

Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee
Attn: Chair, Councilmember O'Farrell
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Submitted via email

Dear Chairman O'Farrell and Committee Members:

I appreciate the opportunity to offer a few words regarding the Griffith Park Performing Arts Center.

There is a group of people who have appealed the Mitigated Negative Declaration which has not only been approved by the L.A. parks Commission, but more importantly, has been supported by thousands of people in the community, most notably parents with children; the very people who have, for decades, benefitted vividly by the free performances of both Symphony In The Glen and more recently, the Independent Shakespeare Company.

Their appeal notes several areas of controversy.

1. Concerns for wildlife (Grey Fox, Bats, etc.):
2. Increased noise
3. Overcrowding of the Old Zoo Picnic Area.
4. Loss of space for picnickers and hikers.

As concerns the wildlife issue, even though not one Grey Fox has been spotted in the Old Zoo Picnic Area over the twenty years Symphony In The Glen has been performing there, nevertheless we should all be concerned about them. To that point, I would opine that they face greater danger from coyotes and P-22 than they do from Mozart and Hamlet. (I can't comment the appellant's concern for bats. It is my understanding that they abide primarily in Bee Rock, a good distance from the Old Zoo Picnic Grounds.)

Regarding increased noise, it's interesting to note that a number of appellants have, over the years, frequently attended (and enjoyed) Symphony In The Glen concerts. However, I don't recall any of them approaching me after a concert and saying: "Maestro, we love your concerts but feel they're a little loud." The marvel of the Old Zoo Picnic Grounds is that its natural bowl shape confines the sounds of both theater and classical music within its own defined area.

Then there is the appellant's oft-repeated figure of 5,000 people crowding into that space. To begin with, the very most that space can accommodate is 2,500—and the appellants well know this. Yet, they continue to attempt to advance this untruth. To be clear, the performances *do not* generate 5,000 attendees. They *do not* generate 2,500 attendees. (Both Symphony In The Glen and the Independent Shakespeare Company

would be ecstatic to achieve those numbers.) In fact, the normal attendance ranges from 1,000 to 1,500. The appellants know this, because ... well ... They've been there!

Another obfuscation is the loss of space for picnickers and hikers. Rarely are there more than one or two families picnicking in the space. And I suppose hikers might get upset if they had to walk in time to the music. In addition, in as much as performances begin at 7pm and continue, through sundown, till 9pm, the problem of crowding out picnickers and hikers is minimal; in all probability non-existent. In fact, performances by both Symphony In The Glen and the Independent Shakespeare Company have, if anything, created great awareness, enormous love and deep appreciation of the Old Zoo. If anything, many of our audience members, upon discovering The Old Zoo, have become regular Griffith Park picnickers and hikers.

The good people opposing the creation of the Griffith Park Performing Arts Center have provided little but their objections. On the other hand, Symphony In The Glen and The Independent Shakespeare Company have raised millions of dollars to provide free arts programs of the highest caliber for underserved families and children of Los Angeles.

A while back Symphony In The Glen had to suspend its free concerts at The Old Zoo because the construction and taking-down of a temporary stage and canopy was costing about the same as a 50-piece professional symphony. The Griffith Park Performing Arts Center will allow Symphony In The Glen to return to its home and resume its goal: cultivating new generations of classical music lovers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by 'B. Rubinstein'.

Arthur B. Rubinstein

Music Director, Founder
Symphony In The Glen Free Concerts