



**FIDELITY
FUTURESTAGE**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIDELITY INVESTMENTS® AND THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY
DONATE MORE THAN \$50,000 WORTH OF INSTRUMENTS TO HISD**

Donation Celebrates Launch of Fidelity FutureStagesm Music Education Program

HOUSTON, December 13, 2007 – Fidelity Investments and the Houston Symphony today unveiled *Fidelity FutureStage*, a new music education initiative designed to support and strengthen music programs in local Houston schools, and provide unique opportunities for underserved student musicians to explore and develop their individual talents.

To celebrate the program kickoff, Fidelity and the Houston Symphony presented an early holiday gift to more than 200 students of Marshall Middle School and Sharpstown High School in the Houston Independent School District (HISD), surprising the students with brand-new musical instruments valued at more than \$50,000.

Music students from the two schools gathered at Sharpstown High School for a special holiday assembly featuring Houston Symphony musicians performing with the Sharpstown band. As a surprise conclusion to the event, more than 40 new instruments were revealed on stage and presented to the music directors and students of the two schools, including saxophones, trumpets, baritones, clarinets, flutes, French horns, marimbas and percussion kits. To identify the instrument needs of the two school programs, Fidelity and the Houston Symphony worked with The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to identifying underserved schools and bringing musical instruments to programs most in need.

"These new instruments play a significant role in the *Fidelity FutureStage* program, giving more students access to the resources they need to develop their musical interests and talents," said Jeanie Reckart, Fidelity Investments senior vice president and Texas market manager. "Learning to play an instrument and experiencing music in new and creative ways can help young musicians build valuable skills that will serve them well, not just performing onstage, but throughout future stages of life."

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Marshall and Sharpstown were selected to participate after careful evaluation of the schools' music education needs and administrative dedication to their programs. Both schools boast passionate, committed music educators in place to support the *Fidelity FutureStage* initiatives and foster well-rounded students with appreciation of the arts.

“Across the country, music and arts programs are being cut from school budgets. Because of programs like *Fidelity FutureStage* and the resources provided, we're able to strengthen our programs while providing a meaningful, authentic experience for less advantaged youth,” said Dr. Abelardo Saavedra, superintendent of HISD.

In its inaugural year, *Fidelity FutureStage* will give students from the two participating schools special opportunities to work with Houston Symphony musicians who will dedicate their time as part of Musician Residency Programs with the Sharpstown and Marshall music departments. The musicians will provide one-on-one and group instruction over the course of 18 weeks, sharing expertise ranging from individual instrument technique to playing as an ensemble. The program will also coordinate field trips for students to attend rehearsals and concerts at Jones Hall – for many, their first professional performance.

Perhaps the most ambitious element of *Fidelity FutureStage* is the Composer Residency Program, coordinated by the Houston Symphony. A pilot project within *Fidelity FutureStage*, the Composer Residency Program will offer a group of Sharpstown High School students the chance to learn the art of composition by a noted composer, and then apply those learnings to actually create their own musical work. The pilot composition program will culminate at the end of the school year, when the completed student work is performed at a Houston Symphony concert.

“We are extremely pleased to continue our partnership with Fidelity and to take it to yet another level through *Fidelity FutureStage*,” said Matthew VanBesien, executive director/CEO of the Houston Symphony. “We will work even more closely together in the Composer Residency pilot program – the first of its kind in the nation.”

Fidelity FutureStage was developed by Fidelity Investments to support music and other arts education programs in local communities. The program grew from the company's long-standing commitment to arts and culture including its support of many of the nation's leading symphonies, Broadway productions and community arts organizations. Fidelity launched the *Fidelity FutureStage* theater education program in New York City during the 2006-07 school-year and following that success, turned its efforts to developing a complementary music initiative. Today's launch in Houston will be closely followed by activities in Boston this month. Additional *Fidelity FutureStage* music education programs will launch in Chicago and Los Angeles in early 2008.

About Fidelity Investments

Fidelity Investments is one of the world's largest providers of financial services, with custodied assets of more than \$3.4 trillion, including managed assets of \$1.6 trillion as of Oct. 31, 2007. Fidelity offers investment management, retirement planning, brokerage, and human resources and benefits outsourcing services to 24 million individuals and institutions as well as through 5,500 financial intermediary firms. The firm is the largest mutual fund company in the United States, the No. 1 provider of workplace retirement savings plans, the largest mutual fund supermarket and a leading online brokerage firm. For more information about Fidelity Investments, visit www.fidelity.com.

Fidelity has four Investor Center locations in the Houston area including The Woodlands, Highland Village, Houston Memorial and Texas Medical Center.

About Houston Symphony

Founded in 1913, the Houston Symphony is one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Texas. Its mission is to inspire and enrich the lives of Houston's diverse citizenry through outstanding symphonic music performed by a great orchestra. Each year the Houston Symphony performs more than 170 concerts attended by an estimated 350,000 people. The season includes classical, pops and family concerts as well as free summer concerts at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Deeply committed to the community, the Houston Symphony performs educational concerts for 40,000 students each year, tours the region every summer with 15 free children's concerts and appears at local hospitals, community centers and schools.

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