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Eddie Van Halen's Will Includes A 7-Figure Donation To A Music Non-Profit In LA

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Eddie Van Halen is continuing to make an impact on future musicians with a "monumental" donation to The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation in Studio City.

The foundation has received a seven-figure bequest from the rock legend's will. Van Halen's estate has requested that the exact dollar amount remain private.

Felice Mancini, president and CEO of the foundation, said the donation will help expand their work in musical education. She said her team is already looking at how to make good use of the funds, starting with infrastructure, equipment and staff.

"The need is so huge in arts education, for many things, and so we're just trying to address the need," Mancini said. "It'll help with a lot of different areas, just getting us to the next place where we can scale our work a bit more."

The foundation is inspired by the motion picture *Mr. Holland's Opus*, which explores the real-life challenges of arts education funding. The composer of the film's score, Michael Kamen, started the foundation in 1996 to provide instruments to under-funded schools. The work has grown to helping schools create and sustain musical education programs.

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Van Halen, who died in October 2020, was a longtime supporter of the foundation's work. His contributions to improving music education began when his manager called seeking an organization that would get 75 guitars into the hands of children. After the foundation was approved, the instruments went to seven schools.

"Eddie wanted to go to one of the schools, so he did," she said. "I think that got him hooked once he actually got on the campus and saw the guitars in the kids hands. He was quite delighted."

Since the artist's death, his son Wolfgang Van Halen has stayed involved with the foundation by donating the proceeds of his song *Distance*, a tribute to his father.

Mancini said she's looking forward to their small organization being able to expand their capacity to help more students and teachers in musical education.

"For non-profits to get this kind of a gift is really, really outstanding," she said. "So it will definitely help us enormously."

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