I’ve been thinking a lot lately about why I started Maestra.

IT HAD TO DO WITH THE 2016 ELECTION and the way every woman I knew was shattered to wake up one morning in November, having hit her head on a glass ceiling the night before. It had to do with the Off-Broadway production of Sweet Charity I was music directing then and the difficulty I had finding and hiring an all-female band. It had to do with the dawning awareness that I had never had a music history class with a female composer on the syllabus. It had to do with playwright Marsha Norman encouraging me to join the Board of The Lillys and with director Molly Smith commissioning me to write an original musical for Arena Stage because she knew her story needed to be told by a woman. It had to do with my friendship with conductor Mary-Mitchell Campbell and the anecdotes we shared about working for decades in all-male Broadway music departments.

I understand now, five years later, that I am fueled and fed by professional relationships with strong women and have always needed more of them. As Maestra has grown this year, in ways that this Annual Report will illuminate, I’ve observed that our members ARE BECOMING STRONGER INDIVIDUALLY BECAUSE OF THE EXPANSIVE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE WHOLE. As we have leaned into the three tenets of our mission statement – support, visibility, and community – Maestra has engaged in significant anti-racism and gender equity work, focusing on creating spaces where all Maestras, especially our trans, nonbinary, and BIPOC members, can thrive in this rapidly changing industry.

I recently participated in an interview with a very successful young musician who said, "I'm lucky that I started out at a time when Maestra already existed. I know there are opportunities I'm having that weren't available to women just a few years ago." And yet for every story I hear about a Maestra finding success, I also hear about incidents of resistance, bias, and surprise from people who aren't used to seeing women and nonbinary people in positions of leadership and authority. Cultural change takes time, and as composer Jeanine Tesori said when she won her 2015 Tony Award, "For girls, you have to see it to be it."

So here it is. See it. Be it. Maestra.
Our membership is made up of composers, lyricists, music directors, orchestrators, arrangers, copyists, rehearsal pianists, and other musicians who are an underrepresented minority in musical theater.

Maestra Music, Inc. provides support, visibility, and community to the women and nonbinary people who make the music in the musical theater industry.
Maestra is a MOVEMENT.

We are the women and nonbinary professionals who make the music in the musical theater industry.

We have a bold vision for an industry that is more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible across all intersections of race, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual ability, age, nationality, appearance, gender identity and expression.

We seek to build, apply, and own our collective power.
We value relationships. We practice **radical collegiality** to champion each other as individual professionals and nurture connectedness among us.

We value transparency. We **share our knowledge** to help each other thrive.

We value collaboration. We **encourage participation** from our members and respond to new ideas and initiative.

We value partnership. We **coordinate** with other groundbreaking leaders and organizations because this movement is larger than us.

We value solutions. We **take practical steps** to support individual members while driving toward cultural and systemic changes that benefit our entire global community.
From deep within the social isolation of the 2021 pandemic, Maestra looked for new ways to connect and fundraise. In March, Women’s History Month, we produced AMPLIFY, our first annual concert and community event. Created in partnership with Broadway Unlocked, Amplify was an interactive event in a custom-built virtual venue that featured pre-recorded music written and performed by Maestra members. The event allowed for real-time interactions among the 1050 participants who logged in from 26 countries.

In August, on International Mother Artist Day, Maestra Moms partnered with The Parent Artist Advocacy League (PAAL) to produce The Motherhood Concert: Truth Set To Music, an online event spotlighting mother composers and their songs about motherhood. All writers, performers, orchestrators, and creatives were parents, and 50% were people of color.
WE'RE ONLY MISSING MAESTRAS IN THE DAKOTAS AND ALASKA.

10,466 PARTICIPANTS SINCE WE BEGAN VIRTUAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS
ADDED 3,983 IN 2021

1,302 MAESTRA DIRECTORY PROFILES
UP FROM 1021 IN 2020

241 BIPOC MAESTRAS
SELF-IDENTIFYING AS PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE DIRECTORY

2021 BLOG ARTICLES PUBLISHED

6,168 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

60 COUNTRIES

47 STATES

3,637 WEEKLY NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

1 GOVERNMENT GRANT FROM THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM 47 STATES

PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM 60 COUNTRIES
Prior to Maestra Mentorship, mentee Sara Matin had never met another artist of any discipline who shared her Iranian heritage. "As a kid from Iranian parents you’re told you’re a doctor, you’re an engineer, or you’re a failure. Those are the three options."

