



UPPER VALLEY  
MUSIC CENTER



IMPACT REPORT



2025

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## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As I look back on Upper Valley Music Center's 30th Anniversary Year, there is an abundance of events and accomplishments to highlight. As a "music center" UVMC both nourishes individual students and helps create community, bringing together people of all ages and abilities from across the Upper Valley who delight in how music enriches lives.

In keeping with the spirit that infuses many Upper Valley organizations, building community is integral to UVMC. During the past year we continued to strengthen and add to the many mutually beneficial partnerships UVMC has forged with libraries, schools, businesses, foundations and an array of arts and social service organizations, made possible through your generous support.

At the core of these intersecting groups are enthusiastic students, outstanding faculty and the multi-skilled administrative staff who make our historic building hum with music all day long. I hope that those of you who come by for classes, concerts, lessons or with young students in tow find this as exhilarating as I do!

The heart of learning is great teaching. Last year's celebration was also a chance to see the contributions of great teachers in our community and to invest in their work. Thanks to imaginative planning and some special gifts, faculty are undertaking creative projects, attending professional conferences, gathering ideas to share with one another and providing inspiration for all of us.

It's wonderful to see the strength of so many relationships in the Upper Valley rallying around music making and the power it has. Thank you, and I look forward to enjoying music with you in the year ahead.

*Susan "Rosie" Greenstein*

Susan "Rosie" Greenstein  
President



## 2025 IMPACT REPORT

When a small group of people gathered 30 years ago to make music, none of them imagined that they were creating a music-making catalyst that would now be serving more than 2,000 adults and children each year.

The past year has been inspiring. People from across the Upper Valley came together to sing, play, and invest in our musical community, both to show what was possible and to lay a foundation for music making for many generations to come.

We commissioned new pieces of music, welcomed guest artists, explored musical traditions, took our music on tour, celebrated at a sold out Birthday Bash concert, and made 30 continuous hours of music.

Because of you, the 30th anniversary wasn't only a celebration of music and community – it was also a launching point. It was extraordinary how many of you got sponsors for Sing & Play, played music in unusual places or in the middle of the night, or donated special auction items. Many of you made your first gift and had fun with friends to support music making for all.

Thanks to the gifts you raised and the gifts you made, we were able to begin work on a studio and elevator expansion to UVMC's historic home to help address waitlists and provide much needed space.

You also generously invested in amazing faculty, increased access to music and instruments in new ways, stepped forward with support for tuition assistance, and had a vision for how a transformative gift could have an immediate impact and benefit our community for years to come.

Collaboration was central throughout the year: UVMC worked with 64 partners throughout the community, and the video 'I've got the music in me' featured more than 600 people and 42 community groups! If you haven't seen it lately - I encourage you to watch it again. It makes me smile every time.

Please join me in thanking everyone who makes music in our community possible. As someone said at a recent concert, you can't be a chorus by yourself, and, in that spirit, it takes all of us to make a community music center.

We're just getting started – let's make music!



Benjamin Van Vliet  
Executive Director



## CONTACT US

Upper Valley Music Center PO Box 826 8 South Park Street, Lebanon, NH 03766 (603) 448-1642 [uvmusic.org](http://uvmusic.org)

INSPIRING GUEST ARTISTS

## A BILINGUAL MUSICAL YEAR

*Students learn from GRAMMY-winning guest artists*



On stage were nearly 120 students, ages 3 - 18, three Villalobos Brothers with their band, seven UVMC faculty, and a whole host of parent volunteers. In the audience were hundreds of family, friends, and community members. Tuning in remotely were loved ones from around the world. And filling the air were the rhythms and harmonies of music spanning multiple centuries, continents, traditions and languages.

That's how a year-long residency with the GRAMMY-winning Mexican fusion band the Villalobos Brothers culminated at the Suzuki Showcase during Sing & Play 30 for 30.

