

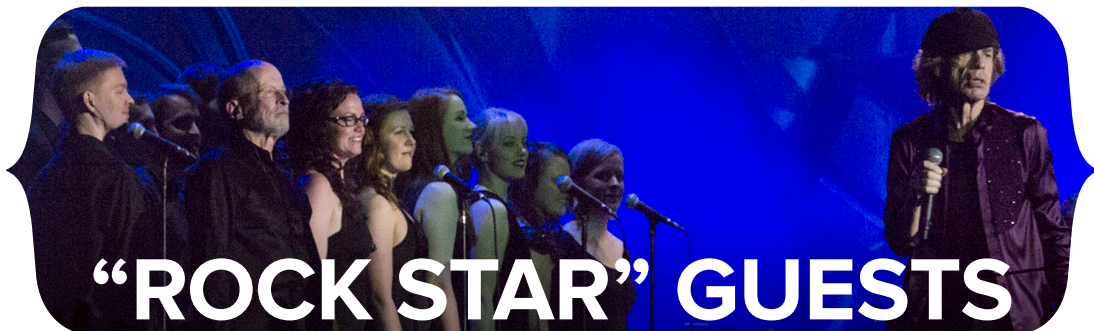


VOCAL**ESSENCE**

TOGETHER WE SING



WORLD TRAVELS



“ROCK STAR” GUESTS



NEW VOICES



COMMUNITY IMPACT

2014-2015

ANNUAL REPORT

TOGETHER WE SING AROUND THE WORLD



In August 2014, the **VocalEssence Ensemble Singers** set sail on the **Asia Pacific Tour**, stopping in Seoul, South Korea to perform at the 10th World Symposium on Choral Music and then continuing to Shanghai and Nanjing, China.



Warm greetings and rock star status followed the Ensemble Singers throughout the tour. After one performance, the Ensemble Singers were mobbed by their new fans:

“We were walking to the bus and there was a group of maybe 50 to 100 people waiting for us. We couldn’t get to the bus; they just wanted to talk, take pictures, ask questions, get autographs,” said Ensemble Singer Ryan French. “It was really an exciting and surreal experience.”

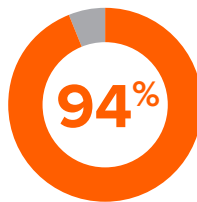
In addition to performances, the Ensemble Singers connected with local choirs through exchange workshops and banquets. “We sat with them, had a Chinese feast, and performed songs for them,” said Artistic Director Philip Brunelle. “The feeling of camaraderie among us all was overwhelming. It was a very moving experience.”

Connecting together through song did not stop with the Asia Pacific Tour. Thanks to an Arts Tour grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board and funding from Land O’Lakes, Inc., members of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, fiddlers **Molly Sue McDonald** and **Sara Pajunen**, and **Don Shelby** toured Minnesota with **River Songs & Tales with Mark Twain**. The tour stopped in Red Wing, Dawson, Faribault, Austin, and Alexandria, MN, and even made a brief stop in Saint Paul at the Minnesota Centennial Riverboat for the Gather at the River with Mark Twain Fundraiser.

3,000



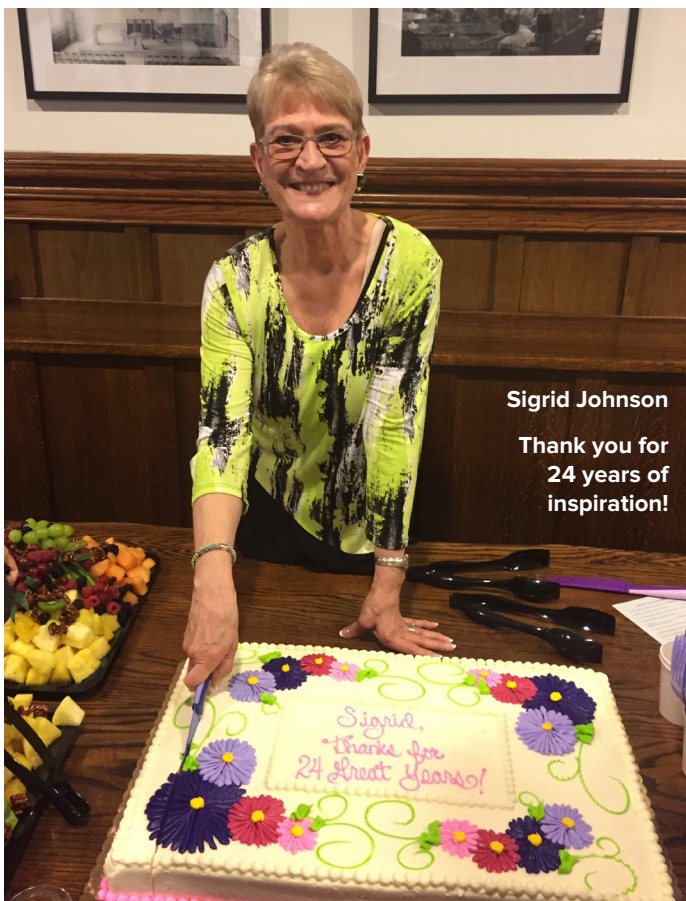
In total, VocalEssence reached more than 3,000 Minnesotans on the tour who attended concerts and various community programs including school workshops, master classes, and community performances.



