



ANNUAL REPORT

2020



MIDWEST YOUNG
ARTISTS
CONSERVATORY



A message from the **Chairman of the Board and the Founder & President**

Dear MYAC families and friends,

MYAC can face challenges like no other organization I know because of our students, families, friends, donors, Board, staff and alumni. We epitomize the idea that challenges build character. Here are some powerful quotes that relate to the challenging and difficult times we all faced in 2020-2021 at MYAC...

When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back.

– Paulo Coelho

Headed into 2019-2020, MYAC was growing like crazy – serving close to 1,000 contacts a year. We could barely squeeze ourselves into Symphony rehearsals and had to limit enrollment to 120 just to fit in the room. When Covid hit us in March, we basically had to shut down all in-person operations, but kept close to our students and families through creative conversations, including telephone and Zoom masterclasses, breakfasts, and classes.

Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional. – Roger Crawford

Over the beginning of the summer, our wonderfully creative faculty met and came up with special classes to help keep our students involved in music. The goal was to engage the creativity and musical passion of our students. Thanks to our fantastically supportive donors and the government's forgivable loans, we were able to keep our faculty and staff involved in providing music education opportunities.

Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly. – Robert F. Kennedy

But the "Musical Staycation" didn't go far enough: the goal remained to try and create an environment to allow us to perform and rehearse together again – in the same location, playing the same music. We are thankful for our parents at MYAC and believe we can answer many of our "issues" by coming together.

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all.

– Helen Keller

We are so fortunate here at MYAC to have a mission that everyone buys into. One that expresses why we exist: "to build a home (a place for everyone – students, families, ALL members of our community – any color, any race, any age) with the POWER of music (no need to explain that one!) to enrich the lives of our students (make them whole

– allow them to be who they are, to grow while being supported and nourished by music, family, friends – allow them to become scientists, inventors, doctors, teachers, musicians, garage mechanics, etc., all loving & appreciating music as part of their lives) and their communities (families, schools, churches, social groups, etc...).

If you aren't in over your head, how do you know how tall you are? – T.S. Eliot

That T. S. Eliot quote is how I felt when we were putting up the tent. It HAD TO WORK!!!

Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. – Martin Luther King Jr.

We persevered and had one of the best years of our 28 years, thanks to all of YOU! YOU made it possible for us to rehearse every weekend, all but the 2 days in sub-zero temps. YOU students, because you came on freezing days and made music against incredible odds. YOU parents, for letting your children come to MYAC. YOU BOD & donors, for helping us get through the year with greatly reduced tuition and greatly increased costs. YOU faculty & staff, for being here in difficult times and showing your dedication and love of teaching.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials. – Chinese proverb

So THANK YOU for a wonderful year! Perhaps not the easiest, but one none of us will ever forget. Now we need to take that gem and use it to light the world with music and bright, hard-working young adults, and families that witnessed the dedication and hard work of our faculty & staff. We need to go even further with our mission, "to build a home with the POWER of MUSIC to enrich the lives of our students and their communities"!

Sincerely with great admiration, respect & appreciation,

Allan Dennis (*Founder & President*)

Kelly McNamara-Corley (*Chairman of the Board*)



Persevering through the 2020-2021 Season

The theme through this challenging year was resourcefulness. MYAC's deep commitment to music education translated into a resourcefulness that met every twist and turn of the evolving pandemic.

When we received a PPP loan in June 2020, we created a dynamic and popular virtual summer session: our 2020 online "Summer Music Staycation" served over 600 students from 29 states and around the world. These students participated in tuition-free online programs for multiple age levels, including masterclasses, improvisation, literature, conducting, music history, and theory and aural skills classes.

Community is an essential value of everything we do. When things shut down, we continued to keep in touch with our community of students through Breakfast with Dude and the Dennises on FaceTime, Zoom meetings with students old and new, and a virtual jazz-choral-orchestral ensemble performing *What the World Needs Now is Love*.



Link to full video at
youtube.com/MidwestYoungArtists



SUMMER STAYCATION STATISTICS

Participants came from...

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Michigan

Minnesota
Montana
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Texas
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin

Outside the USA:

Canada
China
France
Germany
India
Panama
South Africa

MYAC launched a brand new, tuition-free summer music program with rich and diverse offerings for students of all ages, able to participate from anywhere! MYAC's expert faculty, alongside a team of renowned guest artists and master teachers, brought their knowledge into the homes of young musicians at no cost to families.

