

Music holds things together

It was a daunting prospect. In the summer of 2020 it became clear the pandemic gripping the world would not be short-lived, and our collective task was to adjust to a life governed by safety measures and restrictions around gatherings. But what exactly did that mean for the Orchestra: a season of hibernation? Uncertainty about our role in the community? A sustained pause in live music-making?

In fact, just the opposite transpired in the 2020-21 season. This fraught time period, which could have shaken the Orchestra's purpose, instead intensified it. We heard from audiences that music matters, and we resolved to embrace creative ways of living out our mission—even in a pandemic. Especially in a pandemic.

With the remarkable support of donors, audiences and community partners, the Orchestra created a far-reaching media initiative that offered 19 live concerts for audiences across Minnesota and the world. We distributed the performances free of charge by TV, digital livestream and radio, emphasizing access at a time of need.

We resolved to shift our programming too: Nearly every concert in this season featured the music of composers of African, Latin, Indigenous or Asian descent. Offering more comprehensive programming of these voices is one of the ways we are holding ourselves accountable as we strive to become an anti-racist organization that addresses inequities in our institution and industry. Our work is ongoing.

In June, when we were finally able to welcome audiences back to Orchestra Hall in person for 13 summer concerts, it was overwhelming. "I'm glad the Hall's lights were dimmed as I listened, so no one could see the tears streaming down my face," wrote one audience member. We were humbled by acclaim in the industry as well, including two regional Emmy Award nominations and being named *Gramophone* magazine's 2021 Orchestra of the Year.

Like our colleagues across the performing arts, the Orchestra has deeply felt the economic hardships of the pandemic. In response, we cut costs and introduced salary reductions for everyone in the organization; indeed, our musicians and staff readily shared in this sacrifice to help support the Orchestra in a challenging time. With federal support and steadfast commitment from our donor community, we have been able to significantly reduce the size of the Orchestra's deficit year over year, despite facing one of the most challenging seasons in our history. Enacting a solid plan for balancing our budget remains a priority, and we are optimistic about the future.

Louis Armstrong famously said that "music is life itself." Beethoven thought music could change the world, and Prince weighed in that "Music is healing. Music holds things together."

We share that fundamental belief in music and what it can mean in the life of a community, especially in difficult times. Although the pandemic continues to throw us challenges, the season just past illuminates the resilience of our mission. With your solid support, it is our privilege to remain in service to music and this community. Thank you.

Joseph T. Green

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Osmo Vänskä Music director

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21 —



Let there be music

"The Minnesota Orchestra is a lifeline of humanity and beauty for me. Tuning in allows me to feel connected again to the Orchestra, and to the incredible musicians who are giving so much to our community."







The world changed in 2020, but the Minnesota Orchestra's music-making never stopped—and as fall arrived, the ensemble's musicians returned to Orchestra Hall for the launch of a transformed 2020-21 season. With the Hall initially closed to audiences, the Orchestra engaged in the most ambitious multimedia initiative in its history, partnering with Twin Cities PBS and YourClassical MPR to create the broadcast and livestream series *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. Concerts were conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä and others, and Principal Conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall Sarah Hicks served as the on-camera host and writer.

Across the season the Orchestra produced 19 live concerts for audiences around the world and distributed them free of charge by TV, radio and online streaming. From afar, viewers experienced the beauty and inspiration of superbly performed live classical music, first by chamber groups, then building to the full ensemble and guests. In addition to concerts, the Orchestra maintained a robust online presence, sharing musicians' at-home videos, collaborations with Cloud Cult and other partners, all-ages educational activities and a steady stream of blog posts, among other videos and writings. In summer 2021, safety protocols allowed for the phased return of in-person audiences to Orchestra Hall in a series of concerts featuring Creative Partner for Summer Programming Jon Kimura Parker.



2.3 million views of Minnesota Orchestra video content during the 2020-21 season



42,000 average total views, for each episode-roughly 21 times Orchestra Hall's seating capacity



17.3 million social media impressions



Something special in Minneapolis

"It means a lot to us that this is an award decided by the public, by people who listen to and love and need classical music in their lives. Through the pandemic we stretched to find new ways to connect with audiences. Sometimes this brought us outside of our comfort zone, but music is such a vital force that it must be part of how we make sense of the world, especially in challenging times. And so over the last year we have reflected the full range of human experience on this stage: grief and anger and joy and laughter and hope."



As the 2020–21 concert season unfolded, audiences and critics took note that truly special things were happening at Orchestra Hall at a time when many organizations around the world were shuttered. The prestigious U.K. classical music magazine *Gramophone* asked its critics to scan the globe and nominate ten ensembles for Orchestra of the Year consideration, based on each orchestra's artistic merit and body of work over the past year. Only two American orchestras made that cut. Minnesota Orchestra fans, many of them new to the fold thanks to the livestreamed *This Is Minnesota Orchestra* broadcasts, propelled the ensemble to the prestigious award, conferred in October 2021 and accepted by Osmo Vänskä in an online ceremony. Also in fall 2021, two *This Is Minnesota Orchestra* broadcasts from the 2020–21 season were nominated for Upper Midwest Emmy Awards in the Long Form Entertainment category.



