



FY23 Impact Report



Table of Contents

- 2 Letter from Equity Arc
- 3 FY23 By the Numbers
- 4 FY23 Investment & Growth
- 6 FY23 Initiatives & Impact
- 11 A Peek Into FY24
- 13 Call to Action
- 14 Equity Arc Members
- 17 Equity Arc Leadership

Letter from Equity Arc

Dear Friends,

It is incredible to look back on all we accomplished in our third year as an organization. To name a few, we grew from one full-time employee to three, changed our organizational identity from NIMAN to Equity Arc, created our first strategic framework, and grew our membership by 220%.

Looking at our impact on the field, we developed a space for 12 Pathways programs with 285 fellows across the country to connect and access resources, gave 40 pre-college musicians a transformative musical experience in Cincinnati, and broke down barriers to help 156 musicians access summer festivals.

We could not have achieved this without the continued support of our members, partners, and donors. Thank you to those who have been with us since our beginnings as an informal working group in 2018 and to all who have joined along the way.

We are committed to creating a level playing field for BIPOC classical musicians in the United States, and we're just getting started. As you review the progress we've made toward this goal—through programmatic initiatives and organizational investments—I hope you'll feel proud of the contributions you've made toward our mission.

Sincerely,



Stanford Thompson, Executive Director
Equity Arc

FY23 by the Numbers

\$1.8M

Awarded to National Collective for Musical Pathways Members

\$260K+

In scholarships awarded to Common Application participants

Nearly

500

Musicians Reached in Equity Arc Initiatives

264

Participants in Equity Arc Events

14

Common Application Partners

84

Total Members

50

New Members

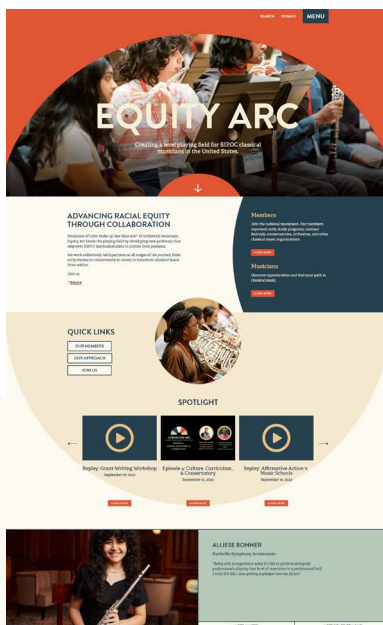
27

States Represented



FY23 Investment & Growth

As a growing organization, we prioritized investments in our infrastructure and capacity to strengthen the programs and services that we offer our members across the Arc:



equityarc.org

Website and Branding

As our organization has matured, an investment of time and funds to rethink our organizational identity and build a dynamic website for our members was an important step. Through a project led by Masters Group Design, we sought to find a name and branding that would help fuel greater awareness of our work in the field of classical music, portray the professionalism of our staff and work, help distinguish our organization from the growing number of national diversity initiatives, and provide an online space for our current and potential members, musicians, and supporters to feel part of a bigger continuum. Our **new website** facilitates the telling of our story and our members' stories and offers greater opportunities for engagement and growth.

Personnel

Expanding our team was a top priority to ensure that we could support the trajectory of our work and build on the foundations established in our first years. We began FY23 with one full-time staff member. Through collaboration with the Board, a successful search was launched to identify our Membership Engagement and Marketing Coordinator who joined the team in a full-time capacity in January 2023. Stanford Thompson's transition to full-time Executive Director in May 2023 was another major organizational achievement. The small-but-mighty Equity Arc team stewarded significant growth and accomplishments to end the fiscal year on a high note.



Magee Capsouto



Paula Wilson



Stanford Thompson

Strategic Framework Development

Another major priority was the development of a strategic framework that outlined our goals and objectives, providing clarity on Equity Arc's unique role in the field. Nonprofit consultant Dr. Elisabeth Babcock facilitated the process of refining our commitment to the pre-college phase of the Arc and our strategic goals in the broader context of the field. Strategic sessions explored refining our mission and role in the field, creating a framework for internal and external alignment with an emphasis on measurable outcomes to achieve clarity, drive priorities, and maximize resources.

