



DOCKET ITEM #7
Special Use Permit # 2021-00119
711 Princess Street – Classical Movements

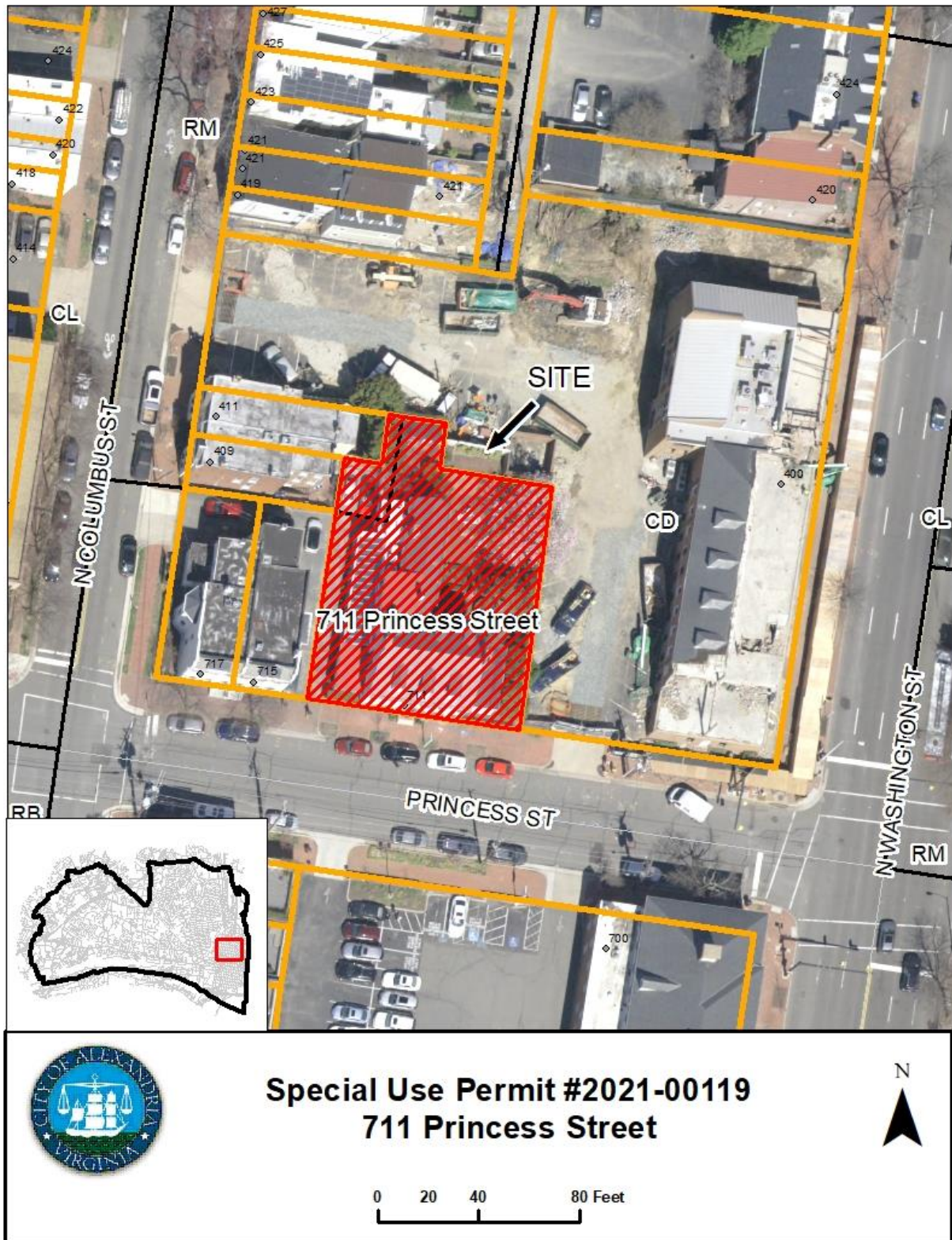
Application	General Data	
	Planning Commission Hearing:	February 1, 2022
Public Hearing and consideration of (1) a one-year Special Use Permit review and (2) a request to extend the hours for indoor and outdoor live entertainment, to expand the number of seats for outdoor dining and outdoor live entertainment, to permit amplified sound to allow a parking reduction, for indoor and outdoor live entertainment and outdoor dining use (amending Special Use Permit #2020-00102)	City Council Hearing:	February 12, 2022
Address: 711 Princess Street	Zone:	CD
Applicant: Blue Heart Travel, Inc., dba Classical Movements, represented by Neeta Helms	Small Area Plan:	Braddock Road Metro Station

Staff Recommendation:

APPROVAL in conformance with the staff report.

Staff Reviewers: Ann Horowitz, ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov
Tony LaColla, anthony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov

PROJECT LOCATION MAP



I. DISCUSSION

The Special Use Permit (SUP) #2021-00119 review represents a City Council one-year review of an SUP and its conditions for indoor and outdoor live entertainment and for outdoor dining uses at 711 Princess Street. Added to this SUP review are condition amendments, requested of the applicant, Blue Heart Travel, Inc., dba Classical Movements, for an extension of the hours for indoor and outdoor live entertainment, an expansion of the number of seats for outdoor dining and outdoor live entertainment, permission for amplified sound, and for a parking reduction.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is an 8,491 square foot lot of record and is developed with a 5,642 square foot commercial building, constructed circa 1785 (Figure 1). Open space behind and on the east side of the building measures approximately 2,849 square feet and is landscaped as a garden with patio area, where the business conducts concerts, outdoor dining and special events. A driveway and two parking spaces exist to the east of the building.



Figure 1: 711 Princess Street

A mix of commercial and residential uses surround the applicant's property. Commercial and residential properties share property lines with 711 Princess Street to the east, and the senior living facility, Sunrise of Old Town, shares property lines to the north and west (Figure 2). The surrounding uses' property lines range between 10 and 60 feet from the stages the applicant uses for performances.



Figure 2: Surrounding uses: subject property is outlined in red; abutting commercial properties are outlined in blue; abutting residential properties are outlined in purple; and the Sunrise of Old Town is outlined in green.

BACKGROUND

I. Applicant business uses

Classical Movements at 711 Princess Street has organized concert tours, nationally and internationally, for orchestras and choirs since 1992. This function is defined as a business and professional office use in the City's Zoning Ordinance. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, cancellations of in-person concert performances world-wide resulted, and Classical Movements sought to diversify its business to remain economically viable. In March 2021, the applicant received City Council approval of SUP #2020-00102 for a live entertainment use for indoor and outdoor concerts and for a restaurant and outdoor dining use for special events, such as weddings.

Businesses that hold special events where food is served are categorized as restaurant uses in the Zoning Ordinance. The private, ticketed outdoor concerts were staged at two locations in the rear yard, where weddings also took place.

II. City Council Review of SUP #2020-00102

In addition to standard SUP conditions and staff conditions to mitigate impacts, City Council amended and added several conditions to SUP #2020-00102 during the public hearing to reduce the potential for noise impacts on nearby residents and to ensure compliance with the City Code noise ordinance. The amended and added conditions were:

2. CONDITION AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL: Indoor live entertainment, restaurant and outdoor dining are permitted ~~on Saturdays and Sundays~~daily, between 10 a.m. and 10 9 p.m. ~~(P&Z) (PC) (CC)~~
10. CONDITION AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL: ~~The indoor live entertainment, restaurant and outdoor dining uses must comply with the city's noise ordinance. No indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 10:00 9 PM. (T&ES) (PC) (CC)~~
23. CONDITION AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL: The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the Special Use Permit one year after it has been operational and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council ~~if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the Director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation; or (c) the Director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed~~ one year from SUP approval at the February 2022 hearings. (P&Z) (CC)
24. CONDITION AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL: The maximum number of outdoor seats for live entertainment shall ~~comply with the Virginia Uniform Statewide building code;~~ be 50. City Council approval is required for an SUP amendment to increase outdoor seating over 50 for live entertainment. (P&Z) (PC) (CC)
25. CONDITION AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL: Outdoor live entertainment is limited to four hours a day and is permitted on Friday and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. and Sundays through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. (P&Z) (PC) (CC)
29. CONDITION ADDED BY CITY COUNCIL: Within thirty days after the third representative concert to be held following the SUP approval, the applicant shall submit a report on his conducting noise measurements during three representative concert events using the service of a professional acoustic consultant to verify compliance with the City noise code at all property lines including those of 409 and 411 N. Columbus properties. City staff shall be invited to observe the measurements of the consultant. (CC)
30. CONDITION ADDED BY CITY COUNCIL: If the results of the noise measurements show non-compliance with the noise code, the applicant shall submit a mitigation plan to

the City within one month from the date of the report submission and implement all mitigation measures within two months from the submission date of the mitigation plan, all to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. During this period of non-compliance, the applicant shall apply for a temporary noise variance permit. (CC)

31. CONDITION ADDED BY CITY COUNCIL: Amplified sound is not permitted. (CC)

III. SUP condition compliance

Staff presents an outline of the applicant's compliance with the conditions of SUP #2021-00102 since its approval in March 2021 for City Council consideration.

A. SUP warnings and citations

Zoning inspectors issued the following warnings and citations for non-compliance with SUP conditions since the March 2021 SUP approval:

April 9, 2021	Verbal warning issued for violation of Condition #31 for amplified sound.
June 8, 2021	Citation issued for June 5, 2021 event violation of Condition #31 for amplified sound.
June 29, 2021	Warning notice issued for violation of Condition #25 for outdoor live entertainment past 8 p.m.
August 5, 2021	Citation issued for violation of Condition #25 for outdoor live entertainment past 8 p.m.

Additionally, staff received complaints from a resident, who shares a property line with the business, regarding noise levels that interfered with the enjoyment of his property, however, these did not result in documented warnings or citations as City staff were not on-site to measure and verify noncompliant noise levels.

B. SUP Noise Compliance Testing – Condition #29

The applicant worked diligently with the City's Transportation & Environmental Services staff to comply with Condition #29, to collect noise measurements for three representative concerts, and with Condition #30, to submit a noise mitigation plan if noise measurements were found to exceed the permissible noise levels of 60 dB(A) as measured at the property lines. Classical Movements conducted noise compliance testing during three concert events that took place on April 25, May 27 and July 23, 2021. City staff was present at all three concerts to conduct noise measurements independently of those obtained by the applicant's consultant. The applicant submitted to the City the initial noise compliance testing report on August 20, 2021 and an amended report on October 18, 2021.

City noise measurements were conducted based on the measurement procedures written in the noise code section 11-5-5(2). As such, no readings that would have been affected by other noise sources such as a passing truck or aircraft were recorded. Table I shows the results whereby the median readings of a series of nine consecutive readings taken at least 20 seconds apart were derived and compared to the maximum permissible limit of 60 dB(A) as stipulated by the noise

ordinance in effect at that time. These results clearly demonstrated that all three concert events had noise readings that exceeded 60 dB(A).

The noise measurements conducted by the applicant's consultant are summarized in Table II and include only those measurements for the last two events of May 27 and July 23 since for the first event of April 25, the consultant's noise meter was not equipped with a noise calibrator and could not provide comparable results to the ones used by City staff. Again, the results from the applicant's consultant also indicated that the median noise readings for these two concert events exceeded the permissible level of 60 dB(A).

TABLE I – Noise Compliance Testing During Three Concert Events – City Staff Measurements

[illegible]

TABLE II – Noise Measurements by Classical Movements Consultant

	5/27/2021																7/23/2021																	
	Kenedy Center Opera House																Savory Soiree: Bastille Day																	
	Bob O'Hara																Bob O'Hara																	
Time																																		
Location	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
Meter calibration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Wind Condition																																		
1	53.3	63.4	49.3	65.7	52.8	55.6	55.3	54.6	53.2	53.5	49.8	63.2	49.7	52.5	50.3	58	56.3	47.1	53.4	56.6	61.5	59.3	57.3	58.3	53.4	55.6	63	50.1	58.1	53.3	53.3	67.6	56.2	58.1
2	53.3	60.4	51	59.8	51.7	58.7	54.2	54.3	53.1	55.5	52.3	50.8	51.3	68.5	47.3	57.6	76.4	50.1	72.4	58.3	59.7	61.4	57.1	57.8	53.3	55.9	68.9	51.6	60.3	54.4	54.4	66.2	56.1	57
3	47.8	66.8	46.4	62.8	53.4	56.1	52.9	55.4	53	55.9	52.1	56.8	51.4	57.6	48.4	58.1	72.4	54.1	57.7	53.8	62.7	61.1	56.3	57.3	50.6	56.4	59	52.6	70.2	55	53.5	70.8	56.6	57.1
4	57.3	67.4	53.5	58.2	55.4	55.1	56.9	53.7	56.1	52.7	53.5	59.7	57.1	58.5	51.4	58.4	73.5	50.3	54.7	53.2	57.2	58.2	61.5	58.6	55	59.5	55.4	52.6	62.2	55.6	54.9	67.2	55.8	57.2
5	56.5	69.4	48.6	62.2	52.2	60.3	56.4	53.5	53.8	54.5	55.9	61.6	55.2	58.4	52.8	60	64.5	47.7	54.9	52.3	61.2	59.6	55.1	57.8	52.5	54.5	50.3	53.2	56.6	54	55.6	55.2	56.6	56.5
6	53.8	73.2	45.6	69.2	51.2	57.3	54.9	54.8	52.9	57.5	54	55.4	57.3	58.2	49.8	58.2	57.3	49.9	59.5	54	57.8	59	54.6	58.4	50.3	54.7	62.2	52.3	49.6	54.4	53.7	57.9	56.8	58
7	55.4	72.3	48.6	56.9	52.9	55.4	57	57.8	51.8	57.8	49.1	57.6	53.8	56.3	50.6	57.7	70.8	48.1	60	55.4	58	61.4	55.6	57.8	54.5	54.9	53.4	50.8	53.8	55.1	55.7	48.5	56	56.9
8	52.4	67.4	55.5	66.5	50.3	63.8	54.1	55.5	52.2	57.5	52.8	57.5	54	64.1	53.1	58.3	54.4	50.2	69.6	56.5	64.3	59.4	61.2	57.9	57.2	54	49.5	51.9	69.1	54.6	54.7	58.1	57.1	57.5
9	58.3	73.3	48.1	58.9	48.9	58.6	56.2	55.7	51.9	59.6	50.8	60.2	55.9	56.7	54	57.6	70	47.4	64.2	53.8	58.5	60	64.5	61.2	53.9	56.4	70.3	50.9	70.4	53.8	53.6	69.5	56.6	58.3
Median	53.8	67.4	48.6	62.2	52.2	57.3	55.3	54.8	53	55.9	52.3	57.6	54	58.2	50.6	58.1	70.8	49.9	59.5	54.0	59.7	59.6	56.3	57.9	53.4	55.6	59.0	51.9	60.3	54.4	54.4	66.2	56.6	57.2

1. Revised Noise Ordinance

The City Council adopted a revised noise ordinance on December 18, 2021. Accordingly, the maximum permissible noise limits (MPNL) at the property lines are determined by the property use category of the noise source. The daytime (7 a.m. to 11 p.m.) MPNL for commercial uses increased from 60 dB(A) to 65 dB(A). Moving forward, the applicant's operations must now adhere to the maximum noise limit of 65 dB(A) at its property lines. Although, more of the noise readings fall below 65 dB(A), staff recognized that some still exceed, and others fall within the margin of error of, the new, higher limit. For this reason, staff found that the noise measurements continued to indicate non-compliance with the noise code and submission of a mitigation plan was necessary, as required in Condition #30.

C. Noise Mitigation Plan – Condition #30

The applicant submitted the final noise mitigation plan dated November 18, 2021. The specific actions in this plan are:

- Sound proofing would be installed along the western property line, as suggested by its sound mitigation experts. The structure would be 18 feet wide and ten-feet high and constructed of noise-reducing materials. There would be three panels, each six feet wide, placed between four, ten-foot high pillars. They will be erected about six-feet apart along the western fence wall, inside the 711 Princess property line, from which these sound buffering materials can be hung.
- Additional plywood would be installed up to the height of the existing fence at the location adjacent to 411 N. Columbus Street.
- Tall trees, bushes and plants at the property lines would be planted.
- Suggest that the audience limit clapping to short durations as these contribute to some of the loudest noise readings.
- Use of three different performance stages, which would be selected based on the type of instruments, weather, artist's express priorities and other artistic decisions.
- Two staff members on-site during concerts to monitor the music and audience noise levels and take readings with a decibel meter.
- Conduct programs featuring soft Jazz, Classical Music, Folk, Opera, Cabaret/Musicals/Broadway, Flamenco, and similar generally soft and pleasant music. Dance bands or disc jockeys would not be allowed.

PROPOSAL

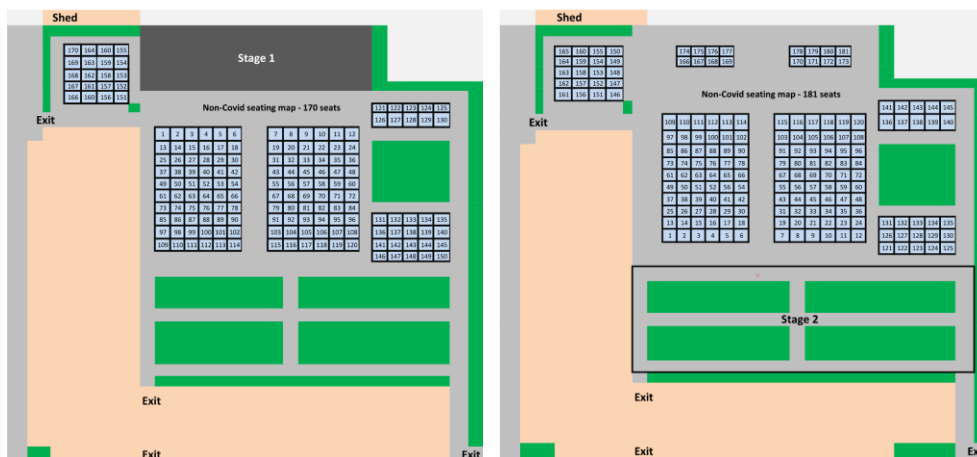
This SUP report represents a City Council one-year evaluation of the business operation guided by the conditions of SUP #2020-00102, as required in Condition 23, and includes a simultaneous consideration of condition amendments proposed by the applicant. Although the applicant, Blue Heart Travel, Inc., dba Classical Movements, continues to engage in tour sales and proposals for 2022, it does not anticipate a return to a full concert tour scheduled until 2023. As such, outdoor garden concerts remain an important source of income, leading to the condition amendment requests to intensify the indoor and outdoor live entertainment and outdoor dining uses.

