



Augustana Arts
A Silver Anniversary Season
2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT



Vision:

Lives enriched and transformed through meaningful encounters with the arts.

Mission:

We bridge the gap between audience and artist, so that all feel welcome and are able to experience the arts in a deeper, more meaningful way.

Our Values & Beliefs:

- We believe all are welcome here.
- We believe the arts are for everyone – no matter who they are or where they come from.
- We believe in making each performance a personal experience, not a passive one, allowing each concert to be more meaningful, more enriching, more transformational for those who join us.
- We believe an in-person interaction with the arts offers a more profound experience, speaking more clearly to the heart, mind and soul, than is possible through a screen or ear buds.
- We believe in creating art with you instead of at you. We aren't inviting you to come watch us play music. We truly want you to come so we can create music FOR, and sometimes with, you.
- We believe we must redefine and reimagine the experience of classical music. For many, the traditional experience of classical music feels snooty, stuffy, and uninviting because of the unspoken rules about who is welcome, what to wear and how to act. We believe too many feel worried or embarrassed or have a distasteful experience which is keeping them from the joy of music. We are flipping the script by intentionally creating a welcoming, friendly and engaging experience for which all are welcome to enjoy and participate in whatever capacity/way feels most comfortable for them.

Guiding Principles:

- All are welcome here. No matter who you are or where you come from, all are invited to experience the joy of the arts.
- Make the arts approachable. Let's flip the script of classical arts by intentionally creating engaging experiences where all are welcome to enjoy and participate in whatever way feels most comfortable for them.
- Invite a connection between the audience and artist. Whether it's an interactive portion of the performance, or intentionally telling the stories of the musicians/artists/dancers, we create a space for respect, appreciation, and interaction in both directions.
- It's about the audience member, not the artist. Shift from "We invite you to enjoy the music we are performing" which is about the musicians/artists to "We are creating music for you. Join us for a unique, engaging experience." which is about the experience of the audience member.
- Our musicians are people, not props. Our musicians are humans worth appreciating; they are not props up on a stage. They have lives. They have stories. We aim to foster respect, appreciation, and interaction between our musicians and those we serve.
- Strive to improve. We grow and learn and push those around us to do the same.
- See the big picture. We keep an eye on how our individual work connects to a larger purpose.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on our 2022-23 Silver Anniversary season, I am profoundly moved by the milestones achieved, the music we've shared, and our lasting impact on the communities we've engaged. The fruits of our efforts over the past twenty-five years are a testament to the dedication, vision, and relentless pursuit of excellence of the Augustana Arts family.

This season has highlighted the diversity, talent, and spirit that have characterized us since our inception, a legacy shaped by the vision and passion of the members of Augustana Lutheran Church. Indeed, we owe immense gratitude and appreciation to our founding Board members **Margaret Aerstad, Michael Shasberger, Donald Tallman, Audrey Carroll, Shirley Swedeen, and Ronald Swenson, the executive leadership of Donald Tallman, Karen Aarstad, Marsha Temple, Donna Smith, and Peter Hellyer, and current Board Co-Presidents Kent Mueller and Marcia Olson.** Their collective efforts have shaped us into an organization that champions community, cultivates talent, and lights the way for the next generation. No doubt, the affirmative headline of Augustana Arts as being "One of the 10 Colorado Arts Groups that Get it Right" (Denver Post, 11/19/2015), rings true for us today just as it did in the past.

In our 25th year, we've celebrated the transformative power of music and its deep connection to the human spirit. To that end, we acknowledge two overarching themes. We are,

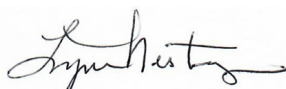
Artistically Pioneering: The debut of Adam Torres as Music Director of the Stratus not only marked a new phase for Stratus but also symbolized our growth and commitment to excellence and innovation. By commissioning an orchestral piece from Kevin Poelking, featuring the brilliant voice of Lindsay Kesselman, and showcasing the accomplished talents of Stratus musicians, we continue to advance musical virtuosity and further highlight our dedication to expanding our artistic reach.