National Pathways Festival & Annual Convening

Equity Arc’s National Pathways Festival and Annual Convening in many ways encapsulates our work to create a dynamic pathway for BIPOC musicians and foster a robust network of support. Concurrent with a unique and intensive musical experience for pathways musicians from across the country, 125 convening guests explored some of the primary issues that members experience and focused on collaboration between institutions. The collective action, collaborative conversations, and explorations throughout the weekend resulted in tangible action items that have informed our next steps.



Application Fees

Investment in application fees through Acceptd for all of our programmatic initiatives has ensured that this expense does not prevent talented and deserving musicians from participating in essential growth and learning opportunities that empower their next steps across the musical Arc.

Revenue

The Paul M. Angell Family Foundation’s generous support has empowered Equity Arc’s major accomplishments. We are grateful for their ongoing belief in our work and faith in our capacity to effect change. Equity Arc began to diversify our funding in FY23, including impactful individual gifts and a contribution from the Guy and Shirley Lewis Foundation that complemented the Angell Foundation’s support of the National Pathways Festival and Annual Convening in Cincinnati in March 2023.

In addition to foundation support for our work, member dues play a critical role in advancing our mission. Dues revenue increased by 125% to \$60,645 because of our members' continued support. These contributions are invested back into our members and musicians through benefits like the Common Application for Summer Study and digital resources, propelling us closer to leveling the playing field in classical music.

	FY22	FY23
Earned Revenue	\$28,680.15	\$80,504.99
Contributed Revenue	\$273,729.95	\$615,417.69
Total Revenue	\$302,410.10	\$695,922.68
Administrative Services and Operations	\$164,033.20	\$240,419.04
Festival and Convening	\$45,104.47	\$42,904.96
Musician Application Fees	\$5,670	\$6,690
Member Services (Website + Consulting Projects)	\$300	\$39,524.72
Strategic Planning	\$0	\$14,671.46
Total Expenses	\$215,107.67	\$344,210.18
Net	\$87,302.43	\$351,712.50

FY23 Initiatives & Impact

The National Collective for Musical Pathways

In the fall of 2022, we launched the National Collective for Musical Pathways, an alliance of rigorous pre-college music training programs committed to removing barriers and accelerating the progress of BIPOC musicians. This was a culmination of roundtable conversations at the 2022 Youth in Music Summit in Chicago. The Collective began with 12 programs, some that have been operating for over 30 years and others that were established within the past year.

This diverse group of programs across the nation creates opportunities to share insights, learn from each other, and develop collective initiatives to advance equity in classical music.

Here are some achievements of the Collective:

- The Paul M. Angell Family Foundation granted a total of \$1.8 million in multi-year operating support to 8 programs in the Collective. [Read announcement >](#)

“We were grateful to be one of the organizations funded by PMAFF—and to get a three-year grant was really wonderful. We allocated it toward tuition for our students to attend orchestra and summer programs, as those are sizable parts of the budget. It also means we can draw fewer funds from our supporting organization, which will contribute to their longevity.”—Primavera Fund

- 40 musicians from Pathways programs across the country traveled to Cincinnati to perform in the inaugural National Pathways Festival Orchestra. This transformative experience included opportunities to play side-by-side with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under the leadership of Maestro Kevin John Edusei, perform mock auditions for distinguished collegiate faculty, and connect with peers from similar cultural backgrounds. [Read announcement >](#)

“The CSO musicians were all incredibly kind, inspiring, encouraging, and supportive. They made me feel like I belonged and their unrelenting energy was contagious.”—Emilia Lacy, Boston BEAM



*“It's amazing to be able to interact with other musicians of color because most people in the orchestras I participate in are predominantly white. It's nice to talk to people who have similar experiences as I do.”
—Dayla Spencer, Nashville Symphony's Accelerando*

"Both of the Maestros were incredibly knowledgeable and I learned so much from them! I also got to ask the CSO musicians a lot of questions, which helped me feel more secure about my future."—Aarushi Kumar, Nashville Symphony's Accelerando



- The increased visibility of the Collective has given newly established and pre-existing Pathways programs a place to find guidance. In order to support this growth, we initiated a search—receiving nearly 200 applications—for a Programs Manager to be hired in the fall of 2023.

The next fiscal year will expand upon the groundwork laid by the Collective. This includes developing an instrument fund, producing a Pathways Census Report, and developing a set of best practices to aid in program mentorship.

