This has been a year of recalibrating expectations and turning challenge into opportunity. We were so excited to launch Maestra at an event originally scheduled for March 30th, 2020. We thought we would reschedule it about a month later. As of this writing, theaters across the country are still closed, and Maestra still hasn’t officially launched.

Except that we have. Last April 2nd we moved our master class series online, and our Virtual Technical Workshop series was born. It turned out the classes were a great way to keep our members engaged in skill-building and music-making as the pressures of unemployment increased, but just as important was the vitality of connection: seeing each other and building common purpose from the little boxes on our computer screens. Within months our reach was global, our donations were increasing, and our Directory membership was exploding.

Today, we are saying loudly that we can’t just reopen, we have to reinvent. We’re demanding that our industry think carefully and thoroughly about issues of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, ageism, and intersectionality. Maestra’s big question right now is this: when the industry “comes back,” who will the decision-makers be, and will they be advocating for us?

We’re not waiting for the future leaders to emerge; we’re building them. We envision a theater industry that centers women and people of color in the music department of every show, but we also demand an industry that uses Maestra’s standard as a bar by which all other departments evaluate their own inclusivity. Never again do I want to hear, “We wanted to hire a woman, but we just couldn’t find one.”

You will find her at Maestra.

Georgia Stitt
Maestra envisions a world in which women and non-binary musicians* have **EQUITABLE ACCESS, VISIBILITY, and CREATIVE IMPACT** in the musical theater industry.

In this future, at least half of all music-related theater jobs and leadership positions are filled by qualified women and non-binary musicians, decidedly inclusive of people of color. Women are historically and consistently under-represented in musical theater.

Maestra provides support, visibility, and community to the women who make the music in the musical theater industry. By delivering on our mission, we will be a catalyst and driving force to help achieve gender equity in our business.

* In 2021 Maestra has begun working to ensure our vision has expanded to include our non-binary colleagues. Please stay with us as our language evolves!
Maestra’s IMPACT

Making a Difference for the Music Makers

3,245 people receive Maestra’s weekly newsletter

1,021 member profiles are searchable in the global Directory

167 of the Maestras on the Directory have self-identified as People of Color

4,157 followers across our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts where we regularly share insights and information about women and non-binary musicians.

Maestra Mentorship launched in 2018 in partnership with New York Youth Symphony’s Musical Theater Songwriting program

- 2018: 5 mentor/mentee pairings
- 2019: 11 mentor/mentee pairings
- 2020: 78 mentorship applicants from 5 continents, 36 mentor/mentee pairings via newly-formed Student Maestras, 15 mentor/mentee pairings at NYYS, 50% BIPOC

Since Maestra incorporated in January 2019, we have received 2,320 Individual Donations from a total of 862 donors. 243 of those donations were received in 2019 and 2,077 were received in 2020.

In 2020, we pivoted to Virtual Technical Workshops in order to provide focused education and training for Maestras.

6,483 Total Registrations Attendees from 25 Countries and 39 states.
I AM NOT LOOKING FOR A GOAL OF 50/50.

I am looking for a goal of more than that. I’m looking for women and women’s sensibility and women’s skills to DOMINATE THIS INDUSTRY.

— ERIN MCKEOWN, COMPOSER & LYRICIST OF MISS YOU LIKE HELL
Maestra Moms
A network of Maestras who are also parents, Maestra Moms has an active Facebook group and enjoys meet-ups and picnics for which Maestra provides childcare.

Regional and Affinity Groups
Smaller groupings of members from the Maestra Directory connect Maestras around the world. Each group has its own presence and community of followers.

Maestra Mentorship
Pairs Maestra mentors and mentees and provides access to and information about their chosen fields.

Monthly Meetings
Taking place in NYC and on Zoom, these Monthly Meetings allow members of the Maestra Directory to get to know each other and share information and contacts.

Technical Workshops
In 2020, we offered sixty-one classes to provide the focused education and training necessary for Maestras to be successful in their work. These sold-out workshops covered topics like percussion, music copying, writing an artist statement, music technology, creating inclusivity in a music rehearsal room, and more.

