



VOCAL**ESSENCE**
**SING AND
CELEBRATE**

season
49
2017 - 2018



ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

Sponsored by Thrivent Financial



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VOCAL ESSENCE Singers Of This Age

YEAR ONE

Under the visionary leadership of Associate Conductor, G. Phillip Shoultz, III, we launched a high school choral arts program that revolutionizes the concept of choir and reflects the diversity of our community in its membership. This year, members of VocalEssence Singers Of This Age had workshops with 14 different artists representing a variety of artistic disciplines including: acting, choreography, composing, dance, hip-hop, spoken word, singing, music theory, and aural skills.

Through this choir, VocalEssence is awakening artistic expression and creativity in young people, championing the community-building power of group singing, and encouraging a wider circle of participation in the choral art form.

Assessment of the inaugural impact of this program found that participating students:

- Gained confidence
- Found a place of belonging
- Realized the power music has to bring people together

The singers took to the stage at Orchestra Hall at the February **VocalEssence WITNESS: Of Such I Dream** concert sharing a performance of songs inspired by the poetry of Langston Hughes. The year also provided other opportunities to perform including a community partners luncheon in February, an appearance in the **VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! 10th Anniversary Community Concert**, and a special role in the evening entertainment for this year's Gala.

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT VOCAL ESSENCE SINGERS OF THIS AGE (VE SOTA) IN YEAR ONE:

- 57 students from 14 Twin Cities schools participated
- 79% students of color
- More than 30% of participants identify as Immigrant/Newcomer/Refugee.

WHAT'S THE IMPACT ON VOCAL ESSENCE SINGERS OF THIS AGE PARTICIPANTS IN YEAR ONE?

We asked them the following questions:
How important is VE SOTA in your life?

- 93% answered "Important"

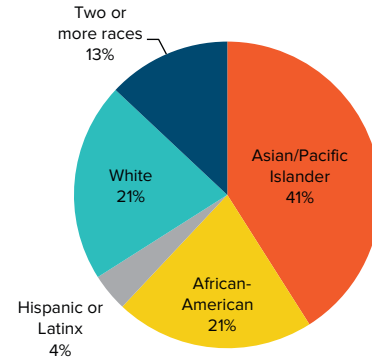
What impact has VE SOTA made on your life?

- 84% answered "A lot"

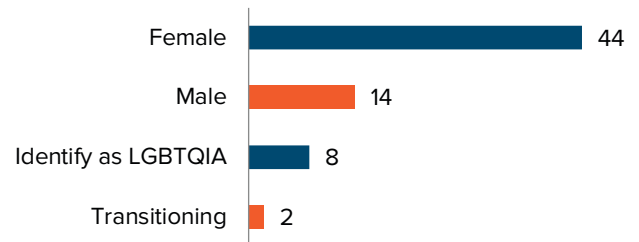
How likely are you to recommend VE SOTA to a friend?

- 97% responded "Likely"

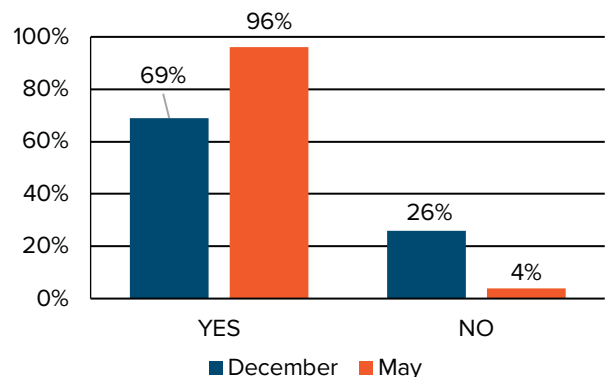
Cultural Demographics



Identity Demographics



Do you feel that your singing voice has expanded or improved since joining VocalEssence Youth Choir?



VOCAL ESSENCE SINGERS OF THIS AGE
PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

“Choir was just an interest and something I deeply liked; but after hearing stories of many who rely on music for life I realized music is actually life-giving.”

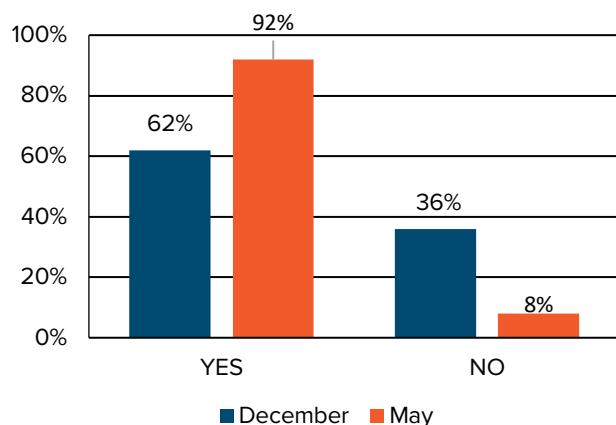
“Phillip, Rhiannon, Gavin, and Chadwick all guided us through this amazing experience and have made this community the loving and positive environment that it is.”

