



# MAESTRA

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



# from the FOUNDER



## 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.



WOMEN'S  
MUSICIANS



# 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.

# VALUES *statement*

## **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.

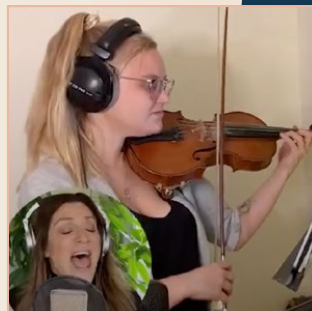
## **We value solutions.**

We **take practical steps** to support individual members while driving toward cultural and systemic changes that benefit our entire global community.

# CONCERTS



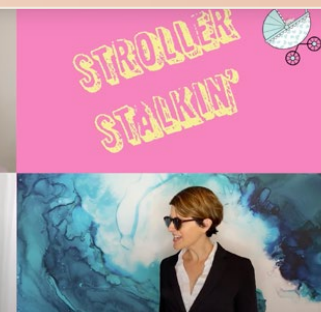
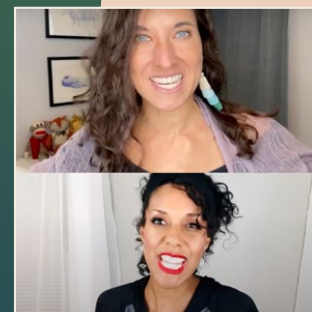
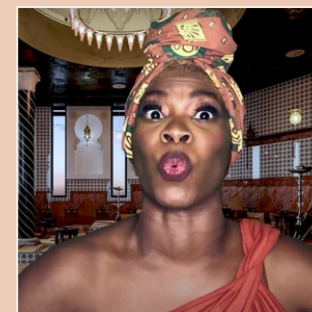
## MAESTRA AMPLIFY



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,

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**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.





10,466

PARTICIPANTS SINCE  
WE BEGAN VIRTUAL  
TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

ADDED 3,983  
IN 2021

PARTICIPANTS  
CAME FROM

47  
STATES

PARTICIPANTS  
CAME FROM

60  
COUNTRIES



WE'RE ONLY MISSING MAESTRAS IN  
THE **DAKOTAS** AND **ALASKA**.

19

BLOG ARTICLES  
PUBLISHED

6,168

SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOLLOWERS

1,302

MAESTRA  
DIRECTORY  
PROFILES

UP FROM 1021 IN 2020

241

BIPOC MAESTRAS

SELF-IDENTIFYING AS  
PEOPLE OF COLOR IN  
THE DIRECTORY

1

GOVERNMENT GRANT  
FROM THE NEW YORK  
STATE COUNCIL ON  
THE ARTS

3,637

WEEKLY  
NEWSLETTER  
SUBSCRIBERS

MAESTRA *by the numbers*



## 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."**

# Support



“ 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, THORNTON 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."**

# AFFINITY COMMUNITY



## DATA DOESN'T TELL STORIES, PEOPLE DO.

We bring our personal experiences and perspectives to stories. We connect to people in stories who share our experiences, remind us of a person we once knew or connect us to emotional journeys. Stories are complicated and moving and personal. Organizations like Maestra are made up of individuals, each with their own stories.

In comparison, data can be simple. Gathered by asking specific questions, it can provide a slice of these complex human stories and can be more easily digested when presented clearly. In 2021, Maestra partnered with the Local 802 Musicians' Union to collect data that asks simple questions, probing to see how the membership of the union self-identifies, where they work, which instruments they play, how they get their work, what styles of music and sectors of the industry they participate in, and how they make a living doing this work. This is the first time ever in the union's history that it has gathered this information from its members, and Maestra was instrumental in encouraging the union to participate in this process and engaging the independent data scientists who created the survey and its resulting report.

“As the theater begins to get to work, the industry behind it has to get to work to make sure we're addressing the issues of who gets to work.”

