
season 9 annual report

july 1, 2022 – june 30, 2023







about palaver

Palaver Strings is a musician-led string ensemble and nonprofit organization based in Portland, ME. Founded in 2014 and established as a nonprofit in 2015, Palaver has made its mark as a forward-thinking ensemble whose mission is to strengthen and inspire community through music. Palaver recruits musicians from top music training institutions in Boston, New York, Chicago, and beyond, with the goal of bringing highly skilled musicians and educators to Portland to contribute to Maine's cultural diversity and creative economy.

Each year, Palaver Strings presents a full series of approximately 40 live performances featuring diverse musical programming, cross-genre projects, and community collaborations in Maine and around the northeast. The ensemble has performed at venues such as the Kennedy Center, National Sawdust, and a Lullaby Project celebration at Carnegie Hall. Palaver's most recent album *Ready or Not* (Azica Records, 2022) has received acclaim by publications such as *The Guardian* and *BBC Music Magazine*. The ensemble has enjoyed residencies at Rockport Music, Boston Center for the Arts, Bay Chamber Concerts, and Longy School of Music, where ensemble members teach workshops, master classes, and graduate courses on music and community engagement.

Equally committed to education, Palaver launched the Palaver Music Center in 2019, as an umbrella for all educational and community-based programming. In 2022, the Palaver Music Center opened its doors as a dedicated teaching space in downtown Portland through which we coordinate and serve hundreds of Portland area students and adults annually and which is now a community hub for lessons, classes, rehearsals, artists collaboration, and more.



dear friends of palaver

A close-up photograph of a man with glasses playing a double bass. He is wearing a red sweater and is looking intently at the instrument. The background is dark with blue and purple lighting, suggesting a stage or concert setting. Another person is visible in the background, out of focus.

At the end of our 9th season, we at Palaver are struck by how much we have grown and evolved as an organization, and how the themes we explore in our music making, and the values at the heart of our programming, have remained unchanged. Witnessing our performance and education programming process develop over the past decade has been an adventure and a joy. Each Co-Artistic Director has brought their individual personality, skills, passions, and perspective to our process and to our programs, and together we have created a way of presenting concerts and educating hundreds of Portland area students that is recognizably Palaver's own.

This year we performed live for over 4000 people, taught music to 187 Portland-area students, moved into our first brick and mortar space, and surpassed a budget of \$600,000.

Together we have created something that has never really existed before: a classical music ensemble that actively performs, teaches, records, and tours the country while being firmly rooted in community. In nine years we've continued to invite more folks into the fold through live performance as well as the Palaver Music Center, enrolling more families in our education program supported with scholarships to ensure access equity, and finding home in a new brick and mortar space in downtown Portland.

We're grateful to all of you for helping to strengthen our foundation as we raise up our voice and our mission, making it stronger for all to hear in this chaotic world.



Signed by all Palaver Strings
Season 9 Co-Artistic Directors

Palaver Strings affirms that Black lives matter and acknowledges that systemic racism continues to affect our community. Our mission is to strengthen and inspire community through music, and we believe that true community is not possible without sustained work to dismantle these oppressive structures that can separate us and impair the development of the community we seek. As performers, educators, and collaborators, we strive to create a culture of equity, inclusion, and accountability. One necessary part of this work is examining classical music's legacy of exclusion and white supremacy, and the ways in which this legacy shapes our playing, decision-making, and ways of being together. We will coordinate that effort with a continuing awareness of the effects that exclusion and white supremacy have on our day-to-day lives. Our work cannot end here; it must continue with concrete action to disrupt these systems and practices.

palaver team

Josie Davis
Brianna Howard
Maya French
Teagan Farn
Kiyoshi Hayashi
Lysander Jaffe
Jesse MacDonald
Nate Martin
Elizabeth Moore
Kamyron Williams
Matthew Smith
Nathaniel Taylor
Iman Enan
Eli Kaynor
Sunday Maker
Haley Maiden
Roland Robitaille
Sylvia Schwartz
Sampson Spadafore
Lauren Sterling
Fiona Hilton
Yoon S. Byun

co-artistic directors + staff

Violinist, Co-Artistic Director + Evaluations Coordinator
Violist, Co-Artistic Director, Education/Social Media Coordinator + PMC Faculty
Violinist, Co-Artistic Director, Managing Director + PMC Faculty
Violinist + Co-Artistic Director
Violinist + Co-Artistic Director
Violist, Co-Artistic Director, Communications + Evaluations Coordinator
Violinist + Co-Artistic Director
Bassist + Co-Artistic Director
Violist, Co-Artistic Director, Programming Director + PMC Faculty
Cellist + Co-Artistic Director + PMC Faculty
Cellist, Co-Artistic Director, Managing Director of Education + PMC Faculty
Cellist + Co-Artistic Director
Student + Family Coordinator
PMC Faculty
PMC Faculty
Marketing Director
Operations Director + Performance Manager
PMC Faculty
Lifesongs Project Coordinator
Philanthropic Advisor
Graphic Designer
Photographer + Videographer

