

MAESTRA



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE FOUNDER A LETTER



Maestra turned five this year, and it's amazing how much this organization has transformed in such a short amount of time. You will read in these pages about the programs we have created and the people who are impacted by them, but I also want to share with you the ways that the Board, staff, and I are working steadily to secure this company's roots and plant the seeds for its enduring success.

The biggest news from Maestra headquarters is that we have begun the search for an Executive Director, a visionary arts leader who will lead Maestra into 2025 and beyond. This organization really was born during the pandemic; so much of what we initially built was in response to a community of musicians who were scared they might never again be able to make music together. Maestra created an online community, taught Virtual Technical Workshops, and launched Regional and Affinity Groups to share resources and opportunities. The theatre industry of course did come back, and **our members have flourished because of the connections they made and skills they honed here.** One young musician told me recently that every job she's gotten since she graduated from college was because someone found her profile in the Maestra Directory.

Success like that is showing up in our numbers, too. In 2021 when we first started collecting data, 22% of the pit musicians on Broadway identified as women or nonbinary people. This season that number rose to 39%. **In 2022 we asked our members what success for Maestra might look like in three to five years, and one of the answers we received was that there should be "at least one major female music contractor."** This season, **60% of the new musicals on Broadway were contracted by women.**

As cultural conversations around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access are beginning to change, **Maestra remains steadfast in the belief that supporting women and nonbinary people does not come at the expense of others.** Our male allies have been pivotal in this work; we see them recommending and hiring Maestras, using the RISE Theatre Directory, serving as mentors in our community, and challenging racial and gender inequities on creative teams and on tech crews and in offices. Maestra's stability depends on our supporting and being supported by our partners, our donors, our volunteers, and the network of members who are all over the world looking out for each other and making music and theatre together, despite the external forces that tell them they can't.

2024 was a great year, and we are setting ourselves up for even more success by leaning into our mission of providing support, visibility, and community for our members. **Thanks for growing with us.**

Georgia Stitt
Composer, Lyricist, Music Director
Founder and President of Maestra Music

MISSION STATEMENT

Maestra Music, Inc. provides **SUPPORT, VISIBILITY, and COMMUNITY**

to the women and nonbinary people who make the music in the musical theater industry.

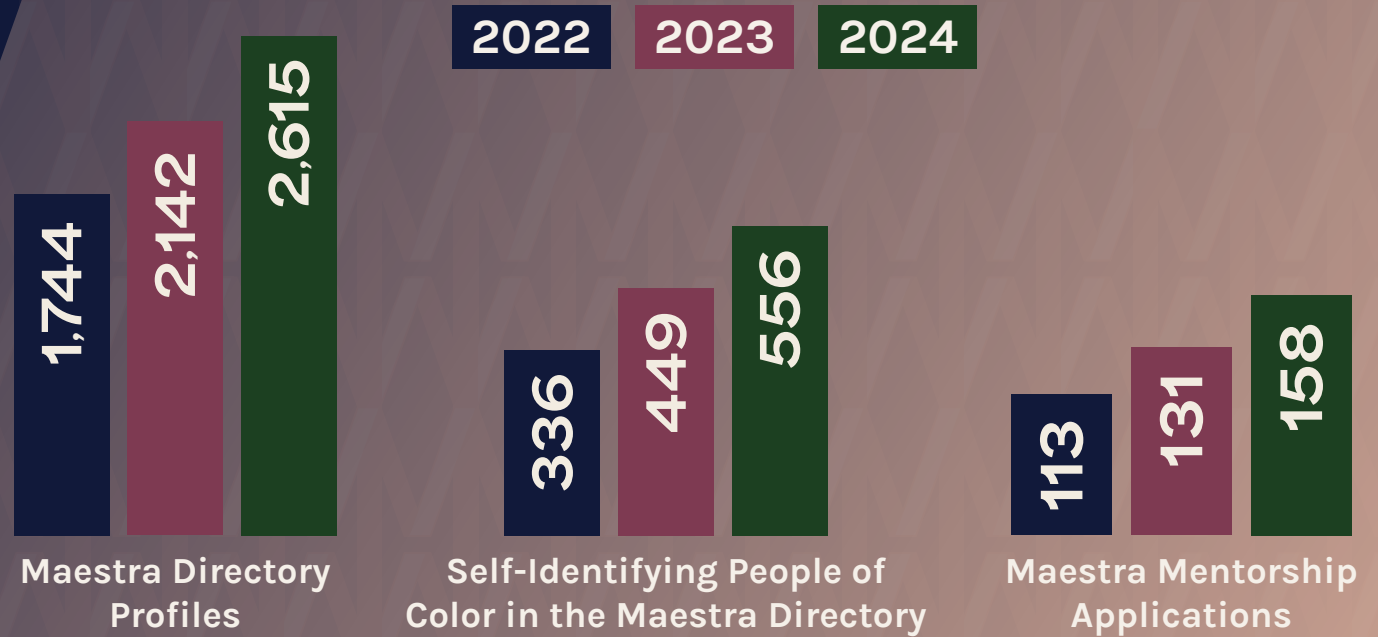
Our membership is made up of **COMPOSERS, MUSIC DIRECTORS, ORCHESTRATORS, ARRANGERS, COPYISTS, REHEARSAL PIANISTS,** and **OTHER MUSICIANS** who are an underrepresented minority in musical theater.