The Summer Music Staycation offered courses for elementary and high school aged orchestra, jazz, choral and chamber musicians. Students continued developing their musicianship over the summer months, and could choose from masterclasses, improvisation courses, literature classes, conducting classes, music history, theory and aural skills.





Persevere Today, Create Tomorrow

MYAC's commitment to excellence is integral to every ensemble, from youngest to oldest and smallest to largest. How can you maintain this value while carefully following all COVID restrictions? First, we took advantage of our outdoor spaces. We spread out on the lawn in the front, out back, and everywhere that we could find space.

But we knew that a Chicago winter was on the way and that the lawn would only stay green and sunny for so long. We got lucky, and found out that one of our student's family was in the business of selling tents; great big event tents, engineered in Germany! The Board jumped on the opportunity and initiated a successful *Persevere Today, Create Tomorrow* fundraising campaign aimed at securing funding for one of these tents. The end result was a beautiful event tent finished in early October—just in time for our Halloween concerts!

Winter came as expected, and we installed generators and propane heaters against the wind, rain, and snow.

Our COVID season included...

19

socially distanced, inside Sunday Chamber Music Soirees

48

large ensemble concerts (choral, jazz and orchestra)

7

in-person master classes

BLACK OAK ENSEMBLE *in residence*



The Black Oak Ensemble was a highlight of our COVID year. Through funding from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, this group of fabulous artists/educators worked with MYAC students in several engaging masterclasses. They also performed live in the outdoor tent on January 27, 2020, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, selections from their newest album, *Silenced Voices*, a collection of intriguing works by six promising 20th century Jewish composers originally from Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands. The Black Oak Ensemble comprises of Grammy-nominated violinist **Desirée Ruhstrat**, cellist **David Cunliffe** of the acclaimed Lincoln Trio, and violist **Aurélien Fort Pederzoli**, a founding member of the groundbreaking Grammy-nominated Spektral Quartet.



ILLINOIS
ARTS
COUNCIL
AGENCY



WALGREENS NATIONAL CONCERTO COMPETITION



Bella Kim, viola

Senior MYAC Overall Winner



Jocelyn Gao, cello

Junior MYAC Overall Winner



Esme Arias-Kim, violin

Overall Open Division Winner

Competitions

MYAC's annual national competitions were both held virtually this year, and received outstanding participation from students nationwide. The Walgreens Concerto Competition had **217 participants** from 17 different states throughout the entire country. The Chamber Competition had 109 students across 29 ensembles from 10 states stretching from New York to California.

Students submitted video recordings of their performances, which were reviewed by esteemed panels of judges. Contestants compete for cash awards and MYAC tuition scholarships, as well as special performance opportunities.

CHICAGO NATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION



Quartet Feroce



Lumiere Quartet



Cirsten Kuhlmann Photography

GALA

The tent stands as a living monument to the resourcefulness and dedication of the MYAC community—the perfect place for the annual MYAC Gala. The new space wasn't the only change to this annual tradition. We also tried a hybrid format: 50 guests joined us in the tent live, 100 joined through house parties around Chicagoland, and 100 individuals joined from around the country.

The event honored Chick Corea with the **Golden Baton Award**, honored posthumously after his death in February, and Rhona Reagen with the **Take Note Award**.



Chick Corea



Rhona Reagen



MYAC'S CLASS OF 2020



DID YOU KNOW, IN 2020-21 OUR MYAC ALUMS . . .

Completed 9 years as a lead teacher of an El Sistema-Inspired music program at Margarita Muniz Academy in the Boston Public Schools.

Graduated from Northwestern University and took a position as a Software Developer at a startup company in Chicago that works on building databases that can handle petabytes and exabytes of data at high speeds.

Graduated from Infantry School at Fort Benning with plans to go through training & receive airborne certification.

Became the Executive Director of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

Completed the Oahu Circumnavigation, a 136.8 mile marathon, in record time: 32 hours, 55 minutes and 35 seconds, smashing the previous fastest known time by nearly 4 hours.

Was featured in a series of online performances by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, where they are the Associate Conductor.

Gave MYAC a shoutout in a Food Network article highlighting their stars' favorite causes and community groups.

Was featured on a panel of professionals hosted by DePaul Nonprofit Management for his experience as a development professional at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Was named second trombone in the San Francisco Ballet Symphony.

As Space Suits & Crew Equipment Manager at SpaceX, designed the SpaceX spacesuits, which were given a 5 star rating by NASA astronauts.

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

52 GRADUATES

The Class of 2020 has been with MYAC for average of 3.5 years.



