

An abstract painting with a complex, layered composition. The color palette is dominated by various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep, dark navy and black. Interspersed are vibrant green and teal tones, particularly on the left side. The texture is highly expressive, with thick, visible brushstrokes and areas of what appears to be cracked or peeling paint, especially in the lower-left quadrant. The overall effect is one of depth and movement, suggesting a landscape or a scene of significant emotional or historical weight.

LA GRUA CENTER

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT



Where Community Meets Culture

To engage community through arts and culture and provide an enriched cultural life for all of our region - this was the vision that Winifred La Grua had when she made the generous gift that allowed the purchase and renovation of our beautiful space in memory of her husband, Maurice C. La Grua.

In the nearly two decades since the doors opened at La Grua Center, I am proud to say that we are more than achieving Wynne's vision. This year, 8,000 people enjoyed our concerts, exhibits, presentations, classes, and workshops. Our innovative and creative programming reached a virtual audience of 3,200.

There is no place like La Grua. A new patron commented that "La Grua Center does it all and there is a new program every week to expand my horizons." The continued support of the La Grua community allows us to provide exceptional programs, expand our reach, and foster authentic connections.

Music Matters wowed audiences with performances ranging from a Brahms piano concert to Empire Wild's jazz cellists. Concerts on the Green brought generations together to listen and learn about a variety of musical genres. Our gallery was a showcase for local and regional artists and we provided an opportunity for local high school students to show their work as part of our Emerging Artists exhibit. Our lecture series, many presented in collaboration with local organizations, covered a wide variety of topics from artificial intelligence to a book reading by a bestselling author on the Holocaust. Our Youth Art Workshops expose our youngest audience to the power of art and creative expression.

I am particularly proud that we are able to present the majority of our programs free of charge and price our ticketed events to allow all members of the community the opportunity to engage in arts and culture. The success of La Grua Center would not be possible without the dedication and support of our staff, volunteers, artists, and donors. As we approach our 20th anniversary in 2028 and beyond, we are grateful and inspired by your support and commitment to this vision.

With Warm Regards,
Beth Black, *Board Chair*

Snapshot July 2024–June 2025

Over the past fiscal year, La Grua Center remained a lively crossroads for arts, ideas, and community, filling our hall with concerts, talks, exhibitions, workshops, and family-friendly programs. Our Music Matters series featured songs from Havana & Buenos Aires with **Zahili González Zamora** and **Claudio Ragazzi**;

The Genius of Brahms with **Constantine Finehouse**; a Romantic era clarinet concert



ARTEM BELOGUROV

with **James Campbell**, **Alix Reinhardt**, and pianist **Futaba Niekawa**; *Hommage to Fauré* with pianist **Matthew Odell**; *Classical for Two Pianos* with **Asiya Korepanova** and **Ilya Kazantsev**; the genre-bending **Empire Wild** who also performed for hundreds of students at West Vine Street School; the **Avery Ensemble**; *Timeless Trios* with the **Champlain Trio**; an interactive concert with **Beyond the Notes**; *Rasa String Quartet's Redefining Home*; and *Mozart on His Own Piano* with **Artem Belogurov**. We also partnered with **Tessa Lark** and **Musical Masterworks**, hosted Maestro **Martin Picuch**'s final concert, welcomed the **Yale Whiffenpoofs**, and presented **Jesse Terry's** Arcadia album-release show in our More Music series.

For families, we added a festive South American and Caribbean



TESSA LARK AND MUSICAL MASTERWORKS

concert with **Surcari**. Outdoors, our *Concerts on the Green* brought free programs to the community with **Ed Fast & Conga Bop**, **Bergin & Melissa**, **On the Trail**, **Jacob**

Jolliff, **Grant Gordy**, and **Mozart for Munchkins**.

Our speaker and author lineup blended artistry with timely topics. Good Stories Well Told welcomed marine artist **Russ Kramer**, novelist **Jane Barton Griffith** (*Two Women, One War*), **Elissa Bass** (*Happy Hour*), and bestselling British author **Wendy Holden**

(*The Teacher of Auschwitz*). On Our Minds examined the frontlines of climate violence with **Peter Schwartzstein**



PETER SCHWARTZSTEIN

(*The Heat and the Fury*) and the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence with **Dr. Yvonne Masakowski**. We also staged two evocative theatrical events: *An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe* featuring **Campbell Harmon** and *Frost Warnings: A Portrait of Robert and Elinor Frost* with **Christie Max Williams** and **Anne Flammang**.

In the gallery we showcased community and regional talent across six exhibitions: the *15th Annual Stonington Artists* exhibit with works from artists in **Stonington**, **Mystic**, and **Pawcatuck**; *Coming Out for Art* with **OutCT**; *The Art of Belonging* which featured artwork by artists supported by **Vista Life Innovations**, a nonprofit organization that helps individuals with disabilities; *Art & Gardens* showcasing a captivating collection of works by the talented members and friends of the **Stonington Garden Club**; the



EMERGING ARTISTS FROM GRASSO TECH

4th Annual Emerging Artists exhibit with student

artists from area high schools, including **Fitch, Grasso Tech, Ledyard, Stonington, Westerly, and Wheeler**; and *Artful Alchemy* with **Gallery One** which represented a diverse group of accomplished Connecticut-based artists.