The organization's initiatives include **monthly educational seminars, mentorship programs, technical skills workshops, networking events, and online resources** and **partnerships** that aim to promote equality of opportunity and to address the many historical disadvantages and practices that have limited women and nonbinary composers and musicians in the musical theater.



NUMBERS BY THE

YEAR OVER YEAR GROWTH



3,416

RISE Profiles

4,610

RISE Total Social Media Followers

3,264

Subscribers to On The RISE Newsletter

52%

of survey respondents said that Maestra has helped them achieve their personal or business goals.

4

Conferences Attended

6

Maestra on the Road Schools Visited

46

RISE Network Partners

126

Workshops in the Maestra Replay Library

6,951

Subscribers to Maestra's Weekly Newsletter

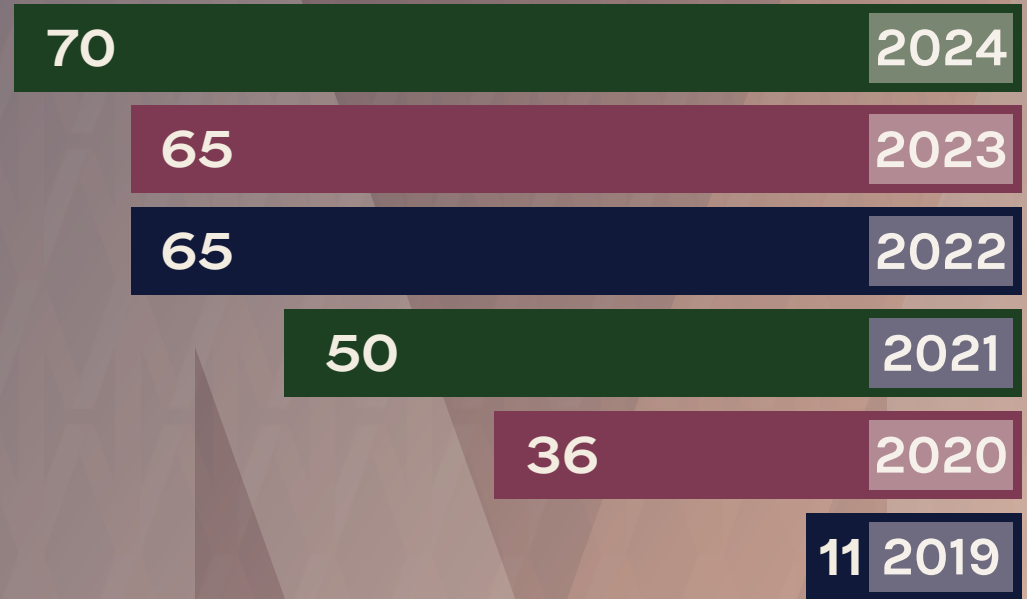
14,282

Maestra/RISE Total Social Media Followers

MAESTRA MENTORSHIP PAIRINGS

297

ALL-TIME PAIRINGS



Virtual Technical Workshops served

14,307

attendees from **78** countries and **49** states

between **2020** and **2024**.



“

I would tell another musician considering this [mentorship] program that it's a **no-lose situation** for mentees. If someone is willing to put in the work and effort to make this their career, Maestra is there to unlock, if not open, the doors.

This program has changed everything for me.

– Emily Davies, *Bassist, Maestra Mentee '24*

”

Visibility Spotlight: THE PIT AT SUFFS

Since Maestra's founding, there have only been three Broadway musicals that intentionally put together bands with all female and nonbinary musicians: *Head Over Heels*, *Six*, and, most recently, *Suffs*.

For many of the Maestras who worked on *Suffs* this past season, it was their first time playing in this type of inclusive ensemble. They appreciated feeling truly seen and valued in a new way.

"I had a sense of ownership and belonging here that I haven't felt elsewhere," shared associate conductor Emily Whitaker. Several *Suffs* musicians, Whitaker included, received significant career opportunities when more established Maestras—such as *Suffs* conductor Andrea Grody—were willing to take a chance on them.

Veteran Broadway reed player Christine MacDonnell has played in her fair share of male-dominated pits where "they're telling their own jokes, and you either have to laugh with them or you're ostracized," she said. In contrast, *Suffs* was a rare opportunity to easily bond with her colleagues and build community.

"They always say women and Black folks have to be twice as good as the next person," noted *Suffs* concertmaster and violinist Mazz Swift, who envisions a changed culture on Broadway. Bands like *Suffs* are leading the way and showing how that new era is possible.

After all, the impact of seeing a band full of Maestras extends far beyond the pit and into the audience.

"There will be kids who come to the show, and I am the first conductor they see. They'll go, 'That's what a Broadway conductor looks like,'" said Grody. "And then things will change; one step at a time."

BY SARAH REBELL

"If I made history the other night, it's because I stand on the shoulders of maestras who have lit the way for me, and I will do everything in my power to leave the light on for the next girl."

—Shaina Taub
Two-Time Tony Award® Winner
Suffs Book, Music, & Lyrics
Maestra Directory Member



PROGRAMS

Maestra's programs are designed to provide **support, visibility, and community** for our members. In addition to regular events within First Takes, Maestra Care, and Mentorship, our Monthly Meetings create gatherings for classes, celebrations, and unique experiences. This year we have also spent time building partnerships with other organizations across the theater industry.



