



CONVERGENCE ENSEMBLE

Rachel Goodwin, Artistic Director

Our Year in Review: 2020

Responding.

Adapting.

Growing.

www.convergenceensemble.org

2020 was a
challenging
year, but we
have grown.



Identity.

Artistry.

Education.

Financial.



Who We Are

Founded in 2015 by **Pianist and Artistic Director Rachel Goodwin**, Convergence Ensemble is a non-profit organization that presents unusual chamber music programming by supporting a diverse group of musicians that engage local audiences, inspire local pride, and strengthen the connections between our various Boston neighborhoods. The ensemble was founded on the belief that the arts are interdisciplinary—that art, poetry, dance, literature, and music inform one another. The organization prides itself on working not only with musicians but also poets, writers, and literary performers.

Passionate about education, Convergence Ensemble prides itself on creating Interactive Musical Educational Performances. These performances serve youth that have difficulty accessing classical music. The programs empower youth to be creative, celebrating their artistic voices and giving them a platform to share their life experiences. We believe that the students we serve will be the next ones to write about history!

Our Journey in 2020

Without a doubt, 2020 was a challenging year. Convergence Ensemble, along with the greater arts community, faced unprecedented obstacles from the Covid-19 Pandemic. Despite canceled concerts, delayed educational programs, and setbacks in fundraising, we persevered and grew.

Over the year, we searched deep within the ensemble and reformed our identity, adopting a new mission, clarifying our vision, and explicitly outlining our values.

For the first time in Convergence Ensemble history, we completed a virtual salon concert that explored history, art, and activism. We brought together the visual, musical, and literary arts communities with the Peace and Nuclear Disarmament communities!

We developed a virtual, interactive, musical, educational performance specifically for students with learning disabilities, reaffirming our commitment to serving diverse populations.

Finally, through the generosity of our donors and through our grant writing efforts, Convergence has been fortunate enough to grow financially.



Mission

Fostering community through chamber music, Convergence Ensemble provides welcoming, accessible, and exceptional quality music experiences for audiences, educational institutions, and neighborhood organizations throughout New England.

Vision

The vision of Convergence Ensemble is that our contribution of chamber music will stimulate, support, and inspire stronger connections within and between New England communities. Our commitment is to share the power of music and the arts as expressions of our common humanity.

Values

We provide programming of the highest quality, featuring a diverse collection of musicians, and artists from various disciplines, for communities throughout New England that often have limited access to such programming. Our intention is to work collaboratively with performance venues and educational institutions to provide programming consistent with their goals and needs. In addition, we consider it important to give talented, young, emerging musicians and mature, established musicians the opportunity to work with and learn from each other.

Strengthening Our Identity

Our Planning Committee, comprised of poet and former Massachusetts Cultural Council program director Charles Coe, former Administration and Production Director of the Luvre Auditorium in Paris Magali Maiza, and pianist and artistic director Rachel Goodwin was joined by the incomparable Myran Parker-Brass, who was the former Executive Director for the Arts for the Boston Public Schools and Director of Education for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Together, the team strengthened Convergence Ensemble's identity.

The new mission, vision, and values adopted by Convergence Ensemble allows us to continue building community through chamber music.

Welcoming.

Accessible.

Quality.

Community.

Collaboration.

Celebration.