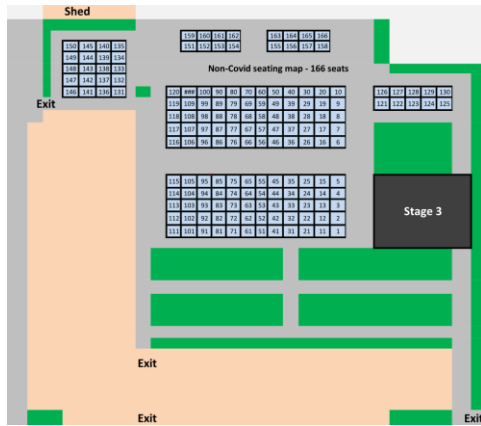
The applicant's website provides an example of the number of events scheduled between February and June 2022: one indoor concert and dinner in February, four outdoor concerts in March; six outdoor concerts in April; eight outdoor concerts in May; and five outdoor concerts in June. The one-hour outdoor concerts are posted as typically taking place on Tuesdays and Thursdays with start times of 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

The applicant's proposed amendments to the conditions of SUP #2020-00119 are:

- Condition 2: Amend the closing hour for indoor live entertainment from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. and remove the restaurant and outdoor dining reference since the applicant believes these are accessory uses and do not qualify as SUP uses.
- Condition 4: Delete the condition for the limitation of 50 seats for outdoor dining since it believes the outdoor dining use is an accessory use and does not qualify as an SUP use.
- Condition 10: Amend to indicate that no indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 10 p.m. instead of after 9 p.m.
- Condition 24: Amend the number of seats for outdoor live entertainment from 50 to 181 seats (Figures 3-5).
- Condition 25: Amend to allow outdoor live entertainment daily between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. instead of Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. and Sundays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Condition 31: Delete condition to allow for amplified sound.

Given that the applicant proposes an increase in number of seats for outdoor concerts in Condition 24 to 181 seats, 48 off-street parking spaces would be required for the office and the SUP uses. The applicant provides 10 off-street parking spaces resulting in the need for SUP approval of a 38-space parking reduction.





Figures 3-5: Proposed seating and stage location options submitted by applicant

PARKING

Section 8-200 (A)(8) of the Zoning Ordinance requires theaters, auditoriums and assembly halls to provide one off-street parking space for every four seats. With an auditorium style seating arrangement, the applicant is required to provide 46 parking spaces in addition to the two spaces for its office use, for a total of 48 spaces. The business provides 10 parking spaces -- two spaces on-site, four spaces at 715 Princess Street and four spaces at 300 N. Washington Street -- requiring SUP approval for a 38-space parking reduction.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION AND CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Use Requirements

The applicant's business and professional office is a permitted use in the CD zone, pursuant to Section 4-502. Section 4-503(A) requires SUP approval for any use with live entertainment. Outdoor dining with over 40 seats requires SUP approval in accordance with Section 11-513(M)(3), due to the potential of impacts in an outdoor environment. Since the previous SUP approval, staff has observed that the applicant infrequently holds indoor special events where food is served (defined as a restaurant in the Zoning Ordinance) and finds that the indoor restaurant use could qualify as an accessory use, pursuant to Section 2-104, and would not require SUP approval.

City Council Review of Special Use Permits

Section 11-501 of the Zoning Ordinance details the City Council's authority in its review of Special Use Permits: "The city council may approve an application for a special use permit provided for in this ordinance if the proposed location is appropriate for the use and if the proposed use or structure will be designed and operated so as to avoid, minimize or mitigate any potentially adverse effects on the neighborhood as a whole or other properties in the vicinity."

Further, City Council considerations for SUP proposal reviews are found in Section 11-504. Section 11-504(B)(8) states, "Notwithstanding any other provisions of the city code, whether the proposed use will have noise characteristics that exceed the sound levels that are typical of permitted uses in the zone."

Historic District Requirements

Given the location within the Old and Historic District, any permanent exterior changes require BAR approval.

Master Plan Designation

The property at 711 Princess Street is sited within the Braddock Road Metro Station Small Area Plan and the supplemental Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan, which designate the lot for commercial use.

City Code of Ordinances

The noise ordinance requirements of Section 11-5-5 of the City Code of Ordinances establishes the maximum decibel levels to be measured at the noise source's property lines. The maximum decibel level allowed at the property lines surrounding 711 Princess Street is 65 dB(A).

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the one-year SUP review, proposed condition amendments and the parking reduction to the extent noted in Section III of this report. The implementation of a noise mitigation plan (Condition #32), including the applicant's self-monitoring of noise levels (Condition #33), and a limitation on late night hours and number of outdoor patrons would balance the applicant's ability to financially succeed with the City's responsibility to limit noise impacts on nearby residents who directly abut the property at 711 Princess Street.

Conditions from SUP #2021-00102 have been carried forward and recommended amendments and deletions are outlined in Section III with a discussion of each in this staff analysis. Given that the indoor restaurant use has proven to be an accessory use to the by-right business and professional office, the restaurant reference in Conditions #2 and #3 has been deleted. Consistent with other SUP restaurant uses with indoor live entertainment, staff also recommends amending Condition #2 to allow indoor live entertainment until 11 p.m., as requested by the applicant, given that noise levels are reduced when indoor doors and windows remain closed, as required in amended Condition #10.

Although the applicant requested 181 patrons at outdoor live entertainment events, staff recommends limiting the attendance to 100 to control noise. Figures 3-5 indicate that the placement of 166-181 guests would extend closer to the residential properties to the west and to the property lines shared with Sunrise of Old Town. Noise measurements conducted during the three sample concerts identified that noise from the patrons at the end of performances and in between sets often resulted in noise levels over 65 dB(A), exceeding the current noise ordinance requirement. Limiting the patrons to 100 would allow the applicant to concentrate the seating within the main body of the courtyard, closest to the building at 711 Princess Street, and the farthest away from residents.

With 100 seats, the applicant's total parking requirement would fall to 27 off-street spaces. As it provides 10 off-street spaces on-site and at properties within 1,000 feet of 711 Princess Street, a parking reduction of 17 spaces is required to comply with Section 8 of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommends approval of a 17-space parking reduction as the applicant directs patrons to the availability of mass transit, to the nearby North Alfred Street garage and to the surface parking lot at the corner of Cameron and St. Asaph Streets, satisfying Conditions #14 and #15. In addition,

the applicant is required to maintain parking agreements for at least eight off-street parking spaces at sites within 1,000 feet of the business in Condition #11.

As in Condition #24, staff has increased the number of seats from 50 to 100 for outdoor dining in Condition 4. Although the applicant requested the deletion of this condition as it deemed the outdoor dining use an accessory use, staff maintains that the outdoor dining use should remain part of the SUP to ensure through conditions that nearby residents do not experience impacts from noise, odors and cleanliness, commonly associated with outdoor dining. Hours for outdoor dining remain as 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. (previously noted in Condition #2) and the outdoor area must be cleaned no later than 10 p.m., required in amended Condition #5.

In response to the applicant's request to extend outdoor live entertainment daily between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. in Condition #25, staff finds 10 p.m. to potentially interfere with the well-being of residents in the immediate area. An extra source of noise measuring 65 dB(A) at the shared property lines after the currently conditioned 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 8 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday could still be potentially disruptive for some residents who wish to retire for the day. Further, although music would end at 10 p.m. in the applicant's proposed scenario, noise would continue past this hour while up to 100 patrons disperse from rear yard and out to the streets, extending neighborhood impacts later than 10 p.m. Staff continues to recommend existing Condition #25, which the City Council specifically amended in March 2021 to limit noise impacts, allowing outdoor concerts on Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., and on Sundays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Given City Council's March 2021 restriction for amplified sound in Condition #31 due to the potential for noise impacts on neighbors, staff is not supportive of the applicant-requested deletion of this condition. All test measurements occurred without amplified sound and the probability exists that the use of amplifiers on a regular basis would elevate noise readings. Nonetheless, recognizing the applicant's interest in short-term amplified music to accompany wedding parties, staff proposes a condition amendment to accommodate only wedding events by allowing an electric piano or other similar instruments with soft tones as background music for short durations. Public address systems and bands would not be permitted during wedding events, however.

With the applicant's and staff's completion of the noise readings at three representative concerts and the development of a noise mitigation plan, staff has deleted Conditions #29 and #30. Added Condition #32 requires the implementation of the noise mitigation plan prior to the first event should City Council approved this SUP. Although the noise standard was recently approved for an increase from 60 dB(A) to 65 dB(A), staff believes the noise mitigation plan and the applicant's monitoring of noise levels during events, as stated in added Condition #33, is critical to allow the commercial and residential uses to reasonably coexist side-by-side. Because sound measurements from the applicant's consultant and staff indicated some noise levels hovering near and over 65 dB(A), staff supports limited intensification of the outdoor live entertainment use with the implementation of the noise mitigation plan.

CONCLUSION

Subject to the conditions contained in Section III of this report, staff recommends approval of the Special Use Permit one-year review and applicant's request to intensify the SUP uses and for a parking reduction.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

1. The Special Use Permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
2. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** Indoor live entertainment, ~~restaurant and outdoor dining are~~ is permitted daily, between 10 a.m. and 9 11 p.m. All patrons must leave the indoor premises at 9 11 p.m. ~~(CC) (SUP2021-00102) (P&Z)~~
3. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The maximum number of indoor seats for the indoor live entertainment ~~and the restaurant~~ uses shall comply with the Virginia Uniform Statewide building code. ~~(PC) (SUP2021-00102) (P&Z)~~
4. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The maximum number of outdoor seats for outdoor dining shall be ~~50~~ 100. ~~City Council approval is required for an SUP amendment to increase outdoor seating over 50 for outdoor dining.~~ (P&Z) ~~(SUP2021-00102)~~
5. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** Outdoor dining is permitted daily between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. and all patrons must leave the premises by 9 p.m. The outdoor dining area shall be cleaned and washed at the close of each business day that it is in use and must be completed before 10 p.m. (P&Z) ~~(SUP2021-00102)~~
6. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all SUP provisions and requirements, and on how to prevent underage sales of alcohol. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
7. No food, beverages, or other material shall be stored outside, with the exception of materials specified in other conditions. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
8. On and off premises alcohol sales are permitted in compliance with Virginia ABC requirements. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
9. CONDITION DELETED
10. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** No indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 9 11 p.m. All windows and doors shall remain closed during performances. ~~(CC) (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)~~

11. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall maintain agreements to meet ~~the a minimum seven~~ eight off-street parking space requirement within 1,000 feet of the business. (P&Z) ~~(SUP2021-00102)~~
12. The applicant shall require its employees who drive to use off-street parking. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
13. The applicant shall encourage its employees to use public transportation to travel to and from work. The business shall contact Go Alex at goalex@alexandriava.gov for information on establishing an employee transportation benefits program. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
14. The applicant shall provide information about alternative forms of transportation to access the site, including but not limited to printed and electronic business promotional material, posting on the business website, and other similar methods. Contact Go Alex at goalex@alexandriava.gov for more information about available resources. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
15. The applicant shall encourage patrons to park off-street through the provision of information about nearby garages or lots in the business' advertising and website. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
16. Exterior power washing of the building shall not be completed using any kind of detergents. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
17. Chemicals, detergents or cleaners stored outside the building shall be kept in an enclosure with a roof. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
18. Trash and garbage shall be stored inside or in sealed containers that do not allow odors to escape, invasion by animals, or leaking. No trash or debris shall be allowed to accumulate outside of those containers. Outdoor containers shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES, including replacing damaged lids and repairing/replacing damaged dumpsters. (P&Z) (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
19. The applicant shall control odors, smoke and any other air pollutants from operations at the site and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
20. All waste products including but not limited to organic compounds (solvents and cleaners) shall be disposed of in accordance with all local, state and federal ordinances or regulations. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
21. Supply deliveries, loading, and unloading activities shall not occur between the hours of 11:00pm and 7:00am. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)

22. Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way and spaces adjacent to or within 75 feet of the premises shall be picked up at least twice a day and at the close of business, and more often if necessary, to prevent an unsightly or unsanitary accumulation, on each day that the business is open to the public. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
23. **CONDITION SATISFIED AND DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~The Director of Planning and Zoning shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council one year from SUP approval at the February 2022 hearings. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)~~
24. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** The maximum number of outdoor seats for live entertainment shall be ~~50~~ 100. ~~City Council approval is required for an SUP amendment to increase outdoor seating over 50 for live entertainment. (CC) (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)~~
25. Outdoor live entertainment is limited to four hours a day and is permitted on Friday and Saturday between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. and Sunday through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)
26. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** ~~The outdoor live entertainment use~~ applicant must comply with the City's noise ordinance. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)
27. The applicant shall designate an employee as a community liaison to respond to property owners' questions and noise concerns. The contact phone number and email for the community liaison shall be provided to these property owners. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
28. The applicant shall provide at least five-days prior notice to property owners, located one block of the business, of scheduled outdoor concerts and events. (P&Z) (SUP2021-00102)
29. **CONDITION SATISFIED BY APPLICANT AND DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~Within thirty days after the third representative concert to be held following the SUP approval, the applicant shall submit a report on his conducting noise measurements during three representative concert events using the service of a professional acoustic consultant to verify compliance with the City noise code at all property lines including those of 409 and 411 N. Columbus properties. City staff shall be invited to observe the measurements of the consultant. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)~~
30. **CONDITION DELETED BY STAFF AND REPLACED WITH CONDITION 32:** ~~If the results of the noise measurements show non-compliance with the noise code, the applicant shall submit a mitigation plan to the City within one month from the date of the report submission and implement all mitigation measures within two months from the submission date of the mitigation plan, all to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. During this period of non-compliance, the applicant shall apply for a temporary noise variance permit. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)~~

31. **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** Amplified sound is not permitted outdoors with the exception of instruments similar to electric pianos, lutes, guitars or balalaikas that are played for a short duration as background music for wedding events. Public address systems and/or bands are not permitted during wedding events. ~~(CC)~~ (T&ES) ~~(SUP2021-00102)~~
32. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall implement the noise mitigation plan prior to its first event after SUP approval. (T&ES)
33. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall have at least one employee on-site during each performance and utilize a sound level meter to monitor noise levels to ensure ongoing compliance with the City's noise code. (T&ES)
34. **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the Special Use Permit one year after approval and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the Director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation; or (c) the Director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)

STAFF: Tony LaColla, Division Chief, Land Use Services,
Department of Planning and Zoning;
Ann Horowitz, Principal Planner

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a Special Use Permit by City Council or the Special Use Permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- R-1 **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** No indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 9 11 p.m. All windows and doors shall remain closed during performances. ~~(CC)~~ (T&ES) ~~(SUP2~~

- R-2 **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** ~~The outdoor live entertainment use applicant must comply with the City's noise ordinance. (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)~~
- R-3 **CONDITION SATISFIED BY APPLICANT AND DELETED BY STAFF:** ~~Within thirty days after the third representative concert to be held following the SUP approval, the applicant shall submit a report on his conducting noise measurements during three representative concert events using the service of a professional acoustic consultant to verify compliance with the City noise code at all property lines including those of 409 and 411 N. Columbus properties. City staff shall be invited to observe the measurements of the consultant. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)~~
- R-4 **CONDITION DELETED BY STAFF AND REPLACED:** ~~If the results of the noise measurements show non-compliance with the noise code, the applicant shall submit a mitigation plan to the City within one month from the date of the report submission and implement all mitigation measures within two months from the submission date of the mitigation plan, all to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. During this period of non-compliance, the applicant shall apply for a temporary noise variance permit. (CC) (SUP2021-00102)~~
- R-5 **CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** ~~Amplified sound is not permitted outdoors with the exception of an electric piano and limited and short duration background music for wedding events. Public address systems and/or bands are not permitted during wedding events. (CC) (T&ES) (SUP2021-00102)~~
- R-6 **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall implement the noise mitigation plan prior to its first event after SUP approval. (T&ES)
- R-7 **CONDITION ADDED BY STAFF:** The applicant shall have at least one employee on-site during each performance and utilize a sound level meter to monitor noise levels to ensure ongoing compliance with the City's noise code. (T&ES)

Code:

No comment for live entertainment and parking reduction

Fire:

No comments or concerns

Health:

No comments received

Parks and Recreation:

No comments received

Police Department:

No comments received



APPLICATION

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT # SUP2021-00102

PROPERTY LOCATION: 711 Princess St, Alexandria, VA 22314

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 064-02-08-07

ZONE: CD

APPLICANT:

Name: Blue Heart Travel, Inc. dba Classical Movements

Address: 711 Princess St, Alexandria, VA 22314

PROPOSED USE: Live Entertainment

- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.
- ☒ THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Neeta Helms

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

711 Princess St

Mailing/Street Address

Alexandria, VA

City and State

22314

Zip Code

DocuSigned by:

Neeta Helms

DECFC44524C4456

Signature

11-08-21

Date

703-407-3456

Telephone #

Fax #

Neeta@ClassicalMovements.com

Email address

PROPERTY OWNER'S AUTHORIZATION

As the property owner of 711 Princess St, Alexandria, VA 22314, I hereby
 (Property Address)
 grant the applicant authorization to apply for the Live Entertainment use as
 (use)
 described in this application.

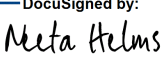
Name: Neeta Helms and Johannes van Zyl

Phone: 703-407-3456

Please Print

Address: 6125 Stegen Dr, Alexandria, VA 22310

Email: Neeta@ClassicalMovements.com

Signature: 
 DocuSigned by:
 DECFC44524C4456...

