

2020: year of challenges and opportunities

The 2019/20 season presented unique challenges, but also unanticipated opportunities as we joined arts organizations across the country in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. With very little time between January and March to prepare for the unknown, we found ourselves quickly moving to online programming. We wanted to ensure that we could continue serving the public, while also keeping the administration team employed and generating income for the freelance musicians we engage on a concert-by-concert basis.

We began by releasing archival recordings on a new digital platform (for which we paid musicians broadcast rights) and partnering with Classic 107 radio and sponsors to create a bi-weekly MCO at Home program. Musicians were commissioned to record short works for posting online, many of them in honour of those living, working, and recovering in healthcare facilities. Previously untapped in-house expertise was put to work as we edited videos, recorded Zoom interviews, and created weekly digital newsletters, all while reaching out to patrons, sponsors, and funding agencies.

This year's surplus will be vital as we face the uncertain future. We carry forward significant commissioning expenses to future seasons, too, and look forward to gathering together once again in shared appreciation of our composers and musicians.



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Manitoba Chamber Orchestra

MCO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING / 21 OCTOBER 2020

MANITOBA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES 24 YEARS IN THE BLACK



The February 12 concert featuring cellist Ariel Barnes and conducted by Earl Stafford, was the last live concert offered prior to the pandemic lockdown (photo Vicki Young).

THE MANITOBA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA continues its third decade in the black in spite of the pandemic's pressures.

For 24 years in a row, the MCO has maintained balanced budgets. The 19/20 season was a highly unusual season, with the COVID-19 lockdown forcing the MCO to effectively suspend their concert season from March onwards. Despite this upset, the MCO was agile in readjusting to the evolving circumstances and well supported by its allies. The outcome was one of MCO's most unique seasons from a music-presentation standpoint, a useful reappraisal of its digital strategy, and a surplus vital to cushioning the organization as it continues to create value in the 20/21 season without the reliability of more conventional levels of ticket revenue.

From September to February, the MCO presented five subscription season concerts at Westminster Church and one matinee. Total attendance levels were 3,315. Audiences delighted in reconnecting with well-established soloists

and MCO favourites such as cellist Ariel Barnes, soprano Karina Gauvin, and pianist Simone Dinnerstein. They also enjoyed getting to know newer collaborators like violinists Timothy and Nikki Chooi and composer-pianist-conductor Dinuk Wijeratne, whose brilliant concerto *Gajaga Vannama* earned a rapturous response. Another new music highlight was the Western Canadian Music Award nomination the MCO received for the *Cello Concerto* album.

Over the same period, the MCO's Fiddlers on the Loose outreach ensemble performed for 65 people at Théâtre Cercle Molière's 'Dimanche en famille' in October, and for over 200 people at various correctional facilities. They also played for another 315 people post-lockdown at Assiniboine Park and in the RWB Plaza through Downtown Biz. The Artists in Healthcare program reached another 2,000 people, and Dinuk Wijeratne and Karina Gauvin gave master classes and talks at CMU and U of M.

After the MCO was compelled to suspend their season in March, staff

immediately turned their efforts to retaining revenue for cancelled events. With leadership from the MCO managing director, Elise, Joan, Corinne, and Conrad engaged in an extended campaign to communicate with subscribers and ticket-holders for cancelled concerts to determine how they would like to allocate their ticket credits. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with only 7% of unused ticket revenue requested for refund. 84% of unused ticket revenue was donated back to the MCO and 9% carried forward to the following season. Through this campaign, the MCO staff often found themselves in personable conversations with loyal audience members eager to find ways of reconnecting with the local cultural community remotely amid the lockdown. One outcome of this was the release of MCO at Home, an online content hub curated and hosted by MCO Music Director Anne Manson for presenting online performances and interviews. Since launching this platform in late March, the MCO YouTube channel has earned around 22,000

new views with more ambitious content for the 20/21 season promising to secure even higher engagement.