Virtual Technical Workshop
with Anaïs Mitchell



Lunar New Year



Maestra Care/RISE Care Cookies



Ice Cream Social with
Broadway Women's Alliance



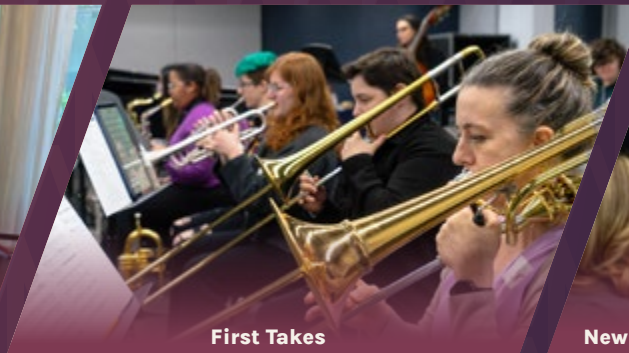
Hispanic Heritage Month



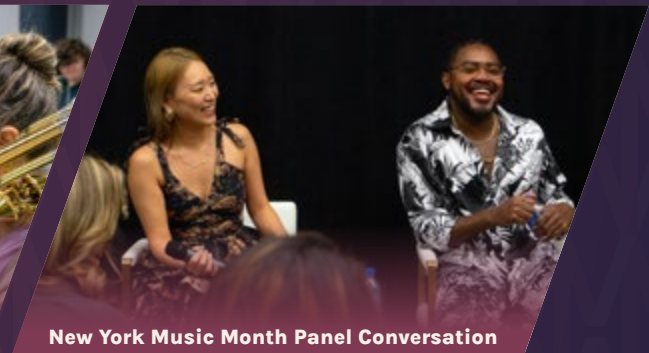
Maestra Night at *Water For Elephants*
on Broadway



Broadway League's Spring Road Conference



First Takes



New York Music Month Panel Conversation

REGIONAL AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Our Regional and Affinity Groups carry the mission and work of Maestra far beyond New York City into national and international theatre markets serving women and nonbinary musicians around the globe.



Boston



Chicago



Los Angeles



Michigan



New York



Texas



London



Vienna



Mexico City

RISE Theatre

203 Inaugural RISE Summit Attendees

In September, we launched The RISE Summit, a free, in-person event at the New York Public Library for theatre changemakers to address equity concerns by connecting the RISE network partners, building community across disciplines, and identifying and creating pathways for sustaining progress within the industry. Sponsored by Disney Theatricals and AKA and in partnership with Playbill, the event sold out in one day, and **our website saw a new user increase of 89%.**



ASL Interpretation provided by Access Broadway NY



RISE was spotlighted in the 2024 Viva Broadway Hispanic Heritage Month exhibit at The Museum of Broadway



“ RISE is not the solution; it's just one facet of a way we can connect really talented technicians and artists to the jobs that they should be doing.

It's continuing to look at diversity as something that makes theatre better.

The more your rehearsal room looks like the world, the more exciting the thing is that you're going to get to make.

– Lin-Manuel Miranda,
*composer, lyricist, bookwriter,
performer, director*



Support Spotlight: ARI AFSAR

In most industries, people use tools like Indeed or LinkedIn to find qualified candidates for a job. For musicians, it all depends on who you know. At least, that's how people used to get hired — before the Maestra Directory.

"Without a directory, you ask your friends who they've worked with. That means that your network is only as big as the people that you know," songwriter Ari Afsar observed.

In addition to being a successful composer, Afsar is a former Miss California (Top 10 in the Miss America pageant), *American Idol* contestant, star of a Netflix film (*Wedding Season*) and the original Eliza in the Chicago production of *Hamilton*. Through all the different facets of her career, she has continued to be an advocate for equity, passionate about fostering a sense of equality both onstage and offstage in her shows. That's why she frequently uses the Maestra Directory when looking for musicians to help support her work and bring her musicals to life.

Most recently, the Directory led Afsar to Brittany Harris – a cellist, composer, and singer who has since become a valued collaborator: Harris went from being Afsar's music copyist to actually performing in her show.

Afsar believes Harris' "energy and communication style" contributed to their successful partnership. "We entered into a collaboration as a team," she shared. "I was able to support her in exploring all of her multi-hyphens in an authentic way."

That's just one example of how the Maestra Directory is enabling Afsar to support her fellow musicians, especially those who are underrepresented in the industry. "If there's no gender and race representation, it actually is a lost opportunity to be able to deepen the musical theater work."

She is grateful to the Directory for how it supports her own practice of making consciously inclusive hiring choices – and also for introducing her to new collaborators like Harris. "Now," she added, "I have a friend who is also a badass cellist that I got to collaborate with through Maestra."

