

LA GRUA CENTER
2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



A Pause for Gratitude

This past year, wonders were pause for inspiration outside, inside, and beyond the walls of La Grua Center's stone foundry. You gathered for live jazz on the lawn surrounded by fresh ocean breezes. You mailed in postcards, painted and collaged, from far and wide, to decorate La Grua's open doors. You shared Stories of Resilience on Zoom and showed up in person to learn from gallery exhibits.

La Grua's north star is its mission to engage community through arts and culture, and from July 2020, to June 2021 we did just that. La Grua's staff and volunteer board and committees are so grateful to make meaningful and relevant opportunities for all to come together and enjoy. We look forward to sharing perspectives, creative expressions, and moments that move us—the songs, the

stories, that pause between a piano's last note and the group's applause.

In gratitude,
Muireann O'Callaghan and James P.
Quinn
Co-Presidents, Board of Directors



Snapshot

La Grua Center continues to present programs and activities consistent with its mission, vision, and guiding principles. Last year we presented a wonderful mix of performers, lecturers, and visual artists—established and emerging—including those furthering our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts towards race, ethnicity, and a younger demographic.

Examples include nationally recognized puppeteer **Pam Arciero**; Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **Connie Schultz**; 29-year-old Costa Rican cellist **Gabriel Cabezas**;



noted mystery writers of color **S.A. Cosby**, **Kellye Garrett**, and **David Heska Wanbli Weiden**;



local author and filmmaker **Cormac O'Malley**; and the wizard of artificial intelligence, **Randy Bean**. Sponsored by the **Stonington Village Improvement Association**, La Grua held amazing outdoor summer concerts on **The Green** at **Stonington Commons** and on the lawn of **Wadawanuck Square**.

There is an abiding affinity for classical music at La Grua Center; and our **Music Matters** series continues to be popular and exceptional. Guided by Christopher Greenleaf and a music committee; we brought ten classical and jazz performances to our audience. Prominent performers included the duo, **Stephanie & Saar**, on our two grand pianos. This series is complemented by our **More Music** sessions which feature performances by contemporary musicians and

vocalists, like the **Jim Hunter Jazz Trio**.

La Grua's gallery is in constant use to showcase a wide variety of visual arts and exhibitions. Our annual **Stonington Artists** show was presented virtually on Facebook.

The Lords Hill Art Show in September marked the return of open doors to our gallery.



The stresses of the pandemic were artistically expressed in the **ARClove** show during the winter. The work of Hispanic artists was celebrated in a show brought to La Grua by **Expresiones Cultural Center**. Our “hands-on” **Mail-In Postcard Art Project** enabled La Grua to connect to our regional community, as well as people throughout the country, and as far away as Croatia. The “**Stories of Resilience: Encountering Racism**” series about the personal experiences of local Blacks in the Great Migration were amplified by a wonderful exhibit. Beautifully curated by **Lincoln Norton**, the show about his father, the Renaissance man, **Thomas A. Norton**, was very popular.

We continued our commitment to youth by presenting our annual **Youth Arts Workshops** on our YouTube Channel with the help of our Youth Advisory Committee and the volunteer artists. Earth Day was celebrated by our younger audience with a variety of instructional YouTube videos about things like building birdhouses and a “Bug Hotel.”

Partnership and the Public

Establishing partnerships and joint programming with other arts and cultural organizations remains an important part of La Grua's efforts. Our alliances include the **Mystic Film Festival** for the performance of student films; planning for joint programming with **Connecticut Early Music**; the **U.S. Coast Guard Band** for community concerts; the **Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce** for the production of the "**Stonington Pop-Up Book**," *The Day*; planning for joint programming with the **United Theatre**; **outCT**; **The Yellow Farmhouse**; and collaborating with the **Stonington Harbor Yacht Club** for outdoor music and other events.

We're getting noticed. La Grua press coverage in the last year included interviews on WCRI classical radio's **Conducting Conversations** with Mike Maino, with Rona Mann



on **Mann About Town** on WBLQ, and on Facebook Live with the **Beat Team** from the **Frank Olean Center**, an organization that works with individuals who are developmentally or intellectually challenged. Newspaper features included pieces on **Pam Arciero** in *The Westerly Sun*, and the racism and religion panel in *The Day*. *The Westerly Sun* also featured photos of the audience at the **Latin Essence Jazz Group** concert.