Maestra Care
Provides support and information about mental health and wellness along with resources for emergency relief to Maestras in need.

Research & Analysis
Bolsters our call to action by telling the story of women and non-binary musicians in musical theater through irrefutable data and statistical research gathered across race, gender, and age.
Yu Okuda
COMPOSER, ARRANGER, MUSIC DIRECTOR, BANDLEADER, AND PIANIST

The way Yu Okuda tells it, Japan is not exactly a hotbed of original musical theatre. Western shows come on tour and are locally produced, but very little musical theater is home-grown. There is a dearth of expertise and a great lack of resources.

In her quest to acquire the body of knowledge necessary to create a musical, Okuda watched YouTube videos and followed social media accounts — which led her to Maestra. And when Maestra brought the technical workshops online during the pandemic, Okuda found not only the trove of resources she had been seeking, but the structure and support to keep going in uncertain times. She attended regularly twice a week, exposing herself to everything Maestra had to offer, even areas outside of her expertise. It all related to theater, and she consumed the information avidly.

In Japan, there were no workshops or classes on offer, and she found it frustrating that other artists were not willing to explore on their own as she had. So, like the small-m maestra she is, Okuda stepped in to fill the gap and launched her own series of workshops, kicking it off with a series taught by Georgia Stitt direct from Maestra. In normal times, this would never have been possible.

Maestra’s technical workshops allowed Okuda a window into musical theater as it is created professionally in the industry’s hub. And when it is women teaching women, it inspires and liberates people’s minds from what is “supposed to be.” When people see female and non-binary experts in the field, they will feel liberated from the norm that certain work is for men. The impact of Maestra’s teaching Maestra widens opportunity for everyone.

Yu Okuda is a Tokyo-based Composer, Arranger, Music Director, Bandleader, and Pianist who mainly composes for theatre. She is the Founder and President of Onpuma Musical Theater Workshop. Her composer credits include: Avidya: No Lights Inn (commissioned by Niwa Gekidan Penino), which won the Japan Cultural Affairs Agency Arts Festival Excellence Award in 2016, and was performed in Japan, Germany, the U.S., Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, and France, and Wataru’s Innocent Marriage Hunting, The Musical which was commissioned by Umeda Arts Theater Co., Ltd.
It has been such a fulfilling opportunity to mentor

**YOUNG, ASPIRING FEMALE MUSICIANS,**

especially those of color, who may not have chosen this field because they didn’t see many involved who looked like them. Maestra allows these hopeful young women to be mentored, to gain confidence in their abilities, and to ‘unmute’ their voices, thoughts and ideas, so that the look of Broadway reflects a multi-cultural demographic, just like the world we live in. With Maestra,

**OUR VOICES CAN SPEAK VOLUMES!**

— SHEILAH WALKER, MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR
Kristy Norter has worked hard to get where she is. She's a top-notch musician, playing (she estimates) around nine instruments, not including the rare foray into penny whistle or harmonica. She has subbed and had chairs on and off Broadway for many years. Recently, she has become a music coordinator on Broadway.

“Visibility and representation is everything, and I’m not sure I really understood that until maybe the last four or five years of my life. It’s kind of one of those ‘once you’ve seen it, you can’t unsee it’ things.”

She is her own case in point. Her current (pre-pandemic) job is saxophonist for Tina: The Tina Turner Musical. The gig calls for her to appear on stage, coming down a staircase playing a big featured solo. This is not a position she would ever have imagined herself in. “I’m not young, I’m not cutesy in tight leather pants, I’m not skinny, I’m just who I am.” But, she continues, “What’s funny is that I get a killing reaction every night, and it freaked me out at first, because I kind of bought in.” She felt a bit like an imposter because she didn’t fit the stereotype. But after finding a costume that both fit the role and reflected her personal style, “I feel pretty cool coming down the stairs now. I feel a little badass. The visual representation meant as much to me as it did to others.”

Making change “isn’t just sitting around and complaining about it, it’s finding a way in through the back door and then opening up the front door in a way no one thought.”