BY SARAH REBELL



AMPLIFY

Maestra's fourth-annual concert and fundraising event featured stories, conversations, and musical performances from an impressive array of Broadway stars, composers, music directors, and more. This year we moved to Sony Hall in Midtown Manhattan, accommodating **378 guests** and raising **\$98K** to support Maestra's programming and operations. J. Harrison Ghee and Bonnie Milligan co-hosted.



Community Spotlight: DARRELLE JOHNSON

You don't have to be a Maestra to recognize the organization's impact.

Darrelle Johnson, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at The Broadway League, views both Maestra and its program RISE as "game changers" for the theater industry.

Johnson first heard about Maestra during the pandemic when she was working at Jujamcyn Theaters and attended a brunch for the newly created RISE Directory. "I'll remember that event for life," she recalled. "I thought it was fascinating that this industry could bring so many people together to support the launch of this great initiative."

Back at her office, she immediately began spreading the word about the Maestra and RISE Directories and has been championing both organizations ever since.

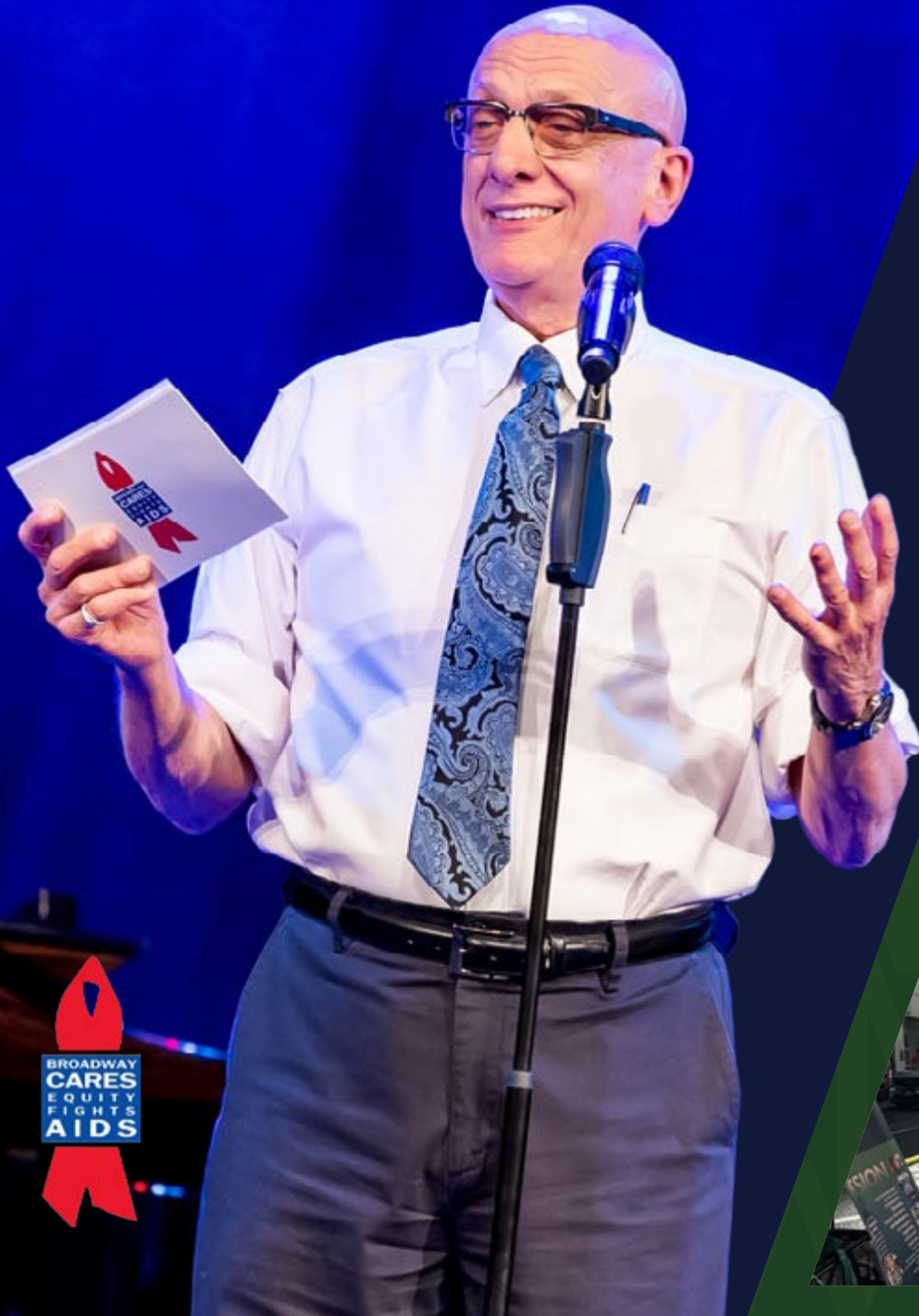
Notably, she's observed a change in how Maestras advocate for themselves. "I saw a shift in the energy go from one of being hesitant to communicate with management to now being strong and firm about addressing things that matter to them." She attributes this newly found confidence, in large part, to Maestra's work in empowering its members "to stand up for themselves and for what they know is right."