“This program is amazing and I want it to continue.”

“I’ve always wanted to, and now I feel I can truly express my feelings through song.”



Have you learned more about dancing and movement since joining VocalEssence Youth Choir?



SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

1 Finlandia Forever

The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers opened the season celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Finland's independence performing music of Finnish composers with Osmo Vänskä on clarinet, Sara Pajunen on fiddle, and Philip Brunelle conducting.



2 Bach & Bluegrass Jamboree

VocalEssence joined Monroe Crossing and the Minnetonka High School Treble Choir to perform Carol Barnett's *Mortals and Angels: A Bluegrass Te Deum*.



3 Welcome Christmas

VocalEssence shared the spirit of the holiday season with four performances of Welcome Christmas across the Twin Cities.

4 Star of Wonder

The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers rang in the holiday season with a kid-friendly holiday concert.



5 VocalEssence WITNESS: Of Such I Dream

This year's VocalEssence WITNESS Concert celebrated the life and work of Langston Hughes.

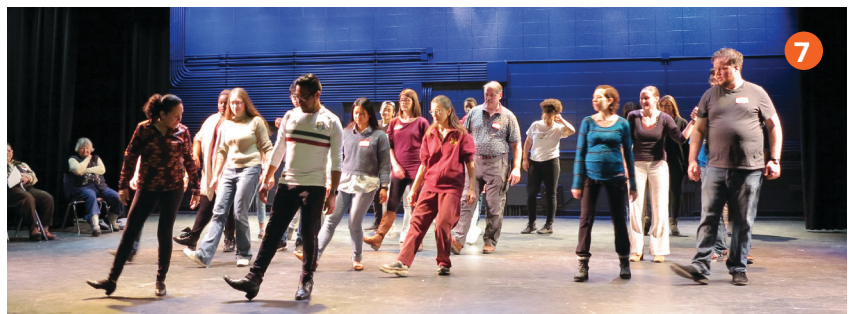


6 VocalEssence Vintage Voices

Robert Graham led VocalEssence Vintage Voices choirs at Trillium Woods in Plymouth, Sabathani Senior Center in Minneapolis, and the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center in St. Paul.

7 Together We Sing

The second annual VocalEssence Together We Sing Festival brought 178 people from the community together to make music and give back.



VOCALESSENCE OUT AND ABOUT



ACDA-MN State Conference

The VocalEssence Chorus was selected to be a featured choir at this year's Minnesota American Choral Director's Association State Conference at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, MN. They performed works by Powell, Argento, Bach, and Runestad.



Super Bowl LIVE

Members of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers helped kick off Super Bowl LIVE festivities in Minneapolis with a special Minnesota-themed performance. Also on the concert was Idina Menzel.



River Songs & Tales Tour

15 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, inspired audiences in Northern Minnesota during a successful tour performing **River Songs & Tales with Mark Twain**.

GALA 2018: COME TOGETHER

Thanks to the leadership of co-chairs Ann Farrell and Jenny Wade, a dedicated committee, and strong community support, the VocalEssence Gala 2018 raised more than \$400,000. This is the highest amount raised at a VocalEssence fundraiser in the last 14 years!

The Gala was held at the Hilton in downtown Minneapolis, a new venue for this event. Throughout the evening, over 620 attendees had a chance to visit with old friends, browse and bid at the silent auction, and enjoy delicious food. Guests also enjoyed an evening of musical entertainment provided by the VocalEssence Chorus, our new youth choir Singers Of This Age, and special guests The New Standards. The night was particularly powerful in reminding attendees of the impact of singing and the ways that VocalEssence provides meaningful musical engagement to a wide population.



Gala Co-Chairs Jenny Wade and Ann Farrell

RUTTER RETURNS

A true delight of this season was welcoming British composer John Rutter back to Minnesota in the spring season concert **Rutter Returns**. The special visit included an exceptional evening of music at the Cathedral of Saint Paul, continuing a partnership VocalEssence is proud to have held with the Cathedral since 1981. Some of the many highlights of this concert included a pre-concert talk with Rutter, the world premiere of Rutter's newly commissioned piece, "When Music Sounds", his conducting of the second half of the concert featuring all his music, and guest soloist Marietta Simpson's exceptional performance in *Feel the Spirit*.

"I am a big fan of John Rutter, so I greatly enjoyed the pre-concert discussion and then watching him conduct. I was also eagerly awaiting the newly commissioned piece, and it was fantastic!"

—Concert Attendee

Also while in Minnesota, Rutter led a community sing for a sold-out audience of 475 singers at Plymouth Congregational Church. In a post-event survey, attendees noted their enjoyment of Rutter's humor and declared a closer connection to the music after Rutter explained the intent and approach for each piece. Of those surveyed, 90% left feeling a strong emotional response to the experience.

"The overall enthusiasm of those in attendance and the energy of John Rutter mixed together and became pure magic."