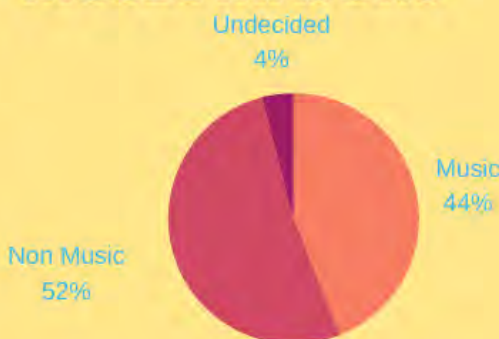
INSTITUTIONS

31
Our graduates are attending 31 different colleges/universities that span over 18 states.



44% MUSIC MAJORS

Over 44% of our graduates are pursuing a major or double-major in music.
Over 96% have committed to attending an institution of higher learning.



Statement of Financial Position

As of May 31, 2021

ASSETS

Cash	1,043,481
Other Current Assets	66,507
Investments	1,666,859
Property and Equipment	7,088,939
Contributions Receivable	33,313

TOTAL ASSETS	\$9,899,099
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	29,059
Deferred Revenue	29,361

TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$58,420
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	8,458,111
Board Designated	489,968
With Donor Restrictions	892,600

TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$9,840,679
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TOTAL	\$9,899,099
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Operating Revenues and Expenses

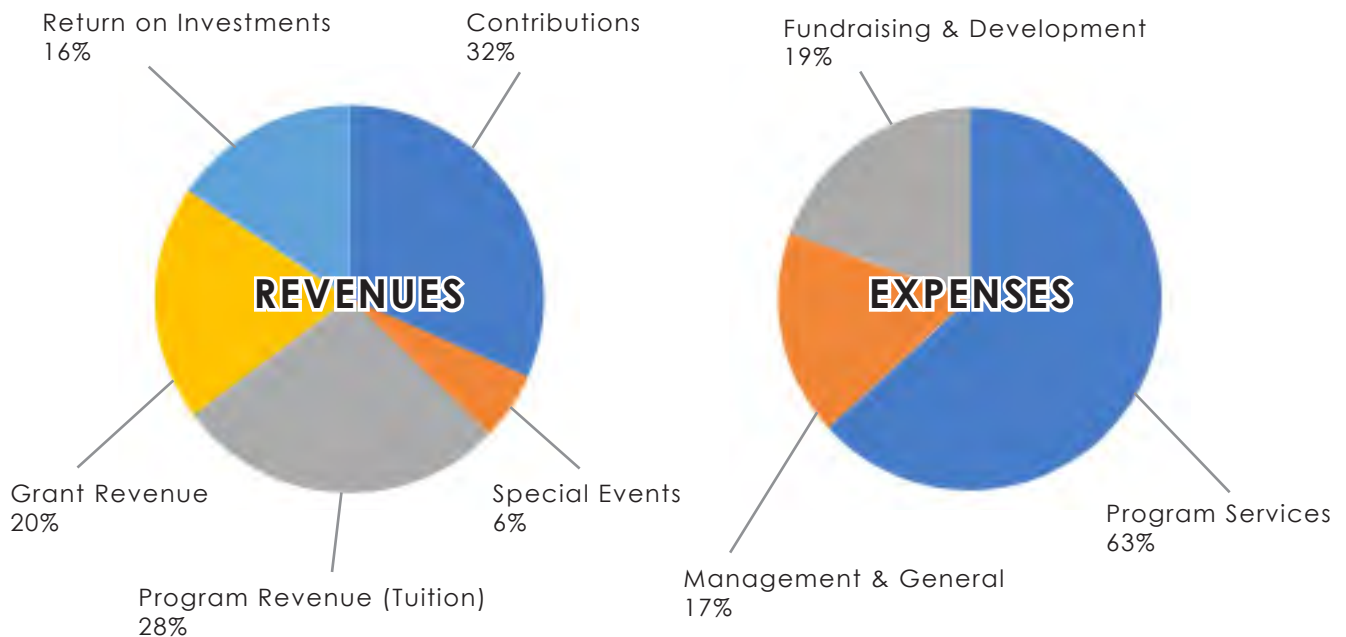
OPERATING REVENUES

Contributions	687,722
Special Events	123,599
Program Revenue (Tuition)	601,168
Grant Revenue	427,407
Return on Investments	339,742
TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,179,638

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	746,884
Management & General	204,822
Fundraising & Development	229,618
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,181,324

Change in Net Assets **\$998,314**





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mya.org