Date: 11-08-21

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

☒ **Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.**

☐ **Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.**

2. The applicant is the (check one):

☐ Owner

☐ Contract Purchaser

☒ Lessee or

☐ Other: Both Owner and Lessee of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent.

Neeta Helms, 6125 Stegen Dr, Alexandria, VA 22310, 100% Owner of Blue Heart Travel, Inc. dba Classical Movements

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

☐ **Yes.** Provide proof of current City business license

☐ **No.** The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request **in detail** so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use. The description should fully discuss the nature of the activity. (Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

See attached narrative description and information.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Moving the Music, Changing the World

145 Countries | Orchestras | Choirs | Festivals | New Music | Cultural Diplomacy

Page 4 Narrative Description.

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use. The description should fully discuss the nature of the activity. (Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Since June 2020, Classical Movements has been presenting innovative live concerts of classical music in the garden of our historic building in Old Town Alexandria, the first and largest series of its kind in the United States since the beginning of the pandemic. Due to Covid-19, our company – based in Alexandria since 1997 – has seen a complete loss of income as a concert tour company for orchestras and choirs operating at the intersection of travel and music, two of the industries hit hardest by the pandemic. Most of our concert tours will return in 2023 because of the Delta variant. We continue to operate our office and work on tour sales and proposals even for 2022 hoping for the return of our primary business. In the meantime, our garden concerts have become an important accessory source of income and a valuable asset to the community. Through these concerts, we have been able to hire many of our colleagues in the music community, the vast majority of who are freelancers for whom this has been their only opportunity to perform in a safe and in-person environment since March 2020. They also boost the economy in Old Town as our audiences frequently dine before or after the concerts. We have received overwhelming support from our artists, audiences including neighbors (3,327 since June 2020), local businesses, and press. We are regularly listed thing to do in Alexandria and bring revenue to the city, retail shops and restaurants. We have kept our staff, paid all of our taxes and been an asset to the city. Our building, the Rectory on Princess Street, from 1785 is historic, beautifully maintained and is now one of the buildings that attracts people rather than one more empty building in the city. Our livelihood is contingent upon being able to continue these concerts.

Re: Ann Horowitz 11/4/21: Yes, for any condition changes, include the condition numbers you would like changed and what the proposed changes are in the narrative section. The narrative can be concise and to the point as your business already has an SUP where background details of your operation are noted. You may provide supplemental information on mitigation and implementation if you would like, although it is not necessary since T&ES will have this information.

Condition Changes

Reference: Attached SUP2021-00102 Conditions

1. Increase the number of seats.
 - a. Condition 4: The maximum number of outdoor seats for outdoor dining shall be 50. Since Restaurant and Outdoor Dining is limited and an accessory use, we do not need to include in our new Special Use Permit application.
 - b. Condition 24: The maximum number of outdoor seats for live entertainment shall be 50. Change to the maximum number of outdoor seats for live entertainment shall be determined by the **Fire Prevention Permit**. (Current Fire Prevention Permit Approval is for up to 99 but we can increase up to 499 with an additional entrance/exit that we are currently adding.). **Our request is for up to 181 seats.**
 - i. Equitability Precedence: Lloyd House 100 seats (outdoor garden and north parlor room), Lee-Fendall House (outdoor rentals 125), Carlyle House (130 with Terrace and Garden), and more, some of which are smaller than us. These properties host live concerts and not just weddings and other events.



- ii. Because of the limit of outdoor seats put by the SUP our income is severely limited and we need to generate more to pay our bills until our primary business returns.
- iii. The audience is the primary absorber of sound so a larger audience is one of the mitigation strategies for our outdoor garden.
- iv. Beyond essential financial feasibility, an increase in the number of seats would allow us to give more free and reduced tickets and facilitate access and opportunities to more students and children, foster programs, disabled, veterans, first responders, older adults including those at Sunrise of Old Town next door to us, and others to experience live music. We are already doing this and being as generous as we can, but with artists fees, the current limit of 50 seats means we have hardly any ability to offer free seats to those in need.

2. Change the hours.

- a. Condition 2: Indoor live entertainment, restaurant and outdoor dining are permitted daily between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. All patrons must leave the premises at 9 p.m. **Change hours for indoor live entertainment to permitted daily 10 a.m. and 11 p.m. Since Restaurant and Outdoor Dining is limited and an accessory use, we do not need to include in our new Special Use Permit application.**
- b. Condition 25: Outdoor live entertainment is limited to four hours a day and is permitted on Friday and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. and Sundays through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. **Change to: Outdoor live entertainment permitted daily between 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 PM.**
- c. Condition 10: No indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 9:00 PM. **Change to: No indoor amplified sound shall be audible at the property line after 10 p.m.**
 - i. The Noise Ordinance Phase II increased the commercial decibel standard from 60 to **65 decibels** between the hours of **7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.** effective 12/18/2021.
 - ii. We really need extended hours until 10pm so we have a choice to plan better, this 8 p.m. limit Sunday to Thursday is impossible, especially in summer in the heat and 9 p.m. on Fri and Saturday.
 - iii. Equitability Precedence: Lloyd House 10:00 am – 10:00 PM (12 midnight indoors or no music outdoors), Lee-Fendall House 10:00 am – 10:00 PM (11 PM indoors or no music outdoors), Carlyle House 3:30 PM – 12:00 midnight (both indoors and outdoors), Atheneum (until 12 midnight), and more. These properties also host live concerts and not just weddings and other events.
 - iv. Because of the limit of hours, we need to have the first of two concerts sometimes start as early as 3:30 PM which no one can attend and if combined with food it is impossible. This affects our ability to sell tickets as people are working. If it is a live entertainment event with catered food it is too late for lunch and too early for dinner.

3. Remove the No Amplification Condition

- a. Condition 31: Amplified sound is not permitted. **We request that this condition is removed.**
 - i. The permit and conditions are based on the noise ordinance so this should not matter if there is amplification or not. Amplification should be permitted as long as it is within the noise code.



- ii. Equitability Precedence: Lloyd House allows lightly amplified music as a certain amount of amplification is required to hear the sound of a keyboard, guitar, and wind instruments such as a clarinet. The Lee-Fendall House is permitted amplification. The Carlyle House permits amplification in the form of small Bluetooth speakers (i.e. Beats Pill). All of the outdoor dining establishments with Limited Live Entertainment that play music through speakers or have bands. These 3 properties also host live concerts and not just weddings and other events.
- iii. In regards to Live Entertainment, we should be permitted to use amplification. We are referring to examples such as a small lapel microphone and small speaker as the audience cannot hear important emergency instructions (where the exits are) or other information (a musician explaining the program) especially with other factors such as noise from airplanes, wind, cars, sirens, birds, whistles, voices, HVAC, Neighbors, and so on. We should be able to use light amplification for instruments if needed. For example, a keyboard (which is quieter than a piano), and other instruments like a lute that were too quiet for the audience to hear at the back. When we talked about amplification in our original application and hearings we were thinking about large speakers that rock and roll bands and DJs use, as an example, etc. We do not allow dance bands or DJs.
- iv. Further to this, Mr. William Skrabak confirmed that the conditions were not intended to limit us in regards to the type of examples I mentioned above. In another call, he said the same to Neeta and Johan and that it was meant to limit large speakers (like 2 feet tall).
- v. Throughout each event, staff will monitor to ensure that an appropriate volume level is maintained.

Addressing Other Conditions

1. Noise Readings as per SUP Conditions
 - a. Condition 29: Within thirty days after the third representative concert to be held following the SUP approval, the applicant shall submit a report on his conducting noise measurements during three representative concert events using the service of a professional acoustic consultant to verify compliance with the City noise code at all property lines including those of 409 and 411 N. Columbus properties. City staff shall be invited to observe the measurements of the consultant.
 - b. Condition 30: if the results of these noise measurements show non-compliance with the noise code, the applicant shall submit a mitigation plan to the City within one month from the date of the report submission and implement all mitigation measures within two months from the submission date of the mitigation plan, all to the satisfaction of the Director of T&ES. During this period of non-compliance, the applicant shall apply for a temporary noise variance permit.
 - i. We still stand by our expert consultants report as well as our own analysis that the overall median and average of the **valid** readings is in compliance as per the noise ordinance. 9% of the noise readings should be excluded because of significant noise from extraneous sources as marked on the noise measurement readings, leaving a total of 739 out of 813 noise readings. April 25, 2021 Median 59.7, Average 58.3. May 27, 2021 Median 56, Average 57.1. July 23, 2021 Median 57.2, Average 57.7. We also gave the median and average by location in our email on October 17th. Our overall is Median 57.1 and Average 57.6 and this still includes the intermittent applause which we also felt should not be included.



- ii. This is just a note that we are working closely with T&ES in regards to noise readings, our mitigation plan, and the implementation of our mitigation plan. We will continue to do all that we can to mitigate an impact on the community.
- 2. Parking
 - a. Conditions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.
 - i. We have maintained our agreements to meet the parking requirements of all of these conditions. During the last year, we monitored the street parking situation and during all events we took photos of Princess St and N. Columbus St to make record that the streets were mostly empty with ample open spots for the residential neighbors.
- 3. Community Questions and Noise Concerns
 - a. Condition 27
 - i. We have not received any questions or concerns via our designated phone number and email from any property owners or others since we received our SUP.

USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for (*check one*):

- ☐ a new use requiring a special use permit,
☐ an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
☒ an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
☐ other. Please describe: _____

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?

Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

Up to 181 seats per Live Entertainment concert. Current Fire Prevention Permit Approval is for up to 99 but we can increase up to 499 with an additional entrance/exit that we are adding.

B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?

Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

2-5 staff per Live Entertainment concert.

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:

Indoor Live Entertainment: Permitted Daily

Hours:

10:00 am - 11:00 PM

Outdoor Live Entertainment: Permitted Daily, Limited to 4 Hours/Day

10:00 am - 10:00 PM

See Narration for More Information on Requested Changes to our Conditions.

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

Live music, typically classical. Our expert consultant report as well as our own analysis shows that the overall median and average of the valid readings are as follows: April 25, 2021 Median 59.7, Average 58.3. May 27, 2021 Median 56, Average 57.1. July 23, 2021 Median 57.2, Average 57.7. Patrons are very quiet except they show their appreciation of the artists by briefly clapping.

B. How will the noise be controlled?

The outdoor garden is surrounded on all sides by our three story office building, tall 6 and 8 ft. fencing, 10-30 ft trees around property, and other landscaping to help mitigate the "noise". Our windows are double paned. We have strict guidelines about what is allowed. Staff will actively monitor the "noise" levels at our property lines to ensure that an appropriate volume level is maintained within the noise ordinance. If the "noise" level exceeds the noise ordinance, we will tell the performers to decrease their sound. We have been in the process on ongoing mitigation and will continue with more measures that we are implementing based on consultation with TE&S and private acoustic and sound experts.

- 8.** Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

On rare occasions we may have food provided by a permitted caterer or a food establishment (restaurant). ~~Food is stored and prepared at the permitted food establishment (not on site), transported on the day of an event using approved storage, and all refuse, trash and equipment will be collected and removed from our site immediately at the end of the event.~~

- 9.** Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)
 There is little to no trash or garbage generated at a typical Live Entertainment concert. Trash and garbage may be used paper towels, sanitizing wipes, masks, and paper or plastic cups.

B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)
 We typically have 1 bag or less of trash generated per week.

C. How often will trash be collected?

We have weekly service with Waste Management Trash and Recycling. We use Thompson Hauling & Recycling and Shred-It for other trash collection needs. Trash will be collected weekly or if needed as an exception we would schedule a special pick up. Covanta Alexandria Waste Management facility on Eisenhower or the Recycling Drop Off Center in Alexandria on Eisenhower.

D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

We have a trash receptacle at the entrances/exits of the garden and building. Our concerts do not have any printed materials as due to COVID-19 everything is provided electronically. Staff monitors the area surrounding our property before, during and after concerts and would pick up litter if any left behind.

- 10.** Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

- 11.** Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

- 12.** What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons? These concerts are private ticketed events and not open to the general public and limited in nature. Each ticket holder receives instructions about the safety protocols in place prior to each event. The outdoor garden is accessed from the street, down our driveway, into our building or outdoor garden. No one needs to access any other property, residential or commercial. Our building is locked and the outdoor garden is gated and locked. The building is protected by ADT security with camera's and sensors. The property owners and Classical Movements are insured with general liability, property, worker's comp, errors and omissions, professional liability and other insurance. All vendors are required to also provide proof of insurance.

ALCOHOL SALES

13.

- A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

Typically we do not sell alcohol. On a rare occasion, we would use a permitted caterer who would provide alcohol (i.e. glass of wine) with dinner, or we would get our own liquor license. We would ensure the caterer has the appropriate license or would apply for a one time event license if required. This would only be on-premises.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

2 Standard spaces
 Compact spaces
 Handicapped accessible spaces.
8 Other.

<p style="text-align: center;">Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A <u> </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--

- B. Where is required parking located? (*check one*)
- ☒ on-site
- ☒ off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

715 Princess St and 300 N Washington St. See narration.

PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

☒ Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are available for the use? 2

<p style="text-align: center;">Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 <u> </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

- B. Where are off-street loading facilities located? In our private driveway. Typical use would be
a car or van that parks in our private driveway (door to building and gate to garden by driveway), they take their equipment out, then they park.
- C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
A few hours before and immediately after each concert.
- D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?
Typically once per week, 4 times per month, select months per year.

- 16.** Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

~~There are other commercial properties and the Sunrise Senior Living garage and loading/unloading entrance right next to our property, the Wells Fargo drive thru ATM across the street, and a FedEx/UPS location so no new improvements would be required for our limited use with regular vehicles on Princess St.~~

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- 17.** Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.

- 18.** What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

5,642 Indoor sq. ft. (existing) + 2,849 Outdoor sq. ft. (addition if any) = 8491 sq. ft. (total)

- 19.** The proposed use is located in: *(check one)*

☒ a stand alone building
☐ a house located in a residential zone
☐ a warehouse
☐ a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____
☐ an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____
☒ other. Please describe: Also Private Enclosed Outdoor Garden.

End of Application



Department of Planning & Zoning

Special Use Permit Application Checklist

Supplemental application for the following uses:

- ☐ Automobile Oriented
- ☒ Parking Reduction
- ☐ Signs
- ☐ Substandard Lot
- ☐ Lot modifications requested with SUP use

Interior Floor Plan

- ☒ Include labels to indicate the use of the space (doors, windows, seats, tables, counters, equipment)

If Applicable

- ☒ Plan for outdoor uses

Contextual site image

- ☒ Show subject site, on-site parking area, surrounding buildings, cross streets

SUP # _____



APPLICATION - SUPPLEMENTAL

PARKING REDUCTION

Supplemental information to be completed by applicants requesting special use permit approval of a reduction in the required parking pursuant to section 8-100(A)(4) or (5).

1. Describe the requested parking reduction. (e.g. number of spaces, stacked parking, size, off-site location)

2. Provide a statement of justification for the proposed parking reduction.

3. Why is it not feasible to provide the required parking?

4. Will the proposed reduction reduce the number of available parking spaces below the number of existing parking spaces?

_____ Yes. _____ No.

5. If the requested reduction is for more than five parking spaces, the applicant must submit a *Parking Management Plan* which identifies the location and number of parking spaces both on-site and off-site, the availability of on-street parking, any proposed methods of mitigating negative affects of the parking reduction.

6. The applicant must also demonstrate that the reduction in parking will not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
¹ Neeta Helms	711 Princess St, Alexandria, VA 22314	100%
²		
³		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 711 Princess St, Alexandria, VA 22314 (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
¹ Neeta Helms	6125 Stegen Dr, Alexandria, VA 22310	90%
² Johannes van Zyl	6125 Stegen Dr, Alexandria, VA 22310	10%
³	6125 Stegen Dr, Alexandria, VA 22310	

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity indicated above in sections 1 and 2, with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property are required to disclose **any** business or financial relationship, as defined by [Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance](#), existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review. **All fields must be filled out completely. Do not leave blank. (If there are no relationships please indicate each person or entity and "None" in the corresponding fields).**

For a list of current council, commission and board members, as well as the definition of business and financial relationship, [click here](#).

