

2024

UPPER VALLEY MUSIC CENTER ANNUAL REPORT





DEAR FRIENDS,

Reflecting on the past year, I take special delight in the flourishing of “music together.” From the program for parents and young children to the circle of participants, audience, and supporters, we all come together to make music and create opportunities for everyone at Upper Valley Music Center.

UVMC’s work infusing music throughout our community is possible because of a generous community of supporters who see — and often experience first-hand — the profound benefits of making music.

This growing investment in the transformative impact of music-making has led to thriving partnerships, lower barriers to participation, and, at the heart of it all, support for a vibrant group of exemplary faculty who live and work in the Upper Valley.

As we embark on UVMC’s 30th anniversary year, it is inspiring to see how an idea that took shape in a living room nearly 30 years ago can bring such profound benefits to so many people. As we look ahead, together we have tremendous potential to enrich our shared lives with the rewards of music — made by and for each other.

I look forward to sharing music with you in the year ahead.

Susan “Rosie” Greenstein

Susan “Rosie” Greenstein, President

DEAR FRIENDS,

With your support more than 1,900 children and adults made music in the past year. Gifts to the UVMC’s Annual Fund made it possible for people of all ages — including toddlers and their parents, and adults in their 90s — to find their music and grow.

As you’ll read in this report, special gifts, sponsorships, and grants helped feature faculty in performance, offer free programs in comfortable community spaces, and support school music programs.

Making music with friends old and new is deeply rewarding, and with enthusiastic support for ensembles, UVMC’s orchestras, choruses, and chamber groups continue to build momentum with rehearsals and performances throughout the year and around the area. You might have caught a performance outdoors, in a concert hall, at a library, or in a school.

The path to joining an ensemble can start as young as a few months old, and students of all ages began their music journeys in group classes and lessons. Annual Fund gifts meant that we could provide instruments and specialized equipment for students, more than \$44,000 in tuition assistance, and support for faculty, allowing them to focus on providing inspiring music education for their students.

Because we know how deeply rewarding music education can be, expanding access is a high priority. In addition to tuition assistance, your support helped children make music in summer recreation camps, affordable housing communities, and special childcare settings.

Learning to sing and play takes a lot of hard work, which makes the times when we gather to enjoy performances that much more meaningful. Recitals at the Holiday Music Festival and Sing & Play Festival were joyful occasions, with family and friends, joining both in-person and online from around the world, cheering on their loved ones.

Thank you to everyone who has helped build our musical community through singing, playing, donating, or volunteering! You have made a difference in so many lives this past year — one that will resonate for many years to come.

Yours in notes and rhythms,

B. Van Vliet

Benjamin Van Vliet, Executive Director

THE DONOR DIFFERENCE

A Little Lunch Music

UVMC faculty welcome audiences in a series of free lunchtime concerts.

Soprano Julie Ness still gets butterflies before a performance — even if it's just a free lunchtime concert at the Upper Valley Music Center.

Ness, a voice instructor at UVMC, performed in the “A Little Lunch Music” program, a free monthly concert series made possible by a generous donor as a way to feature faculty and welcome people into UVMC's home.

“These opportunities are important to me because it maintains my love of sharing music via performing,” Ness said. “I enjoy the unique, temporal energy of live performance. Performing inspires me to continue evolving as a singer and a teacher. It amazes me that I am still learning as a singer, after all these years of study!”

The series, launched in fall 2023, offered seven concerts with nine faculty and three guests. More than 200 attendees enjoyed the performances— which varied in genre and style — and were held in the Center's Bach Room in the historic Kendrick-Wood home.

“A Little Lunch Music has been very successful in welcoming audiences and providing an opportunity for faculty to share music that they love,” said Executive Director Ben Van Vliet. “Thirty folks or more filled the Bach Room each performance, ranging from children to adults of all ages. There was always a great mix of first-time attendees and enthusiastic regulars.”