Outreach Advancing: The Music Encounters program remains a testament to our dedication to nurturing the musical talents of the next generation, offering transformative experiences through music lessons to underserved youth in Title I schools and community centers. With the introduction of "Flex Pay" as a ticketing option, we've broadened access for individuals and families who might have previously been unable to experience high-quality concerts. Furthermore, our newly developed Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Belonging (DEIB) statement solidifies our commitment to creating a future that reaches new audiences and communities.

Even as organizations naturally evolve to serve their communities more efficiently and effectively, we remain anchored by the transformative power to music handed off from generations of the past to voices of the future. As I often quote Edwin Hubbel Chapin, "Every action in our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity." This sentiment captures the essence of our impact, often in ways we may never fully grasp. But that's the magic of music; it transcends boundaries.

As we mark the conclusion of our 2022-23 season, it's a celebration of our resilience and legacy. To our treasured friends and supporters, your unwavering faith has been the melody that fuels our mission. We extend our deepest thanks for your support, passion, and enthusiasm, which empower us to share the unifying and healing force of music with the world.

With deepest gratitude,



Lynn Nestingen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

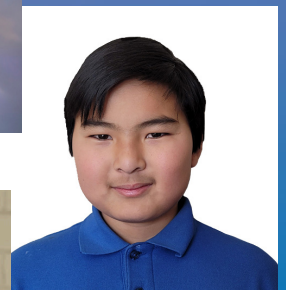


Lynn Nestingen, Donald Tallman, Donna Smith



STRATUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

- Celebrated the dynamic debut of Adam Torres for the 2022-23 performance season, ushering in a new era as Music Director.
- Performed at the outdoor immersive event, *Metamorphosis*, at the Aurora Municipal Center, marking the 10th anniversary of the tragic Aurora Theater Massacre.
- Featured Grammy-nominated soprano, Lindsay Kesselman, in "Searching: Stories from the Other Side." For the Saturday evening concert, we offered a wine and cheese tasting experience, while the Sunday matinee provided an immersive seating format. We also arranged an opportunity for students from Denver Talent Education to perform before the concert.
- Highlighted the virtuosity of Stratus musicians, including Arlette Aslanian-Townsend, Kathy Langston, Leah Quigley, Carrie Beeder, and Kurt Ochsner, through solo and small ensemble performances accompanied by the entire orchestra in "Driven: Virtuosos of Stratus."
- Commissioned and debuted the world premiere of *Unexpected Places* by renowned composer Kevin Poelking.
- Collaborated with students from Music Encounters to present a combined rendition of *Twinkle Variations* at the "Emerging: New Musical Voices" concert.
- Showcased young musicians Rui Guo, Sybil Bradley, Eireen Margittai, and Ella Bygrave, winners of our SHINE with Stratus Concerto Competition, as they performed alongside the Stratus Chamber Orchestra in "Emerging: New Musical Voices."