The VINYL VAULT earned \$10,305 from September to February. In October 2019, Heidi Ouellette joined the MCO staff in the new role of Director of Development. We were pleased to welcome back all of our major concert and outreach sponsors, and were delighted to earn several new sponsorships in support of our MCO at Home programming. Efforts by the fundraising team to retain sponsorship support for the cancelled 19-20 concerts was also strong, with many sponsors choosing to shift their support towards our online content. MCO's Endowment Fund, administered by The Winnipeg Foundation, received more donations from supporters and matching funds from the Foundation and the federal Endowment Incentives Program. It now sits at \$2.129 M, plus a \$375,000 life insurance policy. The MCO Board of Directors expressed satisfaction with the year's results, and has turned its focus to the promise of the current season.

2019/20 Board and staff

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Her Honour, The Honourable
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Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba

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& Front-of-house Manager**
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Bookkeeper
Pat Ireton

Systems and Design
Jon Snidal

Concertmaster
Karl Stobbe

Concert Manager
Boyd MacKenzie

Music Librarian
Michaela Klier

Program Advertising
Brian Chipney

2019/20 Concerts

25 September 2019
The Buhler Concert
Anne Manson, conductor
Nikki and Timothy, cello
Matinee Concert co-sponsors:
**Mrs. Angela Ross
& Drs. Elizabeth Tippett-Pope
& Bill Pope**

Evening Concert sponsor:
Wawanesa Insurance
Matinee Concertmaster sponsors:
Elaine & Neil Margolis
Evening Concertmaster sponsor:
Paul Walsh
Concert Media Sponsor:
**Nostalgia Broadcasting
Co-operative (CJNU 93.7)**

30 October 2019
Dinuk Wijeratne, piano & conductor
Concert sponsor:
Pollard Banknote Limited

13 November 2019
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
Guest Artist Sponsor:
The Asper Family Foundation
Concertmaster sponsor:
Raymond Hébert

4 December 2019
Anne Manson, conductor
The Winnipeg Singers
Karina Gauvin, Soprano
Concert Sponsor: LBL Holdings Ltd.
Guest Artist Sponsor:
Sandi and Ron Mielitz

Music Director Sponsor:
Allmar Inc.
With support from the **Foundation
for Choral Music in Manitoba**

12 February 2020
Earl Stafford, guest conductor
Ariel Barnes, cello
Concert sponsors:
Johnston Group Inc.

24 March 2020 (concert suspended)
Cluster Festival collaboration
Concertmaster sponsor
Edmond Financial Group Inc.†

Music Director sponsor
**Warde Fraser
Manulife Securities†**
MCO/Cluster Festival
Collaboration support
The Winnipeg Foundation†

22 April 2020 (concert suspended)
Anne Manson, conductor
Victoria Sparks, percussion
Matinee Music Director
& Concertmaster Sponsor
Stella's Café and Bakery†
Evening Music Director
& Concertmaster Sponsor
**Roger Groening
(in memoriam, Edd Groening)†**

23 May 2020 (concert suspended)
Aislinn Nosky, violin
Guy Fishman, cello
Concertmaster Sponsor
PwC Canada†

9 June 2020 (concert suspended)
Anne Manson, conductor
Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano
Concert Sponsor:
Gail Asper Family Foundation†

†In view of the pandemic lockdown and resulting suspension of the second half of MCO's 2019/20 season, these sponsors generously reallocated their support for the 2019/20 season to the MCO at Home platform.

2019/20 Education & outreach

Fiddlers on the Loose is a troupe of MCO players that offers workshops and mini-concerts in Manitoba schools, libraries, and correctional facilities. **Pizzicato Pizza Club** offers music education and free pizza to attendees of the MCO's evening concerts. Other pre-concert events include the MCO's talks at **McNally Robinson**, generally featuring an MCO featured soloist or conductor, and MCO mini-concerts, generally featuring emerging musicians, presented at Westminster 45 minutes before the main concert event.