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
¹ Neeta Helms	None	None
² Johannes van Zyl	None	None
³		

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

11-08-21

Date

Neeta Helms

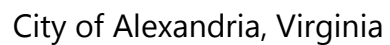
Printed Name

DocuSigned by:

Neeta Helms



















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Signature

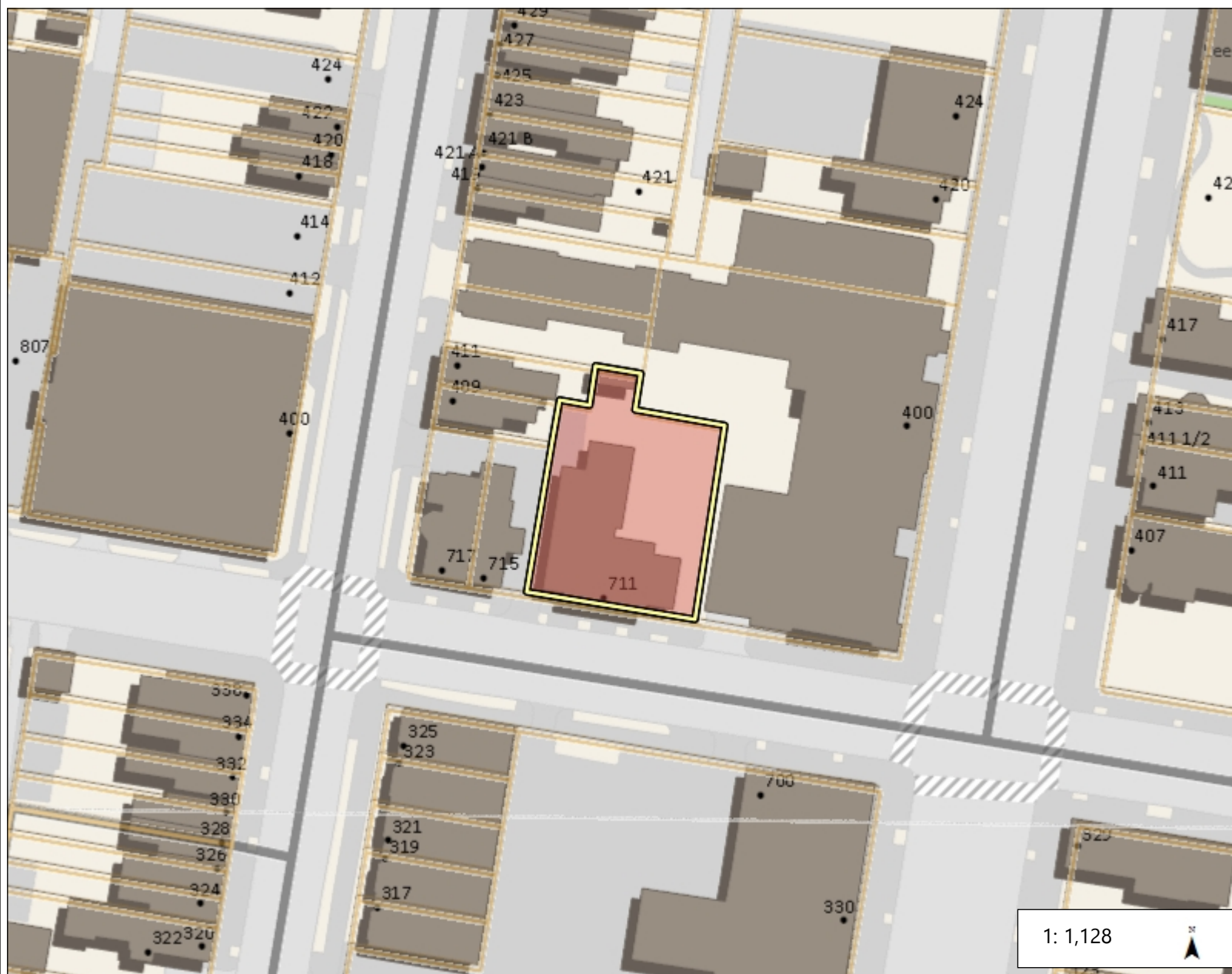


711 Princess St



-  Tax Map Index
-  Parcels
-  Blocks
-  Fire Stations
-  Addresses
-  Metro Stations
-  Metro Lines
 -  Blue
 -  Yellow
 -  Yellow Blue
-  City Boundary
-  Rail Lines
-  Parcels
-  Buildings
-  Surface Water
-  Streams
-  Parks
-  City of Alexandria

Notes

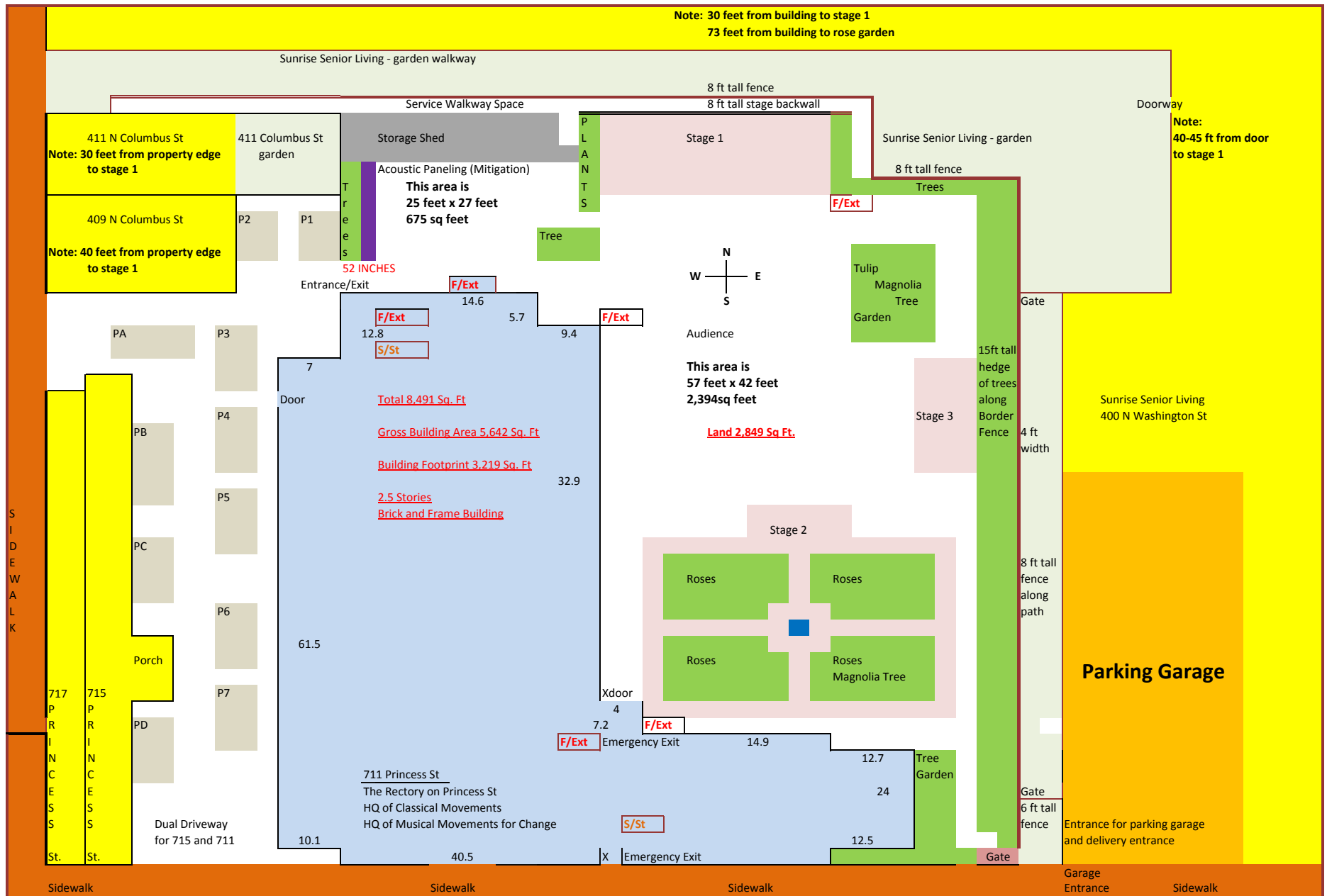


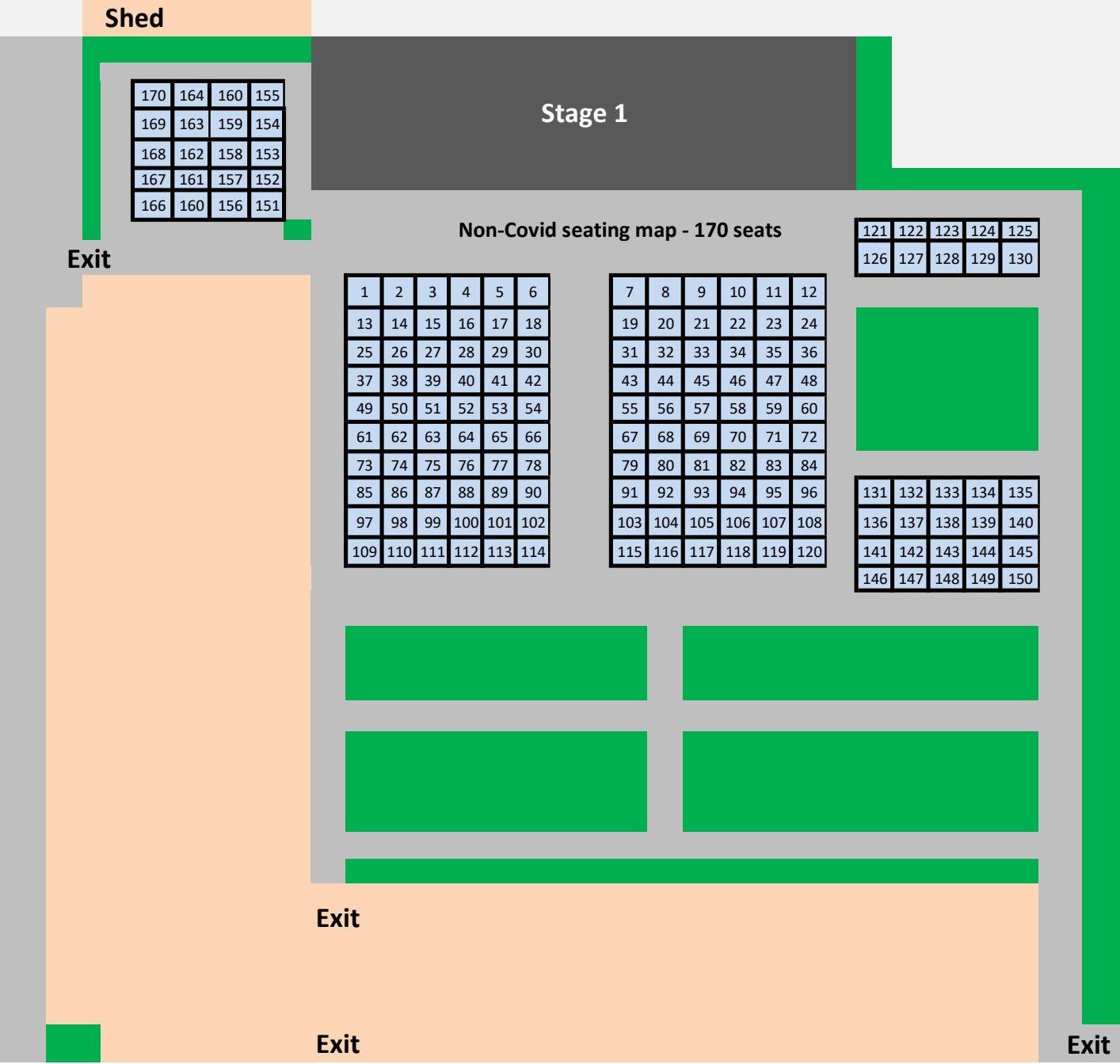
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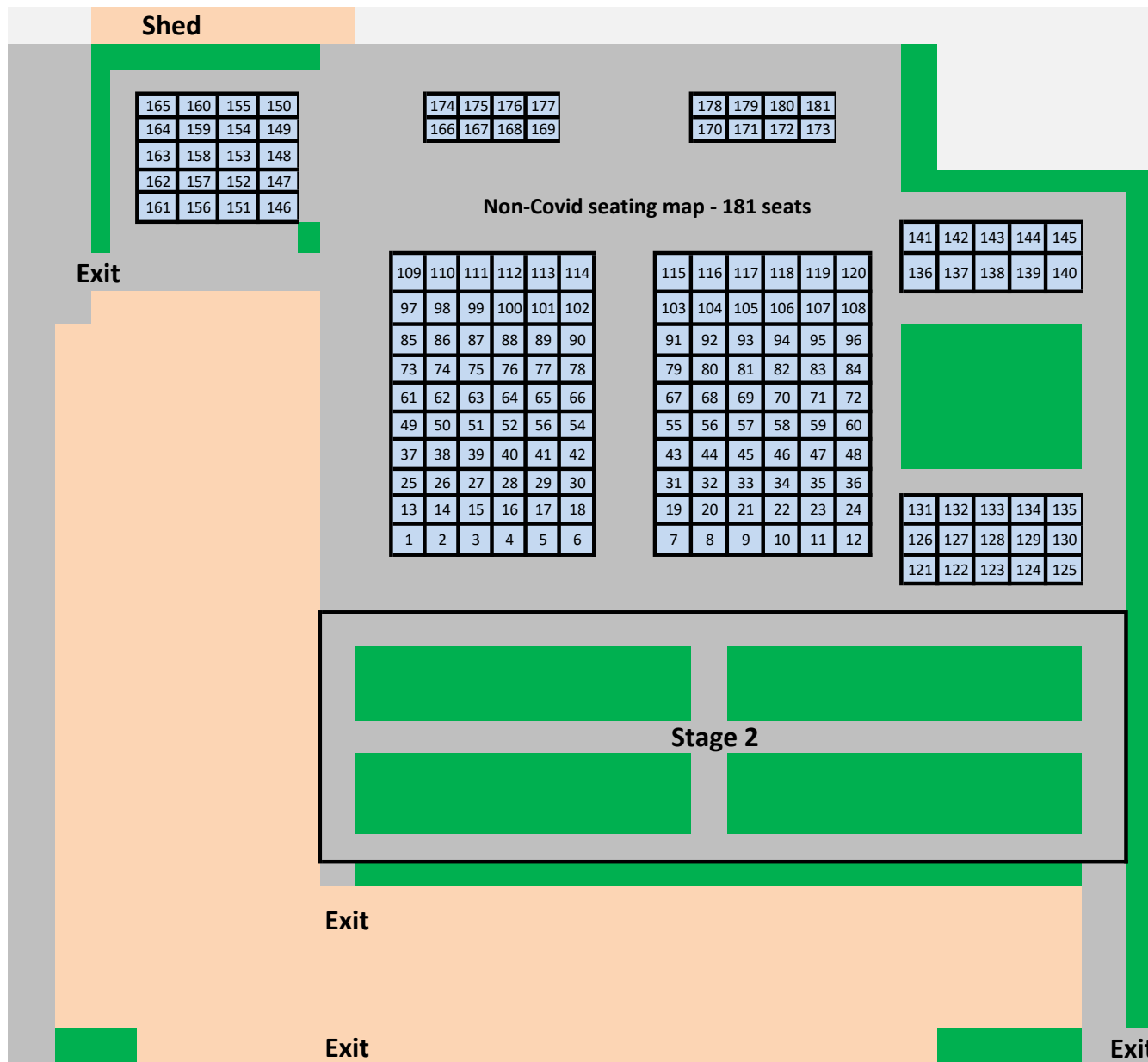
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City of Alexandria, VA

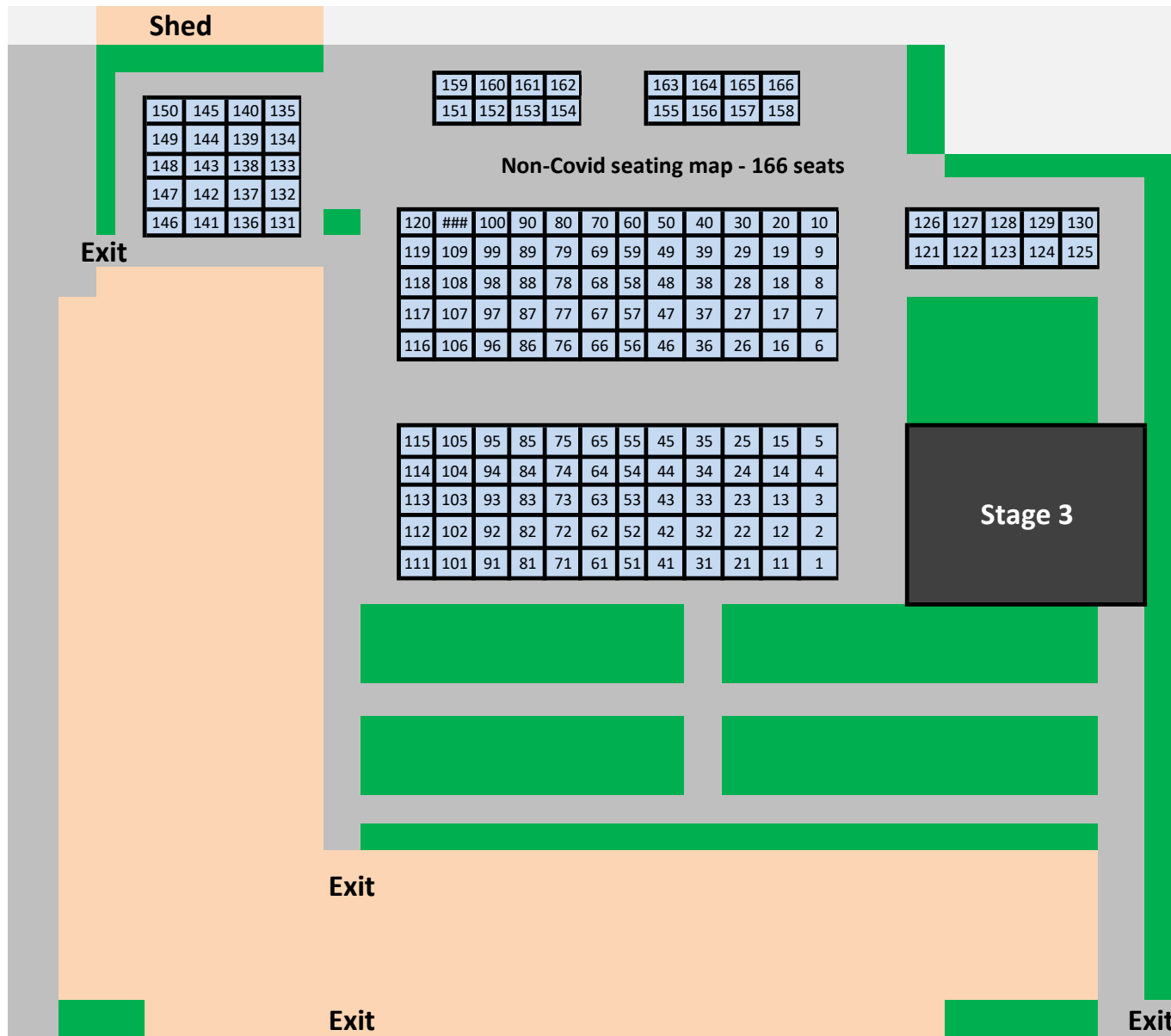
This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION









In addition to notes from Sunrise Senior Living staff, Classical Movements has received expressions or messages of support and appreciation from the following **Sunrise residents**:

- Winnifer and Jim Anderson (attended our November 9, 2021 concert)
- Jane Christ
- Carla Dulaney
- Cynthia Ford
- Norman Mausoff (attended our November 9, 2021 concert)
- Candace Thomas and her children Troy & Paula Thomas (who have attended concerts often)
- Jill Tracey
- Bernadette Troy

See selected messages, attached.