The series helped Ness make time and space for her own musical goals, and challenged her to try something new by performing some of her original compositions.

“In the same way we value foods that are locally grown and items that are locally crafted, it's important to support music that is ‘locally grown,’” Ness said. “The faculty at UVMC is wonderfully talented, varied, and professional. Come check out the music right here in your own neighborhood.”

“As a teacher and as a musician, I still want to grow. Performing gives me a chance to work on my music, encourages me to practice, and helps me as a teacher assist students when they are preparing for a performance. It's also good for students to see their teachers play on stage – it makes them more relatable.”

– Dr. Chenyu Wang, Piano



Soprano Julie Ness was joined by special guests Martin and Arlo Philip. Their musical selections were inspired by many evenings sitting around after dinner making music together, and they brought their audience into the warmth and spontaneity of the moment.

2023–24 LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

- Rachel Clemente, harp, presented a concert of traditional Scottish music and original compositions.
- Ben Kulp, UVMC's cello instructor, presented a concert of classical and contemporary works.
- Will Ogmundson, UVMC's collaborative pianist, and Annie Arrington, choral director, shared a concert of holiday music and original compositions.
- Alicia Casey, violin, and Chenyu Wang, piano, performed Beethoven's *Spring Sonata* and César Franck's *Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano*.
- Jeremiah McLane (accordion, piano, vocals) and Eric Boodman (fiddle, feet, vocals) shared traditional tunes from North America and the British Isles.
- Tristan Bellerive, guitar, shared guitar music through the ages.
- Julie Ness, vocals, with special guests Martin Philip and Arlo Philip, performed tunes at the intersection of folk, bluegrass, and classical.



THE STRENGTH OF SPONSORSHIP

UVMC's Summer Band Program

Claremont Savings Bank provides support to help kids make music all summer.

"The Summer Band program was fantastic! While I loved getting to know the students, especially those from other areas, during rehearsals, the highlight of the summer had to be the final performances in Colburn Park. There was a great crowd to support both ensembles, and the students did a wonderful job!"

- Dominick DeFrancisco, band director and music teacher at Lebanon High School, Summer Band co-director, and member of UVMC Board of Directors

It was a sunny August afternoon when the UVMC Summer Band took the stage in Colburn Park as part of the annual Nexus Festival. The high school students had been rehearsing their music for weeks in preparation for the community concert — and they knocked it out of the park with their concert and jazz performances.

UVMC's Summer Band program is just one example of the collaborative potential that is possible with sponsorships and donations. The idea was developed by local high school teachers, supported administratively by UVMC, and generously funded by Claremont Savings Bank.

"Claremont Savings Bank is excited to support UVMC," said Molly DeLuca, Vice President of Marketing at Claremont Savings Bank. "Their programs not only enhance learning, inspire creativity, and build important skills across all age groups, but also emphasize how crucial music education is for personal development and community enrichment."

More than 35 students — entering grade 8 through seniors in high school — from across the Upper Valley signed up for the inaugural summer season.

"I signed up because it was a fun summer experience to keep music going in my life outside of school," said Trevor Adams, 16, a junior at Stevens High School in Claremont, NH. "I liked meeting new people and it helped me to learn to play with people I've never played with before. I really enjoyed being able to spend my summer doing it."

The hope is to expand the program next summer.

"There's plenty of room for this program to grow over the next few years. It would be great to add other ensembles like a choir or orchestra to the mix," DeFrancisco said. "I personally hope we can create a rotation of local or semi-local teachers to take turns leading the ensembles. It's nice to put new faces in front of students so they can experience other styles of teaching and conducting. I can't wait for this program to grow and continue on next year!"

GROWTH WITH GRANTS

Music at Upper Valley Libraries

A grant supports free music-making opportunities, reducing the barriers to participation in music education.

You may think of it as a place for quiet reading, but in Lebanon and throughout the Upper Valley, public libraries are places for gathering, learning, and making music.