Packed audiences raved about the performance with 94% giving the concert the highest enjoyment rating.



EXCITING CHANGES AT VOCALESSENCE



Sigrid Johnson

Thank you for
24 years of
inspiration!

Together we sing! VocalEssence said hello to a new look, new programs and new staff members, and goodbye to a longtime friend. VocalEssence Associate Conductor **Sigrid Johnson** retired in May 2015 after 24 years inspiring singers and refining the choral sound of VocalEssence. Thank you, Sigrid!



Phillip Brunelle and
G. Phillip Shoultz, III

G. Phillip Shoultz, III joined VocalEssence in a new position as the full-time Associate Conductor. Phillip comes to VocalEssence from Georgia, and is currently finishing his doctorate in Choral Conducting at the University of Minnesota.



VOCALESSENCE Vintage Voices

VocalEssence welcomed two new community programs to our portfolio. **VocalEssence Vintage Voices**, funded by a grant from the MN State Arts Board, fosters the creation of choirs in assisted living homes and senior centers. The participants have already been reporting health benefits.

"My memory is improving! Since I've been coming here and singing with you every week, I feel like it's the first time that I don't have to check my calendar to see what day of the week it is!"



VOCALESSENCE ReMix

VocalEssence ReMix encourages break-out musical artists to write for voice. It provides artists with a mentorship with renowned composers **Libby Larsen, Carol Barnett, J. David Moore** or **Timothy Takach**; a performance by the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers; and access to an audience who may want to perform his/her music in the future.

RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH FAMOUS GUEST ARTISTS



The VocalEssence 46th season was filled with unexpected and amazing cameos and guest artists.

1 “Thank you, you sing magnificently,” said **Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger** to an audience of 40,000 screaming fans after VocalEssence rocked the TCF Bank Stadium in June 2015.

2 Rapper and singer **Dessa** performed with VocalEssence at Orchestra Hall and added a fresh voice to the Made in Minnesota concert.

3 Guest choir **Young People’s Chorus of New York City®**, with conductor and MacArthur ‘genius’ Fellow **Francisco Núñez**, wowed audiences with their electric stage presence.

4 The Midwest Premiere of the VocalEssence co-commissioned opera **The Radio Hour by Jake Heggie** reimagined the role that a chorus plays in performance by including the Ensemble Singers as movers as well as singers.

5 **Peter Schickele aka P.D.Q. Bach** performed with VocalEssence and the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble at a sold-out performance at Ted Mann Concert Hall. As a “birthday gift” to the audience, Peter also gave the recording to audiences for free. It became the first episode in the VocalEssence Podcast, with free downloads available at vocalessence.org.



VOCALESSENCE WITNESS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS



VocalEssence marked the 25th anniversary of the WITNESS program inspiring more than 2,000 audience members and more than 5,100 students from 49 schools at school workshops, a subscription concert and three sold-out Young People's Concerts. Grammy Award-winning Sounds of Blackness, the VocalEssence Chorus, and the South High School Varsity Choir brought audiences to their feet, inspiring them to join hands and sing "We Shall Overcome."

The program theme—"Let Freedom Ring"—celebrated the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his lifelong promotion of racial equality through nonviolent resistance.

In their post-concert survey responses, teachers shared how the VocalEssence WITNESS School Program benefits their students:

"One of my students said that they wanted to meet the group and someday to perform with them! They found 'Sounds of Blackness' very inspiring!"



"My students are just at the age where they can begin to empathize and process the depth of some of the issues we discussed in class—segregation, injustice—they began to be able to relate personally. Music is a vehicle for opening up some of these conversations and for the opening and softening of hearts."



Audience members also raved about the concert:

"The Sounds of Blackness performance got me off my feet and touched my soul."

"This concert was probably the BEST WITNESS concert ever! Including the South High School choir plus Sounds of Blackness with the VocalEssence Chorus was fantastic. The concert flowed and moved very quickly. Thank you!"

INSPIRES THOUSANDS IN TWIN CITIES AND ROCHESTER



Composers **Julio Morales** and **Jean Angelus Pichardo** worked with 545 students from Twin Cities elementary and high schools, and composers **Rodrigo Cadet** and **Novelli Jurado** worked with 561 students from Rochester elementary, high school and community choirs, made possible by a grant from the MN State Arts Board. All composers also had the chance to work with the VocalEssence Chorus.