Nearly one-third of all voters from around the world chose the Minnesota Orchestra as Orchestra of the Year.

Australia's Limelight magazine named the Minnesota Orchestra's recording of Mahler's Tenth Symphony as its 2021 Recording of the Year.



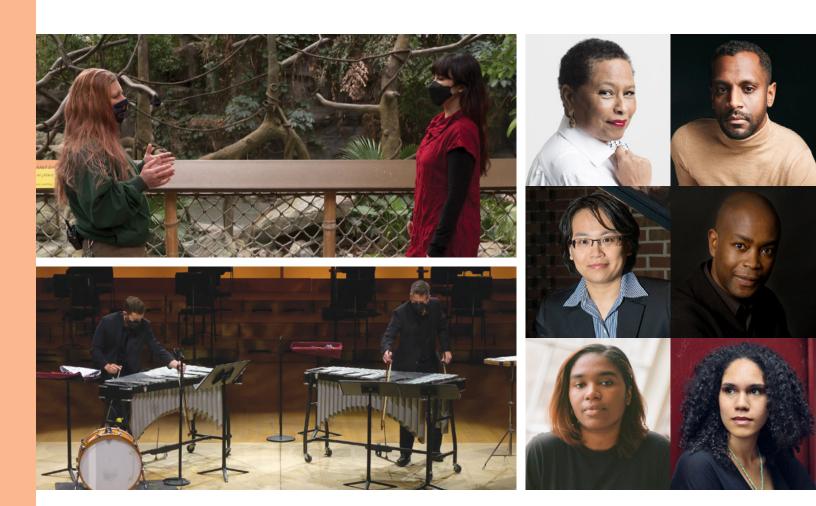
Deepening the mission

"I love what the Minnesota Orchestra is doing with the programming To hear music which would rarely be a part of the regular season and includes composers of color is wonderful to see. Thank you!"

-MAY 28, 2021 LIVESTREAM VIEWER

"This is the best of what the Orchestra can do for the community and this program speaks to all age groups, young and old."

-FEBRUARY 12, 2021 YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERT VIEWER



Nearly every concert in the Minnesota Orchestra's 2020–21 season featured the music of at least one composer of African, Latin, Indigenous or Asian descent. This is part of a newly energized commitment to program and center these voices, ranging from Classical-era composer Chevalier de Saint-Georges to 20th- and 21st-century composers such as (clockwise from upper right corner) Carlos Simon, Philip Herbert, Jessie Montgomery, Yaz Lancaster, Chiayu and Eleanor Alberga.

For more than a century, the Orchestra's mission has included educational engagement, and in 2020–21 these efforts had to be reimagined as the pandemic kept many students at home. Teachers and parents were keenly interested to find resources that kept learning alive for kids, and the Orchestra responded with inventive new programming and curricula. The most ambitious effort was the Orchestra's first-ever televised and livestreamed Young People's Concert, Musical Menagerie, in collaboration with the Minnesota Zoo, hosted and conducted by Sarah Hicks.



36,000 views of Musical Menagerie on live TV and streaming



The community comes together

"It was an unexpected delight to have your music accessible to us during some of the darkest times of the pandemic. We continued to donate because our gifts support the beauty, kindness, compassion, and ongoing hope your orchestra continues to deliver."







In a time of physical distance, the bond between the Orchestra and the community was as tight as it has ever been. The 2020–21 season brought challenges for the Orchestra as well as exciting new chances to serve—deeply, movingly—with great music. This community responded with generosity that allowed the Orchestra's musicians and full-time staff to remain employed and continue to create music and meaning for audiences in an uncertain time. Key funds were raised in the first-ever virtual Symphony Ball chaired by W. Anders Folk, Angela Pennington, Bill Miller and Katie Miller.

As a way to give back to those who kept downtown Minneapolis operating, the Orchestra performed its July 30 concert as a gift to frontline workers of the pandemic. Invitations went to more than 40 downtown Minneapolis neighboring organizations—a mix of businesses, non-profits, healthcare facilities and government agencies. Orchestra musicians, through their Bellwether Fund for education and community programming, funded the tickets free of charge, in gratitude and admiration for the workers' resilience and service.

"Music inspires, yet soothes. We are particularly grateful for the agile and thoughtful way you continue to share exceptional performances with us through the pandemic. Thank you for that tremendous gift."

-PATRON TRIBUTE TO OSMO VÄNSKÄ, FALL 2021

Minnesota Orchestra Financial Report 2020-21

The following financial results are summarized from the Fiscal 2021 audited financial statements.