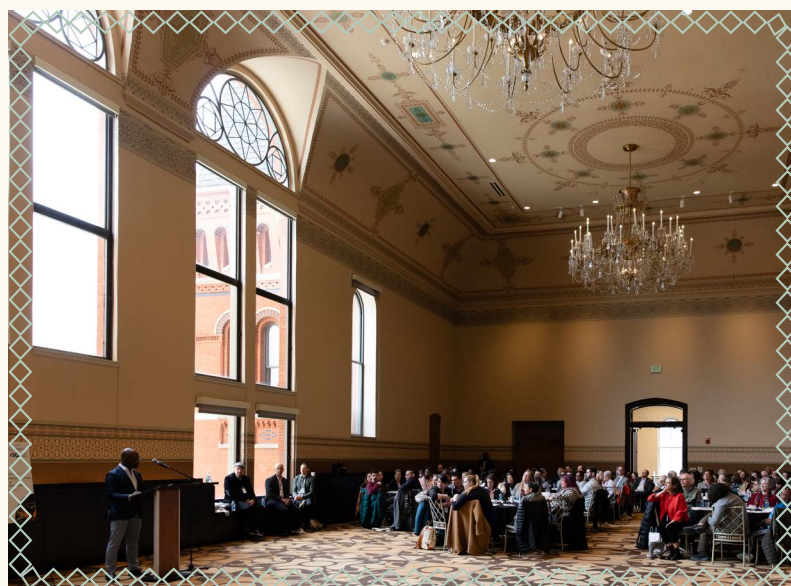
NATIONAL COLLECTIVE FOR MUSICAL PATHWAYS MEMBERS (as of August 31, 2023)

- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program (Atlanta, GA)
- Baltimore Musical Pathways Initiative (Baltimore, MD)
- Bridge to Equity and Achievement in Music (Boston, MA)
- Cali Pathways Project of Montclair State University (Montclair, NJ)
- Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (Chicago, IL)
- Cleveland Institute of Music Musical Pathway Fellowship (Cleveland, OH)
- Nashville Symphony's Accelerando (Nashville, TN)
- Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth Artists' Initiative (Philadelphia, PA)
- Project STEP (Boston, MA)
- The Primavera Fund (Philadelphia, PA)
- Washington Musical Pathways Initiative (Washington, D.C.)
- Youth Orchestra San Antonio Rising Star Fellows (San Antonio, TX)

Equity Arc Annual Convening

In conjunction with the National Pathways Festival, we hosted an Annual Convening where 125 administrators, faculty, parents, musicians, and supporters developed strategies to advance racial equity in classical music.

Over 90 action items were conceived then pared down to 25 after the convening. **We hosted a post-convening session** on May 24, 2023, to share an overview of the convening report and to hear how attendees prioritized



the 25 action items. Feedback from these gatherings helped inform our FY24 strategic plan.

These FY24 strategic priorities stemmed from Convening action items:

- Create a set of best practices for the National Collective of Musical Pathways
- Develop a database for recruiting BIPOC musicians for collegiate and summer study

READ THE FULL REPORT: <https://equityarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Equity-Arc-Post-Convening-Report.pdf>

The exponential growth of membership and initiatives required Equity Arc to consider how to dive deeper into the specific needs within each stage of musical development. As a result, we will host separate in-person events to allow more time for targeted discussions and strategy sessions. This will be offered in addition to our Annual Convening, to be held November 16-18, 2024, for all stages of the Arc.

OUR UPCOMING IN-PERSON EVENTS:

- **November 16-18, 2023:** Building Bridges Symposium: Connecting the Pathways, Atlanta, GA
Recognizing the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program 30th Anniversary and pathways to professional orchestral training
- **April 6-8, 2024:** National Pathways Festival & Summit, Nashville, TN
Connecting Pathways musicians with post-secondary resources and focusing on collective action in the collegiate stage of musical development
- **November 16-18, 2024:** Equity Arc Annual Convening, Chicago, IL
Bringing together all stakeholders across the Arc for meaningful discussions on equity in classical music

Common Application for Summer Study Season 2

This fiscal year marked our second season of the Common Application for Summer Study, a free resource for musicians of color to apply to multiple summer music festivals with one application. Each partner committed to providing at least one full-tuition scholarship to an Equity Arc fellow.