Views, Seats, and Numbers

As a result of the pandemic, live events were curtailed for most of the year. Nonetheless, La Grua Center made significant efforts toward producing virtual programming and ticketing revenue options. As a side benefit, these virtual activities enabled us to significantly grow our online community and

create a retrievable library of programs. All of our **Music Matters** classical performances were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel, together with our "**Kids Art**" programs. About 1,800 "real" people sat in our seats last year, while almost 5,400 people viewed our programs online.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Our board and volunteers form a collage of diversity. Our wonderful differences touch race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, income levels, and more. Targeted DEI efforts by La Grua Center include sessions with the newly established **New London Arts Council**, and the **Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition's PULSE** initiative for young creatives in the region, particularly New London-based Black and Latinx artists. Our outreach to the

Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut about their exhibition "**Stories of Resilience: Encountering Racism**" resulted in a three-segment panel discussion at La Grua. We participated in the annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Dinner**, and an anti-racism statement was added to our website. La Grua's sponsorship of **New London Pride** highlights our alignment with the LGBT community.

Grants and Funding

The past year saw a large increase in funding from grants. La Grua Center received its first grants from: Sustaining Organizations grant from the **CT Office of the Arts** for \$4,900; **Dominion Energy** in support of the **Stories of Resilience: Encountering Racism** exhibit and panel discussions for \$2,000; and the **Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation** for \$2,500 to support updating of building systems. We received several COVID-related grants, including: \$5,000 from **The Edward**

and Mary Lord Foundation, \$1,000 from the **SECT Cultural Coalition Economic Recovery Fund**, and \$1,500 from the **Ocean Community Chamber Foundation**. As part of the CARES Act, we received a second \$25,000 Paycheck Protection Program loan that was forgiven at the end of June. Through the **Connecticut COVID Relief for the Arts Fund**, La Grua also received \$38,000

Our Volunteers

Along with our volunteer Board of Directors, who serve on various board committees, our programming is also made possible by the dedication of our committees and volunteers, as well as the many speakers who give us compelling talks. We also thank former board members who remain engaged by serving on board committees. As always, we extend our gratitude to all of the following for their donated time and personal commitment to La Grua Center.

EVENT AND FUNDRAISER VOLUNTEERS

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David Schulz
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Wick York

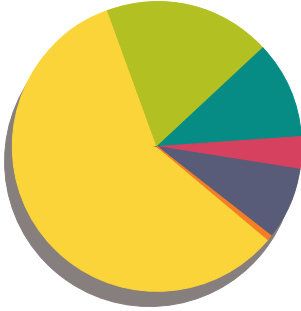
STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Lauren Vossler
Emerson Baltrukonis

VOLUNTEERS FROM ORGANIZATIONS

Stonington Garden Club
Stonington High School
Yellow Farmhouse Education
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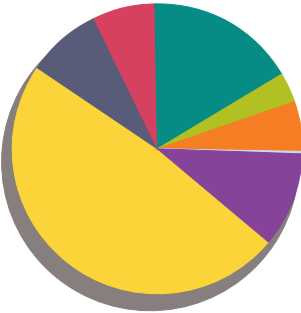
Financials



Income

- Direct Contributions: \$178,723
- Grants: \$56,549
- Fundraiser: \$32,630
- Program Sales and Fees: 10,926
- PPP Income: \$25,000
- Misc. Income: \$1,195

TOTAL: \$305,023



Expenses

- Salaries and Benefits: \$138,397
- Marketing and Support: \$24,076
- Non-personnel Expenses: \$20,153
- Facility and Equipment: \$47,515
- Insurance and Office: 9,078
- Programming: \$16,503
- Misc. Expenses: \$928
- Depreciation: \$29,409

TOTAL: \$286,059



Board of Directors and Staff

Board of Directors and Staff
 Muireann O'Callaghan, *Co-President*
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Donors

We thank the following donors to the Annual Fund who make our programming possible with their financial support. All donations to La Grua Center were made to the Annual Fund between the dates of July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

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While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, please accept our sincere apology if there are any errors or omissions with your name. If your listing requires correction, please let us know.



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