“Most of my mentors were men and I just thought that was fairly natural, but recently I’ve come to understand how important visual representation is. Maestra is that: making things more visible, getting people out there, giving opportunities to people.”

Kristy Norter is a Freelance Musician specializing in woodwind instruments. She has been hired as the Music Coordinator for Six, making her one of a very small number of women Music Coordinators ever to have worked on Broadway. Kristy also plays saxophone on Broadway in Tina: The Tina Turner Musical. Past credits include: A Bronx Tale, In the Heights, Newsies, Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Radio City Spring Spectacular, Himself and Nora, and multiple shows at the Paper Mill Playhouse including Ever After, Bandstand, A Bronx Tale, The Sting, The Honeymoons, Halftime the Musical and Benny and Joon.
Maestra has helped me meet some really wonderful people, some of whom I’ve gone on to work with. It’s created an OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME REALLY GREAT CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER WOMEN COMPOSERS. We all have our own story, our own relationship to what is expected of us as women, and WE ALL LOVE MUSIC SO DEEPLY.

—DR. MASI ASARE, COMPOSER/LYRICIST/PLAYWRIGHT AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES FACULTY AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
It was through community that Christie Chiles Twillie became involved with Maestra, and it is community that she exemplifies in her role as a board member residing in the large regional theater town of Chicago.

“This is the first organization that was reaching with open arms that basically had no end—all across the US, locally where I was, overseas...I was really floored by the level of care and support that was there.”

Maestra reminded Chiles Twillie of how it is to work on a show in the rare environment of an all-female creative staff. “There were just no barriers. You didn't have to act a certain way. The communication was really free and open. There was no one there that was concerned that you were going to try to infringe on their work. It was just a safe space, it was truly a safe space.”

Chiles Twillie sees a future where Maestra is instrumental in facilitating those in larger theatrical hubs to start grooming people in regional areas, bringing about a change in the culture. It’s clear that the industry has a history of isolating and dividing women. Hiring women singly here and there for pits does not promote community, and local artists haven't had groups to nurture relationships in a way that's not competitive. Maestra has the power to bridge those gaps.

Chiles Twillie has been involved in many organizations and has sat on other boards. She feels that often, the thought of what to do was there, but the sincerity was missing. The fact that she has said “yes” to so many aspects of Maestra is a ringing endorsement. She believes in Maestra and the consistent sincerity of its leaders.

“The future lies in women supporting women.”

Christie Chiles Twillie is a Professional Pianist, Music Director, Conductor, Composer, and Sound Designer who composes for theater and film. Christie was awarded the 2019 Footlights Best Musical Direction Award and a Rachel Rockwell Fierce Women Behind The Table Award. She was a BTAA nominee and a Chicago Broadway World Finalist for Best Music Direction. Regional credits include *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Newsies*, *The Gospel at Colonus* and the Chicago premiere of *Minnie’s Boys*. 

Feature interviews written by Lisa Diana Shapiro
GEORGIA STITT  
Composer/Lyricist/Music Director, Founder/President

MONICA DAVIS  
Violinist/Violist

EMILY GRISHMAN  
Music Copyist, Secretary

LAURA IVEY  
Film/Television/Theater Producer, Treasurer

CHRISTIE CHILES TWILLIE  
Music Director/Composer/Sound Designer

MASI ASARE  
Composer/Lyricist and Performance Scholar

JANET AXELROD  
Flutist, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 Executive Board

KATE BALDWIN  
Tony-nominated Actress and Singer

MOLLY BARNETT  
Grapevine Public Relations

KRISTEN BLODGETTE  
Broadway Music Director

MARY-MITCHELL CAMPBELL  
Broadway Music Director, Founder of ASTEP

KIRSTEN CHILDS  
Composer/Lyricist/Bookwriter

CARMEL DEAN  
Composer/Music Director

CARLA DIRLIKOV CANALES  
Opera Singer, Founder of The Canales Project/Hear Her Song

TINA FALLON  
Founding Producer, The 24 Hour Plays

ELISE FRAWLEY  
Violist, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 Executive Board