Dear Neeta,

On behalf of the entire Sunrise team, we wanted to express our most joyful congratulations on being named one of Musical America's Top 30 Professionals of the Year! We are so grateful for our lovely partnership with you. Your team is full of incredible talent. This special reward and recognition is more than well deserved! Team Sunrise is for you 100%!

Congratulations!

Julie, Lisa, Stephany & Maya



OLD TOWN

Mrs. David C. Tracey

Just a note to tell you
a number of your senior
neighbors at Sunrise enjoy
your concerts from our rooms.
We look forward to a new
season.

Jui T. Tracey

Dear Neeta: On behalf of the entire Sunrise team, we wanted to express our most joyful congratulations on being named one of Musical America's Top 30 Professionals of the Year! We are so grateful for our lovely partnership with you. Your team is full of incredible talent. This special reward and recognition is more than well deserved! Team Sunrise is for you 100%!

Congratulations!

Julie, Lisa, Stephany & Maya

Just a note to tell you a number of your senior neighbors at Sunrise enjoy your concerts from our rooms. We look forward to a new season.

Jill T. Tracey [103]

From: Jane Christ

Date: January 17, 2022 at 8:03:23 PM EST

Cc: Carla Dulaney

Subject: Thank you note to Johan van Zyl

I am a resident at Sunrise , Old Town and would like to thank you for the summer concerts that we all enjoy from our patio next to your concert hall. I hope they will continue next summer.

As a college student I used to be an usherette at the Robin hood Dell in Philadelphia in the patrons section of the Dell and saw at that time how wonderful outdoor concerts can be.

Unfortunately I could not get the e/mail address directed to Mr. van Zyl in person.

With sincere appreciation,

Jane Christ

From: Jane Christ
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022 10:59 AM
To: Johan van Zyl
Subject: Enjoyment of the out door concerts

Many of us at Sunrise Senior Living enjoy and look forward to the concerts next door to our Senior residence . We hope you can continue in the next program year.

I used to be (in my younger years,) an usherette for the Philadelphia Orchestra during their summer concerts at the Robin Hood Dell in Philadelphia. There was a small paying section for orchestra benefactors and a large section for the public on the hill who could enjoy with publicly obtainable free tickets. Needless to say this was much appreciated and well-attended.

Your concerts offer us much the same Benefit.

Jane Christ
Sunrise Senior Living, Old Town

From: Carla Dulaney
Sent: Friday, January 14, 2022 10:27 AM
To: Johan van Zyl
Subject: Re: Jan 11

Jan 14

I wanted to let you know that there's 2 note cards at our front desk for you to pickup when convenient. I have made contact with a few other residents so there might be more.

We have a lot of new residents who may not even know about the Secret Garden, and we have a very small directory, as well as a very limited number of people who are computer savvy!

Just wanted to give you a update, Carla

Sent from Carla's iPad

From: Carla Dulaney
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2022 10:09 PM
To: Johan van Zyl
Subject: Jan 11

Again, how can I help keep your license, any address that I can write to? Whatever, please let me know.

It's Carla, a Sunrise resident, who enjoys your performances, even the private ones from the other side of the fence. 😊

I did sign up for your emails...if it didn't work please add me: carladulaney6@gmail.com

Sent from Carla's iPad

ATTACHMENT 3

Summary of All Public Comments Received

PHASE II REVISION

SURVEYMONKEY FEEDBACK FORM QUESTIONNAIRE

Q16 What other issues would you like the City to address in the revised ordinance?

Answered: 253 Skipped: 106

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Police need to stop and ticket vehicles that are loud and this should be done no matter where they are either public or private places. Vehicles are supposed to be inspected for noise control and that should be enforced by police.	10/22/2021 11:21 PM
2	7 am is too early to run lawn equipment in residential areas, consider 9 am	10/22/2021 11:02 PM
3	Cars... and motorcycles that have poor mufflers/expanded motor. And, pls - this survey was so poorly constructed... there is little I would consider valid - and I am a research professional. Just look at Q 15... you say should they increase from the present - but give no number for the increase. And - not including don't knows.... only shows the questions are meant to be biased. The city can do better on surveys.	10/22/2021 9:05 PM
4	the hours should be shorter. 9pm is ridiculous, people are putting kids to bed way before then. besides, sunset isn't even ever that late in ALX (latest in 2021 was 8:37pm).	10/22/2021 7:28 PM
5	Regarding Question #14: In dense neighborhoods (like where we live in Del Ray), people working from home are impacted nearly every day because one property or another nearby is receiving lawn maintenance using leaf blowers, weed wackers, and lawn mowers. The city should assure that the total number of hours of impact per week is limited.	10/22/2021 5:15 PM
6	The Planning Commission and City Council should have flexibility to be less restrictive with the noise ordinance when approving or updating Special Use Permits especially for Live Entertainment use. This change to the noise ordinance will allow the city to be fair and equitable and less burdensome for private for-profit commercial businesses who are required to get a Special Use Permit vs. public and non-profit organizations (properties such as the Carlyle House, Lloyd House and Lee-Fendall House) who are allowed to have similar activities (based on "noise" or music emitted) without a Special Use Permit. This is especially important when the process to obtain and retain a Special Use Permit for Live Entertainment and other uses are arbitrary and capricious. The Special Use Permit process is confusing, intimidating, time consuming, and it is not business friendly. Hopefully changes to the noise ordinance will take place so that we can operate in the City without wasting the police departments valuable time or under constant threat of violations and fines when operating under an approved Special Use Permit. Special Use Permit holders should be afforded the same exemptions given to others in the city. The City gives exemptions of up to 3 years for construction (which are the loudest noises of all), allows leaf blowers and lawn mowers, loud vehicles, delivery trucks that stand with loud running engines for an hour at a time, airplanes, special permits for all day parades, marches, public concerts on city property, and allows for 75 db(A) 10 feet from the property line in the CBD which is only one block away from us. It is arbitrary that the City cannot make provisions within the current City code for small businesses such as ours, who have live music less than 1% of the year, just outside the CBD district, with an approved Special Use Permit for Live Entertainment and other uses when they do so for so many others. The noise ordinance from the 1960's is outdated and should be modernized for commercial uses. The outdated commercial standard of 60 db(A) does not consider site-specific factors that reasonably support louder sound because of prevailing noise from airplanes, traffic, wind, sirens, birds, whistles, HVAC, construction, and other sources in our urban area. Commercial properties should be permitted a modernized commercial standard of 65 db(A) especially when you consider surrounding areas allow 65 db(A) or more for commercial use. The city of Norfolk has allows 67 db(A) daytime and 62 db(A) nighttime, Fairfax County allows 65 db(A), Arlington County allows 65 db(A), Falls Church allows 65 db(A), Louden County allows 65 db(A), Prince George's County allows 67 db(A) daytime and 62 db(A) nighttime, Montgomery County allows 67 db(A) daytime and 62 db(A) nighttime, the District allows 65 db(A), just to give a few examples. How is it that other urban areas as well as suburban and rural areas are allowed higher decibel levels than our City? We are losing business and the City is losing revenue to other counties in our area because we have too many restrictions from the noise ordinance.	10/22/2021 5:14 PM

Phase II Revision of Noise Ordinance

12	Powered lawn equipment and modified exhaust systems need major enforcement. Even unmodified lawn equipment is often 80db+ at 10-20 feet. With ongoing work from home they are a completely unmitigated nuisance!	10/22/2021 11:02 AM
13	We support the Classical Movements concerts. It is a shame that one neighbor loudly tries to disrupt this cultural event.	10/22/2021 10:51 AM
14	As a founding member of the board of Musical Movements for Change (MMC), a nonprofit based in Alexandria committed to supporting projects the use music to bring people and cultures together, I have had countless occasions to witness the transformative power of concerts and other musical projects – and the value it can add to communities around the world. Classical Movements' concerts at the Rectory on Princess Street have led the way, reintroducing live classical music after the silence imposed by the pandemic and offering Alexandrians a uniquely intimate way to experience great music in a beautiful setting. The comments made by artists and audience members alike (including those who have made donations to MMC to underwrite concerts and initiatives to make concerts accessible to students, veterans, foster children and other underprivileged persons) demonstrate the tremendous value this project has introduced to Alexandria. However, the recent activity of one neighbor also the shortcomings of the City's Noise Ordinance, if it has been used to further a vindictive and petty effort to expose Classical Movements to a level of scrutiny unseen elsewhere in the city – and an attempt to deprive the community of a project that has brought comfort and joy to so many. The noise created by construction crews is louder and more irritating than classical music, as is the the extremely loud noise created by the. Neighbor objecting to music A five second note, above the established decimal range is hardly irritating Why would you allow one neighbor to cause so much trouble? I spend time in Lake Geneva , Wisconsin They have live, loud music nearly every evening. People in the city enforcement role should be rational and judicious.	10/22/2021 9:17 AM
15	Leaf blowers	10/22/2021 8:26 AM
16	Could the city also address the use of emergency vehicle sirens during overnight hours. Some vehicles just use lights but other blast sirens. Seems if some can do lights only, emergency services could review standard overnight procedures to limit sirens in residential neighborhoods. Of all the categories in this survey, this is by far what disturbs my family the most. Other than that, the other sources of noise in my neighborhood are manageable.	10/22/2021 8:04 AM
17	I have attended several outdoor concerts in the city of Alexandria and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being outside in our beautiful city while listening to great music. Classical music is not noise, but a beautiful meditation of expertly performed sounds that transport us to a new place. This opportunity, to hear classical music outside, is a huge bonus to our city and it should not be restricted.	10/22/2021 7:57 AM
18	Limit leaf blowers to weekdays only and only October through January.	10/22/2021 7:56 AM
19	Motorcycles and noisy vehicles!!!	10/22/2021 7:56 AM
20	These questions are very poorly constructed. Some are either/or with only a Y/N option (so unclear what you are responding to with your selection), many give no context for current regulations so you can't evaluate what the change would be. If I think that the present situation — whatever it is — is or is not sufficient, I can't respond to questions that don't tell me whether the change would be more or less restrictive (or in what ways). Please structure surveys better in the future to better capture citizen thoughts. My main issue is living on a block that is all residential but for two or three commercial establishments at the end - there can be loud truck deliveries and it would be nice for more restrictions on this.	10/22/2021 7:43 AM
21	Post noise ordinance signs at key locations (e.g. Seminary, Braddock, Beauregard, Rt 7, etc.) to inform the public that such regulations are in place and enforced.	10/22/2021 6:24 AM
22	Penalties are so weak, there is no motivation for construction projects to comply. I've been living next to one for about a year and a half, and there have been ongoing offenses for the duration. We have about another 6 months of torture to live through.	10/21/2021 10:24 PM
23	The City of Alexandria is empowered to be the gatekeeper of the health and safety of its citizens, with that, the city should realize that noise over the 60 decibel limit is unhealthy and detrimental to the health of its citizens. The World Health Organization outlines the negative health effects of loud noise, especially constant noise at high levels. A special revision for mixed use is critical for residents living and teleworking above and around commercial equipment owned by the businesses around the residents of a mixed use building. I have been	10/21/2021 10:21 PM

Phase II Revision of Noise Ordinance

68	being awakened at 5 am most morning by train horns	10/20/2021 1:49 PM
69	Work with local authorities to stop the drag racing on Woodrow Wilson Bridge	10/20/2021 1:37 PM
70	Train horns	10/20/2021 12:53 PM
71	As a resident in a mixed-use neighborhood (I live on Columbus Street, around the corner from a bagel shop and fish market and down the street from a live classical music venue), I encourage liberal permission for commercial and entertainment noise. Noise from trash removal and other related services are a cost worth bearing for the privilege of living in a dense, multi-use neighborhood. I would approve of ordinances that encourage development of such neighborhoods. My primary noise concerns are related to loud traffic noise, particularly from Washington and Route 1. Anything to encourage alternative modes of transportation would help alleviate this negative.	10/20/2021 12:33 PM
72	Noise from trains ! It is disturbing, does not allow me to sleep through the night. It is damaging to the health of all residents that live close to the train tracks.	10/20/2021 11:23 AM
73	Freight trains, passenger trains, and Metro trains all sound their loud horns multiple times when approaching the tunnel under Duke Street and the King Street Station. There is no federal, state or local law, ordinance, or regulation that requires this. Train horns are not just annoying, but have serious health consequences over time. Thousands of Alexandria's citizens live and work in the Carlyle neighborhood and are impacted daily by this unnecessary nuisance.	10/20/2021 11:02 AM
74	Noise from trains	10/20/2021 10:48 AM
75	The trains are a necessary part of living and a noise restriction on the horn will reduce the safety along the track and under the tunnels..... please remind the people of this.	10/20/2021 10:40 AM
76	Train noises. Way to loud	10/20/2021 10:32 AM
77	Blowing of train whistles.	10/20/2021 10:31 AM
78	Generator use at night to that causes reverberations indoors through closed windows.	10/20/2021 10:31 AM
79	None of the above questions address the train noise levels on Duke St. We are not bothered by the noise of the trains themselves, but the three horn blasts that supposedly are required when a train goes through that underpass disturb the entire neighborhood. As train traffic increased, so did the blasts, and somehow also the length of the blast. It is most disturbing during the night and the early morning hours. Perhaps the City could request the elimination of horn blasts from 11 pm to 7 am. Thank you.	10/20/2021 10:27 AM
80	I don't understand why the trains need to blow their horns all the time. I don't understand why infrared thermal imaging cameras haven't been installed in the tunnels to identify trespassers via an AI algorithm and change track signals to allow time for railroad authorities to clear the tunnels.	10/20/2021 10:22 AM
81	The metro trains have been increasing the horn noise at times blowing them constantly every 5 seconds as they pass our buildings. Commercial trains violate the night time hours	10/20/2021 10:19 AM
82	Train horns in Eisenhower / Carlyle. Also, question #8 is not a yes/no.	10/20/2021 10:11 AM
83	The city has not been enforcing existing noise ordinance violations and needs to step up and hold SUP holders accountable for compliance with the current (and new) standards. Issuing fines on commercial businesses for repeated violations should be routine and bureaucratically simple if any of the rules are actually going to be followed.	10/20/2021 8:33 AM
84	Whatever the rules are, actually enforcing them. Complaints about noise infractions get low priority for APD responses (which I understand) but leave residents feeling helpless when businesses know they will face no actual penalty for violations.	10/20/2021 7:47 AM
85	Since noise can have devastating effects on health, it is desirable to eliminate horns sounding on trains approaching and departing the Alexandria Union Station.	10/19/2021 11:22 PM
86	I strongly recommend granting special exemption to the Secret Garden on 711 Princess Street. Musical sound coming out from live performances should not be considered noise. The surrounding location has very few residences. The concert hours are short and end early in the evenings. Since the City supports restaurants allowing roadside dining, we can certainly go for some food for the soul, music and dance in a small scale.	10/19/2021 8:45 PM

Phase II Revision of Noise Ordinance



87	Provisions for Classical Movements	10/19/2021 7:10 PM
88	No more horn blowing of the trains in the city limits. Enforce excessive motor vehicle noises, especially motor cycles	10/19/2021 6:56 PM
89	Car/exhaust noise Pets in condo buildings how loud can music be, and what hours, in condo buildings When can trash be dumped from construction sites	10/19/2021 5:07 PM
90	Alexandria can mitigate the effects of train horn noise by establishing a "quiet zone." In this quiet zone, railroads can be directed to cease the routine sounding of their horns when approaching the Alexandria station. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations.	10/19/2021 4:42 PM
91	Alexandria claims to be an eco city. Consider migrating landscaping companies to battery operated lawn care equipment that is less noisy and less polluting. I believe California has done that with recent legislation. Do not eliminate the decibel limit at property lines for this equipment. The level of noise from this equipment is downright unhealthy.	10/19/2021 3:56 PM
92	Consider restriction of residential construction and landscaping noise levels above 60 decibels from 8 am - 7pm on weekdays and 12pm to 5pm on Sundays. Enforce noise ordinance for after market auto exhausts Prohibit fully the use is 2stroke gas powered leaf blowers within city limits.	10/19/2021 3:05 PM
93	Have a dedicated complaint line for noise issues.	10/19/2021 1:55 PM
94	The noise from cars / very very loud music /very very loud mufflers AND very dangerous speeding on Duke has to be dealt with. It is unsustainable for the community.	10/19/2021 1:47 PM
95	The Metro and train horns are a significant issue: too often, too loud, likely unnecessary for safety or for other operating reasons.	10/19/2021 1:42 PM
96	Stop the VRE and freight trains from blowing their horns around the King St station.	10/19/2021 1:25 PM
97	Train horns are horrible loud. They should be stopped	10/19/2021 1:01 PM
98	My main issue is with the train horns which truly don't seem to serve any purpose. Construction can be loud but I get that it needs to happen. But those trains!! :-)	10/19/2021 12:44 PM
99	Drop this issue embarrassing	10/19/2021 12:20 PM
100	I understand that trains are exempt from the noise ordinance. I don't know if that is due to jurisdictional issues. However, the apparent "safety" reasons for the current whistle blowing practice can be addressed in other ways at the Alex Amtrak station.	10/19/2021 12:14 PM
101	Address the train horns. City working with other stakeholders should modify the Alexandria train station so that passengers are not allowed onto the platform until the Amtrak and VRE trains have arrived and stopped. They do this at Union station, which permits the Amtrak/VRE trains to NOT blow horns while entering the station. City should also work with stakeholders to develop a warning system so that the Amtrak/VRE trains do not have to blow their horns when departing the station. Once passengers are no longer present on the platform, then the CSX freight trains can pass through the station without sounding their horns.	10/19/2021 11:54 AM
102	Please hold amtrak, VRE, and CSX accountable for blaring horns at Alexandria station, especially at night	10/19/2021 11:46 AM
103	Trains - I realize federal regs override any local concerns but I live close to King St and we get 4 diff types of trains - horn blasting varies by "type" Amtrak and VRE esp have very loud long blasts - is that really necessary?!	10/19/2021 11:43 AM
104	PLEASE work to stop the train horns as then enter/leave the King Street station. They are VERY loud and disruptive. This is a serious quality of life and property value issue. Please consider this.	10/19/2021 11:25 AM
105	Train whistle noise when entering and leaving the station.	10/19/2021 11:20 AM
106	There is no enforcement of rules on train horns in the city, Amtrak and CSX frequent violations, blowing horns in station, extended blasts upon entry. With the planned expansion of train operations, this problem will get worse. Multiple residential areas and businesses along the tracks are impacted by this as well as every person choosing train travel via the Alexandria station. Some cities implement quiet zones, if Metro can safely operate without sounding	10/19/2021 11:19 AM