Our First Ever Virtual Salon Earl Kim: *Now and Then*



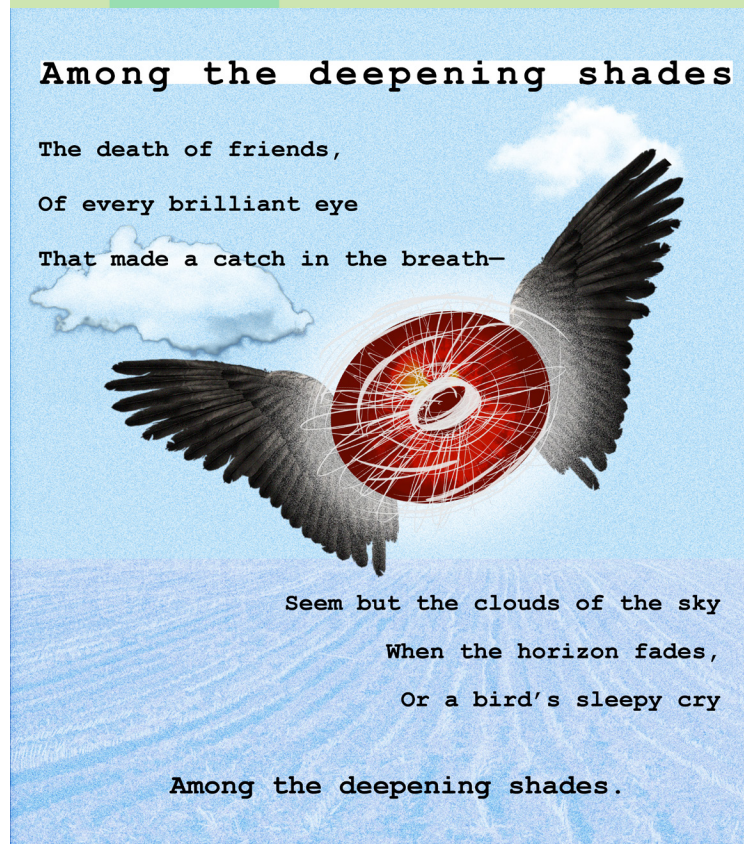
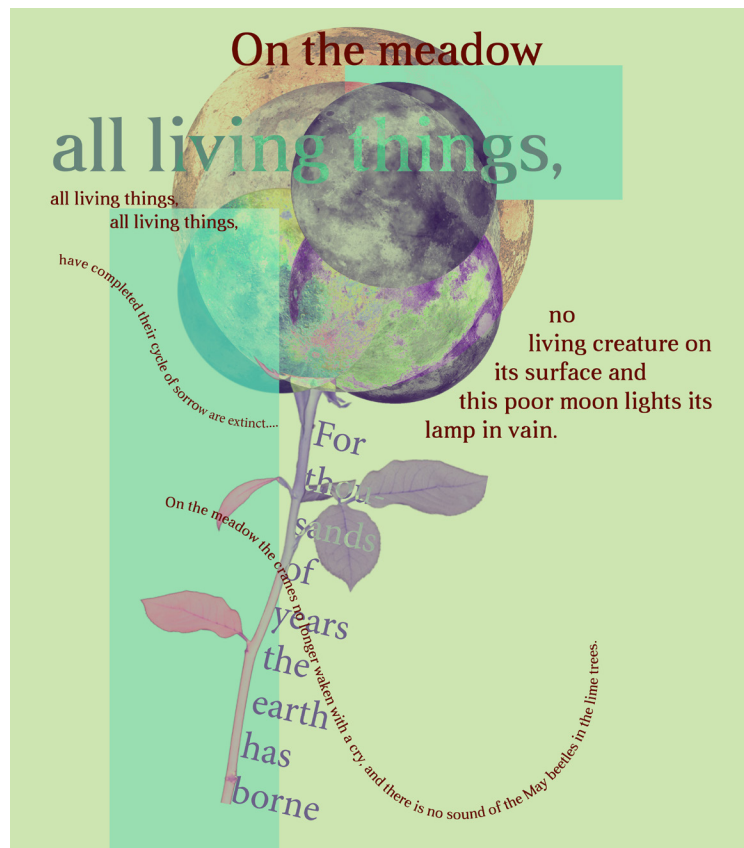
In December, Convergence completed its first public, virtual salon. The salon was centered around a performance of the late Korean-American composer Earl Kim's *Now and Then*, which was a piece written as a response to the tragic atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Kim was a pilot in the US Army

Air Force during WWII and flew over the destruction of Nagasaki. It took Kim nearly 36 years to write *Now and Then*. The piece is described as the composer's "quiet, passionate protest against nuclear war." Kim wrote of the piece:

