



VOCAL**ES**SENCE

2015-2016

ANNUAL REPORT

season

47

2015 - 2016

DREAMS OF THE FALLEN | VOZ EN PUNTO | WELCOME CHRISTMAS | WITNESS: MOREHOUSE COLLEGE GLEE CLUB
FOUR SAINTS IN THREE ACTS | LISTENERS' CHOICE LIVE | STAR OF WONDER | ¡CANTARÉ! | CHORALIA
COMMUNITY SINGS | ENSEMBLE SINGERS ON TOUR | CONCERT CONVERSATIONS

DREAMS OF THE FALLEN

Turner Harsh $\text{J} = 132$

with gratitude Jeffrey Biegel

Two musical moments



VOCAL ESSENCE WITNESS

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE GLEE CLUB

The Morehouse College Glee Club rocked the Twin Cities this past fall and winter through the VocalEssence WITNESS program. More than 9,000 people of all ages were inspired through performances, education programs, and a community sing.

The stars of the event were the 260-Voice High School Male Chorus, created to inspire young men from Twin Cities high schools to sing. Participating students rehearsed with VocalEssence Associate Conductor G. Phillip Shoultz, III, as well as members of the Morehouse College Glee Club and director Dr. David Morrow. They performed on stage at Orchestra Hall at one public concert and three Young People's Concerts in February.

One student said of the experience:

"I feel honored to be a part of it at my age, and I think that everyone should have this type of opportunity. It is amazing that VocalEssence is able to provide this opportunity to youth like me."

One teacher commented,

"The VocalEssence WITNESS program is a wonderful way for my students to have first-hand experiences which expose them to a culture different than their own. Cultural understanding and acceptance are so badly needed in our society right now, and this program is helping to create these important values in our young students."

- 5,436 students (grades K-12) from 43 schools in the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota participated in the VocalEssence WITNESS School Program.
- Nearly half of the schools report a more than 50% non-white student body, and more than a third report that more than 50% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.



RIVER SONGS & TALES WITH MARK TWAIN: NORTHERN MINNESOTA TOUR



Twelve members of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, along with Don Shelby as Mark Twain, Sara Pajunen on fiddle, and VocalEssence Associate Conductor G. Phillip Shoultz, III on piano, toured our theatrical River Songs & Tales with Mark Twain performance to four Minnesota communities—Moorhead, Detroit Lakes, Mora, and Bigfork.

The tour was a major success! The performances and outreach activities—which included school and community workshops and community performances—engaged more than 2,700 Minnesotans. Virtually all attendees were enthusiastic about the experience. 91% of concert attendees said they enjoyed it “very much,” and the same held true for community outreach events.

“This was truly inspiring for my students,” said one teacher. “They do not get to hear and work with singers of this caliber.”



An unexpected highlight was working with Viking Elementary School in Pelican Rapids. To enrich the experience for the high population of Spanish speakers, VocalEssence included songs and content from VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! in the student workshop. VocalEssence also provided joy to senior residents at Ecumen Emmanuel in Detroit Lakes.

One singer noted, “A resident told me that she doesn’t always feel happy, but that she could go through the day with something happy to cling to after our performance.”



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

FAMOUS GUEST ARTISTS & INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

The VocalEssence 47th Season was filled with unexpected and amazing cameos and guest artists.

1 The Guthrie: *The Events*

Singers from VocalEssence performed on stage during the Guthrie's performance of *The Events*.



2 Dreams of the Fallen

The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and pianist Jeffrey Biegel joined VocalEssence to perform Minnesota composer Jake Runestad's new piece, *Dreams of the Fallen*.



3 Voz en Punto

Mexican a cappella jazz ensemble Voz en Punto invited the Anoka High School Concert Choir on stage to perform.



4 A Prairie Home Companion

Members of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers joined Garrison Keillor on stage multiple times during the 47th season.



5 Four Saints in Three Acts

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers and guest artists Black Label Movement brought this eclectic opera to life.



6 VocalEssence ¡Cantaré!

Students from Northport Elementary School used iPads during the performance.



7 VocalEssence with Andrea Bocelli

Sixty-five members of the VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers wowed more than 16,000 fans at Target Center with Andrea Bocelli on Tuesday, June 9.

SINGING OUR PRAISES

The 47th season of VocalEssence was filled with numerous artistic and administrative successes including a sold-out fundraiser, a national award, and recognition through a first-ever chorus audience study.

