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Welcome to KSO and Raymond Harvey Farewell Celebration

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Good evening, and welcome to Western Michigan University, a proud sponsor of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

Tonight, our goal is threefold. We're here to:

• Celebrate the conclusion of the KSO's outstanding 2016-17 season.

• Experience a first-rate performance of Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni," and

• Affirm our admiration, respect and deep affection for my friend and Kalamazoo's treasure, Maestro Raymond Harvey.

Maestro Harvey is stepping down as conductor after 18 incredible seasons with the KSO. This is his final concert as conductor of the KSO. His professional direction moving forward will be to continue to his work as an associate professor and music director of the Moores Opera Center at the University of Houston.

In coming to this decision last fall, Maestro Harvey said. "Teaching has always been my calling, and my love of opera has been a mainstay in my life." He also called the opportunity to lead a university opera program, "a blessing." It is difficult to argue with reasoning like that, but we will miss him.

Maestro Harvey has discovered, as I have, that this is not a community to which one says "good bye." "Farewell" is perhaps the better term. He has agreed to become music director emeritus of the KSO and will return annually to conduct a concert.
Raymond Harvey's love for opera and his devotion to this community mean we are about to enjoy "Don Giovanni" performed by the KSO and an international cast of singers. What a fitting way to close the season, salute this wonderful conductor and thank him for his contribution to the quality of life in our community.

Please enjoy your evening here and join with me in giving our full-throated note of thanks to a wonderful musician and passionate advocate for the arts.

Thank you.