

# MAESTRA

FOR THE WOMEN WHO MAKE THE MUSIC IN THE MUSICAL THEATER INDUSTRY



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



# WELCOME from the Founder

**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.**

A portrait of Georgia Stitt, the founder of Maestra. She is a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a dark purple sleeveless top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background behind her is a dark blue with a white geometric pattern of interconnected lines.  
*Georgia Stitt*  
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!



# Our Vision & Mission



# Maestras,

# MAESTRAS

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

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

4,157

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

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.

## 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.

# PROGRAMS

## Maestra Mentorship

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



## 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.





# SUPPORT

## 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 Maestras teaching Maestras 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





# VISIBILITY

## Kristy Norter

REED PLAYER AND MUSIC COORDINATOR

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 Honeymooners*, *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





# COMMUNITY



## Christie Chiles Twillie

PIANIST, MUSIC DIRECTOR, CONDUCTOR, COMPOSER, AND SOUND DESIGNER

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



# Board of Directors

## 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

# 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

Founding Producer, The 24 Hour Plays

## ELISE FRAWLEY

Violist, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 Executive Board

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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





# Program Heads

## FAYE CHIAO

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

## MEG ZERVOULIS

Student Maestras and Maestra Mentorship

## TINA DEVARON & LAUREN CREGOR

Maestra Moms

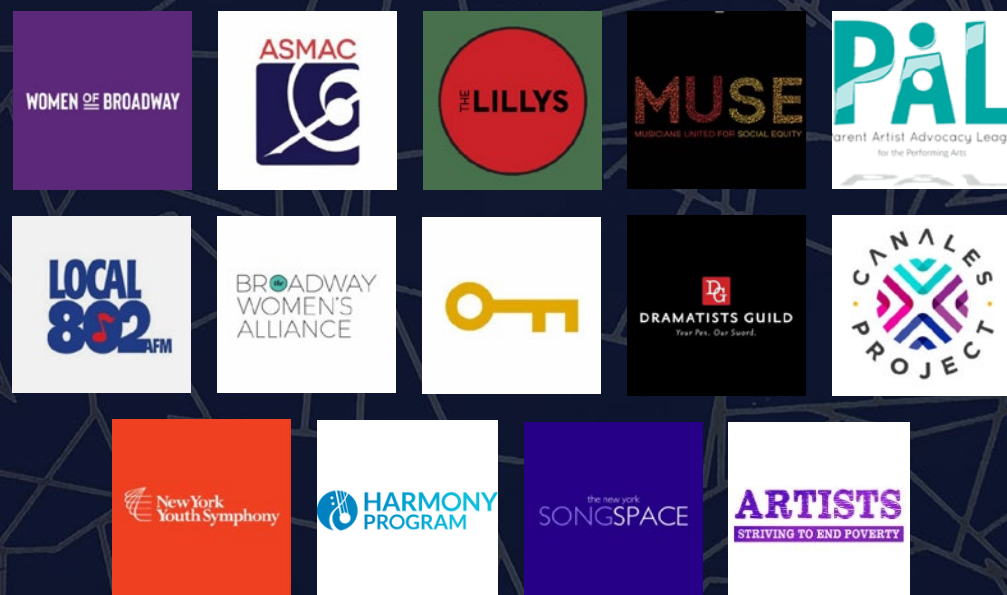
## BRITT BONNEY & LAURA BERGQUIST

Maestra Care

## CAITLIN WARBELOW

Data/Statistics Project

# Community Partners



# 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

## 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

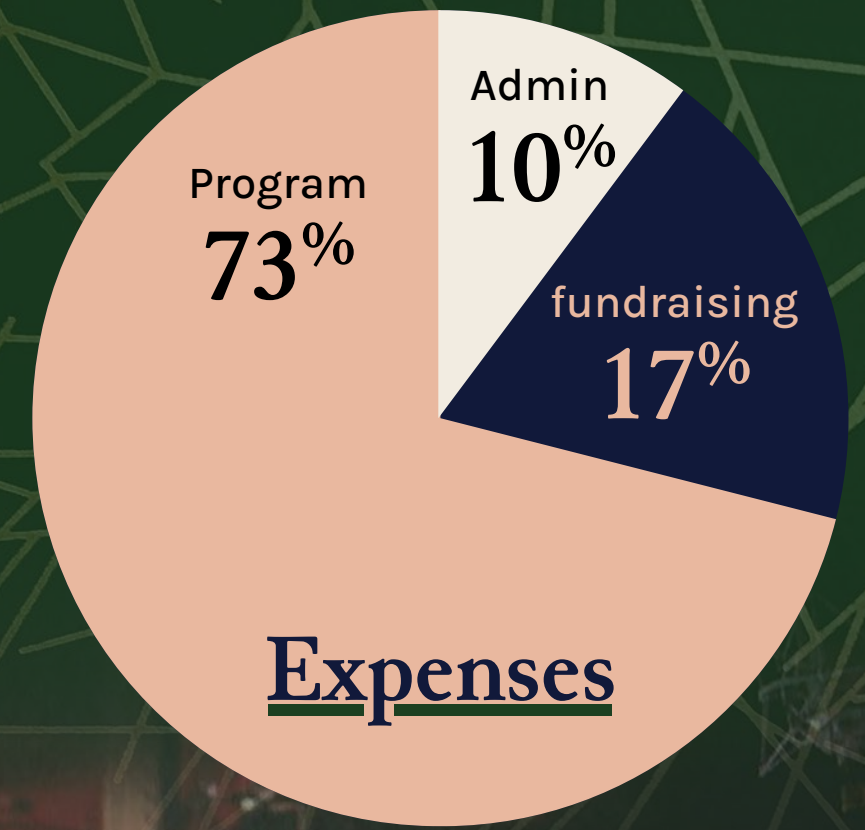
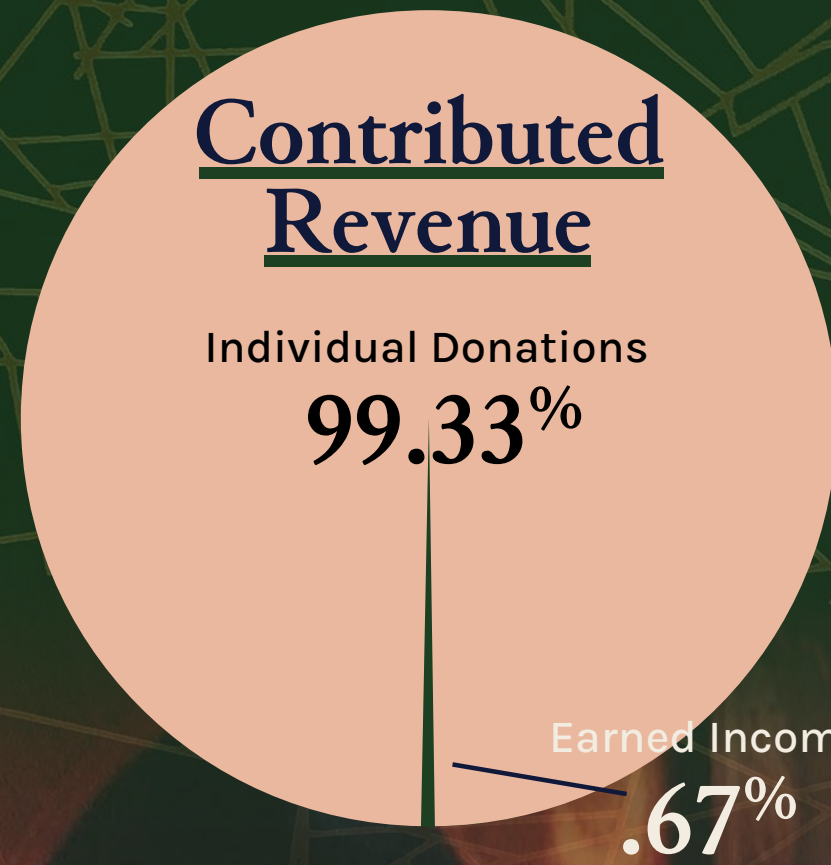
## FRANCESCA FENECH, ARLENE MCNAUGHT, CASEY ROBARDS, ALYSSA KAY THOMPSON, MACY SCHMIDT, KAT SHERRELL, MONICA DAVIS, SUE WILLIAMS

Maestra Reps in Virtual Technical Workshop Series





# 2020 FINANCIALS





# MAESTRA



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