Summary of Financial Position

		(\$000 OMITTED)
ASSETS	August 31 2021	August 31 2020
Current Assets	\$8,829	\$21,925
Noncurrent Receivables	1,291	1,823
Investments	138,591	115,649
Other Assets	48,447	48,077
TOTAL ASSETS	\$197,158	\$187,474
Current Liabilities Deferred Concert Revenue	\$8,973 5,632	\$12,135 3,208
Long-Term Liabilities	2,159	5,590
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$16,764	\$20,933
Net Assets Without Donor Restriction	\$(18,062)	\$(14,464)
Net Assets With Donor Restriction	198,456	181,005
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$180,394	\$166,541

\$197,158

\$187,474

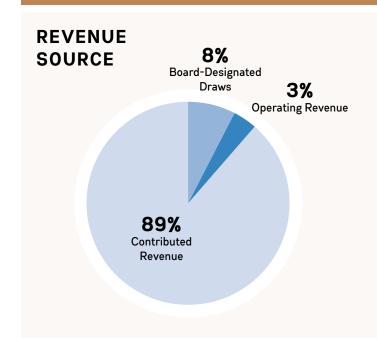
Summary of Operating Results

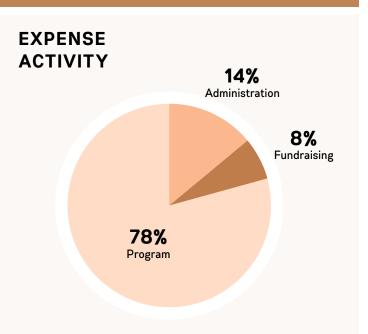
	(\$000 OMITTED)
Year Ending August 31 2021	Year Ending August 31 2020
\$662	\$6,819
18,321	13,955
1,579	1,720
\$20,562	\$22,494
\$18,919	\$24,429
7,958	9,786
\$26,877	\$34,215
\$(6,315)	\$(11,721)
	August 31 2021 \$662 18,321 1,579 \$20,562 \$18,919 7,958 \$26,877

Financial Overview

TOTAL LIABILITIES

AND NET ASSETS





Financial Facts At-a-Glance

Financial Summary: A Season in a Pandemic

The realities of a long-lived pandemic painted a sobering picture for performing arts organizations across the country in Fiscal 2021. However, the Minnesota Orchestral Association entered the 2020–21 season with a realistic fiscal plan in place that prioritized keeping the Orchestra playing, and the organization managed through this challenging season by enacting institution-wide expense reductions and by seeking increases in contributed revenue.

Ultimately in Fiscal 2021, even as it encountered one of the most testing years in its history, the Orchestra reduced the size of its operating loss to \$6.3 million, a decrease of more than \$5 million from the previous year, and also increased its total net assets by 8 percent over the prior season to reach \$180 million. In the 2021–22 season, the Orchestra will continue to be guided by its multi-year financial plan to improve fiscal results and increase total net assets.

Operating Revenue

During a year in which large group gatherings were mostly prohibited due to the pandemic, the Orchestra performed for the first nine months of the season without an in-person audience, playing free performances for TV, radio and online streaming audiences. As pandemic restrictions lifted in the late spring, the Orchestra was able to perform 13 ticketed concerts for in-person audiences ranging in size from 25 to 50 percent of Orchestra Hall's capacity. These concerts brought in total operating revenue of \$662,000, which is a small fraction of the organization's typical operating revenue. In this unusual season, however, the organization had planned its revenue expectations with great caution, and this was a better outcome than expected.

Contributed Revenue

Contributed revenue continues to be critically important to the Orchestra's success. Total contributed revenue—which comprises annual fund donations, major gifts, Symphony Ball, trust distributions and a Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG)—grew by \$4.4 million over the prior year to reach \$18.3 million. The key drivers of the increase were federal SVOG funding through the Save our Stages Act, which was vitally important in a season with such limited opportunity for producing operating revenue, and a groundswell of support from donors at all levels. Community gifts donations (those ranging in size up to \$2,500), for example, grew by nearly 60 percent to reach \$1.1 million in Fiscal 21.

Although livestreamed concerts were free, more than 1,300 audience members gave an average gift of \$140 to support the This Is Minnesota Orchestra series.

Expenses

Managing expenses was another critical factor in reducing the size of the organization's operating loss in Fiscal 2021. Total expenses were \$26.8 million, nearly \$7.5 million less than in the previous season. A key component driving this decrease was salary reductions that were taken by every individual in the organization for the entire season. Musicians took a 25 percent compensation reduction as part of a negotiated amendment to their contract. The Minnesota Orchestral Association is grateful for the shared sacrifice of every musician and staff member who faced the challenges of the pandemic with collaboration and goodwill.

Thank you for your generous support!

We are grateful to the following individuals, and to the nearly 10,000 donors whose Guaranty Fund gifts help sustain the Minnesota Orchestra each year.

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Cy and Paula DeCosse Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, Flute and Piccolo section

Martha Head, *Trumpet section*Kathy and John Junek,

Linda and Warren Mack, Percussion section

Al and Kathy Lenzmeier, First Violin section

Nancy and John Lindahl, Bass section Marilyn Carlson Nelson,

Second Violin section

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Dr. Jennine and John Speier, Cello section

Margaret VB Wurtele, Oboe section

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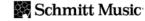
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