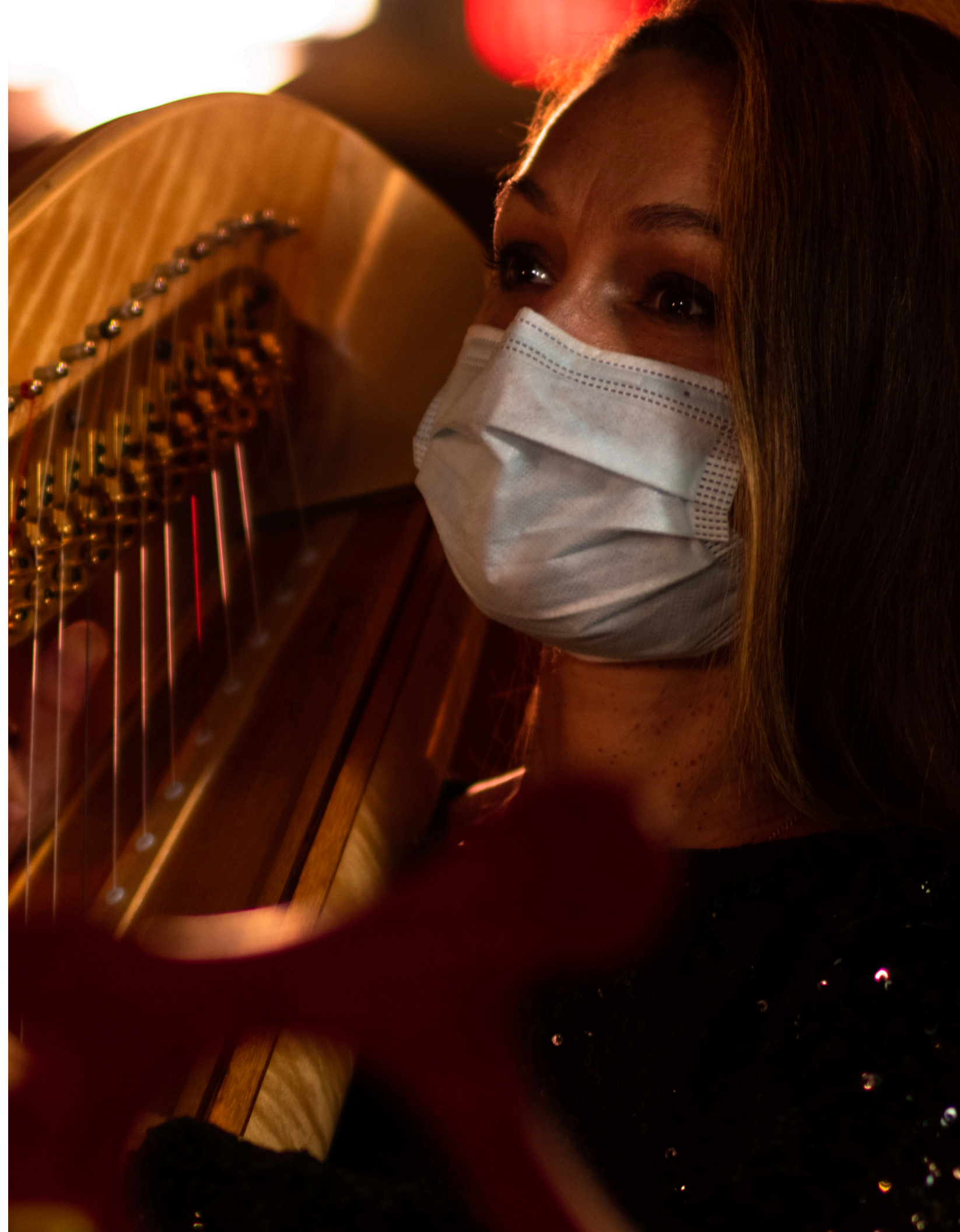
"The texts which I finally settled on cover a range of poetic images dealing with the death of friends, the innocence and vulnerability of daffodils, the loneliness of one's final moment, and Chekhov's prophetic vision of an earth which for thousands of years... has borne no living creature."

Our musical performance featured mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato, flutist Linda Toote, violist Hye-Min Choi, and harpist Ina Zdorovetchi. We commissioned visual artist Makenna Parks to respond to the music, creating four different works of art. The performance also featured a moving performance of the text by Charles Coe.

Following the salon, we invited peace builders Joseph Gerson (President of the Campaign for Peace, Disarmament, and Common Security) and Ray Matsumiya (Director of the Oleander Initiative in Cambridge) to speak about nuclear disarmament, peace, hope, and resilience. The event brought together the arts and peace communities and showed how the arts can help people better understand historical events. We plans to take this program into high schools to teach students about how they can build a platform for themselves through the arts community. Our educational program will be show students that art can explore the depth of expression and can help them understand the history that they live through.