It all started with generous supporters recognizing the transformative power of learning from great musicians and making special gifts to sponsor UVMC's 30th anniversary season. They knew that inspiring guest artists could make a life-long impact on students and highlight the value of music in our community.

When UVMC Executive Director Benjamin Van Vliet learned that the internationally-acclaimed Ernesto Villalobos had moved to the Upper Valley, he leapt at the opportunity to develop a relationship between students and Villalobos. Conversations quickly evolved into a residency where students and families in the Suzuki Program learned about musicianship and the son jarocho tradition of Mexican folk music throughout the year from all three Villalobos brothers.

The starting point for collaboration was arranging music for the year-end Suzuki Showcase concert to suit the wide range of abilities in the Suzuki program. For "El Pijul," the Villalobos' GRAMMY-winning song composed by Ernesto's brother Luis, Suzuki Program Coordinator Alicia Casey worked with faculty to create parts suitable for just-beginning musicians and more complex ones for advanced students.

*"And filling the air were the rhythms and harmonies of music spanning multiple centuries, continents, traditions and languages."*



In addition, Ernesto encouraged students to use their voices alongside their instruments. That led to bilingual lyrics, and students learning to sing in both English and Spanish.

During the year, Ernesto visited classes multiple times to teach students about his musical heritage and to coach students to play music in the son jarocho tradition themselves.

*"...the joyful harmonies of students singing and playing with their mentors summed up the power of a year of transformative teaching and making music together."*

*"I think it's incredibly cool how they see music and how they have vision for it," said Leigh Eggleton, 16, a violinist and a member of the UVMC Tour Group string orchestra.*



Villalobos' work with the students felt like a collaboration, Eggleton said, particularly with "Colas," the Villalobos-arranged folk tune that Tour Group members rehearsed and performed in the Washington D.C. area as part of a concert tour.

"Ernesto added his own touches and ornaments, had his own thoughts for how we might shape the piece," Eggleton said. "But he waited to hear what our sound was, how we'd shaped it, and only then augmented what we'd done."

That wisdom, combined with the Villalobos brothers' infectious energy, made for a memorable experience for students of all ages. Thanks to donor support, collaborations like this continue to be central to UVMC's work—creating meaningful connections, broadening horizons, and celebrating the many ways music builds community.

In the end, the joyful harmonies of students singing and playing with their mentors summed up the power of a year of transformative teaching and making music together.

#### I'VE GOT THE MUSIC IN ME!

More than 600 people and 42 community partners came together to sing, play, groove, and proclaim that they've got the music in them! The video and audio recording process culminated in UVMC's sold out Birthday Bash at Lebanon Opera House. Check out the video here!



## LASTING COMMUNITY IMPACT

# INSTRUMENTAL

*Expanding access to instruments*

When considering how she wanted to have a lasting impact in her community, Deecie Denison knew that instruments were the key.

The sound of a musical instrument can be magical. The popularity of 'instrument petting zoos' at community events is one testament – young children flock to the opportunity to pick up an instrument and experiment with the sounds they can make. An instrument can also have a profound effect, as one pianist described when she found the piano of her dreams: "I wasn't sure if I was ready for it to change me."

Obtaining an instrument isn't always easy, however, and quality instruments take both a financial commitment and specialized knowledge to obtain. Instruments like grand pianos take a lot of space and regular maintenance.

To help people start their musical journeys and inspire students and faculty to go farther with their music making, the newly established Deecie Denison Instrument Fund will create an instrument library, support making exceptional shared instruments like pianos available to our community, and provide less common instruments that are essential for ensembles.