“There is nothing like seeing the face of a composer who hears his or her music sung for the first time,” says Kimberly Meisten, VocalEssence Director of Community Engagement. In the sixth year of VocalEssence ¡Cantaré!, four Mexican composers experienced this joy in both the Twin Cities and—thanks to an Arts Learning grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board—Rochester, MN.

More than 2,000 audience members were able to hear the performances at The Ordway in Saint Paul and Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester in the spring, and students and audience members were blown away by the experience. One student remarked,

“¡Cantaré! was one amazing experience for me. It was an honor singing songs in my own language. It was just awesome.”

VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! is a cross-cultural Mexican composer-in-residence program that fosters a greater awareness and appreciation for Mexican music and culture. Composers travel from Mexico to Minnesota to work with school and community choirs to share Mexican culture and write music specifically for each group. The music is then premiered at a free community concert in the spring.

An audience member shared,

“The performance was beautiful, this was a great experience, thank you!”



VOCALESSENCE FINANCIAL HEALTH

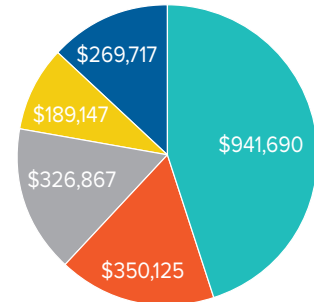
VocalEssence ended the 2014-15 season in a strong financial position. Revenue from contributions accounted for a larger percentage of income (an increase of 14% over the previous year) due to a reduction in investment income. Government grants rose from 9% to 17% due to Minnesota State Arts Board funding for the River Songs tour, ¡Cantaré! in Rochester, and Vintage Voices. Touring also impacted the expense side of operations with growth in overall artistic expense from 55% in 2013-14 to 61% in the current year. Management and general expense decreased by 4%.

VOCALESSENCE BALANCE SHEET - JUNE 30, 2015

ASSETS	2015	2014
Current Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 65,802	\$ 208,857
Accounts Receivable	18,402	493
Pledges Receivable	76,241	111,823
Prepaid Expenses	50,390	163,139
Total Current Assets	210,835	484,312
Investments	4,341,052	4,263,185
Property and Equipment - Net	14,999	17,505
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,566,886	\$ 4,765,002

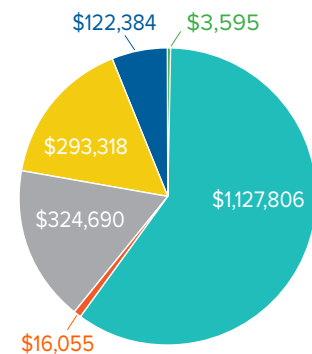
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2015	2014
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$ 17,221	\$ 31,723
Accrued Vacation	10,627	15,543
Deferred Income	11,000	-
Total Current Liabilities	38,848	47,266
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	1,379,426	1,224,870
Endowment	1,152,499	1,177,089
Total Unrestricted	2,531,925	2,401,959
Temporarily Restricted	1,022,654	1,342,318
Permanently Restricted	973,459	973,459
Total Net Assets	4,528,038	4,717,736
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 4,566,886	\$ 4,765,002

OPERATING EXPENSES



- Artistic Series 45%
- Education 17%
- Touring 16%
- Management & General 9%
- Fundraising 13%

OPERATING REVENUE



- Contributions 60%
- Fundraising Events Net 1%
- Government Grants 17%
- Performance Revenue 16%
- Investment Income 6%
- Miscellaneous <1%

VOCAL ESSENCE DONORS

THE ENDOWMENT HONOR ROLL

VocalEssence salutes the individuals and corporate and private foundations whose generosity and leadership sparked the creation of the Endowment Fund. This permanent fund was established in 1987 and is now valued at \$3 million. Its interest income provides ongoing support to VocalEssence. We welcome new contributions to the Endowment Fund and extend our deepest appreciation to the following for their generous gifts.

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The Philip Brunelle Founder's Society recognizes those who make a provision for VocalEssence in their will or estate plans. The society is names in honor of our visionary founder, Philip Brunelle, who every day inspires the community to open their ears to new music from diverse cultures.

Philip and Carolyn Brunelle
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VocalEssence gratefully acknowledges all those who made gifts between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. Although we make every effort to ensure that our Honor Roll list is accurate and complete, we are capable of error. Please let us know if your name does not appear the way you prefer so we may correct it in the next listing. Please call us at 612-547-1473 to make a correction. Thank you!

± Includes Matching Gift Contributions
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