

Making the Case for KING

Brenda Barnes

Great conversations, compelling words, venues that inspire a sense of community, goals that resonate, and strong graphics and information – these are all tools we use to inspire when we are asking for support.

The comments below are excerpted from a presentation Brenda Barnes made at the kick-off event for Classical KING's campaign to build new facilities and establish an internal endowment that was held recently at the home of a major donor. The station has since organized the campaign into phases, with the immediate and urgent focus on finding and funding a new home.

Brenda is President & CEO of KING and was one of the organizers of the Classical Music Rising project.

I fell in love with music in kindergarten and remember the moment distinctly. That led to three degrees in music and a 30-year career in public radio, primarily leading classical public radio stations.

Classical public radio is incredibly important as the chief audience development tool for any community. There is no other classical music organization in Seattle that has more constituents and a more diverse audience than KING. For example:

- Under the age of 35: 45,932 (with 7,656 under the age of 11)
- African American: More than 4,500 listeners
- Latino: More than 11,260 listeners
- 84,000 listeners do not have a college degree.
- 30,000 listeners have incomes less than \$35,000 per year

Why? KING is Seattle's most accessible entry point for those interested in connecting with classical music. It is free and available to anyone. You don't need to buy a ticket, worry about what to wear or figure out when to clap. Furthermore, it goes where you go – home, car, office – making it easy to make classical music part of everyday life.

With 250,000 listeners every week – only 15% of whom have ever attended a classical concert – KING has an important role in developing audience for all the arts organizations in the Puget Sound Region.

It is no surprise that a Knight Foundation study from a number of years ago found that the most important factor for the success of symphony orchestras is the existence of a classical radio station in the community.

Thanks to visionary leadership, KING made the transition from a commercial station to a nonprofit in 2011 and 15,500 people stepped up to support the station since then.

Today, we have to tackle three significant challenges:

- KING has to move at the end of February 2020 because our current building will be demolished. We welcome help in finding an affordable new home for KING.
- We need to establish an endowment for KING so that it has a more stable financial foundation.
- We have to secure funding to continue our important audience development role by using digital technology to diversify our audience to an even greater degree.

Tonight we are launching a Campaign for Classical KING

- \$6 million in two years to ensure KING has a new home, financial stability and the ability to build new audiences for the station and our arts partners.

I am only one small part of the leadership that will transform KING. I am incredibly grateful to our amazing board and steering committee members stepping in to provide the community leadership that is absolutely critical to transforming KING.