

ARTIFACTS

By [Scott Andrews](#)

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The Kronsky Charitable Trust Foundation has issued a challenge grant to encourage new support for ARTS San Antonio. Each dollar donated by new supporters of ARTS San Antonio before August 11 will be matched one-to-one: Give a buck, deliver two. The challenge will match donations up to \$25,000, and extends to those who have not donated in the last two years.

The nonprofit brings performers with global impact, like the Bolshoi Ballet and Itzhak Perlman, to audiences across SA. Sometimes the shows are held in well-known venues like Municipal Auditorium or Empire Theatre on North St. Mary's. Other times the venue is more closely matched to the artist. When David Krakauer, the world's pre eminent classical clarinetist came to town, he didn't play with the Symphony. Instead, his klezmer project played at the Barshop Jewish Community Center's Holzman Auditorium.

Arts SA has organized hundreds of concerts since they were founded in 1992, but what really gets our attention is their ARTsTEach program, which brings performing and visual artists to primary and secondary schools in Bexar County, along with workshops for students.

When Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble were on their spring tour this year they entranced audiences throughout the West, but in San Antonio they stayed an extra day after their Majestic performance for a special gig — sitting in with the student orchestra at Northside's Sul Ross Middle School. The outfit that hooked them up was Arts SA.

While that was an extraordinary happening, ARTsTEach also places 400 to 500 workshops in SA classrooms every year. "These are not assembly programs," Arts SA Executive Director John A. Toohey told the Current. "These are mostly in-classroom, so there is a maximum of maybe 25 students in each workshop. The workshops use the arts, visual, musical, theatrical, literary arts, to support teaching objectives. Each workshop is linked to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives in mathematics, science, physical education, social studies, and the fine arts." Arts SA is wrestling with the current teach-to-the-test education culture and proving that, even in that inhospitable environment, art matters.

"We are working with the reality of what the teachers and students are challenged with, and running with it — and having fun with it," Toohey said. "The workshops are nominally about the arts, but also develop fine-motor development, decision making, answering questions where there may be more than one correct answer, problem solving, and task completion."

Many of the programs are located in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and have received city, nonprofit, corporate, and "up to now," said Toohey, "state support."

With a grim budgetary future for the arts and education, broadening the support base for Arts SA is the only option for survival. Come on, pretend you live here and give a damn (if you happen to be a tourist). If you are a local who can, you will, won't you? Your donation is tax-deductible.

ARTS San Antonio, Majestic Theatre Tower Suite 400, 222 East Houston, (210) 226-2891, artssanantonio.com.

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