"I was so honored and surprised when I first got paired with Mona [Seyed-Bolorforosh]. [Our] first meeting was two hours nonstop of us just talking before we actually got to the part of, ‘What do we want out of this mentor/mentee relationship?’ Neither of us had ever met someone from that demographic who’d chosen to go into music. It was really cool being able to connect on that level."

Meeting a mentor who shared her heritage encouraged Sara to write more about her family’s history. "I’ve been inspired by my own Nona on my father’s side who was married to my Papa as a teenager when he was in his mid-twenties. I didn’t know they had this age difference until I became a teenager myself. When my Nona learned how old I was turning, she teared up. I talked about it with my mom and she said, I think she’s realizing for the first time how young she was when she took on this big responsibility in her life, how innocent she was. I was like, ‘I know this is the seed for the beginning of a song. Who better to realize this moment with than Mona?’"

"We’ve been moving slowly into writing together. Most of our first meeting about this song was talking about standards for women in Iranian culture growing up and sending your loved ones away. If you have a granddaughter who’s in a completely different culture, who’s raised completely different than you are, what that looks like. We started the first verse, talked about an arc, and outlined the song together."

For Sara, Maestra Mentorship has filled integral gaps. "As much as I loved studying arts in college, I felt like there were so many missing puzzle pieces to what I actually needed to succeed in this world, and so I applied to Maestra’s mentorship program because it looked like it was going to fill a lot of those missing pieces, and it definitely has."
In my first two months of joining the Directory, I got a cold call to play drums from a theatre company that found me on Maestra, and now I’m gigging with multiple bands because of that one connection. Maestra has given me everything as a woman in the theatre industry, especially moving to a new city with zero connections. Thank you for creating a space where women and nonbinary members of this community can thrive.

Brooke Trumm (composer, percussionist, and copyist)
I moved across the country to New York City with my partner and 6-month-old baby, excited but uncertain what kind of career I might be able to carve out here. I was especially nervous about trying to make professional inroads as a new kid on the scene, while taking care of my own new kid. Maestra, and particularly the Maestra Moms, have supported me enormously in starting to build a fulfilling NYC career from scratch. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been welcomed into this community.

Sheela Ramesh (music director, composer, and pianist)
TO JULIA THORNTON AND KAT SHERRELL, GROWING A GLOBAL NETWORK OF MAESTRAS FEELS INCREDIBLY PERSONAL.

"We were both really passionate about it because I don’t think we had those opportunities to connect," said Thornton. The co-chairs of Maestra's Regional and Affinity Groups both come from small, rural areas where they did not have easy access to mentorship or ways of networking with other women and nonbinary musicians.

During the pandemic, Maestra's groups grew from a few Facebook pages to nearly 20 different groups of musicians who have connected, virtually and in person, over common locations, identities, or interests.

The current list of existing and developing Regional Groups includes Australia, Canada, Mid-Atlantic/D.C., Midwest, Nashville, New England, New York Tri-State Area, Northern California, Pacific Northwest, Southeast, Southern California, and the UK. Affinity Groups include Maestra Music Directors, Maestra Moms, Musical Theatre Writers, Student Maestras, and Maestra Pride.

AS CO-CHAIRS, THORTON AND SHERRELL OVERSEE ALL OF THESE GROUPS, WORKING WITH EACH MODERATOR TO HELP PLAN EVENTS AND FIND WAYS TO BUILD COMMUNITY.

"A lot of what we’re doing is finding people in each community who are really good at supporting that community," Sherrell explained. "It’s a lot of new structure-building and thinking about how we want it to look and then finding people who are like-minded and also interested in building the community in that way."

"At any stage in your career, it’s important to have people with whom you share an affinity," Sherrell said, noting that as women or nonbinary musicians “we’re not expected to be seen or heard in public. And here we are being seen and heard in public."
Gathering the information is only the first step; Maestra’s Get to Work initiative imagines that the musician’s union and other workers’ guilds, unions, and advocacy organizations will work together to continue to regularly gather and analyze data like this, compare the quantitative information collected to the stories we tell, take an honest look at when our stories are missing perspectives and experiences, and work together to address these inconsistencies institutionally.