Phase II Revision of Noise Ordinance

125	Stop trains from sounding horns when entering/leaving King Street station	10/19/2021 9:56 AM
126	For residents of the Carlyle District, stopping the train horns is the most important.	10/19/2021 9:53 AM
127	the train horns on arrival to alexandria train station are loud and unnecessary. some train operators sound the horns for extremely long periods of time.	10/19/2021 9:53 AM
128	Follow the Federal Railroad Administration rule of allowing train horns to sound when working on tracks and prohibit the sounding of train horns when trains approach or depart from our Union Station. . .	10/19/2021 9:50 AM
129	I want to use this opportunity to support Live Music in the City of Alexandria, particularly the Classical Movements initiative. They were a solace during the restrictive moments of the pandemic, bringing a little joy in the format of live music. It is the exact opposite of noise. However, it has been treated as such. It should not fall under the same category as lawnmowers but with parades and marches.	10/19/2021 8:35 AM
130	Again, racing cars with loud mufflers	10/19/2021 3:44 AM
131	Live music has a profound economic impact on our City. When people are out to attend a performance, they also go to bars and restaurants, shop at nearby establishments, and pay for parking. We need to encourage live music, which especially during this pandemic often happens outdoors. Classical Movements is an excellent example of this.	10/18/2021 9:27 PM
132	Please add provisions to allow stricter noise regulation of vehicles. This has become a significant problem within the past two years, and non-resident vehicle-related noise from blasting music (while idling for hours) and modified exhaust and other systems has significantly affected quality of life in our neighborhood.	10/18/2021 9:04 PM
133	I'm not a resident but often visit and stay with a dear friend who is a resident. And one of the things we most enjoy is live music in Alexandria, such as at the Secret Garden. Please encourage more music in more places, especially jazz and classical. Thank you.	10/18/2021 7:47 PM
134	Neighbor runs a generator whenever power goes away. It's incredibly noisy. Also too many noisy emergency firetrucks on King even no traffic.	10/18/2021 6:16 PM
135	The one outdoor event that is beautiful are the outdoor concerts at the Secret Garden Rectory by Classical Movements. They start at 5 and are over by 730. It is a lovely venue and beautiful music that adds to the charm of Old Town. Please don't create a new ordinance that would take this artistic benefit away.	10/18/2021 5:55 PM
136	\$500 citations for motorcycles and muscle cars designed to be incredibly loud and disruptive, especially in the central business district where people dine outdoors.	10/18/2021 5:02 PM
137	As a home owner and resident on North Columbus Street, I have become a supporter of the Classical Movements Concert Agenda in the "Secret Garden" on the corner of North Columbus and Princess Street. One homeowner constantly complains about the "noise" from the musical events and has imposed "lawfare" on the purveyors of Classical Movements. I consider this homeowner's actions patently ridiculous. The Concerts represent the Arts and violate NO city ordinances for either decibel level or time requirements. When you compare the work that Classical Movements does for starving artists or our local community to the extremely loud noise of organizations like Rolling Thunder or other activities on the waterfront near King Street and Union Street... there is no comparison. Holding Classical Movements to a higher standard than we hold noisy businesses on the waterfront is unfair and undemocratic. Leave the Classical Movement organization alone please. They bring much more to the community than the one "whiner" who is complaining. Thanks in advance for your support.	10/18/2021 4:38 PM
138	Airplane noise.	10/18/2021 4:25 PM
139	Alexandria is a town with history, art, and culture. I am supporting Live Music, especially classical music in the City of Alexandria.	10/18/2021 4:21 PM
140	The "predominant use" definition should be modified so that it also considers not only a 200 ft. radius of the noise source but also weighs more heavily the majority of property uses within a 200 ft. cone *of the direction of the noise source.* The current definition significantly impacts residential areas when businesses operate atypically or against established norms. For example, if a commercial business faces a busy commercial street (Mt. Vernon Ave in Del Ray) but chooses to predominately operate outdoors in the rear of the business which immediately abuts nothing but residential homes in the 200 ft. *direction* of the noise, this	10/18/2021 10:44 AM

Your Views: Defending Classical Movements

Olivia Anderson - April 22, 2021



Guests applauding at an outdoor concert hosted by Classical Movements. Courtesy photo.



To the editor:

I was both dismayed and saddened by the recent letter published from Guy Lamolinara regarding Classical Movements. Many of the facts presented in his letter were misleading and largely untrue. For example, most of the programs sponsored

by Classical Movements are in fact just one hour each – typically spread a few hours apart on a Saturday. Two hours total.

And fortunately, most of the attendees left their “rock and roll stage” a long time ago and are all rather somber. The large events are few and far between. Due to the pandemic, the crowds are kept to a minimum at all events.

The process for approval of this venue followed the same public process with the same level of integrity as others, with support provided from many other neighbors. Lamolinara is indeed in closer proximity to the venue than most of us – but I would urge him to refocus his concern.

His current goal appears to be getting retribution by making paying customers suffer as he believes he is. Rather than putting his energy into disrupting the programs, as he has during the two one-hour shows I’ve attended – e.g., yelling loudly in his yard during chamber music, banging pots during opera – I would instead invite friends over to take advantage of the proximity. We are all paying good money to hear artists of this caliber and he would be able to enjoy it all for free!

It’s especially unfortunate that the artists are equally impacted. We’ve all had to make sacrifices during the pandemic and the arts industry was hit especially hard. Artists are struggling to survive.

I personally am far more concerned about the level of activity and noise associated with the imminent Sunrise facility also adjacent to his property, with its hundreds of residents utilizing outdoor spaces.

I do hope Lamolinara finds ways to enjoy reading a book and have conversations while Mozart or light jazz plays in the background. And I hope that Classical Movements continues to bring joy to so many people in the community we all share and love.

-Laura Rodin, Alexandria

Classical Movements owner recognized by Musical America

Olivia Anderson - December 16, 2021



Neeta Helms



Neeta Helms, the president of Classical Movements in Old Town, was named one of Musical America's top 30 professionals of 2021, according to a news release.

Classical Movements organizes tours of classical music ensembles around the world. In 2020, with concerts cancelled or put on hold due to the pandemic, Classical Movements shifted gears and started hosting outdoor concerts in the "secret garden" behind its Old Town headquarters at 711 Princess St. The first entry in the concert series, which took place in June 2020, was the first live classical music concert since the start of the pandemic. The concerts remain a huge hit with residents and local classical music fans and regularly feature musicians from renowned national symphonies.

Helms also oversaw other pandemic-era projects, including virtual music education programs, a live streamed concert of India and a cross-country celebration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' inauguration.

Helms was recognized as part of a special report from Musical America, one of the country's oldest classical music magazines, titled "The Pandemic: Meeting the Moment." This year's report honored those "whose heroic efforts have helped to sustain the performing arts during one of the most difficult and often tragic times in modern history — the pandemic." Helms was named alongside acclaimed musicians such as Jennifer Koh and the leaders behind the San Diego Symphony and Seattle Opera, according to the release.

-cmelloklein@alextimes.com





2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



◀◀◀ FEBRUARY

Chapman and Aguirre run for re-election

Councilors John Chapman and Canek Aguirre announced on Feb. 1 they would be running for re-election for Alexandria City Council.

Chapman, a lifelong Alexandrian, has served on City Council since 2012. He has worked as an educator throughout the region and currently works in Fairfax County Public Schools as a community use program specialist. He also owns and operates Manumission Tour Company, a local Black history tour company.

Aguirre, the first person of Hispanic heritage to serve on council, was elected in 2018 and during his time on council helped lead the city's 2020 Census Complete Count Committee, resulting in a 100% count of Alexandria households.

Council approves stormwater fee increase

City Council unanimously passed an ordinance doubling the stormwater utility fee from \$140 to \$280 during a Feb. 20 public hearing.

The increased fee will add \$155 million into the city's coffers over the next

10 years and will help fund an ambitious new flood mitigation action plan, according to city staff. The plan includes various capacity and spot improvement projects meant to overhaul Alexandria's crumbling stormwater in-

frastructure.

Although residents have been calling on the city to take action and address the stormwater system after a slew of intense flooding events over the past two years, several residents said they be-

lieved enlarging the city's budget was not enough to curb flooding in their neighborhoods. Previously, the city has used the stormwater fee to fund projects intended to control water quality and not flooding.

Bagley, Lewis join City Council race

Another City Council candidate, affordable housing advocate and community activist Sarah Bagley, tossed her hat in the ring on Feb. 9. James Lewis, vice chair of the Alexandria Traffic and Parking Board, also announced on Feb. 10 that he was running for City Council in the June 8 Democratic Primary.

Other notable events:

School Board rejects affordable housing for Minnie Howard; Councilor Mo Seifeldein announces run for mayor, then backs out of race; Charles Hooff III dies at 80; **Classical Movements forced to shut down popular outdoor concert series**



PHOTO/CLASSICAL MOVEMENTS

National Symphony Orchestra cellists played for a socially distanced crowd as part of Classical Movements' outdoor concert series.

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(Source: BRIGHT MLS)

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◀◀◀ MARCH

Council denies Braddock West project

City Council voted 4-3 to deny a request from developer West Street Acquisitions, LLC, to build a 180-unit multi-use building across from the Braddock Road Metro station that would have featured 14 affordable housing units, during a public hearing on March 13.

In addition to housing, the building proposal included plans to provide additional space for retail, restaurants and other shopping. While the city's Planning Commission voted 6-1 in December 2020 to approve the project's development special use permit, several members of council expressed concern with the building's impact on an already over-taxed stormwater system and its relative lack of affordable housing when compared to other projects such as the redevelopment of the Heritage at Old Town apartment complex.

City and unions debate collective bargaining

The city discussed a proposed draft ordinance on collective bargaining on March 9 that, when passed, would bring the labor practice to Alexandria for the first time.

Collective bargaining is the legal process by which public sector

employees negotiate their wages, benefits and working conditions with their government employers.

Alexandria's proposed ordinance was much more limited in scope than those on the books in Washington D.C. and Maryland. It allowed only for legally bind-

ing negotiations over wages and benefits. The proposed ordinance did not include negotiations about working conditions, such as how workplace hours and schedules are assigned and how the city manages its handling of grievances and discipline.

Council approves American Rescue Plan spending

City Council approved the immediate use of \$450,000 in American Rescue Plan funding to extend food distribution and housing assistance efforts through July during the March 23 legislative meeting.

Like localities across the country, Alexandria was eligible to receive a direct influx

of funding from ARPA, the \$1.9 trillion federal COVID-19 stimulus package that President Joseph Biden signed into law on March 11. The city would ultimately receive \$59.4 million in direct funding, while Alexandria City Public Schools would receive about \$35.4 million.

Other notable events:

Vice President Kamala Harris visits fibre space; City Council approves permit for Classical Movements' outdoor concerts; New public art that honors history of Potomac River comes to Waterfront Park; Police arrest four suspects in West End armed robbery

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“SOUNDS OF HOPE & HARMONY” & “SOUNDS OF JOY & LIGHT”**LIVE, SOCIALLY-DISTANCED OUTDOOR CONCERT SERIES****CHAMBER MUSIC | OPERA | CHOIR | JAZZ**

**Saturday, June 20, 2020: Musicians of the National Symphony, Alexandria
Symphony, Fairfax Symphony and New Orchestra of Washington**

The Washington Post

[Going to my first concert of the pandemic felt like preparing for battle. Then I got there.](#)

Michael Brodeur, *The Washington Post* | June 22, 2020

“Classical Movements isn’t in the business of throwing garden parties, but its fledgling attempt to bring music back to real life, led by founder Neeta Helms, was an ambitious model for what live music might look like for the foreseeable future. As Phase 2 of reopening relaxed some restrictions in the District starting Monday, it’s likely that more attempts to gather skittish audiences will spring up around the area. Even so, the baby steps of Saturday’s gathering in the garden felt like a giant leap.”

“...the intimacy of the experience — and our collective hunger to hear just about anything — gave the feeling that audience and performers were conducting the same experiment: just being there. Even before the first notes were played, I found myself getting lost in the music of chitchat and laughter — our own birdsong.”

“For audience and musicians alike — and especially for Helms and her team, who found themselves immediately fielding questions about when the next concert will be (they’re figuring it out) — the various tweaks, compromises and precautions required to realize something as simple as a night of music felt like a major achievement.”



[Live music returns, offering a preview of the new concert normal](#)

Charles T. Downey, *Washington Classical Review* | June 21, 2020

“At 5 p.m. Saturday evening, something extraordinary happened: a group of people gathered to hear another group of people play classical music on their instruments.”



WAMU 88.5

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RADIO

[How D.C.'s Live Music Venues Are Trying To Survive The Pandemic](#)

Mikaela Lefrak, *WAMU* | July 1, 2020

“The classical musicians wore jeans and khakis, not tuxes. Audience members stood six feet apart — for now, plush concert hall seats are a thing of the past. It wasn’t what anyone was used to, but for one afternoon, the music was back.

“‘These are great artists. For them, performing is sort of an essential thing,’ says Neeta Helms, Classical Movements’ founder and president. ‘And there’s nothing like live music.’”

[Advance Press](#)

[Hear That Sound? Live Music Returns to Alexandria on June 20](#)

Kevin Dauray, *The Zebra* | June 18, 2020

“With the City of Alexandria in the second phase of reopening, some musicians are about to have the opportunity to play before a genuine audience. Yes, you read that correctly. On June 20, members of several local orchestras, including the ASO, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and the New Orchestra of Washington, will once again delight concertgoers.”

[“Sounds of Hope & Harmony” chamber-music concerts from Classical Movements](#)

League of American Orchestras, *The Hub* | June 15, 2020

“Classical Movements Founder and President Neeta Helms has characterized ‘Sounds of Hope & Harmony’ as ‘an important gesture of support and optimism, both to local musicians and orchestras and to our community as a whole.’”

A Live, Stateside Concert to Promote Goodwill

Sarah Shay, *Musical America* | June 12 2020

INDUSTRY NEWS

A Live, Stateside Chamber Concert to Promote Good Will

June 12, 2020 | By Sarah Shay, *Musical America*



On June 20 Classical Movements, the Virginia-based touring company, will present a day of concerts designed for the era of pandemic. "Sounds of Hope & Harmony" will feature two one-hour-long programs, each performed three times, at 10am, 11:30am, and 1pm, and at 5pm, 6:30pm, and 8pm respectively.

The venue is the garden in the rectory of historic Christ Church (1785) in Alexandria, site of Classical Movements' office, and attendees will be required to wear face coverings and stand at least six feet apart per person or small household group. Tickets and programs will be distributed digitally.

Classical Movements Founder and President Neeta Helms has characterized "Sounds of Hope & Harmony" as "an important gesture of support and optimism, both to local musicians and orchestras and to our co million unity as a whole." Performers will include members of the National Symphony, Alexandria Symphony, New Orchestra of Washington, Fairfax Symphony, and several other local ensembles.

The morning program will include works by a potpourri of composers ranging from John Williams to Franz Schubert. The evening program features works by, among others, Mozart, Shostakovich, Astor Piazzolla, Poulenc, Schubert, Handel, and Bizet.

Sunday, June 21, is the rain date. Tickets and program details can be found [here](#).

Pictured: Neeta Helms

Soon You Will Be Able to Go to an Actual Concert in Alexandria

Rob Brunner, *The Washingtonian* | June 11, 2020

"This is not a live-stream event or something informal you watch on somebody's porch: It's an actual concert with tickets and a program and everything—a once-cherished ritual that now feels like a dim memory from a distant era."

Music • Review

Going to my first concert of the pandemic felt like preparing for battle. Then I got there.



Socially distanced crowds applaud for musicians during a performance at the Rectory, a music venue in Alexandria on Jun. 20. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades for The Washington Post)



By Michael Andor Brodeur

Classical Music Critic

June 22, 2020 at 1:26 p.m. EDT

It's coming up on four months since the [coronavirus](#) scattered every cluster of the classical music community back to their respective abodes, and over the course of this eerie interim, it's as though a whole new set of instincts has set in to replace the old ones. In the past, my preparations for a concert involved listening to the work a few times, finding a trustworthy pen and eating a big enough lunch to keep my stomach from joining in with the orchestra.

Saturday afternoon's checklist was a bit more thorough.

I was preparing to head to Old Town Alexandria, where the local orchestral and choral touring company [Classical Movements](#) was hosting "Sounds of Hope & Harmony," an outdoor trio of hour-long chamber concerts in the "Secret Garden" tucked behind its former-rectory headquarters on Princess Street. But it felt like I was preparing for battle.

I had my mask — two of them, actually — a blue plaid number that seemed formal enough to block pathogens at a garden party. I had a small bottle of Purell. A big bottle of water. A hankie for lens fog. An umbrella and a raincoat for the looming thunderheads. A printout of my assigned location in the garden (No. 11 of 35 or so reserved spots). And my usual kit of reporter stuff — phone, pad, pen. I also had a serious case of nerves.

Riding to the rectory in the back of a Lyft, I took shallow breaths (which I'm sure is effective) and hung my head halfway out the open window with all the enthusiasm of a golden retriever en route to the vet. It was raining, and the ominous droplets pelting my forehead felt like tiny omens that I should turn around and go back to the apartment, that this was all too soon, that it was actually crazy. My phone said crowds were starting to form at President Trump's campaign rally in Tulsa, and I felt around my tote bag to make sure I had my inhaler.