—Community Sing Attendee

- Of numerous options, 73% of audience members surveyed said one of the most important reasons they attended was to hear the music of a specific composer, followed by 59% to be emotionally moved or inspired.
- The most prevalent word used to describe one's emotional response expressed in post-concert survey responses was "inspired."



VOCAL ESSENCE ¡Cantaré!

CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

2017-2018 marked the 10th anniversary of VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! serving students and audience members in the Twin Cities. This year, students from Rosemount, Osseo, and Como Park High Schools had the chance to work with Mexican composer Bernardo Feldman, and elementary students from Burroughs Community School, Park Spanish Immersion School, and Prairie Seeds Academy worked with composer Jimena Contreras to explore Mexican cultural and choral music traditions. Teachers were provided with a toolbox of resources and a companion CD to integrate cultural context into their curriculum before, during, and after residencies.

“Hearing Bernardo talk about his process of writing our piece and how cool it was for him to see it come to life was really eye-opening. We could really see how music not only touches the audience and the singers, but the composer as well.”

—VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Participating Student

Each school helped contribute to the composition of a new piece unique to their choir which they then rehearsed and performed at the **VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! 10th Anniversary Community Concert** at the Ordway Music Theater in St. Paul.

“It helped me see another culture in a different way. It helped further my love for other cultures’ music and makes me want to do it more.”

—VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Participating Student

- 448 students from 6 Minnesota schools (2 urban and 4 suburban) participated in the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Program
- 1,506 audience members attended the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Community Concert at Ordway Center for Performing Arts
- 74% of high school students reported that they know more about Mexican music after participating in VocalEssence ¡Cantaré!
- 72% of elementary school students said they enjoyed working with composer Jimena Contreras in their music class



VOCALESSENCE FINANCIAL HEALTH

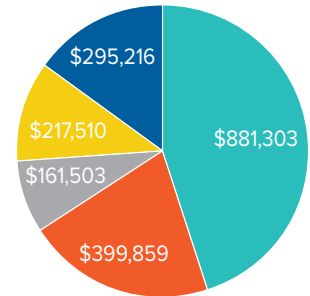
The 49th year of VocalEssence saw many financial success stories. With most 17-18 concert performances exceeding their ticket revenue goals, earned revenue made up a larger portion of the whole. VocalEssence also began experimenting with different performance models in new venues, which could lead to additional streams of earned revenue in the future. Our biennial fundraising gala almost doubled its anticipated net revenue, with its success coming from billing as the “50th Anniversary” celebration, a change in venue, and success in soliciting sponsorships and Fund-a-Need donations. A 50th anniversary fundraising campaign was also launched in the spring of 2018, as evidenced in the increase in Pledges Receivable on the balance sheet as well as in the restricted revenue column. A new program was launched —VocalEssence Singers Of This Age—and its portion of the total expenses is now tracked on the expense side. VocalEssence continues to maintain a healthy financial position with modest liabilities and a substantial reserve of unrestricted net assets.

VOCALESSENCE BALANCE SHEET - JUNE 30, 2018 AND 2017

ASSETS	2018	2017
Current Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$283,442	\$59,650
Accounts Receivable	2,755	12,151
Pledges Receivable	419,013	205,371
Prepaid Expenses	92,008	43,105
Total Current Assets	797,218	320,277
Long-Term Assets:		
Pledges Receivable	332,044	366,609
Investments	4,519,897	4,331,974
Property and Equipment - Net	21,319	36,216
TOTAL ASSETS	\$5,670,478	\$5,055,076

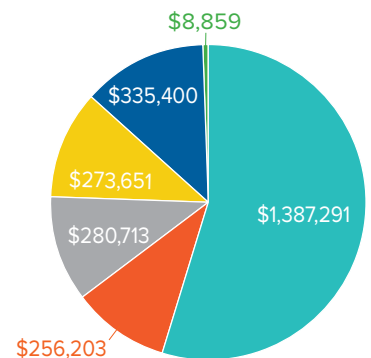
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2018	2017
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$51,557	\$24,489
Accrued Vacation	40,346	27,305
Capital Lease Payable	13,972	11,433
Total Current Liabilities	105,875	63,227
Long-Term Liabilities:		
Capital Lease Payable	-	13,972
Total Liabilities	105,875	77,199
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	1,686,608	1,611,455
Endowment	1,384,393	1,290,048
Total Unrestricted	3,071,001	2,901,503
Temporarily Restricted	1,495,023	1,077,795
Permanently Restricted	998,579	998,579
Total Net Assets	5,564,603	4,977,877
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$5,670,478	\$5,055,076

OPERATING EXPENSES



- Artistic Series 45%
- Learning, Engagement, Community 21%
- Youth Choir 8%
- Management & General 11%
- Fundraising 15%

OPERATING REVENUE



- Contributions 55%
- Fundraising Events Net 10%
- Government Grants 11%
- Performance Revenue 11%
- Investment Income 13%
- Miscellaneous 0.3%

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.

Philip and Carolyn Brunelle
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David and Linda Mona
Sheridan O'Keefe
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VocalEssence gratefully acknowledges all those who made gifts between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. 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

* In Remembrance

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