VocalEssence Choralia

Thanks to the leadership of co-chairs Ann Farrell and Jenny Wade, an amazing committee, and community support, **VocalEssence Choralia** raised more than \$160,000 for the VocalEssence Community Engagement programs! 500 attendees bid on auction items, ate delicious food, and experienced the power choral music has to change lives.



Chorus America Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award

In June, Chorus America awarded VocalEssence with the **Chorus America Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award** at their national conference. The award recognizes individuals or organizations whose work shows a commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and furthering African-American and other diverse choral traditions through performance, research, or the creation of new compositions of significance. As the 2016 recipient, VocalEssence was honored for our 26 years of work with the VocalEssence WITNESS program.



Intrinsic Impact Audience Project

VocalEssence also finished participation in a national two-year **Intrinsic Impact Audience Project**, the first-ever systematic study of choral music audiences. A total of 23 choruses throughout North America participated, and the results shed light on what moves and motivates people who attend choral music performances. Below are a few highlights.

- **Audiences want more information about program inspiration and the performing experience.** Audience members are more interested in “curatorial insight” than they are in biographical information about the ensemble, composer, or soloists.
- **Different programs have different impacts on audiences, and audiences at choral programs reflect the repertoire onstage.** The report states that “In curating programs, artistic directors are not just selecting repertoire, but also curating their chorus’s constituency.”
- **Involved audience members report higher levels of impact.** The study measured forms of audience participation including singing along, clapping along, talking to a stranger, or dancing and moving to the music. Audience members who danced or moved to the music reported the highest levels of impact.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY:

VOCALESSENCE ReMix

How do we keep Minnesota on the cutting edge of choral music? Our new program, VocalEssence ReMix, made the case in its inaugural year.

In partnership with the American Composers Forum and the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota (ACDA-MN) and funded by the Jerome Foundation, VocalEssence ReMix connected four all-star composer mentors—Tim Takach, Libby Larsen, Carol Barnett, and J. David Moore—with four emerging Minnesota composers—Emily Feld, Michael Maiorana, Liam Moore and Daniel Smith. Over a six-month period, the mentors provided professional development and vocal-writing assistance as the composers wrote their choral work. The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers premiered their pieces for 118 choral directors at the annual ACDA-MN State Conference in November 2015. The results were inspiring:

“It stretched and strengthened my abilities. I became more disciplined. I got out of my comfort zone. I got to learn from composers I admire, and from the three other talented young composers. Since it’s such a solitary pursuit, it was fantastic to collaborate with others (mentors, conductors, singers) through the whole process.”

– VocalEssence ReMix Composer

“VocalEssence ReMix creates a space for composers to experiment musically, for conductor-educators to consider the real possibility of commissioning a work, and an insider’s perspective of how that transaction takes place. A very informative opportunity!”

– VocalEssence Ensemble Singer

As part of the program, emerging composer Emily Feld won a commission by VocalEssence that will be premiered at the VocalEssence WITNESS: Underground Railroad concert in February 2017. VocalEssence is pleased to announce that it has received an additional two-year grant from the Jerome Foundation to fund years two and three of the VocalEssence ReMix program.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY:

VOCAL ESSENCE Lullaby Project

This season VocalEssence became the first choral organization nationally to participate in the Lullaby Project, a program of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. The Lullaby Project is an opportunity for young mothers to work with professional musicians to write original lullabies for their children or children they are expecting. The mothers articulate the hopes and dreams for their children, and, in doing so, strengthen the bond between parent and child, a key predictor of success for children later in life.

This season VocalEssence partnered with the Teen Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program at Longfellow Alternative High School in Minneapolis. VocalEssence Associate Conductor G. Phillip Shoultz, III and an octet of VocalEssence Ensemble Singers collaborated with VocalEssence iCantaré! composer Francisco Zúñiga to help six Latina teen moms write Spanish language lullabies. These lullabies were recorded and are available on the Carnegie Hall SoundCloud page. Two of the lullabies were performed at the VocalEssence iCantaré! Community Concert at the Ordway Concert Hall in Saint Paul in May.

The project made a lasting impact on the moms and their children:

"I like to sing to my son, so when I heard about the Lullaby Project I was on board. I never imagined myself to be able to sit down with composers and singers getting to write something that I want for my child, and for that I'm really happy."