But upon reaching the garden, the rain stalled, the clouds parted, the sun glimmered through the trees, and the sounds of nearly two dozen musicians tuning in the various rooms of the 235-year-old rectory filtered into the courtyard. It was the sound of music preparing to return; and just like that, my jitters subsided.



A musician's mask hangs off her stand during a socially distanced concert at the Rectory. (Amariza Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)

Classical Movements isn't in the business of throwing garden parties, but its fledgling attempt to bring music back to real life, led by founder Neeta Helms, was an ambitious model for what live music might look like for the foreseeable future. As Phase 2 of reopening relaxed some restrictions in the District starting Monday, it's likely that more attempts to gather skittish audiences will spring up around the area. Even so, the baby steps of Saturday's gathering in the garden felt like a giant leap.

"There are a lot of reasons to worry," Helms would tell me in a debrief on the phone the next day. "But I feel like we have to try to go ahead."

[Caught between silence and clamor, these musicians find connection in birdsong]

This time out, hand-sanitizing stations stood at the ready and little flags staked out each listener's spot for standing, six feet apart (though couples could cluster). It felt odd at first, but also oddly luxurious if you've ever been vexed by the personal space afforded by seats in a concert hall. Attendees improvised their hey-I-know-you reunions in the rows through a mix of elbow bumps and weird waves and salutes.



Audience members stand at their designated socially distanced spots. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)

The musicians, too, had some improvising to do. Ensembles representing the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the New Orchestra of Washington, as well as the Barclay Brass ensemble (which includes members of the Maryland, Annapolis and Fairfax symphony orchestras) were staggered across the three programs and spread around the stage — the unfamiliar acoustics of socially distant performance requiring more reliance on visual cues between the players.

A quintet of horn players from the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra opened the evening easing into selections from Giles Farnaby's "Fancies, Toyes, and Dreams" before seguing into "That's a Plenty," a 1914 rag-turned-jazz-standard by Lew Pollack, and one of a few detours into ragtime that lent the program a disarming lightness. Members of the NSO later took on Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" and Barclay Brass chased the second suite from Handel's "Water Music" with Allen Toussaint's "Java." (And in all cases, even when a rag sounds a little rusty, it feels right.)



David Murray plays trombone at a socially distanced concert at the Rectory. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)

The wind quintet of National Symphony Orchestra players also gave a brilliant account of Valerie Coleman's "Umoja" (written for Imani Winds) that held court against the noisy birds in the tulip magnolia above us. And a quintet of string players from the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra showcased the skilled interplay of concertmaster Claudia Chudacoff and violinist Peter Haase, delivering a stirring beautiful selection from Mozart's Divertimento No. 1 in D.

Their take on Shostakovich's lovably stumbling polka from "The Golden Age" — and its grasping toward a familiar form — felt freshly relatable; and likewise, their closing selection of "Toreador Song" from "Carmen" felt appropriately victorious for the occasion. After all, we'd made it!

Much like those nervously gathered to listen, the program was a little all over the place; but the intimacy of the experience — and our collective hunger to hear just about anything — gave the feeling that audience and performers were conducting the same experiment: just being there. Even before the first notes were played, I found myself getting lost in the music of chitchat and laughter — our own birdsong.



Socially distanced crowds listen to music during a performance at the Rectory. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/for The Washington Post)

And while there were little reminders of the virus — the wiping down of musicians' seats between sets, the concerted effort to avoid touching the microphone, somewhat-matchy masks — it never overshadowed the evening. (The sun sails hung overhead did that, while helping keep the music contained from the roar of landing planes.)

For audience and musicians alike — and especially for Helms and her team, who found themselves immediately fielding questions about when the next concert will be (they're figuring it out) — the various tweaks, compromises and precautions required to realize something as simple as a night of music felt like a major achievement. I was tempted to high-five my neighbors in audience but, well, you know.

Saturday, July 25, 2020: Musicians of the National Symphony

Advance Press

The Washington Post

Four summertime strolls: Where to take them and what to listen to

Michael Brodeur, *The Washington Post* | July 15, 2020

“If you happen to be biking the Mt. Vernon Trail on July 25, consider locking up in Old Town Alexandria that evening as orchestral touring company Classical Movements launches “Sounds of Hope & Harmony,” a new series of 16 concerts in its socially distanced “secret garden.” I covered the company’s first go at a pandemic-defying outdoor concert (spoiler: it was great!), and its forthcoming programs (Aug. 1, 8, 15; Sept. 12, 19, 26; and Oct. 3) will reach beyond chamber music to include opera, jazz and even choral works.



This first date will bring together players from the National Symphony Orchestra to celebrate “the four B’s” — Barrière, Bologne, Bartók and Beethoven. (And especially that last guy, whose big sesquicentennial has been all but ruined by the pandemic.) Oh, and the ride over is as good a time as any to brush up on your Joseph Boulogne — a.k.a. Chevalier de Saint-Georges — whose String Quartet No. 3 in G Minor is a particular treat on the program.”

The best things to do — virtually and in person — while quarantined in the D.C. area

Going Out Guide Staff, *The Washington Post* | July 23, 2020

“For classical music fans missing the thrill of live performances, an unlikely destination is filling the void left by the Kennedy Center and Strathmore: A 235-year-old rectory in Old Town Alexandria. Classical Movements began holding concerts in the courtyard behind its headquarters in June, with socially distanced seats allowing up to 43 people (singles or couples) to attend. This Saturday, a seven-week series of chamber, opera, choral and jazz performances begins with string quartets and cello duos by musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra. Beethoven, Bartok and the Beatles are all on the one-hour program.”



10 Virtual And IRL Things To Do In D.C. This Weekend

Chelsea Cirruzzo, *DCist* | July 23, 2020

“Concerts are slowly making a comeback and this summer head to a very special show. Concert tour company Classical Movements is putting on a series of intimate garden concerts starting on Saturday.”

WAMU 88.5

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RADIO

Lori McCue, *All Things Considered* | July 23, 2020

“I’m really looking to check out one of these intimate garden concerts put on by this concert tour company Classical Movements in Alexandria [...] they’re holding it outdoors in what they call the ‘Secret Garden’ at their facility on Princess Street and that sounds really magical and I’m looking forward to learning more.”



[Mostly Virtual Arts Round Up, July 16, 2020](#)

Richard Seiden, *The Georgetown* | July 16, 2020

“The secret garden of the Rectory, 711 Princess Street in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, is the venue for Classical Movements’ Sounds of Hope & Harmony series of intimate and socially distanced Saturday-evening concerts. On **July 25** at 6 and 7:30 p.m., cellists Eugena Chang and Britton Riley and a quartet made up of violinists Alexandra Osborne and Angelia Cho, violist Mahoko Eguchi and cellist Rachel Young — all National Symphony Orchestra musicians — will give one-hour performances of works by Barrière, Bartók, Bologne, Beethoven, Joplin and other composers.”

Series and Upcoming Programs

TheHub

League
of American
Orchestras

Classical Movements' outdoor "Sounds of Hope and Harmony" concerts, July 25-Oct. 4

INDUSTRY BUZZ

The concert tour company Classical Movements, based in Alexandria, Virginia, will present eighteen intimate, socially-distanced concerts and recitals from late July through early October at the Secret Garden of...

July 22, 2020



[Javier Arrey, Kaylee Norris, Issachah Savage Headline Classical Movements 'Sounds of Hope & Harmony' Garden Concert Series](#)

David Salazar, *OperaWire* | July 16, 2020

"The first major program for opera lovers is "Prague Comes to Washington," an evening of Art Song and Opera. The showcase will feature baritone Javier Arrey and soprano Kaylee Norris as they take on music by Mozart, Dvorak, Stravinsky, Brahms, Liszt, Wolf, and Beethoven, alongside pianist Taylor Hutchinson.

"An Evening of Grand Opera, Italian and American Art Songs' will star tenor Issachah Savage and pianist Joy Schreier. The duo will perform music by Verdi, Wagner, Strauss, Tosti, Donaudy, and Margaret Bonds."



[A critic's suggestions for music to fill the dog day](#)

Michael Brodeur, *The Washington Post* | July 29, 2020

“Alexandria-based orchestral touring group [Classical Movements](#) continues its Sounds of Hope and Harmony series through the month of August and beyond. On Aug. 1 at 6 and 7:30 p.m. it will host “Prague Comes to Washington,” a pair of hour-long programs of arias and art songs in its freshly pergola’d “[secret garden](#),” featuring Chilean baritone Javier Arrey ([an alum](#) of the Castleton Festival and WNO’s remonikered Cafritz Young Artist Program); soprano Kaylee Norris; and pianist Taylor Hutchinson. Upcoming installments of these 100-ticket, socially distanced soirees this month include NSO musicians performing chamber works by Molly Joyce, Victor Ewald, Andy Akiho, Alvin Singleton, Zhao Tian and Duke Ellington on Aug. 8, and an evening of grand opera arias sung by “heldentenor par excellence” Issachah Savage, accompanied by pianist Joy Schreier on Aug. 15.”

Live Outdoor Concerts by Four Indoor Organizations

Susan Elliott, *Musical America* | July 27, 2020

INDUSTRY NEWS

Live Outdoor Concerts by Four Indoor Organizations

July 27, 2020 | By Susan Elliott, *Musical America*

As the cancellations mount up for performing arts organizations, most are continuing their valiant efforts to stay in the public eye online.

A few brave souls are complementing that with small outdoor events, using safety protocols that are perhaps awkward and labor-intensive to execute, but nonetheless worth it, both for the players and the listeners. Among the first to go the al fresco route was the Minnesota Orchestra, earlier this month announcing a series of [24 chamber concerts on the adjacent Peavy Plaza](#) in August, each lasting no more than 70 minutes (no intermission), requiring advance reservations, face masks, temperature screenings, and keeping to a total capacity--including staff--of 250. Ensemble size is up to eight.

The Detroit Symphony has since followed a [similar path](#) -- small ensembles of DSO musicians performing six concerts out of doors in varying locales, some of which require reservations; all events are free with strict protocols in place for social distancing (those who don't follow the rules will be asked to leave); no seating provided--BYOBlanket.

The San Francisco Symphony, which has a new online series titled Currents, also has joined the al fresco crowd with its [1:1 Concerts](#), bringing a new level to intimacy--literally one orchestra member performing for one listener at a time, using the Davies Hall outdoor terraces. First priority goes to donors, volunteers, etc., but it appears they may be available to the general public as well.

Classical Movements just launched the first of an ongoing outdoor series in Alexandria, VA, titled [Sounds of Hope and Harmony](#). National Symphony Orchestra musicians are among the performers and tickets can be purchased through CM's website. Planned to continue through October 4 on Saturday evenings, the 18 concerts take place in a church garden in Old Town, Alexandria, and feature a range of repertoire.

Kudos to all for fighting the uphill battle of the pandemic.



WSJ

[Socially Distanced Sound: Amid the pandemic, some orchestras are experimenting with modified live concerts. With its smaller number of players, chamber music is ideally suited to the moment.](#)

Barbara Jepson, *The Wall Street Journal* | August 4, 2020

“Given the right conditions, more major orchestras should be taking similar steps. There’s a large and artistically rewarding repertoire on a smaller scale that could be played, where it is safe to do so, before mask-wearing, socially distanced listeners, from string quartets and other chamber music to opera overtures, serenades and symphonies. Doing so now would allow arts presenters to return to their core mission: putting on live concerts in front of audiences. And it would enable at least some orchestra members to perform and some concertgoers to re-experience the joys of live music-making. These events might also offer opportunities to experiment with alternative onstage placements before moving to the next phase with a full symphony orchestra.

“At the very least, orchestra members could play chamber music outdoors while the weather is good. Classical Movements, a concert tour organizer, has sponsored seven such events in Alexandria, Va., since June with no reported spread of the virus...”

[Alexandria Crichlow & V. Savoy McIlwain Headline ‘Songs of Hope & Harmony’ Concert This August](#)

David Salazar, *OperaWire* | August 19

“The Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts and Classical Movements will be joining forces to present a unique concert as part of the “Songs of Hope & Harmony” series on August 29, 2020.

“The showcase will feature soprano [Alexandria Crichlow](#) and baritone [V. Savoy McIlwain](#) alongside pianist Dr. Lester Green. Pamela Simonson will narrate the concert performance. The event is set to take place in Alexandria, Virginia in honor of the March on Washington back in the 1960s.”

Alexandria Times

[Outdoor classical music concert series finds a way forward for live performances](#)

Cody Mello-Klein, *Alexandria Times* | August 27, 2020

“The chance to see talented musicians up close in an intimate setting is also rare in the realm of classical music, where massive concert halls and pricy tickets are standard. Classical Movements is making music more accessible and, in the process, hopes to remind audiences why live performances are so valuable.”



Neeta Helms interviewed for “Voices of Change”

Nicole Lacroix, *WETA* | September 7, 2020

[Pandemic Forces Performing Arts Leaders to Rethink](#)

Richard Selden, *The Georgetown* | September 15, 2020

“While virtual programming has blossomed, there have been few attempts to return to live, in-person performance. Alexandria, Virginia, appears to be the area leader, with outdoor, small-ensemble performances by Alexandria Symphony Orchestra members planned for this fall and the 18-concert Sounds of Hope & Harmony series successfully launched in the Rectory’s secret garden by orchestra tour company Classical Movements.”

The Score: Seasons of Change

The League of American Orchestras, *Symphony Magazine* | Fall 2020

“With most orchestral touring on hiatus due to Covid-19, tour organizer **Classical Movements** looked closer to home for a suitable performance venue, and found one in its backyard: the garden outside its offices in Alexandria, Virginia. In July, Classical Movements President Neeta Helms launched “Sounds of Hope and Harmony,” a series of one-hour outdoor chamber concerts featuring musicians from the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra, among others, in a wide range of music.”

“Sounds of Joy & Light”

[The world is loud. These upcoming classical music performances will give you some comfort.](#)

Michael Andor Brodeur, *The Washington Post* | October 14, 2020

Only live Classical Pick for October:

“With the new season comes another change as the Alexandria-based [Classical Movements](#) refreshes its series of socially-distanced chamber concerts with a new name and 22 more performances, starting on Halloween and continuing through December 19.

[...] That evening, they’ll clear the cobwebs for “[A Venetian Halloween](#),” featuring NSO musicians playing an autumnal chunk of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons as well as Puccini’s “Crisantemi.” (If this isn’t a perfect opportunity to step up your mask game, I’m not sure what is.)”

Also recommended in:

[The best things to do — virtually and in person — while quarantined in the D.C. area](#)



Going Out Guide Staff, *The Washington Post* | October 29, 2020



[Socially-Distanced Outdoor Concerts Selling Out in Alexandria, Virginia](#)

Grace Arnold, *The Zebra* | November 3, 2020

“Social distancing has affected every facet of life from work, to education, to entertainment. Classical Movements is countering that effect, introducing live classical music in a socially-distanced setting. As musicians perform underneath a pergola surrounded by lush foliage, the [Secret Garden at The Rectory](#) series is becoming the new social hub for all Alexandrians.”

“Music has the power to unite even the most uncommon of folks, and there is a poetic irony about unity during times of necessary separation, but that separation makes the power of music all the more relevant right now. Neeta Helms, Founder and President of Classical Movements, agrees, ‘We want to make the Covid winter as beautiful and happy as possible... We should just spread the joy and light that we can.’”

[Weekend Arts Round Up, December 10, 2020](#)

Richard Seldon, *The Georgetown* | December 10, 2020

“Classical Movements will present two afternoon performances of “Hallelujah! Gospel & Choral Favorites with Camerata Baltimore” on **Dec. 19** at 1 and 2:30 p.m. in the Secret Garden at the Rectory, 711 Princess St. in Alexandria, Virginia. The program of gospel music, spirituals and classical repertoire in celebration of Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas includes “Hallelujah” from Handel’s “Messiah,” Saint-Saëns’s “Christmas Oratorio” and works by John Rutter, Undine Smith Moore and Amy F. Bernon. Seating will be socially distanced and masks are required. Tickets are \$45.”



[“Creativity Abounds as Americans Mark Holidays in Times of COVID”](#)

Vero Balderas Iglesias, *Voice of America* | December 21, 2020

“Sounds of Hope & Harmony” 2021

[“Errin Duane Brooks, Joshua Blue, Elizebeth Barnes, Ashley Marie Robillard Headline Classical Movements Spring / Summer Slate”](#)

David Salazar, *OperaWire* | March 5, 2021



[Top Things to Do This Summer in Alexandria](#)

Caroline Secrest, *Visit Alexandria* | May 6, 2021

[“WORLD PREMIERE: Choral Arts Chamber Singers set to premiere “Stand Up” by B. E. Boykin”](#)

Patrick D. McCoy | Jun 3, 2021

“Classical Movements, a global presenter of concerts were among the many who had to make adjustments during the pandemic. One of its major contributions was the beginning of their outdoor concerts in The Secret Garden, which is an intimate space located at the organization’s headquarters in Alexandria, VA. It would be safe to say that President and Founder Neeta Helms and Classical Movements were the very first to begin presenting live concerts during the pandemic, when others were still quite reluctant to do so. What is special about this concert is the world premiere of B. E. Boykin’s “Stand Up.” Commissioned by Classical Movements’ Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program, the work is in honor of the activist and educator Mary Church Terrell, which will be given its world premiere with Scott Tucker and the Choral Arts Chamber Singers.”

[“Juneteenth 2021: DC region event, festival and exhibit guide”](#)

Luke Garrett, *WTOP* | June 19, 2021

[“Of Freedom We Sing: The First Juneteenth Concert in the Secret Garden Honors the New Federal Holiday”](#)

Kelly MacConomy, *Zebra* | July 5, 2021

“The 2021 musical series in the Secret Garden is aptly named “Sounds of Hope and Harmony.” Classical Movements has prevailed over COVID and cicadas, funding and feuding neighborhood challenges. The City granted Classical Movements a special use permit to continue offering live music to the community in a time of great strain financially, spiritually, politically, and creatively.”

“Kudos to Classical Movements and an encore standing ovation to CAAPA for a timely celebration in jubilation of the abolishment of enslavement and involuntary servitude. Let freedom sing!”