Two of the four original works by Makenna Parks, visual artist



Committed to Education

Convergence Ensemble has developed Interactive Musical Educational Performances that have a long-term, meaningful impact on our community's young people. In 2020, we realized that we needed to reform our programs to be more accessible. We partnered with Open Door Arts and Charlestown High School to create our first ever program for students with learning disabilities.

Historically, the Ensemble has worked with schools such as Codman Academy, the Hernandez School, Boston Latin School, and the Epiphany School. Convergence is proud to have presented bi-lingual programs in Spanish and English. Additionally, the Ensemble works with after-school programs, such as B-READY (a bi-lingual program run out of The Church of St. Augustine and St. Martin) and the St. Stephen's Youth Programs (both in Roxbury), the YMCA (Dorchester), and Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston.

Convergence has served 400+ students since its founding!



“Thank you for your support by bringing the recordings [and performances] to school to empower students to take history into their own hands.” - Donor and Education Advocate

Quality.

Providing youth with the highest quality music possible

Ensuring that professional musicians are available to the community



Accessibility.

Relating the concert experience to the lives of students

Overcoming barriers that prevent access to music

Investing in communities and building a space for culturally diverse and enriching experiences

Learning.

Highlighting the connections between music and other arts disciplines

Expressing the role of music in our lives and how it connects our communities

To learn more about our education initiatives and to watch our educational video by Roberto Mighty, visit



www.convergenceensemble.org/education

Educational Program for Students with Learning Disabilities

Charlestown High School

On June 4, 2020, Convergence Ensemble delivered a brand new virtual Interactive Musical Educational Performance (IMEP) to Charlestown High School to two classes serving students with learning disabilities. With the help of Alissa Voth, an Open Door Arts teaching artist at CHS, we developed a program with literary performer Regie Gibson and a program with violin duo Hsin-Lin Tsai and Miguel Perez. The programs integrated with the students' curricula while also ensuring that they had access to professional musicians.

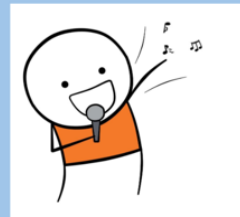


Regie started the class by performing "One World. One Music." The students cheered and clapped along on zoom. After, the Alissa introduced the lesson topic by saying "We learned that you can make music using an instrument. Now we can use our bodies too!"

Gibson and Voth introduced the concept of rhythm to the students. "Do you hear how our voices go up and down when we say certain words? That's rhythm," said Gibson. The students were asked to mirror rhythm with their bodies by putting their arms up and down to match the rhythm. This process allowed students to connect the concepts with their bodies, creating a physical understanding of rhythm! Voth, along with the paraprofessionals in the

classroom, exclaimed that "this is some of the most engagement we've seen in the classroom all year!"

Let's make music with the *syllables* in our names!



The most poignant part of the lesson was when Gibson took out a talking drum and used it to perform students' names. "What syllables do you hear in your name?" Gibson would ask. The students would say their names and "perform" with their hands; Regie would play their name back using the talking drum and his voice. Of course, the students loved this! Students connected with the creative process and were empowered as musicians!

Regie's program ended with a performance of his "Let's Take it Back." For some students, this was the first time a performance space was made accessible to them. Students were dancing, cheering, singing, and clapping along. Before the Zoom call ended, one of the students said, "I hope you come back!"

Hsin-Lin Tsai and Miguel Perez's program taught students about the violin. They opened the class with a performance of Gliere's violin duo no. 5. The students were instantly engaged, and they could tell that this was a special performance just for them.

Tsai began pointing out different parts of the violin, from the neck to the strings. She had the students count out the string numbers as she plucked them from high to low and low to high. Students would

"This is exactly what the kids needed. Thank you so much for creating this program with us!" -CHS Teacher



Next, Miguel is going to teach us about the the violin bow!

hold up their fingers to indicate string numbers and connected the concept of high and low sounds to previous lessons taught in the class. Perez transitioned the lesson into defining *arco* and *pizzicato* or long and short sounds.

As he demonstrated bowing and plucking techniques, students would "air bow" and "air pluck." One student actually had a violin in his home, which was brought out to show the Zoom class. The students were extremely curious to see that their classmate had an instrument, and the caretakers and family members on screen were equally as happy.