Workshops and masterclasses are offered as opportunities arise. Matinee performances, open rehearsals, lectures, workshops, and classroom visits — MCO goes to school, and the schools come to MCO!

MCO at Home launched in April 2020, the MCO's new online platform offers a steady stream of virtual content including concert recordings, exclusive performance videos, interviews with musicians, conductors, and composers with our Music Director Anne Manson, playlists, and more.

Education & Outreach support:
the **Canada Council for the Arts**, the **Manitoba Arts Council**, the **Winnipeg Arts Council**, the **Winnipeg Foundation**, **Assiniboine Credit Union**, **Canada Life**, **LBL Holdings Ltd**, the **Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation**, **Manitoba Hydro**, **Manitoba Teachers' Society**, the **Mauro Fund**, **Red River Co-op**, the **Richardson Foundation**, **Sun Life Financial**, and **Telus Friendly Future Foundation**

Heartstrings

Dinner sponsor:
**Christianson Wealth Advisors
National Bank Financial**

Wine sponsor: **Manitoba
Liquor & Lotteries**

Reception sponsor:
**Johnson Sousa Thoroski
& Associates of RBC Wealth
Management, Dominion
Securities†**

Music sponsor: **Payworks†**

†Sponsorship forwarded to 2021

Special thanks

The **Canada Council for the Arts**
Manitoba Arts Council
Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries
Winnipeg Arts Council
Richardson Foundation
The Winnipeg Foundation
Canada Life
Sun Life Financial
Telus Friendly Future Foundation

Season sponsor: **CN**

Tour sponsor: **Hudbay**

Media sponsors:
Winnipeg Free Press
Canstar Community News
Prairie Public Broadcasting
Classic 107 & Golden West Radio

2019/20 Canadian repertoire

Keiko Devaux
Gabriel Dharmoo
Marcus Goddard
Raine Hamilton

Kevin Lau
Alexina Louie

Sid Robinovitch
Linda Catlin Smith
Claude Vivier
Kristen Wachniak

Dinuk Wijeratne

Dinuk Wijeratne

Forest for the Trees†

Sure until†

Cello Concerto

Starlight,† *Creek Cabin Song*,†
Aurora in the Meadow†

Writ in Water†

Waking The Lion (2019), concerto for percussion and string orchestra†

Percussion Concerto†

Orient Point†

Pulau Dewata (arr. M. Desterle)†

Of Absolute Resistance†

Gajaga Vannama, Fantasy Variations on a Traditional Theme

The Poetry of Squares

†MCO performance postponed until a later season as a result of pandemic lockdown

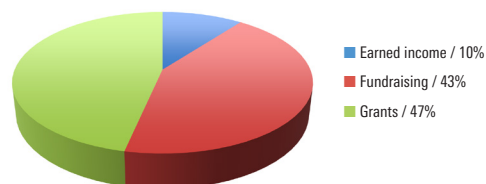
Income and expenses

Income	2020	2019
Earned income	\$96,033	\$221,264
Fundraising and sponsorship	\$398,967	\$442,557
Grants	\$432,282	\$480,250
	\$927,282	\$1,144,071

Expenses	2020	2019
Artistry and performance	\$358,979	\$733,084
Marketing and publicity	\$27,999	\$30,262
Administrative	\$388,459	\$368,223
Contribution to MCO Endowment Fund	\$2,700	\$6,015
	\$778,137	\$1,137,584

Surplus	\$149,145	\$6,487
Accumulated surplus/deficit	\$112,034	\$105,547
Net assets invested in guaranteed cash value of life insurance	\$47,332	\$44,336
Investment in capital assets	\$3,203	\$3,331
Stabilization fund	\$9,868	\$9,868
Special projects fund	\$12,869	\$12,869
Unrestricted net assets	\$187,907	\$41,630
Net surplus	\$261,179	\$112,034

Income



Expenses