— Georgia Stitt

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)*

THEATRE VISIBILITY



“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**  
Secretary



**LAURA IVEY**  
Treasurer



**GEORGIA STITT**  
Founder/President

## ADVISORY *board*

Masi Asare  
Janet Axelrod  
Kate Baldwin  
Molly Barnett  
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 Gregor

**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



# PROGRAMS *and volunteers*

# FINANCIALS

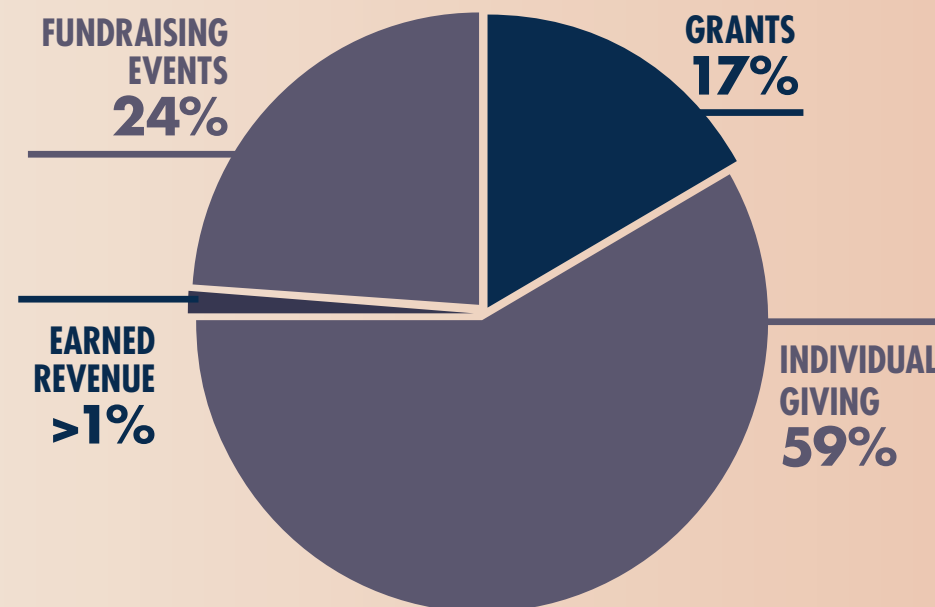


## Major CONTRIBUTORS

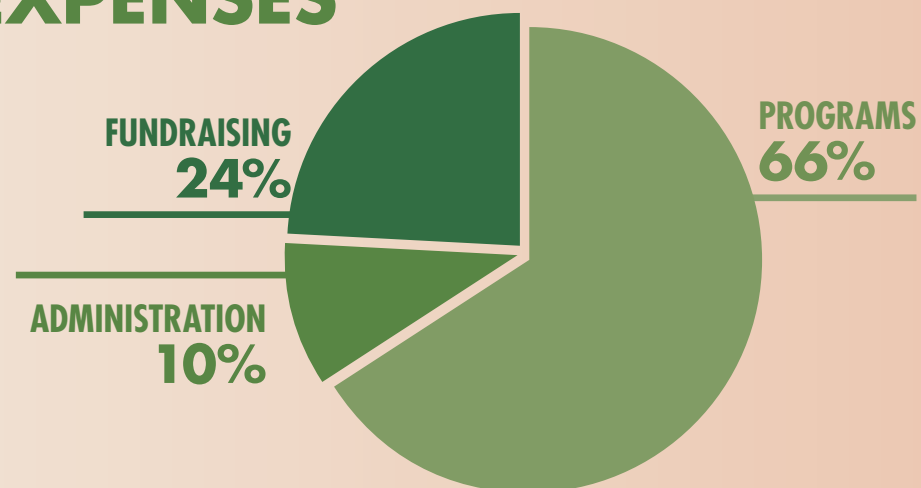


*Stacey Mindich*  
PRODUCTIONS

## CONTRIBUTED REVENUE



## EXPENSES





# MAESTRA

NETWORK *perform* education  
PARENTS  
WOMEN *writers*  
MENTORS *visibility* COMPOSERS MUSIC DIRECTORS *conductors*  
BROADWAY *programs* **SUPPORT** *MUSIC* BELONGING  
VOICES **FAMILY** *community* DAUGHTERS  
GLOBAL *changing the score* LGBTQ+  
equality **MOTHERS** **NONBINARY** *teachers*  
OPPORTUNITY

# MAESTRA

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