With support from the Lane & Elizabeth C. Dwinell Charitable Trust, UVMC launched a partnership with Lebanon Public Libraries in 2023 to offer free music-making programs.

In 2024, a second gift from the Dwinell Trust allowed UVMC to continue the partnership in Lebanon and extend the program to other libraries around the Upper Valley, including Plainfield, Cornish, and Hanover.

The focus of the program is free, participatory music-making activities that appeal to a wide range of ages, interests, and experience levels, reducing barriers to participation in music education. Recent events include introductory clawhammer banjo, holiday songs for preschoolers, and drum circles. Programs are led by UVMC faculty, as well as guest teachers, who bring special opportunities like the Indonesian Gamelan and Taiko drumming.

“An open-door approach allows people to meet faculty, experience

the joy of playing and singing with others, and find inspiration to take the next musical step,” said Erin Smith, Education Director at UVMC. “Families who attended events appreciated the opportunities for kids to engage in a playful way, the high level of performances, interaction with the audience, and the diversity of instruments offered.”

The series also includes free informal performances by UVMC students, faculty, and guests. In spring 2024 UVMC’s youth string ensembles Sinfonia and Tour Group performed a joint concert for an overflowing audience. Students shared their hard work from the year with the community and celebrated their team spirit with a post-performance pizza party. It also created a space for younger students in Sinfonia 1 to hear the more advanced high school students and inspire their future musical journey.

“The gift from the Dwinell Trust has made it possible for more than 1,100 Upper Valley residents to make and enjoy music together,” Smith said. “Their support provides long-term strength to the community.”



“I have attended two of Upper Valley Music Center’s workshops at the Kilton Library in West Lebanon. In each case, the instruments were abundant, the instruction was amazing, and the group of participants was diverse in age, immigration status, physical health, and every other conceivable measure. **We felt we could make music – and we did.** If you think about it, that’s an amazing accomplishment for any organization. There is deep magic in transforming a room full of people into producers of beauty.”

– Julie Püttgen, Lebanon, New Hampshire



GIFTS TO SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION | JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024

Many generous supporters made gifts to Upper Valley Music Center in 2023-24 and helped more than 1,900 children and adults make music.

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\$1,000 to \$125,000

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UVMC received grant funding during the 2023-24 year from the following organizations:

Associated Chamber Music Players
Choral Arts Foundation of the Upper Valley
Hypertherm HOPE Foundation
Lane and Elizabeth C. Dwinell Charitable Trust
Lebanon Rotary Club
Ledyard National Bank
Mascoma Bank
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
New Hampshire State Council on the Arts
New Hampshire Land & Community Heritage Investment Program
Upper Valley Baroque and Early Music Collegium

Thank you to the following businesses who provided crucial support during the 2023-24 season:

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Donations were made in memory of the following musicians and music lovers:

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Fr. Michael Falls
Beverly Fruin
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Dick Herron
David Hostetler
Agnes Speer
Ruth Sylvester
Harriet Thompson



2023-24 EVENTS: Because of your support, here's what happened in the last year. Thank you!

PROGRAMS

1,162
Group Classes
& Camps

319
in Ensembles



1,991
total participants

567
in lessons, including
Individual, Mini-group,
& Suzuki Programs

323
in Workshops
& Master Classes

CREATING ACCESS



\$44,744
Tuition Assistance Awarded



93
Recitals, Performances, &
Special Events



73
Partner Organizations & Artists



120 / 1,400+
Volunteers Volunteer Hours

SPECIAL EVENTS



SING & PLAY FESTIVAL
20 / **1,513**
Events Performers & Audience



FACULTY PERFORMANCES
16 / **500+**
Faculty Performances Audience



HOLIDAY MUSIC FESTIVAL
23 / **1,473**
Events Performers & Audience



The Upper Valley Music Center's mission is to provide and promote the best in music education and ensemble opportunities for people living in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire and beyond.

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