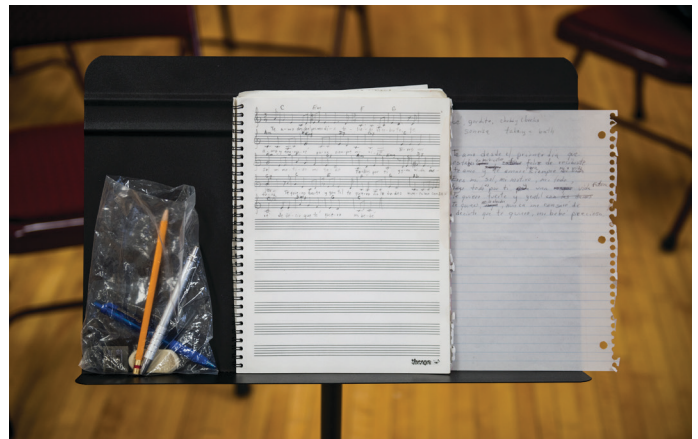
–Lullaby Project Mom

"The recording was like angels singing—the singers touched my heart. I have sung the lullaby to my son, and he smiles and laughs. The song has made my strong feelings for my son even stronger."

–Lullaby Project Mom

"After going through the Lullaby Project, I feel like I have better goals for myself and my son. It has made me want to pursue a PhD in criminology instead of an MA."

–Lullaby Project Mom



VOCALLESSENCE FINANCIAL HEALTH

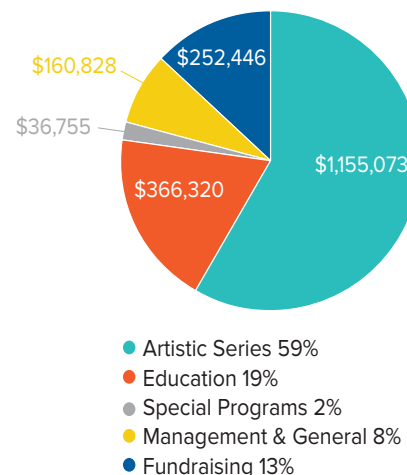
VocalEssence ended the 2016 fiscal year in a strong financial position due in large part to our consistent and growing contributed revenue and the success of our biennial fundraising event, Choralia. Contributed income continues to be over 80% of our annual revenue. Concert expense remains consistently at about 60% of our budget, impacted by Minnesota State Arts Board funded touring and a semi-staged opera production. Our balance sheet is strong with modest liabilities and a healthy reserve of unrestricted net assets.

VOCALLESSENCE BALANCE SHEET - JUNE 30, 2016

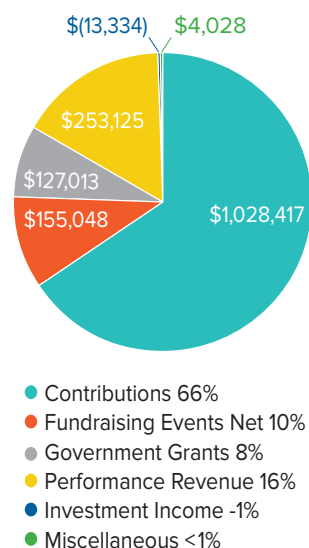
ASSETS	2016	2015
Current Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$12,341	\$65,802
Accounts Receivable	9,616	18,402
Pledges Receivable	126,272	76,241
Prepaid Expenses	44,141	50,390
Total Current Assets	192,370	210,835
Investments	3,952,072	4,341,052
Property and Equipment - Net	47,474	14,999
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,191,916	\$4,566,886

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2016	2015
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$21,094	\$17,221
Accrued Vacation	25,149	10,627
Capital Lease Payable	9,355	-
Deferred Income	-	11,000
Total Current Liabilities	55,598	38,848
Long-Term Liabilities:		
Capital Lease Payable	25,405	-
Total Liabilities	81,003	38,848
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	1,439,166	1,379,426
Endowment	1,158,061	1,152,499
Total Unrestricted	2,597,227	2,531,925
Temporarily Restricted	540,227	1,022,654
Permanently Restricted	973,459	973,459
Total Net Assets	4,110,913	4,528,038
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$4,191,916	\$4,566,886

OPERATING EXPENSES



OPERATING REVENUE



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 named in honor of our visionary founder, Philip Brunelle, who every day inspires the community to open their ears to new music from diverse cultures.

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VocalEssence gratefully acknowledges all those who made gifts between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. 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
 + Includes In-Kind Donations
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