Creativity stayed hands-on with **Youth Art Workshops** throughout the year: *Summer Youth Art, Fall:*

Halloween & Día de los Muertos, Holiday Youth Art, and Earth Day. Talented local artists along with volunteers from **Yellow Farmhouse Education Center, Stonington Community Center, New England Science and Sailing, Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, and Expressiones Cultural Center** shared their expertise with young budding artists during these workshops. Adults explored new skills in a multi-station **Art Lab:** *Discover & Create* with **Eva Leong, Tom Frohnaphel, Jude Larzelere, Rebecca Hnatiuk, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Frances Baldwin, Writing Toward Forgiveness with **Eleanor Kedney** focused on therapeutic writing, *Flower Press & Design* with **Marguerite Alpert, Capturing Beauty: The Art of iPhone Photography with **Jill Corr,** and *Draw That Jazz* workshop led by **Tom Frohnaphel.** With the **Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce** and the **Town of Stonington,** we offered a free children's workshop where over twenty buoys were painted for the annual Stonington **Lobster Trap Tree.******

By the Numbers

We presented 22 in-person concerts including 6 free concerts and 2 family concerts; 12 lectures, films, workshops, and panel discussions, together with another 10 from our



neighboring nonprofits; 6 art exhibitions; our annual Fine Art & Craft Show; 4 youth art workshops; and monthly sound bath, music, drum, yoga, and strength classes—welcoming nearly 8,000 visitors through our doors. More than 3,200 people viewed our online programs on La Grua Center's YouTube channel.

Partnership

We continued to value and build upon our important relationships with our closest neighbors—the **Stonington Free Library, Historic Stonington, James Merrill House, the Stonington Garden Club, the Arts Café Mystic, Musical Masterworks, the CT Early Music Festival, and the Mystic Film Festival,** which all regularly use our space for their public programming. We collaborated with the **Stonington Harbor**



FIRST SELECTMAN DANIELLE CHESEBROUGH DECLARES CHRISTIE MAX WILLIAMS STONINGTON'S FIRST POET LAUREATE

Yacht Club and SVIA for outdoor music and other events. We are active members of the **Stonington Village Cultural District, the Stonington Borough Merchants Association, and the Cultural Coalition,** as well as three chambers of commerce—**Greater Mystic, Ocean Community, and Eastern Connecticut.** Our recent collaboration with WMNR Fine Arts Radio and Classical 95.9 WCRI, has enabled the broadcasts of our live recordings.

Grants and Funding

La Grua Center received a Supporting Arts Grant, and a Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund Grant from **Connecticut Office of the Arts**; a Quick Grant from **Connecticut Humanities**; a **Katherine Forest Crafts Foundation** grant for our textile and clay artists, a grant from the **Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut Foundation** for our youth art workshops; grants from the **Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation** and the **George & Grace Long Foundation** in support of our Music Matters concerts; a sponsorship from **SVIA** for our free outdoor concerts

and a sponsorship from the **Chelsea Groton Foundation** for our affordable family concerts. Our Summer Soirée sponsors, whose generous support makes our year-long programs possible, included **Cove Ledge Beer, Wine and Spirits, UBS, Dime Bank, Dog Watch Catering, Attorney Nicholas Kepple, Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, Chelsea Groton Bank, Ferguson & McGuire, Grover Insurance, Pappas MacDonnell, Inc., Robinson+Cole, Waller Smith & Palmer, and Veritable Distillery.**

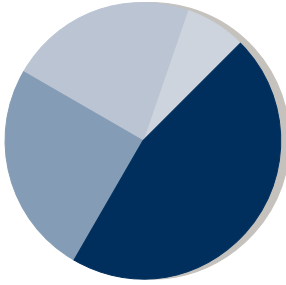
Volunteers

Our programming and events are made possible by the diverse group of volunteers who serve on committees to staff (Music, Programs, Youth, Facilities) and as event/office volunteers. We extend our gratitude to the following for their donated time and personal commitment to La Grua Center.

EVENT, PROGRAM, AND FUNDRAISER VOLUNTEERS

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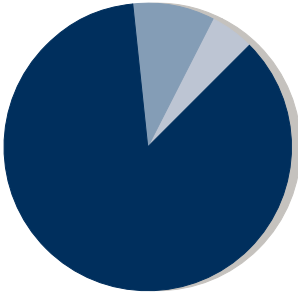
Financials



INCOME

- Direct Contributions: \$166,761 (46%)
- Fundraiser: \$89,368 (25%)
- Program Sales, Fees, Misc.: \$79,779 (22%)
- Grants: \$25,253 (7%)

TOTAL: \$361,161



EXPENSES

- Program: \$303,176 (86%)
- Management and General: \$30,745 (9%)
- Fundraising: \$18,077 (5%)

TOTAL: \$351,998



STONINGTON ARTIST EXHIBIT

The Board of Directors is made up of passionate leaders who advance our mission, sustain our programs, and steward our future. We are proud to have 100% Board giving, with every director making an annual gift.

Board of Directors and Staff *as of July 1, 2025*

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CONCERT ON THE GREEN

Donors July 2024–June 2025

Thanks to the generosity of the following donors to our Annual Fund, programs, and Summer Soirée, La Grua Center is able to bring inspiring programming to our community. The gifts recognized here were made between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

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Muireann O'Callaghan
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