Johnson also appreciates Maestra's community-building work. From events like that RISE Directory launch to more casual music salons, she sees how vast swaths of the theater industry come to network and support each other. To Johnson, **the theater industry is an "ecosystem" in which everyone – composers, musicians, directors, performers, and producers – are interconnected.**

"I'd love to get to a point where we can actually measure the impact of organizations like Maestra and RISE," Johnson said. "That's something that I'm pushing for, to make sure people can see the value in having these relationships and programs."

BY SARAH REBELL





MAESTRA is masterful!
What you have accomplished in five years is remarkable and an extraordinary service to the entire community.

You have led the way, facing a multitude of challenges.

You will always have Broadway Cares' support and my affection.

- Tom Viola,
*Retiring Executive Director,
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS*



BOARD



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Founder and President



Laura Ivey
Treasurer



Emily Grishman
Secretary



Christie Chiles Twillie
Board Member



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Board Member



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Stephanie Sciandra
Ally Shuster
Margaret Skoglund Leigh

Anne Quart
Jeanine Tesori
Kara Unterberg
Imani Uzuri
Lia Vollack
Sheilah Walker
Schele Williams

STAFF & PROGRAM HEADS

Staff

Chief Program Officer

Judy Yin-Chi Lee

Director of Operations and Events

Carrie Caffrey

RISE Program Manager

Victoria Detres

Director of Marketing and Communications

Amy Pastrana

Manager of Marketing and Communications

Emily Ballou

Director of Development

Casey Berner

Development Consultant

Stacy Handler

of Bloom Arts Strategy

Administrative Assistant

Vanessa Porras

Bookkeeper

Claudia Stuart

Website Design

Ryan Foy and Nick Gaswirth

Roundhouse Designs

Interns

**Yu Okuda, Jenia Marquez, Miette Alt,
and Emma-Bella Bass Lawrence**

Program Heads

DEIA

Faye Chiao and

Anna Ebbesen

Directory

Kathleen Wrinn

Education and Mentorship

Meg Zervoulis and

Sonya Hayden

First Takes

Judy Yin-Chi Lee,

Yu Okuda, and

Rebecca Steinberg

Maestra Care

Laura Bergquist and

Britt Bonney

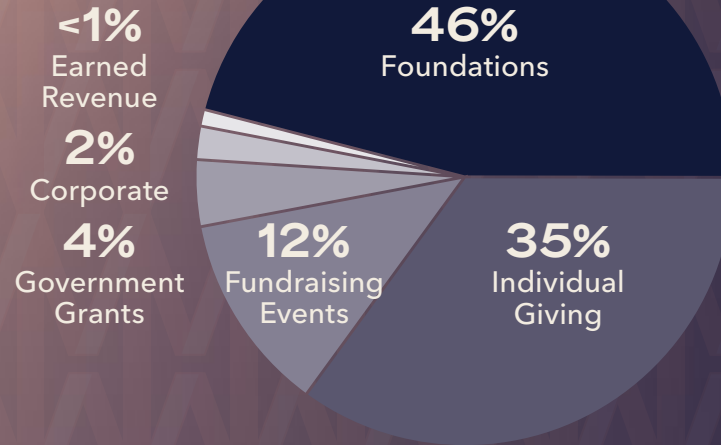
Regional and Affinity Groups

Kat Sherrell and

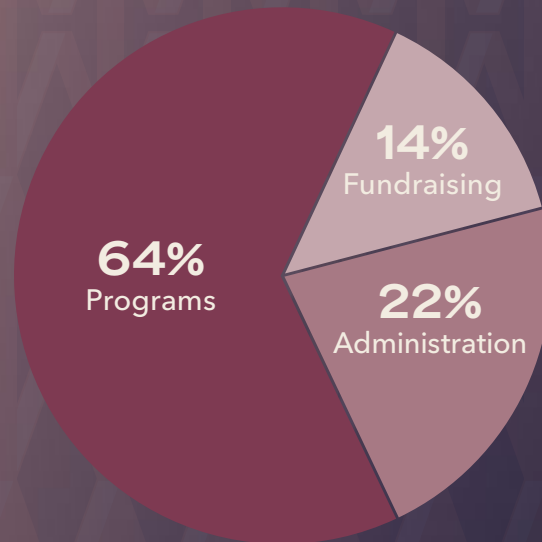
Amanda Wansa Morgan

FINANCIALS 2024

INCOME



EXPENSES



Leading Corporate and Foundation Supporters:

AKA

- Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
- Business For Good
- Concord Theatricals
