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HEADLINE: HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON AND JOHN SYKES, PRESIDENT OF VH1, DISCUSS THE "SAVE THE MUSIC" PROGRAM

ANCHORS: KATIE COURIC

BODY:

KATIE COURIC, co-host:

As you know, we've been collecting musical instruments all week for our VH1 "Save the Music Today" drive, a program started by the VH1 cable channel that takes old instruments, refurbishes them, and gives them to schools whose education programs in music have been cut. Last fall, as part of the program, President Clinton donated one of his own saxophones to a Washington, DC, school, and first lady Hillary Clinton visited a public school to tell students just how important she believes music education is. Mrs. Clinton is here this morning to talk about the "Save the Music" program, and she's joined by VH1 president John Sykes.

Good morning, nice to see you both.

Mrs. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: Good morning. Thank you so much for doing this. It's been a great week with all of the interest. And as we just saw outside, people had come from all over bringing instruments to be able to donate. And it's just made a big difference.

COURIC: I guess you called on Mrs. Clinton, John, because you were trying to get the president to donate his sax. And it just wasn't happening. So you needed to go to the real power, right?

Mr. JOHN SYKES (President, VH1): The person who makes a difference down there. I was--every time I saw him, he was very nice, 'We're going to get it to you. We're going to get it to you.' One meeting with Mrs. Clinton, two weeks later, the saxophone. Now that's power.

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, he really wanted to do it, but it kind of, you know, was not brought to the top of the list.

Mr. SYKES: Yeah. But, also, she was--this was high on her list, children, education. She heard about VH1's "Save the Music," and we really didn't have to badger her that much. It was, 'I want to be involved. This is exactly what my plan is. The public schools are in trouble in this country. Let's join forces.' And she's been amazing.

COURIC: Why did it capture your attention? I mean, you're asked to do a million different things, I'm sure.

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, it--it did for several reasons. Ever since I saw "Mr. Holland's Opus," which is a movie I loved, I've been worried about the way arts education has just been dropped from too many of our schools. And I know from research on child development and education that children learn in different ways. And we know that if kids are exposed to music, some kids are really able to learn better. They acquire talents that they otherwise didn't know they had. And so as part of the continuing emphasis on the importance of the arts, as well as the way arts helps education, I was very interested in doing what I could to put arts education back into our schools and give more kids a chance to have that experience. So when John came to me and said, look, we've got this idea, we're trying to get it off the ground, it just seemed perfect. Because, of course, through their channel, they can be able to communicate much more broadly on a daily basis about the importance of arts education, particularly music. So it just seemed like a great idea.

COURIC: But, as you know, public education is in trouble in some places. I don't want to make a blanket statement.

Mrs. CLINTON: Right. No, you can't do that.

COURIC: But some public schools are struggling to teach children even the basics. So can you understand how some school officials might say, 'Music education is great, but it's not a necessity in a child's curriculum'?

Mrs. CLINTON: I can understand it. But I think it is short-sighted. And it is not based on the research we have, which demonstrates clearly that exposing even infants and toddlers to music helps them with their ability to organize their thinking and analyze. It has a direct relationship with mathematics. It is also a way for kids who have not yet caught on to academic instruction, but who have some kind of talent to feel that, you know, they can learn and master something.

COURIC: So self-esteem?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, not self-esteem so much as confidence, as competence. And also teamwork. Because if you're in a band or an orchestra, you've got to work with other people. So, if you go back and look at the 1950s and the 1960s, when we did have a lot more arts education, particularly music in the schools, I think you can say that we've really undercut our educational mission by withdrawing the arts as dramatically as we have.

COURIC: Also, if you're interested in music and that sort of bleeds over into afterschool hours, you're doing something and not getting into trouble in other ways.

Mrs. CLINTON: That's right.

Mr. SYKES: Which is--which is why America's Promise has--has also approached us, because kids who are--who are practicing music from 3 to 4:30 in the afternoon aren't discovering other subjects like drugs and violence. And there is the academic benefit. Kids who study music go on to score higher on SATS. It's been proven.

Mrs. CLINTON: That's right.

Mr. SYKES: And I just think the parents today take it for granted. We all had it growing up. I think if many parents went out and looked at their schools today, not just in New York or Chicago, but across the country, they'll find a lot is missing. You know, the Dow is over 10,000 now, but we're shortchanging our kids in public schools.

Mrs. CLINTON: You know, when John and I went to the school in Washington to make a very big announcement and--and donation with Babyface, I was so impressed, because they'd cut out music education in that school. But kids needed and wanted it. And a retired teacher came back and would meet with any kid who wanted to meet with him at 7:00 in the morning. Now, that took initiative and effort. Kids had to get themselves up, get themselves to school. But for more than a year, they had been working on learning music, playing instruments. Very old, battered-up instruments. Not enough to even go around. And they'd created this big group of youngsters. Now--and I would only second what John said, because those kids then were showing the kind of initiative that leads to productive lives, that leads to better education. And that's what we want. We want our kids engaged. We want to give them something positive to do. We want adult supervision. Music is a great way to bridge that. And as is athletics and sports. Because I also am concerned that they cut out sports and--and recreation. Kids are--need to be, you know, challenged in all their various aspects.