board of directors

Ari Solotoff	Board President / Founder of Solotoff Law Group PLLC
Lauren Eidson	Board Treasurer / Risk Assurance Advisory Manager at Armanino
Josué González	Board Secretary / Executive Director at Project STEP
Ekhlas Ahmed	Board Member / Community Engagement Director at Cultural Alliance of Maine
William Black	Board Member / Deputy Public Advocate (Retired) at ME Public Advocate Office
Katherine Knox	Board Member / Attorney at Bernstein Shur
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David Lakari	Board Member / President of Renewal Housing Associates, LLC
Molly McCarthy	Board Member / Director of Development at Massachusetts General Hospital
Max Monks	Board Member / Director of Consulting and Subscription Services at Tarifica

advisory council

Manuel Bogorro	Advisory Council / Carnegie Hall & Bay Chamber Concerts
Sarah Darling	Advisory Council / Musician at A Far Cry String Orchestra
Moisés Fernández Via	Advisory Council / Boston Medical Campus Arts/Lab
Monica Kelly	Advisory Council / Bay Chamber Concerts
Bayla Keyes	Advisory Council / Boston University
Heath Marlow	Advisory Council / The Food Project
Brian O'Donovan	Advisory Council / WGBH
Shay Stewart Bouley	Advisory Council / Community Change Inc.

the numbers

40

of in-person concerts performed throughout New England and New York

32

of collaborating musicians, visual artists, and speakers

2

of new commissions by living composers

5

of performance residencies and education partnerships

140

of students in our Portland early Childhood Music program

47

of students in our After-School Strings Program

63k

over \$63,000 spent in Palaver Music Center student scholarships

3

of participants in our Lifesongs Project



highlights



season 9 performances

Palaver kicked off Season 9 with **A Brilliant Escape**, a program that dove into the world of early music world of early music, featuring harpsichordist, John McKean, and filling up hearts with florid violin melodies and driving bass lines. In November 2022, we embarked on a beautiful collaboration with **Chris Pattishall**, **TJ Reddick** and **Marty Jaffe**, centered around the *Zodiac Suite*, a 1945 masterpiece by jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams. *Zodiac* was rearranged for jazz trio and Palaver with in-person shows in Portland, ME, Rockport, MA, New York, NY and Brooklyn, NY.

Over the winter we performed our three **chamber series** programs in Brattleboro, VT, Cambridge, MA, and Portland, ME featuring special guest and good friend, mezzo-soprano, **Sophie Michaux**. March brought **Joy**, a set of live performances exploring joyful music ranging from African-American church inspired bass concerto to romanian folk tunes featuring virtuosic bassist, **Kebra-Seyoun Charles** in Cambridge, MA, Brooklyn, NY and Portland, ME.

April welcomed anew collaboration in Boston, MA, Portland, ME, Brooklyn, NY and Putney, VT with Syrian clarinetist, **Kinan Azmeh** and world-percussionist, **Brian Shankar Adler**, this program explored the fluid space between improvisation and composition, drawing on classical, jazz, Syrian folk elements, and original compositions by the featured soloists, including a world premiere of Kinan Azmeh's *Syrian Dances for String Orchestra*. To culminate the season we turned to preparing for the recording of our upcoming protest music album, **A Change is Gonna Come** featuring tenor, **Nicholas Phan** and vocal artist, **Farayi Malek**, and for which we are now preparing a national release.

highlights

palaver music center

Season 9 was marked by the transition to our first brick-and-mortar music center that serves as a community gathering space for lessons, rehearsals, meetings and events. Our home is located in the center of the peninsula on the corner of Cumberland Ave. and Casco Street and serves as a vibrant space in Portland's Bayside neighborhood, where families of diverse income and cultural backgrounds can experience the benefits and power of music.

In October 2022, we resumed teaching Early Childhood Music to 140 infants to 3-year-olds at several Head Start and Early Childcare centers across Portland, and resumed serving another 47 PreK-K-Grade-4 Strings students through in-person lessons and group classes at our new Palaver Music Center. In this creative space, it is such a gift to hear lessons going on simultaneously, to observe students making friendships in-person, to watch a spontaneous performance between a teacher and student, and to see parents connecting with each other and the teaching faculty, for the first time since March 2020. This has been a dream in the making for many years and we are honored to be taking a leadership role in Portland—making accessible, affordable and transformative music education possible.