At the end of the class, students were asked if they wanted to sing, play, or listen to the violin duo. When they picked "listen," Tsai and Perez performed an arrangement of "Just the Way You Are" by Bruno Mars. "I know that song!" students exclaimed. It was important to Voth that the students could personally connect with the music, making sure that it was music that they heard in their own homes. At the end of the performance, a student and parent said "You should come play for us when we can meet in person again!"

Both IMEPs were extremely successful, adapting easily into the virtual classroom setting and serving students with various learning disabilities!



PERFORM - "Just The Way You Are"



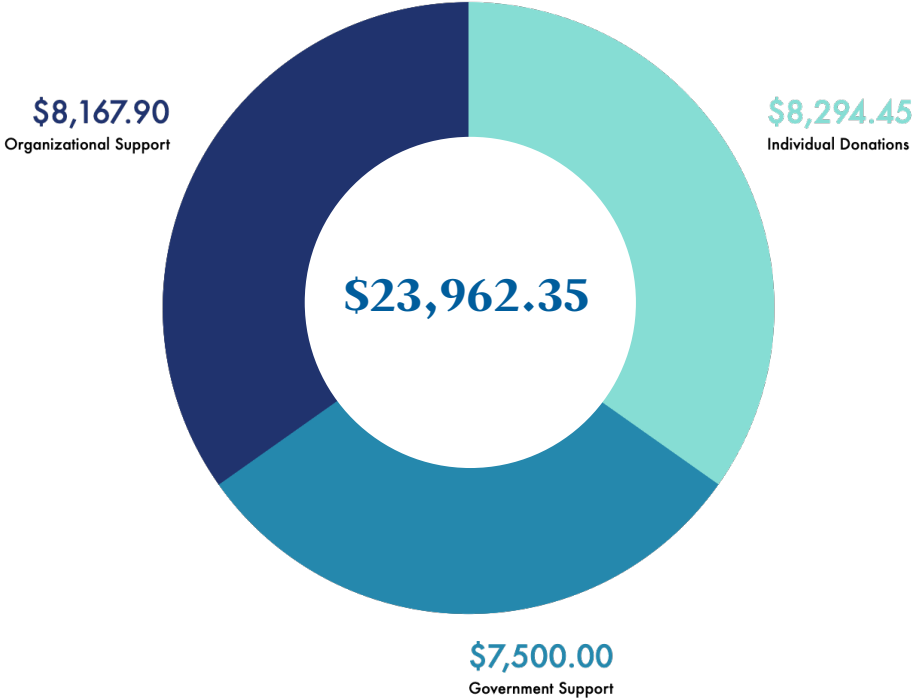
"Regie, Hsin-Lin, and Miguel were phenomenal. It was such an honor and a privilege to work with them on this program. The kids absolutely loved it. I hope we can work together again in the future."

-Alissa Voth, Open Door Arts Teaching Artist

Financial Health During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Despite challenges related to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Convergence raised over \$23,900 during the 2020 calendar year. Support from individual donors, government grants, and organizational grants allowed us to continue. We cannot thank our supporters enough!

Jan - Dec 2020 Revenue



We are proud to have increased our donor base by ~12% and have received more grants than ever! In 2021, we will continue to grow, expand, and diversify our revenue.

Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic, we were able to pay our musicians, grow our staff, and develop brand new artistic and educational programming. The infrastructure that we have invested in has made Convergence stronger as we continue to navigate the Pandemic.

If you would like to support us, please visit www.convergenceensemble.org/support

Who Were the Grantors?

Convergence Ensemble is funded generously in part by the Kathryn and Charles Avison - Miriam Avison Charitable Fund, the Free For All Fund, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boston Cultural Council, the Boston Arts & Culture Covid-19 Fund, and the Charity Aid Foundation of America.

The Avison Fund directly supports Convergence's educational projects. Convergence is grateful to have received the grant twice.

The Free For All Fund has allowed Convergence to produce free concerts, ensuring equal access to audiences.



Staff and Advisors

Artistic Staff

Rachel Goodwin, Artistic Director & Founder

Administrative Staff

Nicholas Tran, Administrative-Operations Manager

Joseph Borgia, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Board of Advisors

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Magali Maïza

Charles Coe

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Michael Charney

Michael Scanlon

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