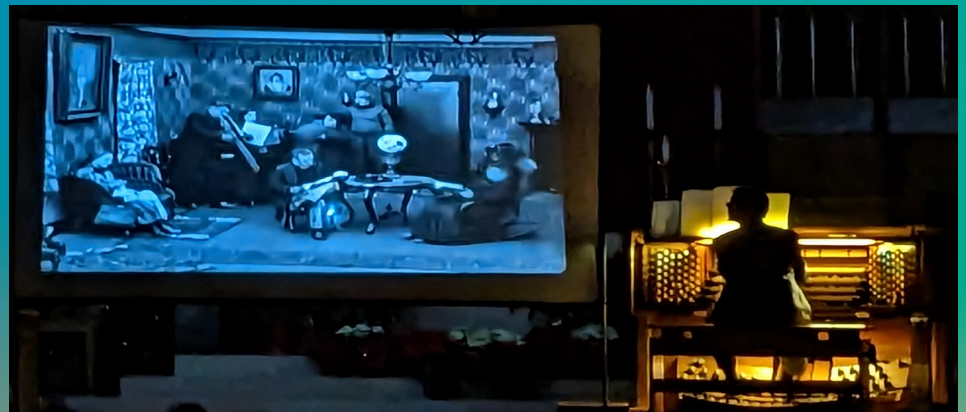
OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- Delivered violin instruction to over 50 students, spanning from third to eighth grades, in small group environments at Aurora First Presbyterian Church and two Title I Schools in Denver.
- Formed a partnership with the Colfax Community Network and launched ukulele lessons for 25 students in transient housing, primarily along Colfax Avenue.
- Held over 250 unique violin teaching sessions for our students at Godsman Elementary, College View Elementary, and Aurora First Presbyterian Church.
- Emphasized diversity in our recruitment, choosing educators who resonate with and reflect the varied backgrounds of our students.
- Engaged Assistant Teachers within school sites to elevate the caliber and breadth of teaching violin lessons for students with little to no music background.
- Collaborated musically with Stratus Chamber Orchestra, presenting a collective performance of "*Twinkle Variations*" at "Emerging: New Musical Voices" in April.
- Actively engaged with colleagues through the Alliance for Music Education Equity (AMEE), and staffed an information booth at Levitt Pavilion in Denver to share information about the Music Encounters program.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Introduced a 'flex pay' option for multiple performances, allowing attendees to choose their ticket prices, welcoming concert-goers from all economic backgrounds.
- Spotlights in an interview at a Phish concert on the "Helping Friendly" podcast as a past grant recipient of the Mockingbird Foundation.
- Hosted "ArtiStandza," a 60-day free public art exhibition of painted music stands, and auctioned these stands during the "Splash into Arts: Launch the Season Party" in August 2022.
- Presented two outdoor "Relax and Unwind" Friday evening concerts spotlighting local talent, and inaugurated the season with Dotsero, a celebrated Colorado jazz ensemble.
- Collaborated with Central City Opera for a season preview concert and marked International Tea Day by serving tea for guests and artists.
- Organized a "Music of the Vine" signature concert experience at Hampden Hall in the Englewood Civic Center, supported by the International Wine and Spirits Guild. This event spotlighted musicians from the Stratus Chamber Orchestra during a wine, cheese, and music pairing special event.
- Partnered with the Denver Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for a lecture and concert, spotlighting local organist David Vogels. Offered a free community silent film and organ improvisation concert titled "Bumping into Broadway," featuring organist Andrew Peters on New Year's Eve.
- Sponsored four nonprofit organizations to perform at Augustana Lutheran Church: the Colorado Choir, Colorado Chorale, Voices of Light Chamber Choir, and the Colorado Saints Chorale, introducing new patrons to Augustana Arts.
- Honored Pastor Ronald Swenson at the 25th Anniversary Scandinavian Brunch to recognize his visionary support of our growth and evolution in the arts.





*Shine
With Stratas!*

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY & BELONGING (DEIAB)

In January 2023, the Board of Directors adopted the following statement on DEIAB:

Augustana Arts is committed to making and presenting music in an equitable, respectful, and kind environment. We believe a commitment to inclusion must accompany diversity, and that equity in all aspects of race, culture, ideology, gender, sexuality and economic reality must be the driving force for how Augustana Arts engages the community with music. We embrace all humans and welcome on-going discourse that is vulnerable, curious, and open, while condemning sentiments and actions stemming from individual and systemic biases.