- Disney Theatrical
- Downtown Music LLC
- Jeffrey Seller Family Foundation
- John Gore Organization
- Junkyard Dog Productions
- The Miranda Family Fund
- MusicalWriters.com
- Nederlander Organization
- New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)
- The Nina Abrams Fund
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Shearer Owen Music Foundation
- Stacey Mindich Productions
- Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé Foundation
- TodayTix

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STATEMENT VALUES

Maestra is a movement.

We are the women and nonbinary professionals who make the music in the musical theater industry.

We have a bold vision for an industry that is more **diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible**, across all intersections of race, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual ability, age, nationality, appearance, and gender identity and expression.

We seek to build, apply, and own our collective power.

To these ends:

We value relationships. We practice radical collegiality to champion each other as individual professionals and nurture connectedness among us.

We value transparency. We share our knowledge to help each other thrive.

We value collaboration. We encourage participation from our members and respond to new ideas and initiatives.

We value partnership. We coordinate with other groundbreaking leaders and organizations because this movement is larger than us.

We value solutions. We take practical steps to support individual members while driving toward cultural and systemic changes that benefit our entire global community.

MAESTRA

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New York, NY 10025

  @MaestraMusicOrg

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Maestra Music, Inc is a 501(c)3 charitable organization (EIN 83-3439518). All donations are deemed tax-deductible absent any limitations on deductibility applicable to a particular taxpayer.



"All the best to you, Maestra, for continued success in helping us navigate the treacherous waters of discrimination of all kinds."

- Sheilah V. Walker
Composer, Music Director,
Voice Coach, and Pianist



"It is more important than ever to support organizations like Maestra, which help bring opportunities to those who have not had the open doors provided to men like me."

- Marc Shaiman
Composer and Lyricist
Hairspray, Some Like It Hot



"Maestra gives me permission to speak openly about gender representation in pits. Before Maestra, these were whispers. Now, they are agenda items."

- Maragaret Skoglund Leigh
General Manager,
Turnkey Theatrical