

Supplemental Public Interest Statement

David R. Elliott, Chairman of Trustees, WHRB

WHRB, staffed and managed by students at Harvard University, has been since its founding in 1940 (open channel since 1957) a strongly individual and quality-oriented broadcaster, a non-profit entity run as a public service with an educational mission for both audience and staff.

Rather than the standard fare of college stations, WHRB presents major blocks of classical music, jazz, and contemporary music with content and commentary that has held a substantial and stunningly loyal listenership for decades.

As broadcasters have abandoned non-pop formats, WHRB has steadfastly offered programs of intellectual and aesthetic depth, attracting more and more listeners who cannot find its compelling programming elsewhere. As the *Boston Globe* wrote recently: “The Harvard-run WHRB-FM is an essential alternative, with wonderfully adventurous classical programming...”

We wish to expand WHRB’s unique service to areas currently underserved because of unnecessary current limits on our transmission pattern.

From listener response, we know we have a listenership beyond our current primary service area that we believe is proportionately greater than that of most stations, because of the unique nature of WHRB’s programming. By expanding the primary service area, we would also be improving service to those beyond it.

For 70 years, WHRB has continued to treat music with creative curiosity and purposeful presentation, continually expanding its audience, an audience that depends on the station for exploration of great music far beyond what professional broadcasters can attempt. It can do this because, as a volunteer organization, it relies on the passionate curiosity of extremely musical staff members, not on a limited number of paid hours. Because it manages to support itself with paid advertising that fits in with the station’s format, WHRB does not need to restrict itself to programming that appeals to the largest numbers.

It is precisely because of the station’s freedom to explore the best that it has a substantial and devoted audience. **Among their many comments:**

“WHRB is a very important part of Boston's musical community [with an] adventurous and creative selection of music [that] really enriches our lives...” *...letter*

“The indispensable WHRB!”

...*caller*

“I listen mainly to WHRB for classical music (so much more intelligent — they actually think you are grown up.)” ... comment on the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* website.

Critics, too, regularly respond with accolades:

“WHRB retains unswerving commitment to individual and adventurous programming.”

....*The Boston Globe*

Programming that is “...idealistic and interesting....a triumph of musical research, imagination, and passion”

...*The New York Times*

WHRB "deserves an award for its uncompromising quality-mindedness"*The Boston Globe*

The two words “adventurous” and “quality” come up again and again. Listeners are deeply grateful that there is at least one station that goes beyond standard fare to find superb music that most people are unfamiliar with and most stations completely ignore.

WHRB’s programming utilizes recordings by the greats going back a full century, tracing musical performance from ancient 78 rpm disks through the LP era to today. In jazz, it isn’t just today’s Wynton Marsalis, it’s John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and others both famous and obscure from 50 or even 80 years ago. In classical music, musicians who knew Brahms and Stravinsky are as important as today’s much-publicized 25 year-olds. Only a few stations in the entire nation can and do place profound musical experience at the top of the list.

Only one station in the *world* has twice presented the complete music of Bach and Mozart, each project lasting nine days — WHRB. Musical experts have acclaimed these and other WHRB projects as works of significant musicology. WHRB has exhaustively explored many other classical composers and greats of jazz, and many lesser-known figures. These programs are known as Orgies®, and they are much beloved by listeners.

Thanks to a dedicated all-volunteer staff and a tradition of decades of enterprise, WHRB has become central to the lives of many thousands of grateful listeners, providing a service they cannot get elsewhere.

WHRB has even picked up a standard another station let fall. When the station carrying the live Metropolitan Opera broadcasts to most of eastern Massachusetts abandoned them after 31 years so as to realize more income from the Saturday afternoon slots, WHRB took over those

exciting broadcasts, an American radio tradition since the 1930s. Thousands more came to depend on WHRB for continuing that tradition, now entering its twelfth year on the station. There are many more Metropolitan Opera fans in the areas we wish to serve better.

Perhaps the most touching evidence of listener loyalty came recently from a soldier from the WHRB listening area who was back from Iraq on leave, and who had been listening to the station via streaming. He telephoned to say, "I just wanted you to know that, thanks to the Internet, a lot of us are listening to you over there, to the jazz and classical music. It's great to hear you even when we're that far away." This was an important link with home for them.

No station has higher aspirations than WHRB, with music complemented by news, public affairs, and sports broadcasts, plus weekly services from The Memorial Church at Harvard for a large and widespread audience that values its high literary and musical standard.

WHRB is essential to its listeners because they cannot find its kind of programming elsewhere. It is this service to a severely underserved audience that WHRB wishes to vouchsafe to more listeners by expanding its signal coverage more nearly to full, normal contours to the north and northeast.