

LA GRUA CENTER

2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT





STONINGTON SOUNDS AT WADAWANUCK SQUARE

Constant Practice

“No excellence in music is to be acquired without constant practice,” said Jane Austen’s famous character Lady Catherine de Bourgh—a despicable figure with some fairly good advice. If you’ve struggled or excelled at instruments (for me the former), you’ll agree that constant practice (or a lack thereof) is really the only influence on the quality of one’s playing. Or as I once heard a piano teacher say, “Every day you practice, you get better. Every day you don’t, you get worse.”

The content of this annual report speaks to the quality of La Grua’s “playing” this year, and it leads me to a single conclusion: La Grua practices constantly.

If you’ve attended an event this year, you may have noticed the results. Maybe you observed the skill of an artist; more diversity in our audiences and performers; the brilliance of Russian pianist Yury Martynov; or the palpable joy of hundreds sitting on the library’s lawn taking in this year’s Stonington Sounds Summer Music Festival.

I’m proud of these results, but I’ve also had the privilege of watching the practice: volunteers planning for next year the morning after this year’s event; a patron lending

us that second piano; an executive director winning a first ever grant from the CT Arts Endowment and another from the Community Foundation of Eastern CT; a team building fruitful partnerships with SVIA, Merrill House, the library, the historical society, and Stonington Public Schools; a board supporting its employees with health-care plans; committing itself to diversity, equity, and inclusion training; and turning with intention to strategic planning.

In short, seeing the practice behind the scenes is the true reward of leading an organization. And as I pass on that responsibility to Muireann O’Callaghan and Jim Quinn, I do so with the knowledge that constant practice is in their blood and that the excellence of La Grua’s next chapter will be the reward we all enjoy.

So enjoy this report, which I share with my deep gratitude to our talented staff Lori Robishaw and Kelli Rocherolle, our board, our volunteers, and loyal supporters like you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul".

Paul Leeming
President, Board of Directors

Snapshot

Music Matters concert-goers were treated this year to two recitals of Bach's six-keyboard *Partitas* by **Andrew Willis** on his own traveling Florentine Baroque piano. Renowned Stonington poet **J.D. "Sandy" McClatchy** was remembered with a late 19th-century chamber afternoon featuring a return engagement by pianist **Artem Belogurov**, this time joined by **Octavie Dostaler-Lalonde** on cello. American-French soprano **Diana Higbee** brought us a packed house in her afternoon of song, featuring Mozart arias, as well as showtunes from Gershwin and Sondheim.

Our eclectic series of talks ranged from **Dr. Sam Harrington** on end-of-life issues to journalist **Elena Mannes** on the spiritual life of animals. Additional topics included learning about the new National Coast Guard Museum



SARAH HANAHAN

from retired **Capt. Wes Pulver**, rural education in South Africa from **Megan O'Neill**, and the harrowing journey of accidental sailor **Nelson Simon** who survived 1991's "Perfect Storm." Visual artists exhibiting with us includ-

ed a trio of artistic visions in one show from **Marija Pavlovich McCarthy**, **Sky Hoyt**, and **R. Douglass Rice**, and varying works from **Women Photographers of Connecticut** and the **Love** family of artists—**Tim**, **Kate**, **Mac**, **Eliza**, and **Harrison**. Further, we welcomed more musicians to our stage including the **Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society**, singer-songwriters **Glenn Jones** and **Bergin O'Malley**, and jazz saxophonist **Sarah Hana-**



MARIJA MCCARTHY, DOUG RICE, AND SKY HOYT

han, a student at the Hartt School of Music. We were very happy to conclude the year with a pop-up exhibition of the works of **David Black**.

We're always grateful for the talented group of seasoned local artists who shared their expertise with young budding artists in our **8th Annual Youth Summer Art** and **Holiday Art Workshops**, and we again presented the annual **Celebrating Art in Autism** exhibit in April.



CONNECTICUT GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY

By the Numbers

We presented 28 concerts; some 30 lectures, films, and panel discussions, including those of our partners; six art exhibitions and one craft fair; three youth workshops; and five weekly wellness, yoga, and dance classes—welcoming more than 10,000 visitors through our doors.