Pianos are a high priority, as they are used in lessons and performances constantly. This fall UVMC has an extraordinary opportunity for NYC master piano technician Tali Mahanor, whose clients include the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, to work on a Steinway A3 donated by Anne Cook during UVMC's first capital campaign. To facilitate that work, plus the rebuilding of a second UVMC Steinway by Vermont-based master piano technician Patrick Branstetter, UVMC has launched a \$35,000 matching challenge, made possible by the Deecie Denison Instrument Fund, Carol Ann Frost, and Margaret Edwards and David Green.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE MEANS MAKING MUSIC

Generous gifts for tuition assistance made it possible for more than 90 students to start or continue their musical journey in ensembles, group classes or lessons.



If the match is met quickly, UVMC could have the first piano completed this spring, and our community could hear first-hand how an exceptional instrument enriches lessons, rehearsals, and performances, and allows musicians to discover new dimensions to their artistry.

Next up will be launching the Instrument Library. With a significant collection of instruments that have been donated to UVMC over the years as a starting point, there is the opportunity to establish a program that provides instruments for beginning group classes, serves as an 'instrument bank' for local schools, and offers students receiving tuition assistance 'instrument assistance'.

From opening a musical door to empowering advancing musicians to reach new artistic heights, the Deecie Denison Instrument Fund is creating lasting impact—supporting access, nurturing young musicians, and helping people of all ages make their own music.



## NEW SPACES

# BREAKING GROUND

*Expanding innovation and access in an historic home*



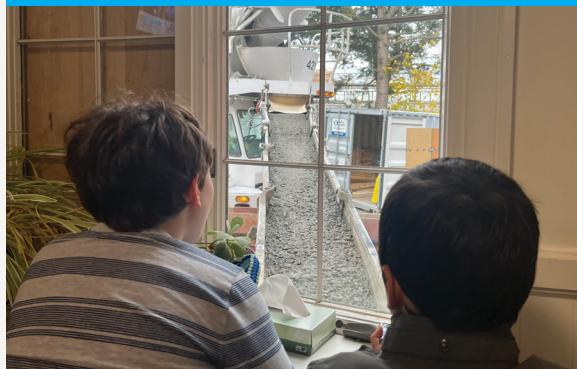
When Upper Valley Music Center moved into its historic home in 2017, there was room to grow. Little did anyone suspect how quickly that growth would take place. Less than 10 years later, community demand for making music is stronger than ever. UVMC is working to respond, adding faculty to address waitlists in many areas. With ensembles, group classes, and lessons filled with students of all ages, the challenge has become having enough space, especially during the busiest days and times.

Thanks to people from across the Upper Valley coming together during the spring with generous gifts of all sizes, construction began in July on a much-needed studio and elevator expansion. Guided by the UVMC's strategic plan, the project represents a significant investment in its mission to deliver high-quality, accessible music education rooted in the creative vitality of the Upper Valley.

At the heart of the expansion are two new specialized studios designed to meet the growing needs of group classes and high-volume instruments. These purpose-built spaces will be equipped with cutting-edge technology that will elevate both teaching and learning. From keyboard and group learning capabilities to digital tools that support composition and collaborative work, the new studios will allow faculty and students to explore music in innovative and dynamic ways. The design emphasizes flexibility, ensuring that the spaces can adapt to evolving programs and emerging technology for years to come.

Equally transformative is the plan to add an elevator, which will make the entire building fully accessible—for people, of course, but also for large instruments. Improved accessibility ensures that UVMC can make full use of its building, and that every student, family member, teacher, and guest artist can participate fully, strengthening UVMC's commitment to an experience of belonging and better serving our whole community.

*"Improved accessibility ensures that UVMC can make full use of its building, and that every student, family member, teacher, and guest artist can participate fully, strengthening UVMC's commitment to an experience of belonging and better serving our whole community"*



Thanks to the vision and commitment of generous supporters, UVMC was able to secure favorable pricing and contractor availability during a highly competitive construction season, and begin construction over the summer.

In the coming year, the focus will be on raising the additional funds needed to complete the classroom interiors with the instruments, furnishings, and technology that will bring these spaces to life. Additional support will also help keep financing costs low, ensuring that resources remain directed toward the core educational mission. Together, we are building a stronger, more accessible, and more innovative home for music in our community.