This initiative was designed in 2021 to eliminate barriers to summer study by removing: fees averaging \$60 per application, the need to prepare and record multiple audition lists, and the financial burden of tuition averaging \$5,000. The second season of this initiative doubled its reach, resulting in 156 applicants, 57 enrolled participants, and over \$260,000 in scholarships awarded.

As part of the partnership agreement, we paid a single \$30 fee per applicant to Accepted, allowing musicians to apply to all partner programs at no cost. This partnership, along with the summer

music programs' willingness to waive their individual application fees, laid the foundation for advancing equity through collaboration.

Musicians and families shared that this tool has changed the game completely, removing barriers to access and participation and creating opportunities for transformative learning experiences. Common Application partners have also shared that they have observed greater diversity in their applicants and that the students who join their campuses over the summer are an excellent fit for their programs.

The development and implementation of a shared audition list was another milestone in our journey. Our partners' willingness to use a shared list and the caliber of musicians who attended their programs has demonstrated that removing the additional barrier of preparing multiple repertoire lists creates opportunity and does not detract from the artistic level. The willingness of our partners and their faculty to embark on this exploration with us sets a precedent of what is possible through collective action.

We produced our first Common Application for Summer Study Impact Report and **hosted a virtual session** on June 27, 2023, to share the findings with our members.

"My favorite part of attending NRO was learning the repertoire and meeting the other fellows. Also working with amazing conductors was such a great experience."—Isaac Visoutsy, Equity Arc Fellow at NRO



"The Common Application has helped me expand my options of where I can apply and also eased the financial burden of various applications. I haven't gone to a camp like Interlochen before and I'm very excited to experience everything it has to offer."—Sarah Morris, Equity Arc Fellow at Interlochen

"I had the most incredible time performing at Brevard and connecting with fellow musicians and faculty. I feel more developed as a player and it has given me so much direction on what to do with my career."—John Pablo Rojas, Equity Arc Fellow at Brevard



READ THE FULL REPORT: <https://equityarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-Common-Application-for-Summer-Study-Impact-Report.pdf>

2023 COMMON APPLICATION FOR SUMMER STUDY PARTNERS

- Ascent International Chamber Music Festival (Cincinnati, OH)
- Boston University Tanglewood Institute (Boston, MA)
- Brevard Music Center Summer Institute and Festival (Brevard, NC)
- Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival (Colchester, Vermont)
- Interlochen Arts Camp (Interlochen, MI)
- Kinhaven Music School (Weston, VT)
- Luzerne Music Center (Luzerne, NY)
- National Orchestral Institute + Festival (College Park, MD)
- National Repertory Orchestra (Breckenridge, CO)
- National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute (Washington DC)
- National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (New York City, NY + International Tour)
- NYO2 (New York City, NY + Miami, FL)
- New England Conservatory Summer Orchestra Institute (Boston, MA)
- Sewanee Summer Music Festival and String Academy (Sewanee, TN)
- VIA Academy (Miami, FL + Remote)

Equity Arc Strategic Framework

Over the past year, we worked with nonprofit consultant Elisabeth Babcock to develop a strategic framework for the organization's growth. This process included input from Equity Arc Board of Directors, staff, and members.

The end result was a framework that identified four strategic priorities with corresponding objectives:

- 1) Strengthen Equity Arc's stability, operations, and ability to deliver services
 - a) Improve Organizational Infrastructure
 - b) Improve Financial Systems, Policies, and Outcomes
- 2) Increase the acquisition, retention, and engagement of members
 - a) Increase Membership and Retention
 - b) Increase Member Engagement
- 3) Improve the effectiveness of mentorship and advancement opportunities provided by Equity Arc members
 - a) Improve the Quality of Equitable Programs
 - b) Improve Inter-Organizational Collaboration
 - c) Implement Measurement Systems for Program Evaluation and Improvement
- 4) Enhance Equity Arc's brand awareness and stakeholder support
 - a) Consistently tell compelling stories of musician and member success
 - b) Partner with major local and national news outlets to tell Equity Arc's story
 - c) Create national alliances and joint-venture partnerships

This framework was unanimously approved by our Board of Directors on June 20, 2023 and shared with Equity Arc members on July 11, 2023.

Consulting Services

Equity Arc was engaged to guide strategic processes by two of our members. These projects represent a type of consulting service that we will explore with all our members, facilitating initiatives and engaging experts in the field to ensure desired outcomes. These collaborations will help members strengthen their equity work and demonstrate the impact of sharing knowledge, best practices, and resources.