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Partnership

Our closest nonprofit cultural neighbors are the **Stonington Historical Society**, **Stonington Free Library**, **James Merrill House**, and the **Stonington Garden Club**, which all use the center regularly for their public programming—we continue to value and build upon our important relationships with them. We are active members of the **Stonington Nonprofit Roundtable**, the **Stonington Borough Merchants Association**, the **Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition**, the **Westerly Regional Arts Partnership (WRAP)**, and the **CT Arts Alliance**, as well as our three closest chambers of commerce—Greater Mystic, Ocean Community, and Eastern CT. We were delighted to host a **Business After Hours** this past winter with our neighboring restaurant **Breakwater** in partnership with the **Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut**.

HIGHLIGHTS



YURY MARTYNOV AT THE 1886 CHICKERING CONCERT GRAND

RUSSIAN VIRTUOSITY

We were thrilled to bring in the extraordinary Russian pianist Yury Martynov, who combines the finest of

Russian and Western European traditions. He made his Northeastern U.S. debut, giving us two wonderful concerts, playing Schumann’s *Symphonic Variations, Op.13* and Liszt’s *Troisième Année de Pèlerinage* on the 1886 Chickering concert grand owned by Christopher Greenleaf, and Bach’s *Six French Suites* on harpsichord.

OUR NATIVE NEIGHBORS

Two talks this past year helped us learn much more about the tribal nations in our region, starting with **Jason Mancini’s** talk



Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

about how Indians in Southern New England responded to land dispossession and maintained kinship networks during colonization and beyond. Jason, now the executive director of CT Humanities, was the former executive di-



MARK BROWN

rector and senior researcher of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. On the 25th anniversary of federal recognition of the Mohegan Tribe, former chairman and longtime member of the Mohegan Tribal Council **Mark Brown** joined us for a conversation with **Bill Stanley** of Yale-New Haven L+M Hospital to discuss the past 25 years and how the Mohegan Sun has impacted the tribe’s culture and history.

STONINGTON SOUNDS

After four years of iffy weather, the sun finally came out and helped us attract some 700



people for the fifth annual day-long summer music festival, **Stonington Sounds**. We hosted six eclectic performances: jazz—both Dixie-

land and Afro-Cuban, barbershop, a concert for kids, classical piano, and Portuguese fado in partnership with the **Portuguese Holy Ghost Society**. We're deeply grateful for the major support of the festival again provided



by the **Stonington Village Improvement Association**, which included underwriting the performance of the U.S. Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band on Wadawanuck Square.

Our Volunteers

We owe a big “thank you” to all our artist and other volunteers who came out two Sunday mornings in July to make our **Youth Summer Art Workshops** possible: Emerson Baltrukonis, Karin Bastidas, Barbara Ginsberg, Karli Hendrickson, Eva Leong, Vincent Loiacono, Dan Potter, JJ Stinton, Lauren Vossler, and Jen Rothman of Stone Acres Farm.

All of our programming is made possible by the dedication of our volunteer advisory committees and event/office volunteers, as well as the many presenters who give us compelling lectures. As always, we extend our gratitude for their donated time and personal commitment to La Grua Center.

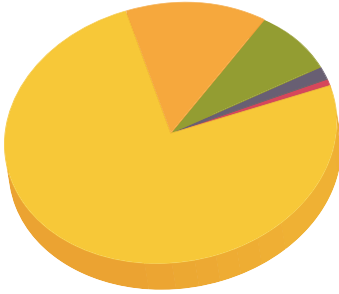
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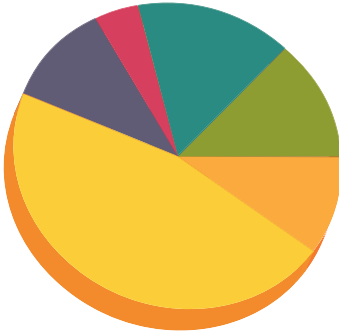
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Ruoqi (Rachel) Wong
Wick York
Elena Zamolodchikova

Financials



Income

Direct Contributions	\$227,694
Program Related Sales and Fees	42,154
Fundraiser (net)	24,940
Rental income	5,445
Misc. Income	2,013
TOTAL	\$ 302,246



Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 131,116
Marketing & Support	31,799
Insurance & Office Related	12,250
Facility & Equipment	43,469
Programming	36,166
Depreciation	29,192
TOTAL	\$ 283,992



SONIA BETTENCOURT AND GUITARRAS DO ATLANTICO AT THE PORTUGUESE HOLY GHOST SOCIETY

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We thank the following donors to the Annual Fund who make our programming possible with their financial support. The list also includes individuals who attended our Summer Soirée fundraising event and/or contributed to our paddle-raise. All donations to La Grua Center were made between the dates of July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

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