*"...the new studios will allow faculty and students to explore music in innovative and dynamic ways."*

**COMMUNITY  
PARTNER SPOTLIGHT**

## **MAKING MUSIC, TOGETHER!**

*A grant from  
Hanover Rotary opens  
the door to lifelong  
music making*

Thanks to a generous grant from Hanover Rotary, young children and their parents are joyfully singing and playing each week through a partnership with family services organization Waypoint and affordable housing provider Twin Pines Housing Trust.

Early childhood is a formative time of life for children and their families. With cognitive, emotional, and motor skills developing at a rapid pace, study after study has shown what many people know intuitively: that making music is a powerful way to support healthy growth and strengthen family bonds, setting up children for success in school and beyond.

*"Study after study has shown what many people know intuitively: that making music is a powerful way to support healthy growth and strengthen family bonds"*



*UVMC's early childhood music program, **Music Together**, provides a rigorously researched, developmentally informed curriculum that centers around children and their caregivers joyfully and meaningfully making music, together – both in weekly classes and at home.*

With demonstrated benefits and a proven program, it quickly became clear in conversations with Waypoint and Twin Pines that early childhood music could also help those organizations meet their goals to serve families.

The partnership began with a pilot grant from the New Hampshire State Council of the Arts. After a successful first year, with everyone in agreement about wanting to continue, Hanover Rotary recognized the long-lasting benefits of a community partnership around music and families and awarded a grant to support the second year of the program.

At a recent class, a new family walked by and saw other children and parents arriving. Someone invited them to join in and soon they will all be making music together.

## Program Statistics

**2,194**  
Total participants

**1,388**  
*in Ensembles, Group Classes, and Camps*

**467**  
*in workshops and master classes*

**544**  
*in lessons, including Individual, Mini-group, and Suzuki Programs*

**34**  
*Guest Artists*

## Creating Access

**\$40,000**  
*nearly* tuition assistance awarded

**64**  
*Partner organizations & artists*

**110** *Volunteers*

## Sing & Play 30 for 30

**28**  
*events*

**2,000**  
*performers, sponsors, and audience*

**24**  
*teams*

**30**  
*hours of continuous music*

**240**  
*auction bids*

**\$251,000**  
*raised*

### BUSINESS SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: PUTNAM'S VINE/YARD

UVMC's Business Sponsors play a crucial role in supporting music making in the Upper Valley. In 2025, Putnam's vine/yard made a generous donation to the Sing & Play Auction, and then became a full-year business sponsor. Music making boosts our local economy, and we want to say thank you to P's for working hard to champion local musicians and for investing in strengthening the vibrant musical community of the Upper Valley!



## GIFTS TO SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION

*Thank you to everyone who made gifts to support music in our community as we celebrated 30 years of music making in 2024-25! From the Birthday Bash to Sing & Play 30 for 30, your support helped strengthen our musical community and made it possible for more than 2,000 people to make music. Donations from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.*

### Leadership Circle

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**Thank you to hundreds of  
supporters at the Friends level,  
including everyone who joined us  
at the Birthday Bash and  
Sing & Play 30 for 30!**

**'I've Got the Music in Me' Partners**  
AVA Gallery and Art Center  
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CCBA  
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Upper Valley Voices  
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George Wenz  
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during the 2024-25 year from the  
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Hanover Rotary Club  
Hypertherm H.O.P.E. Foundation Inc.  
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation  
NH Land and Community  
Heritage Investment Program  
New Hampshire State Council  
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The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation  
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**Thank you to the following businesses  
who provided crucial support during the  
2024-25 season**

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The Grandparents watching over you  
Chip Hedler  
Chris Levey  
Becky Luce  
Isabel McCarthy  
Sylvia and Harry Nelson  
Lucille and Mark Remick  
Ruth Sylvester  
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Charlie Zue

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