A Peek into FY24

Equity Arc's membership strengthens our work and ensures that we are responsive to the issues that are most pressing in the field. Through creating forums for open communication, we are able to gain insight from the field about the greatest challenges they currently grapple with and work collaboratively to address them.

As we look forward to FY24, here is an overview of initiatives we will develop and expand:

Common Application for Summer Study Season 3

The Common Application for Summer Study is one of Equity Arc's flagship initiatives that is breaking barriers and expectations, setting precedent for application and audition processes across the Arc. The viability and impact of a shared application is unquestionable. In preparation for summer '24, we are collaborating with our partners to further refine the application process and create additional opportunities for prospective musicians to meet representatives and learn about programs, helping to ensure a good fit between musicians and the program they attend.

The matchmaking process through the Common Application is a microcosmic example of the impact that Equity Arc will build through the musician database. Through facilitating greater engagement between our musician community and partners in summer, higher education, and professional stages, we can help musicians find their ideal environments, creating an invaluable recruiting resource.

Consulting Services and Member Events

As a member-based organization, Equity Arc is committed to building the value of our membership and offering services that will be impactful to our members. Through feedback from our members, we have begun to develop consulting services and partnerships that will provide members with opportunities to strengthen their equity initiatives. Equity Arc has also begun a series of monthly member events focusing on both topics that our members have identified as of interest and those that will benefit our membership.

Instrument Fund

Musicians across the Arc grapple with the fact that a quality instrument is a necessary part of their development. The limitations of a student instrument can impact everything from technique to physical and mental wellness. The cost of these instruments can be overwhelming, creating a barrier for musicians and their families. In Cincinnati, we heard testimony about the

difficulty in raising funds to purchase an instrument that will empower a musician to develop and refine their playing.

In the summer of 2023, Equity Arc facilitated an exploratory meeting to determine the feasibility and logistics required to create a funding stream that would help musicians acquire instruments. A plethora of considerations were discussed, ranging from eligibility questions to matching expectations. Informed by data generated through the National Collective for Musical Pathways, Equity Arc will submit a Letter of Intent to apply for a grant in January to pilot the instrument fund. While the scope of the pilot year will focus on pre-college Pathways students, this will lay the foundation for a larger program that serves musicians across the Arc.

Musician Database

In conversations with collegiate partners at the Convening in Cincinnati, we explored the challenges around recruiting and ways in which to help ensure that young musicians find the learning environments that will be most beneficial to them. A primary challenge in recruiting is that many institutions seek to have the same prospective students matriculate. Recruiting efforts from multiple schools may focus on one student who ultimately can only attend one institution and who may not feel that many of the schools actively courting them would be the right fit.

Through conversations with collegiate partners, an idea took shape to develop a musician hub that assists in matchmaking between students and schools. Musicians would be able to build a profile that shares their musical experiences and accomplishments, as well as provide insights into the type of learning environment that they seek in the next stages of their musical journey. Admissions teams would be able to interact with these profiles, helping to identify prospective students who are seeking the learning environment their institution offers.

Equity Arc has engaged in exploratory conversations with members aimed at building a database system that will benefit musicians and the institutions where they will study immensely. In addition to helping institutions target their recruiting resources and build better outcomes for recruiting, we will also help musicians connect with learning environments that are best suited to their development. Equity Arc's team has been working to identify both a platform in which to build the database and a firm to ensure that this product is optimally designed and built. Ongoing conversations with our partners will inform the design, ensuring that this tool is impactful for all users.

The Supreme Court's end-of-term ruling on affirmative action raised numerous questions from our partners at both the collegiate and pre-collegiate phases of the musical journey. As member institutions work to embed meaningful diversity in their programs and on their campuses, Equity Arc is committed to providing unique and important support. In our recent panel, **Affirmative Action vs. Music Schools**, we learned that the ruling does not impact targeted recruiting. Equity Arc's musician database will be a valuable tool in developing a robust candidate pool.

The impact of the database is not limited to higher education institutions. Summer study partners as well as orchestral partners seeking to recruit for professional training fellowships or auditions will also be able to utilize this resource.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the development of the Database or have questions about access, please contact Paula Wilson at paula@equityarc.org

Call to Action

Would you like to be part of our Collective impact? Here is how you can get involved with Equity Arc:

Become a Member

Equity Arc members are part of a network of organizations and individuals committed to advancing equity in classical music. Members unlock access to a growing list of benefits including professional development opportunities, digital resources, and national collectives.