Monica Davis (violinist and violist)
During the mentorship program, I got the audition opportunity for a touring show and my mentor checked my performing video and advised me. I landed the Cats musical touring job. I thought it would be difficult to work in the American musical theatre industry as an international Asian woman, but Maestra helped me realize that it’s possible if I keep making an effort.

Mami Matsuura (pianist, composer, and arranger)
BOARD of directors

CHRISTIE CHILES-TWILLIE
MONICA DAVIS
EMILY GRISHMAN
LAURA IVEY
GEORGIA STITT

Founder/President
Secretary
Treasurer

ADVISORY board

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Kate Baldwin
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Kristen Blodgett
Mary-Mitchell Campbell
Kirsten Childs
Carmel Dean
Carla Dirlikov Canales
Tina Fallon
Elise Frawley
Tracy Geltman
Jennifer Isaacson
Stacey Mindich
Amy Power
Kiki Rathbun
Stephanie Sciandra
Ally Shuster
Margaret Skoglund
Jeanine Tesori
Kara Unterberg
Imani Uzuri
Lia Vollack
Sheilah Walker

STAFF

Carrie Caffrey
Casey Berner
Yoanna Nikolova

INTERNS
Nylah Bradshaw
Lorin Green
Halle Mitchell
Vaibu Mohan
Maddie Wu

CONSULTANTS
Tanya Birl-Torres
Ruth Cohen
Lindsay Hoffman
Josie Kearns
committees
DEIA — Faye Chiao
DEVELOPMENT — Laura Ivey, Casey Berner
PROGRAMMING — Georgia Stitt, Emily Grishman

programs
BLOG — Lexi Vollero
DATA PROJECT — Jonathan Reuning-Scherer, Caitlin Warbelow
DIRECTORY — Kathleen Wrinn
GET TO WORK — Laura Ivey, Georgia Stitt
MAESTRA CARE — Laura Bergquist, Britt Bonney
MAESTRA EDUCATION — Meg Zervoulis
MONTHLY MEETINGS — Georgia Stitt
REGIONAL/AFFINITY GROUPS — Kat Sherrell, Julia Thornton
VIRTUAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS — Georgia Stitt, Carrie Caffrey

timeline of women composers
Shoshana Greenberg, Elspeth Collard, Katya Stanislavskaya

affinity group leaders
STUDENT MAESTRAS — Meg Zervoulis, Vaibu Mohan
MAESTRA MOMS — Tina deVaron, Lauren Cregor
MAESTRA PRIDE — Julianne Merrill, Jamie Maletz
MAESTRA MDS — Alyssa Kay Thompson, Georgia Stitt

regional group moderators
MAESTRA NY/NJ/CT — Carrie Caffrey, Georgia Stitt
MAESTRA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA — Eryn Allen, Alicia Jeffery
MAESTRA LA AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA — Amy Englehardt, Kat Sherrell
MAESTRA MIDWEST — Rachel Woods, Julie McBride
MAESTRA NEW ENGLAND — Bethany Aiken, J. Kathleen Castellanos
MAESTRA NASHVILLE — Lori Casteel, Kelsi Fulton
MAESTRA UK — Caroline Humphris, Laura Bangay, Arlene McNaught, Fran Fenech
MAESTRA PACIFIC NORTHWEST — Julia Thornton, Aimee Hong
MAESTRA AUSTRALIA — Carmel Dean, Laura Tipoki
MAESTRA CANADA — Christine Lee, Orian Israelsohn
MAESTRA MID-ATLANTIC (DC) — Valerie Higgs, Marci Shegogue
MAESTRA

SUPPORT

community

FAMILY

MUSIC programs

BROADWAY COMPOSERS GLOBAL MENTORS LGBTQ+ WOMEN NONBINARY MOTHERS PARENTS DAUGHTERS OPPORTUNITY

education PERFORM writers MUSIC DIRECTORS conductors BELONGING
equality NETWORK

voices programschanging the score

FAMILY

GLOBAL

WOMEN

BROADWAY

perform

music

 مدير التعليم

مناهج

US

FAMILY

PARENTS

teachers

BROADWAY

MUSIC

WOMEN

NONBINARY

BELONGING

COMMUNITY

gender equality

THE MOTHERS

parents

GLOBAL

DAUGHTERS

teachers

changing the score

MUSIC DIRECTORS

PERFORM

writers

MUSIC

conductors

education

perform

WOMEN

visibility

programs

sisters

NONBINARY

OPPORTUNITY

equality
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