COURIC: Speaking of sports, how about those Knicks?

Mrs. CLINTON: How about those Knicks?

COURIC: Did you watch last night?

Mrs. CLINTON: I watched some last night. I got back from Binghamton, dropped by a party, and saw most of the third quarter out of the corner of my eye. And then had to go on to something else.

COURIC: Are you a big Knicks fan? Are you rooting for them to...

Mrs. CLINTON: I'm becoming a big Knicks fan.

COURIC: More and more every day, huh?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, I've always been a Patrick Ewing fan. Because, you know, he went to Georgetown. And he's somebody that we have followed in our household. And I've just always admired his just determination and his, you know, absolute commitment. And this may be the year.

COURIC: Meanwhile, I know the New York Yankees are heading to the White House today to be honored for winning the World Series. Are you a Yankees fan, too?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, now, the fact is, I've always been a Yankees fan.

COURIC: I thought you were a Cubs fan.

Mrs. CLINTON: I am. I am a Cubs fan. But I needed an American League team.

Because when you're from Chicago, you cannot root for both the Cubs and the Sox. I mean, that's, you know, there's a dividing line that you can't cross there. So as a young girl I became very interested and enamored of the Yankees. So I'm excited about this afternoon. We're going to have them all there at the White House.

COURIC: This is your 11th trip to New York this year. Newsweek says you're in the process of leasing an apartment here.

Mrs. CLINTON: No. I--I have heard so many stories about apartments and houses that I've bought. And I only wish that were true. But that hasn't happened yet.

COURIC: Are you considering it?

Mr. SYKES: She's--she's in New York because...

COURIC: John, we did the "Save the Music" thing.

Mr. SYKES: I know. She's in New York...

COURIC: Stay out of this, John. We're talking now.

Mrs. CLINTON: No. But I'm going around collecting offers of, you know, people's guest rooms and extra beds and pullout couches.

COURIC: I heard George Stephanopoulos offered his apartment to you. He called Harold Ickes, but he said he was just kidding.

Mrs. CLINTON: Is that right?

COURIC: All righty. This is the first trip to New York since you announced that you're going to form an exploratory committee to decide whether you will, indeed, run for Senate. But, as you know, Congresswoman Nita Lowey bowed out.

Mrs. CLINTON: Yes.

COURIC: No one else's name has really surfaced. If you decide not to throw your hat in the ring, if you will, won't that create a lot of problems for the Democratic Party here in New York?

Mrs. CLINTON: Well, I think a Democrat will win the Senate race. And I'm looking forward to going out and listening to New Yorkers and just having a good time. As I did yesterday in Binghamton. We had a fabulous time. And I learned a lot. I saw a lot of people. I had a great experience. And I'm going to be doing a lot of that in July and August. But I think when you look at what's happening in the country today, a Democrat is going to win this Senate seat to replace Senator Moynihan. Which is as it should be. Because the Democratic Party, as we saw again yesterday, with the way the Republicans treated the gun laws in the House of Representatives, is much more in touch with the mainstream, not only of America, but particularly of New York.

COURIC: From here, I know that you all are heading to a New York City school for a big announcement. Can you tell me, quickly, about that?

Mr. SYKES: Well, Mrs. Clinton and I are going up to a school in Harlem. We're going to join Dr. Rudy Crew, who is a chancellor of the schools, and Barry Rosenblum, who runs Time Warner Cable, our par--our--our affiliate here, and Wynton Marsalis. And we're going to together donate \$ 1 million to our New York City program. And it's been a great week here. You--everyone at the TODAY show, you, Matt, Ann, Al, have been tremendously supportive. You've really helped to get the word out. And so, really, thank you, and we're heading up to the school.

COURIC: Well, it's a terrific program.

Mrs. CLINTON: And I understand tomorrow you, Matt and Al are going to play for us?

COURIC: Oh, I don't think so. I don't think so. But it is a great program. We just hope that we were able to help a lot of kids...

Mrs. CLINTON: You did.

COURIC: ...as well.

Mr. SYKES: Thank you.

COURIC: And Mrs. Clinton, will you come back when you can stay longer and talk in more detail about your political aspirations?

Mrs. CLINTON: Sure will. I will do that.

COURIC: All right, we've got it on tape. And John, you can come back, you just can't talk.

Mr. SYKES: I...

Mrs. CLINTON: Oh!

COURIC: I'm kidding.

Mr. SYKES: I'm--I'm here to support her because she's doing something for us.

COURIC: Anyway, good to see you.

Mrs. CLINTON: And for kids. That's what's really counts.

Mr. SYKES: And for kids, right.

COURIC: Anyway, thanks again. John Sykes, good to see you. Mrs. Clinton, thanks so much for stopping by.

Mrs. CLINTON: Thanks, Katie.

COURIC: Appreciate it so much.

We're going to give people some more information on the "Save the Music" campaign now. If you'd like to help out, you can donate a musical instrument or--instrument or make a financial contribution. Or if you just want to get some information, visit our Web site at today.msnbc.com or call toll-free, that's key, toll-free, 1 (888) VH1-4-MUSIC.

And we'll be back with more of TODAY right after this.

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