TRACY GELTMAN  
COO, Stacey Mindich Productions

JENNIFER ISAACSON  
Producer, WalkRunFly Productions

STACEY MINDICH  
Producer, Stacey Mindich Productions

AMY POWER  
Marketing Strategist

KIKI RATHBUN  
Vice President of Communications, Spotco

STEPHANIE SCIANDRA  
Creative Director, Situation Interactive

ALLY SHUSTER  
Agent at Creative Artists Agency

MARGARET SKOGLUND  
Company Manager

JEANINE TESORI  
Tony Award-Winning Composer

KARA UNTERBERG  
Founder of The New York SongSpace

IMANI UZURI  
Composer/Librettist/Recording Artist/Vocal Coach/Arranger

LIA VOLLACK  
Producer, Lia Vollack Productions

SHEILAH WALKER  
Music Director

SCHELE WILLIAMS  
Director
List Board, Advisory, Key Volunteers - Laura to provide
Board of Directors
Georgia Stitt, composer/lyricist, Founder/President
Monica Davis, violinist/violist
Emily Grishman, music copyist, Secretary
Laura Ivey, film producer, Founder of Par, Treasurer
Christie Chiles Twillie, music director/composer/sound designer

Advisory Board
Masi Asare, composer/lyricist and performance scholar
Janet Axelrod, flutist, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 Executive Board
Kate Baldwin, Tony-nominated actress and singer
Molly Barnett, Grapevine Public Relations
Kristen Blodgette, Broadway music director
Mary-Mitchell Campbell, Broadway music director, founder of ASTEP
Kirsten Childs, composer/lyricist/bookwriter
Carmel Dean, composer/music director
Carla Dirlikov Canales, opera singer, founder of The Canales Project/Hear Her Song
Tina Fallon, Executive Director of Creative Affairs, The Dramatists Guild
Elise Frawley, violist, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 Executive Board
Tracy Geltman, COO, Stacey Mindich Productions
Jennifer Isaacson, producer, WalkRunFly Productions
Stacey Mindich, Broadway producer
Amy Power, Marketing Strategist
Kiki Rathbun, Vice President of Communications, Spotco
Stephanie Sciandra, Creative Director, Situation Interactive
Ally Shuster, agent at Creative Artists Agency
Margaret Skoglund, company manager
Jeanine Tesori, Tony Award-winning composer
Kara Unterberg, Founder of The New York SongSpace
Imani Uzuri, composer/librettist/recording artist/vocal coach/arranger
Lia Vollack, producer, Lia Vollack Productions
Sheilah Walker, music director
Schele Williams, director

Committee Leaders
Faye Chiao, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Meg Zervoulis, Student Maestras and Maestra Mentorship
Tina Devaron & Lauren Cregor, Maestra Moms
Britt Bonney & Laura Bergquist, Maestra Care
Caitlin Warbelow, Data/Statistics Project

Staff & Volunteers
Jamie Maletz, Administrative Assistant
Allie Glickman, Development Director
Kathleen Wrinn, Directory Manager
Ryan Foy & Nick Gaswirth/Roundhouse Designs, Web Design
Bria Benjamin, Derek Bishop, Yoanna Nikolova, Graphic Designers
Janice Maffei & Joanne Spigner/VisionFirst, Consultants

Program Heads
Elspeth Collard, Sara Cooper, Heather Gershonowitz, Kailey Marshall, Lisa Diana Shapiro, Maddie Wu
Blog Volunteers
Shoshana Greenberg, Elspeth Collard, Katya Stanislavskaya, Timeline of Women Composers
Francesca Fenech, Arlene McNaught, Casey Robards, Alyssa Kay Thompson, Macy Schmidt, Kat Sherrell, Monica Davis, Sue Williams
Maestra Reps in Virtual Technical Workshop Series
Maestra Music, Inc is a 501(c)3 charitable organization (EIN 83-3439518). All donations are deemed tax-deductible absent any limitations on deductibility applicable to a particular taxpayer.