Our Pre-K through 3rd grade students performed two celebration recitals in the winter and spring and we were excited to continue our Lifesongs Project in partnership with SPACE and The Studio, co-lead for the first time by our new project coordinator, Sampson Spadafore.





thank you to our season 9 sponsors



and to our season 9 partners

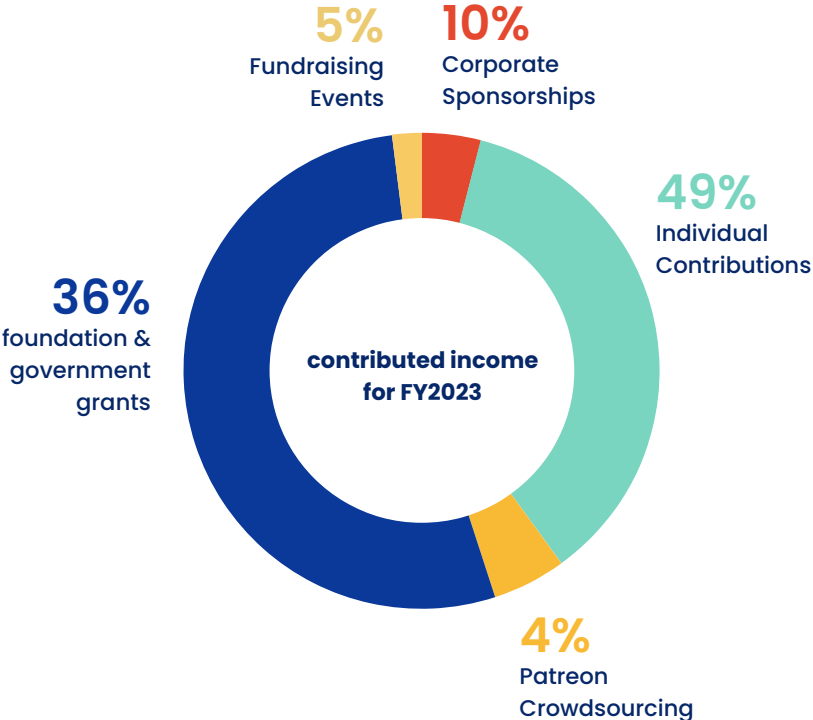
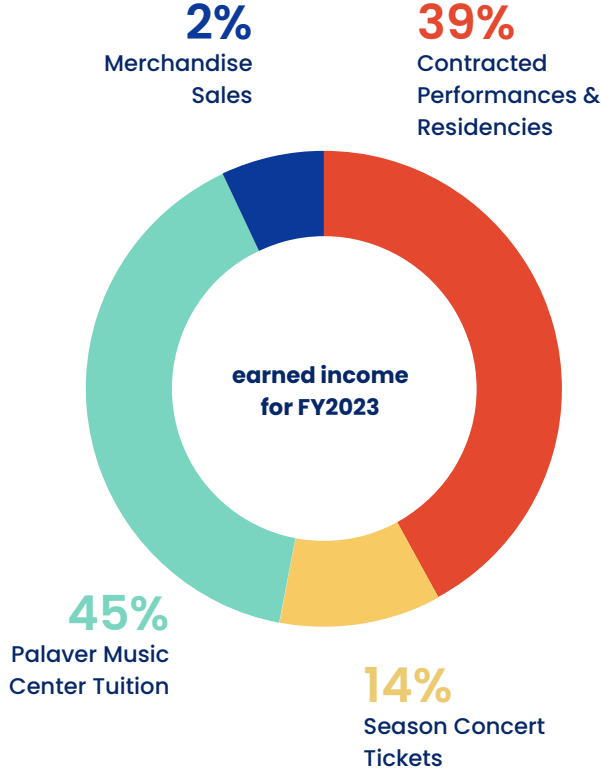


fy2023 financials



revenue	FY2023
Individual Sponsors	\$281,788
Grants + Corporate Sponsors	\$237,473
Performance Revenue	\$57,480
Palaver Music Center Revenue	\$48,590
Other Revenue	\$2,244
total revenue	\$627,874
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expenses	FY2023
Performance Salaries & Wages	\$206,870
Education Salaries & Wages	\$95,064
Administration Salaries & Wages	\$106,666
Program Expenses	\$141,853
General Expenses	\$48,089
total expenses	\$598,542
net revenue (includes FY24 pledges)	\$29,332

income breakdown



Palaver works hard to keep our concert ticket prices affordable to ensure an inclusive audience and to provide scholarships to 60% of our student population in need, we must raise funds through grants, corporate sponsors, and generous individual donors.

thank you

We'd like to thank the following people and organizations who have helped Palaver Strings so much this season...



Ekhlas Ahmed
Aldermere Foundation
Jane Allen
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Todd French
Ariel Friedman
Wyatt + Rachel Garfield
Malisa + Mike Gatje
Edith Gawler
Steven + Kim Gerlach
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Ian Gottlieb
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Victoria Green
Diane Green Minor
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Serena + Brent Hall
Stephen + Judith Halpert
Lucian + Jurgita Hand
Eric + Elizabeth Handley
Peter + Lauretta Harbilas



thank you

Karen Harris + Robert Gips
Beverly Harvey
Kiyomi + William Hayashi
Elizabeth Hays
Nan Heald + Frank D'Alessandro
Judy Hearst
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Fiona Hilton
David Hirsch
Whitney Hogan + Pat Walters
Matthew Hyde
Rachel Iba
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James + Kristen Isaacson
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Derek Jaskulski
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Christine + Kumar Muthu Kopec
Carrie Krause + Paul Lachapelle
Rob + Natalie Krauser





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