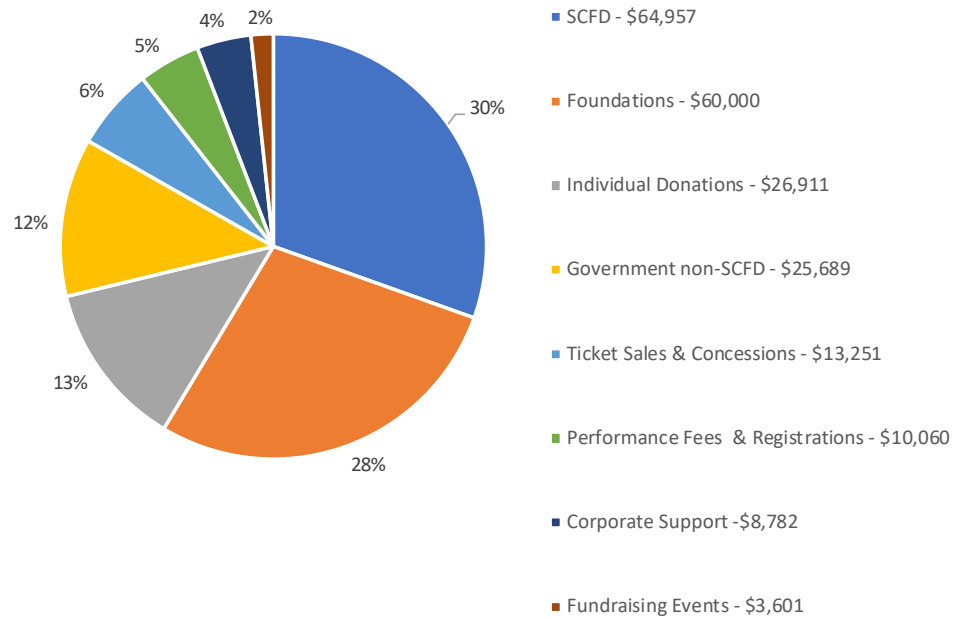
In the months ahead, we will continue to refine this statement by developing a "Code of Authentic and Active Ethics." to guide our commitment to honor the diversity of our staff, students, musicians, and audience.

- Invited families from Music Encounters to enjoy all Augustana Arts performances free of charge.
- Extended Music Encounter programs to economically disadvantaged schools lacking music offerings, and to community centers and libraries, often with little to no fees.
- Collaborated with fellow art organizations in the Alliance for Music Education Equity (AMEE) to amplify DEIA efforts in arts education.
- Spotlitged and interviewed artists from underrepresented communities through our podcast, "Audience Meets Audience."
- Continued to reach out to BIPOC networks to expand Board representation as well as musician/staff audition invitations.

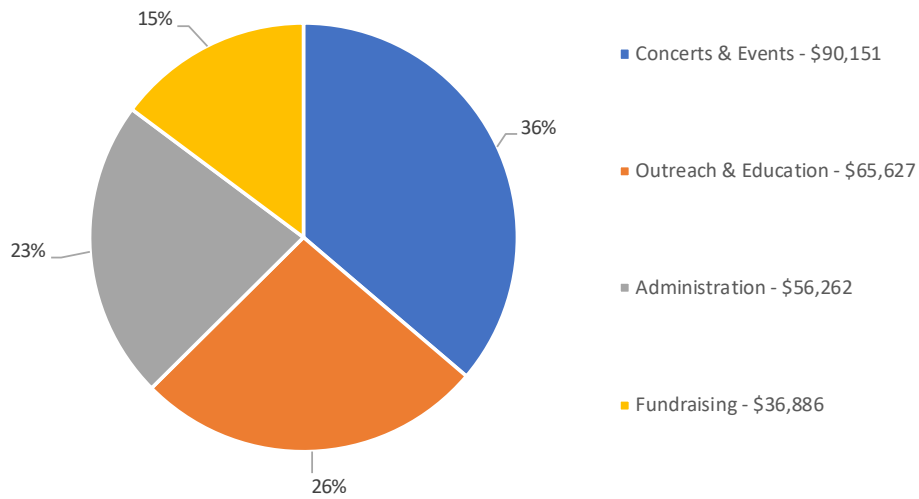


FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

REVENUE



EXPENSES



BALANCE SHEET

AS OF JUNE 30, 2023

Cash	\$62,437
Investments	14,682
Receivables & Prepaid Expenses	21,649
TOTAL ASSETS	98,768
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,812
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$98,768

DONORS & FUNDERS

Over 150 individuals, families, foundations, businesses, and organizations made our work possible through their financial support. For gifts ranging from \$5 to \$80,000 and more, we are deeply grateful!

A full list of donors is published in our performance programs. A digital copy is available upon request.



Ralph & Florence
Burgess Trust

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thrivent
Greg Bickle

2022-23 Augustana Arts Board of Directors

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Marcia Olson, CO-PRESIDENT

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Bill Crossen, TREASURER (1.1.23-6.30.23)

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John House, BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTANT (7.1.22-12.31.22)

Bill Crossen, BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTANT (1.1.23-6.30.23)

Erin Sullivan, GRANTWRITER

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With tremendous gratitude and thanks to all our individual, family, and corporate donors!