If you would like to join our mission to level the playing field in classical music, visit equityarc.org/members or contact Paula Wilson at paula@equityarc.org.

Donate

Donors play a vital role in sustaining our mission. If you would like to support Equity Arc's initiatives, visit equityarc.org/donate or contact Stanford Thompson at stan@equityarc.org.

Explore the ARCive

Dive into our digital ARCive for reports, recordings, content, and news related to Equity Arc's mission at equityarc.org/arcive.

Attend an Equity Arc Event

Browse our upcoming virtual and in-person events at equityarc.org/events. Equity Arc members can access virtual events for free and in-person events at a discounted rate.



Equity Arc Members (as of August 31, 2023)

Active Program Members (47)



Astral Arts



Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program



Bard College Conservatory of Music



Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras



Brevard Music Center



Cali School Pathways



Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute and Ensemble Connect



Castle of our Skins



Chamber Music Cincinnati



Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative



Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra



Cleveland Institute of Music



Colburn School



Columbus Symphony Academy



Credo Music



Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies



Houston Symphony



Indiana University Jacobs School of Music



INTEMPO



Interlochen Center for the Arts



Kaufman Music Center



Levine Music



Luzerne Music Center



Merit School of Music



Nashville Symphony Accelerando



National Orchestral Institute + Festival



New England Conservatory



New Jersey Symphony



New World Symphony



Oberlin Conservatory of Music



Philadelphia Civic Symphony



Play On Philly



PMAY Artists' Initiative



Project STEP



San Francisco Conservatory of Music



Shepherd School of Music



The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University



The Primavera Fund



University of Delaware School of Music



VIA Academy



Voce Velata



Washington Musical Pathways Initiative



YOSA Rising Star Fellows

Supporting Organization Members (6)



National Repertory Orchestra



Sewanee Summer Music Festival



Spirit of Harmony Foundation



The Cleveland Orchestra



The Gainesville Orchestra



Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Individual Members (30)

Abra Bush

Addison Ellis-Otovo

Aidyn Ellis-Otovo

Angelique Montes

Diego Turner

Dr. Roque Diaz

Earl Ross

Evelyn Eskin

Eytan Wurman

Io Hernandez

Javier Irizarry

Jeiran Hasan

Jenny Snyder Kozoroz

Jim Walker

Karen and Mark Belding

Lorie Estanislao

Mateo Estanislao

Matt Koveal

Maya Uchino-Garcia

Michael Angell

Sibylle Johner

Solomon Leonard

Susan Feder

Talia Pavia

Teagan Faran

Walter Bitner

Wren Williams

Xavier Rodriguez

Total Members: 83

Equity Arc Leadership

Board of Directors

Michael Angell, Director of Performing Arts Grants, The Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

Jennifer Bowman, Director of Learning and Community, Houston Grand Opera

Abra Bush, David Henry Jacobs Bicentennial Dean, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

Mark Churchill, El Sistema USA, Founder

Anjoli Ferrara-Clayton, *Secretary*, Violinist, Symphonicity

Mark Gillespie, CEO, The Orchestra of the Americas Group

Charlie Grode, *Co-Chair*, President and Executive Director, Merit School of Music

Jenny Snyder Kozoroz, Program Director, Brevard Music Center

Katherine Drago Luellen, Head of Enrollment and Marketing, New England Innovation Academy

Jonathan Martin, *Vice Chair*, President and CEO, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

Emily Liao Master, *Treasurer*, Executive Director, Friends of the Israel Antiquities Authority

Maria Mathieson, Executive Director of the Preparatory, Institute of Johns Hopkins University

Anthony Mazzocchi, Director, John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University

Ian Saunders, Artistic Director, Project STEP

Edgar L. Smith Jr., Founder, Chairman, and CEO, World Pac Paper, LLC

Jeffery Tribble Jr., *Co-Chair*, President and CEO, Levine Music

Stefanie Wakeman, Director of Community Partnerships, Astral Artists

Staff

Stanford Thompson, Executive Director

Magee Capsouto, Associate Director

Paula Wilson, Member Services and Communications Manager