[“Music Venues May Be Open, but Outdoor Concerts Are Still Big”](#)

Sherri Dalphonse, *Washingtonian* | July 7, 2021

“You can enjoy Bach or Billie Holiday amid boxwoods at performances put on by Classical Movements in the Secret Garden of the Rectory on Princess Street in Old Town. The lineup includes choral music, cabaret, jazz, opera, tango, and more.”

[“Where to Celebrate Bastille Day Around DC”](#)

Maya Pottiger, *Washingtonian* | July 12, 2021

[“Tenor Errin Duane Brooks to Tribute Enrico Caruso and Mario Lanza in Recital”](#)

Logan Martell, *OperaWire* | July 29, 2021



Quotes from the ARTISTS

“It was a joy to sing for a live audience for the first time since the pandemic in our Juneteenth concert with CAAPA. I hope to look forward to more opportunities to perform for your concert series and perhaps be part of one of your tours.”

- **Shana Oshiro, Soprano**

“I would count our recital in Alexandria as one of the highlights of the past year and a half - thanks to the setting, your team, and the fabulous audience. Jeff and I look forward to the next one!”

- **David Kim, Concertmaster of Philadelphia Orchestra**

“I am truly grateful for having been invited and to have had the opportunity, along with my brilliant musical director and dear friend Howard, to perform in your fantastic musical series, and I was honored to make my Alexandria debut with Classical Movements.

I am in awe of what you have accomplished as a company. I was also so pleased to speak on your behalf to the City of Alexandria government to defend and support your stellar concert series.”

- **Anna Bergman, Soprano**

“I was so very proud to be part of your fantastic series. If there was a medal for bravery during these trying times, I would vote for your family. I (and I hope the rest of the city!) appreciates the work that you have done. As an artist, you gave us hope to let us perform again at a time when it was difficult to see the silver lining. I enjoyed every minute, every second that I was performing with Anna in your garden. Thank you, thank you, thank you. “

- **Howard Breitbart, Piano**

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to be part of the Secret Garden Concert Series.

The “Sounds of Hope & Harmony” Concert was an impactful joy of mine during the Pandemic.

Classical Movements is such a monumental organization, a true inspiration. You all have been a guiding light in dark times.

I am looking forward to future endeavors with you all.”

- **Alexandria Crichlow, Soprano**

“Thank you so much for your lovely email. I think I can speak for both Ashley and myself when I say that we were so happy to be a part of the Secret Garden recital series.

It was an absolute joy to put together, and get the opportunity to perform live after many months of isolated recording projects.



I hope your return to touring is uneventful in the best way possible, and you can bring the joy of music around the world once again.”

- **Joshua Blue, tenor**

“Thank you so much for including us in your series. The show was one of our highlights of the past year. We’d be honored to play for your series again.”

- **Brad Kolodner, Banjo of the Kolodner Trio**

“Thanks for having me as a participant! Every single concert I’ve done there has been a blast. Thank you for making this all possible!”

- **Marissa Regni, Principal Second Violin of the National Symphony Orchestra**

“Thank you for your email Neeta! You all have a beautiful thing going on there!

Thank you for creating opportunities when there were literally too few to come by.”

- **V. Savoy McIlwain, baritone**

“Thanks you so much for your kind note. It was a true privilege for me to be able to play on your series, especially when opportunities to perform live were virtually non-existent last year.”

- **Gil Hoffer, Trumpet of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra**

“We so enjoyed being a part of your mission to bring live music to your audiences.

Thank you for all of your passion and drive to not only bring live music to audiences, but also giving musicians a chance to perform again!”

- **David Miller, Trombone of Barclay Brass**

“It was such a fun experience, to finally play live music for in-person humans!!! Thank you Classical Movements for hosting an evening with your music-loving friends!”

- **David Murray, Trombone of the National Symphony Orchestra**

“That was such a precious opportunity for us to play music together and see colleagues and friends from all over this area. It meant a lot to us and we were so grateful to be asked to be part of it. I think it was a success and proves that putting on a concert is possible! We appreciate all the efforts you all took to make it happen (and keep it safe). Thank you also for providing the delicious dinner from Pita House. It was fantastic and we felt cared for in a way we have not felt in a long time. I hope it was as much of a success for you all. It was so nice to see you all and hope that we are all back to work soon. Thank you again!”

- **Kathryn Meany, Oboe of the National Symphony Orchestra**

“What a wonderful event, we really appreciated the opportunity to participate, the careful planning and the grace under unimaginable pressure from the weather! Classy as always.”

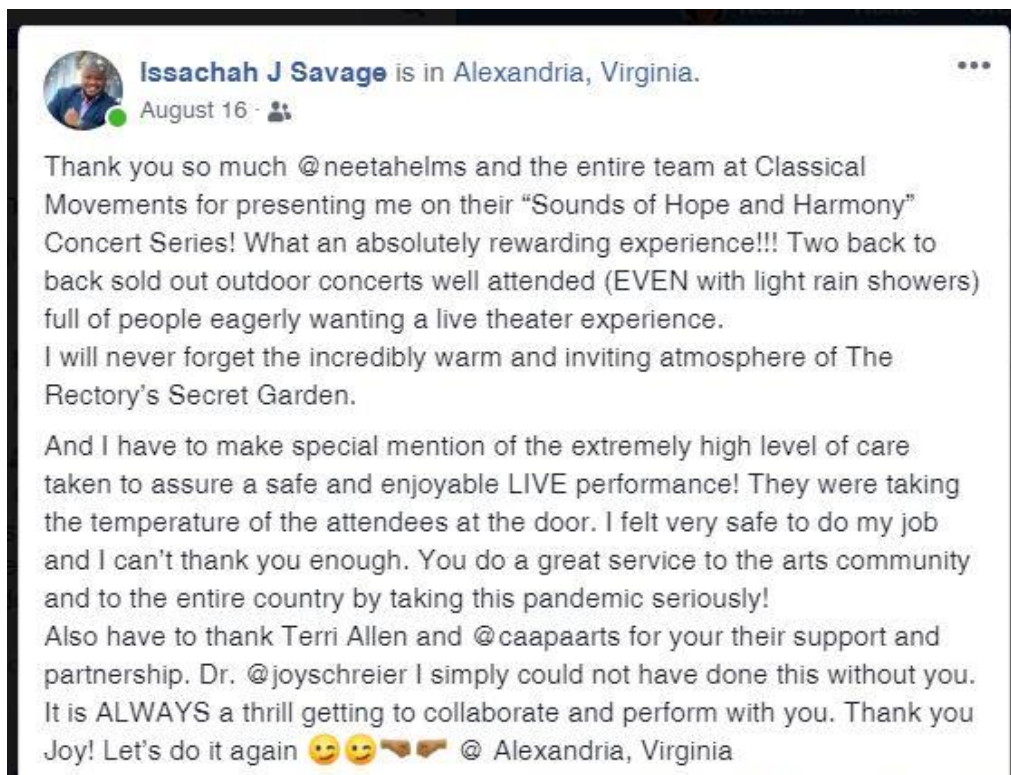
- **Claudia Chudacoff, Concertmaster of the Alexandria Symphony**

“Thanks so much for the opportunity to perform. It was such a treat for us to perform for a live audience and to perform again during these difficult times.”

- **Angelia Cho, Violin of the National Symphony Orchestra**

“The past three months have been surreal. As we watched concert after concert announce their cancellation, we eventually realized that the music industry would be changed in ways that would have been unimaginable just weeks before. As the cancellations started stretching past the summer months and into the fall, Becky and I resigned ourselves to the possibility that we may not have the opportunity to play live concerts for a year or more. Since March, we have devoted our creative energies to recording duos from our home in Philadelphia. While this has been very fulfilling work, the unique exchange that occurs in real time between audience and performer has been absent. We were beyond excited to be approached by our friends at the New Orchestra of Washington about representing NOW in this concert. The format of an outdoor, socially distanced chamber concert is such a creative solution to the unique problems facing the industry at this time. For the first time, will be sharing with a live audience some of our favorite duets that we learned and recorded in quarantine.”

- **Rebecca Anderson, Concertmaster and Alan Richardson, Principal Cello, of the New Orchestra of Washington**



[Featured in the Kennedy Center's NSO at Home livestream, Sunday, November 1, 2020](#)

Quotes from the AUDIENCE

"This was beautiful and a powerful reminder that nothing can replace a live concert! Thank you!"

- **Grace Cho, Executive Director and pianist of the New Orchestra of Washington**

"Thank you guys so much! What fun to have human interaction. Let's keep the Rectory Chamber Concert Series idea alive."



- **George Hanson, Executive Director of the Alexandria Symphony**

“Congratulations to Classical Movements for stepping into the breach, providing live music and pleasure for both audience and musicians. I salute you.”

- **Marlyn Klee, Yale Alumni Chorus**

“You are an inspiration – and you are fearless. I used your announcement last week to prompt my folks.”

- **Deborah Rutter, President, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

Richard Davis III (he comes to all or almost all concerts). On Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/richard.davis.5876/posts/10213587326356912?_cft__\[o\]=AZUk1M0D7lGLdD3pQBqJnAxmcXcaWpQyC9jum8yNyo34h3sChAraKytexUmFoUX_ZK2AsuAq-oYuxRNFV_5pboQIdPEEBNFzDYxK89-ljVKzqWt_X7dxoyNqWBgbK9mID3jt1LA2egWU4N8cXo38yQ8b&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-Rzhhttps://www.kennedy-center.org/globalassets/logos/wnonso/tkc_nso_horizontal.svg](https://www.facebook.com/richard.davis.5876/posts/10213587326356912?_cft__[o]=AZUk1M0D7lGLdD3pQBqJnAxmcXcaWpQyC9jum8yNyo34h3sChAraKytexUmFoUX_ZK2AsuAq-oYuxRNFV_5pboQIdPEEBNFzDYxK89-ljVKzqWt_X7dxoyNqWBgbK9mID3jt1LA2egWU4N8cXo38yQ8b&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-Rzhhttps://www.kennedy-center.org/globalassets/logos/wnonso/tkc_nso_horizontal.svg)

“Another fabulous Saturday evening outdoor concert, as part of a weekly Saturday series at 6 and 7:30. (Tickets can be purchased from link below.) As I left, an organizer/usher thanked me for my FB review of the preceding one. She somehow recognized masked me as its writer! I was pleased, and now I feel I owe another one!

I'll just say it inspired a friend, to get a ticket for next week, which inspired my getting a ticket for me and , since she hasn't seen her friend and fellow artist for at least 5 months, a period that not coincidentally coincides with a certain current event. It will be a brass and percussion extravaganza, which means we may miss the many bird songs and occasional overhead jet.

I should say a word or two about this concert, which left me in varied states of mesmerization. It began with the beautiful soprano, Kaylee Norris, striking in a red-violet (I think?) gown, singing with poignant longing of love in French, Italian, and German. She has a lovely and expressive voice. The famous Chilean baritone Javier Arrey began with untypical song cycles by Dvořák and Beethoven, and I warmed to his singing as he progressed. He ended and brought the house down by acting and singing the Count's musical monologue from Act 3 of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro", not a typical operatic aria with a recognizable structure, but a soliloquy whose phrasing flows with the intensity of the expression.

<https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

I was so excited to be able to attend the first Live, outdoor concert at The Rectory in Alexandria. It was my first live concert after being quarantined for four months. I was amazed at how well everything was organized. The staff cleaned everything again and again. But most important was how special it was to hear live music again. Mostly importantly it was at the highest artistic standards. I look forward to attending many more

- **Joan Gregoryk, Founder of the Children's Chorus of Washington**

"Neeta Helms, Classical Movements president, felt compelled to offer a concert in musical support of the national efforts of the country to speak out for social justice. What a better connection than with the anniversary of the march on Washington in 1963 when Dr. Martin Luther King gave his iconic "I have a Dream" speech.

"The performance was unique in that the entire concert either was an alternation between the baritone and soprano soloists singing spirituals, freedom songs, and civil rights anthems. Replicas of the signs held during the march were distributed throughout the venue - for everyone to keep as a keepsake. Of course, all audience members were appropriately socially distanced and masked-up.

Both voices were exceptional, complementing each other in intensity and sensitivity. Narration was provided by Pamela Simonson which superbly connected the songs in way to make them more relevant today than ever."

- **Dr. Eric Conway, Morgan State University, Fine and Performing Arts Department, Chair**

"This is a brilliant conception and by far the most enjoyable concert experience I have had in a long time."

"Thank you so much for offering these events. The one I attended made me so happy."

"I thank you sooooo much for making it possible to hear live music. I have missed it so much."

"Thanks for providing this soul soothing music!"



Virginia, within the City of Alexandria

A brilliant concept brilliantly executed. – George White

An oasis of culture to enjoy highly accomplished artists in the seclusion of Old Town - a sophisticated antidote for our harried lives! – Scott Corzine

World-class music in Classical Movements' secret garden is a wonderful respite in these challenging times. – Tanya Lervik

We attended a lovely (and safe) program right before Christmas. I was super glad that I found the Classical Movements' project and was able to keep the family's tradition to attend Christmas themed events (choir, orchestra, etc) despite of Covid-19. I would love to go again - even after the holidays, and even after Covid-19 is over... - Renata Mayer Gukovas

A wonderful way to enjoy fine music and support the arts. – Elaine Wick

This hidden gem provided a peaceful sanctuary and world-class performances throughout the pandemic. It keeps our souls alive. – Barbara von Hauzen

A splendid treat for the senses. Attending the concerts is also a way to connect with and support our community as well as have a wonderful day. – Gloria Black

This has been a wonderful addition to Alexandria and hopefully will remain even when other performances return inside. The hosts have brought together an ideal venue, talented performers and most importantly energy and culture that brings joy! – Greg Curtis

In the midst of the COVID pandemic the joy and freedom to watch the highest quality of musicians and performers live, in a wonder venue, has been a gift. Nothing better. –Pamela Zitron

Many thanks for making it possible to have these musical breaths of fresh air! MJR - Mary Jane Ruhl

Virginia, outside the City of Alexandria

During the particularly challenging times that we experienced in 2020, it was uplifting to be able to enjoy the music, talent, and energy of the musicians. During the summer concert, the birds chiming in added an interesting dynamic that you wouldn't get in a concert hall. I appreciate all of the hard work, thoughtfulness, and effort that the team at Classical Movements expended to successfully arrange these events. I enjoyed attending each of the ones I went to and would definitely consider attending future events. – Marla Bright

Was bitter cold that evening so thanks for the space heaters! Stick with the concert venue to support more musicians looking for work in 2021. – Joseph Gigliotti

Excellent performers and varied programs – James Carty

A welcome, lovely, inspiring safe diversion during the pandemic. Thank you for doing this! – Heather McPhail



The Secret Garden concerts we attended were a beautiful escape from the isolation of Covid-19, and a wonderful celebration of music and the joy of the holiday season. The musicians were brilliant, the staff responsive and lovely, and the gorgeous rectory garden with socially distanced seats, a temperature check, and space heaters was luxurious, but above all, magickal! My husband and I loved every moment of the concerts we attended, and hope these outdoor performances continue well past Covid! We are looking forward to 2021 performances. – Allister Nelson

DC and Maryland

These concerts have been vital to maintaining one's sanity during the lockdown. Please keep on hosting these! – Tom Belote

After the depression (in every sense) descended upon us all in mid-March, the fact that Classical Movements could safely open up the Secret Garden on 20 June gave a first ray of hope that has kept on shining ever since. - Howard Spendelow

The setting, the musical offerings and the hosts are as classy as it gets. In addition, logistically it is a very easy affair in terms of parking, getting there, getting in AND it is Covid-safe. – Olga Rodriguez

The music was wonderful in a very safe feeling environment. Hearing live music again made me feel more human and “normal.” – Holly Bode


A wonderful outdoor concert venue following all the necessary COVID-19 protocols....a real hidden gem! – Mimi Rottiers

Thanks for keeping music alive! - Toni Codinas

More Audience Quotes

I just wanted to say thank you for last night! The program and musicians were great and my kids (6, 7, 9) were engaged the whole time. (And now my 6 year old wants to be a bass trombone player ;)). So appreciate you guys making these kind of experiences accessible.

- Kim Vinocour

Thank you for an unforgettable and amazing Mozart last night!! Omg, it was so beautiful!!!  Elke Gordon

Hi Neeta,

I loved the concert and wanted to thank you and Johan and your whole team. What a fantastic performance! Such enormous talent. I so loved it all. I hope the rest of the performances went well.

Here are a few photos.



With gratitude,
Allison Silberberg

What a glorious evening! Impressive and enjoyable music, lovely reception and many fine conversations. The young musicians provided unquestioned assurance that opera and classical music will not just survive but thrive. Thank you for all that you do and for including us.

Carolyn

Dear "Classical Movements"

What a joyous night watching "The Magic Flute" in its own secret garden. The singers were wonderful, the character portrayals very fun, and "the orchestra" played beautifully! Everyone in the cast, the musicians and the production crew deserve a big shoutout - WONDERFUL JOB and THANK YOU FOR A MAGICAL NIGHT!

Also a thank you to Alessandra for going the extra mile to sit the three of us together. Extra thanks.

Best regards,

Elaine Dinn

Classical Movements has been such a delight and joy to us during the pandemic these past two years - and we hope the concerts continue for twenty more. You and Neeta have put on such lovely events that Joshua and I cherish.

Allister Nelson

Thank you ! We thought of you yesterday at the ASO's Sunday matinee. Loved how James Ross had the Afghani musician included in the jam! You've accomplished much and inspired many this past year – crazy as the year was makes it even more impressive.

The very best to you all for Merry Christmas filled with wonderful memories and a happy and HEALTHY new year.

Fondly,



Laura and Don Rodin

Merry Christmas to you! The garden concerts are so beautiful and have been a highlight in my life during Covid.

Thank you,

Susan Hinely

Thank you for the holiday wishes. I wish you And Everyone at Classical Movements the same.

And thank you for what Classical Movements has been doing for the Alexandria community, and most of all, for musicians in the area and visiting it.

Best regards,

Jim Morrison