Falla's *Dance of the Miller's Wife* and *Fandango*. The QSOA also joined with the youth group of Union United Methodist Church to hold a food drive at the concert for the local Salvation Army.

Another project of merit was collaboration with an upper-level arts and marketing class of Quincy University throughout spring 2010. Students divided into four faux "Marketing Companies" and tackled two major projects. The first was to enhance QSO's annual Young People's performances. The orchestra performed three in-school concerts of *Stories, Tales and Fables* at no charge to 3,500 children from 35 schools, many experiencing live symphonic music for the first time. In collaboration with the Baldwin Intermediate School Drama Club, a young reader brought Todd Goodman's *Some Assembly Required* to life. Local storyteller Mettazee Morris also enriched the tales. The QU students worked with the QSO to develop a visual accompaniment to the music for projection onto two screens at the concerts.

The QU group also worked with the QSO Board and staff to enhance the QSO finale concert, a performance of Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* by the QSO, Quincy Symphony Chorus, Culver-Stockton College Concert Choir, and the Quincy University Concert Choir. The marketing class developed flash video graphics for the QSOA website, Facebook, and other internet marketing, along with production of a television commercial in conjunction with WGEM-TV. An audience survey, raffle fundraising signage, a newspaper ad and a YouTube

commercial were also produced.

Others entities the QSOA worked alongside included the Quincy Conservatory, the Salem Church Handbell Choir, True Men A Capella Singers of Truman University, vocal and instrumental soloists, and the Kohls A-Team volunteers.

The QSOA also has several ongoing projects within the community. Four area colleges include the orchestra in their catalogs as a credit class for music majors. This is an important recruitment tool for these colleges, which do not have orchestras of their own. The Encore volunteer council of the QSOA provides annual music camp scholarships and provides financial support to Quincy's high school music programs through its Symphony of Trees fundraiser. The QSOA welcomes children each season with free admission to all concerts. The Youth Orchestra and Youth Chorus programs are offered tuition-free to families with financial need.

“Our goal is to be as accessible as possible to all facets of our community at large and to be a true community partner,” Polett said.