



2019

ANNUAL REPORT



"One of the finest children's choirs in the world today." — Grant Gershon



mission statement

The National Children's Chorus transforms the lives of young people, empowering them to effectively lead society toward the ideals of artistic excellence, cultural openness, and social diversity.

“I am part of a loving and accepting community. I enjoy knowing that I can come to the NCC and be among others who share similar values and who help me learn and improve. I have made some of my best friends while at the NCC, and always look forward to seeing them at rehearsal.”

— Lucy Altus, NCC Alumna '18

Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

“Being accepted into the NCC was the start of something amazing. In my first year, not only did I get to perform at Carnegie Hall, I sang at Lincoln Center and Walt Disney Concert Hall. As a 10-year-old at the time, it was stimulating. As the years passed, I started going on the amazing international tours, traveling across Europe and Asia with the NCC. Over the past few years, I’ve gotten much better at sight-singing and music theory, which have helped me prepare for many things like my high school auditions. Because of the incredible teachers and conductors at the NCC, I will be attending one of the top high schools in the country for performing arts. The NCC has helped me greatly by teaching me how to present myself to the world, not only while performing, but in all aspects of my life. The NCC is a magical experience and will continue to help others soar higher than they’ve ever imagined, just like they’ve done for me.”

— Fiorela Miria, NCC student since 2016



Royce Hall, Los Angeles

Dear Friends,

At the National Children’s Chorus, we have set out on a mission to enrich and transform the lives of young people in our cities of Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco. Our goals are clear—to build confidence, increase awareness and develop character within our students through a disciplined and creative program, devoted to excellence in the vocal arts. While simply stated, the path to achieve these is both complex and daunting. Beyond the successful execution of countless production and administrative details, it truly takes a team of dedicated, hard-working professionals who care passionately about the children’s musical and personal growth. From the Prelude Level directors who greet our youngest singers at the age of five, to the Senior Division conductors, who lead our most advanced vocalists in world-class performances—all elements of the NCC experience flow from our staff’s heartfelt commitment to be a force of goodness in the lives of our members.

With the conclusion of our 10th Anniversary Season, the NCC is excited to begin a new era! Our four cities continue to expand with over 800 students combined. Through charitable contributions, we have been able to increase scholarships by more than 10% annually. Effective fundraising initiatives, coupled with a successfully-implemented organizational strategy, have resulted in a solid improvement in the NCC’s financial strength over the years. This in turn has empowered our ability to engage underserved communities.

vision

Artistically, our ensembles have excelled brilliantly and inspire us to imagine even greater heights. Highlights from 2019 include Meredith Monk’s *Cellular Songs* at Royce Hall UCLA, the world premiere of Nico Muhly’s *The Right of Your Senses* at Walt Disney Concert Hall with the American Youth Symphony, participating for the first time in the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade in Washington, D.C., and performing Mahler’s “Symphony of a Thousand” under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel with the LA Philharmonic. In July, the NCC launched its 5th international tour, and sang at the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) with the Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra, the Mapo Arts Center in Seoul with the Arborvitae Chamber Orchestra, as well as the Kyoto Concert Hall and Suntory Hall in Tokyo. Additionally, the children took part in a beautiful cultural exchange with the Kyoto Children’s Choir. The ambitious *Starlight* 2018/19 Season was surely a great triumph!

In the 2019/20 Season, entitled *Evolución*, we celebrate the journey of life and look forward to performing at Lincoln Center, New York, for our all-city event, including singers from our new San Francisco Chapter. Additional engagements include performances with the Dresden Philharmonic Children’s Choir, Los Angeles-based Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, and Lindenbaum Festival Orchestra from South Korea. This coming summer we travel to Portugal and Spain, performing our Hispanic-influenced repertoire in remarkable venues, including the great Basilíca de la Sagrada Família in Barcelona.

Today, we kindly invite you to view the following pages, which illustrate some of the key aspects of our trajectory. We are truly honored by the wondrous path that lies ahead, and thank you for being a special part of it.



Sincerely,


Luke McEndarfer

Luke McEndarfer

Artistic Director & CEO
National Children’s Chorus

curriculum

The National Children's Chorus has designed an unparalleled educational platform that seeks to build the full musician within each child. As part of weekly study, all students learn to sight read music in the Kodály Method, as well as become familiar with the principles of music theory. When practicing their vocal music, the children not only focus on mastering the pitches and rhythms of their concert repertoire, but also give considerable attention to vocal techniques that apply to much of Western music. Head tone placement, vowel formation, breath support, clear diction and artistic expression of the text are all cultivated within the ensembles, with many of the individual songs being used primarily as exercises specifically selected to teach various lessons. Advanced members of the NCC receive private voice instruction as part of the program, as well as training in composition and conducting. Several NCC students apply and are accepted each year as music majors at top-level universities and conservatories around the world.



“I can’t say enough about the experiences I’ve had here.

Now I’m looking at a career in music. I’m not yet sure what I want to do, but I know I have the skills to do it. I was recently accepted to both USC and UCLA for Vocal Performance. Honestly, it’s because of the training and musicianship skills that I’ve learned from my time at the NCC that’s made it all possible.”

— Sarah Toutounchian, NCC Alumna ‘17

Carnegie Hall, New York

“As a parent, I’m thrilled to have found a program of quality and vision that I feel nourishes our son, Malachi, as he is exposed to the very best of an art form that is central to his being. The NCC is a very big part of his identity and he treasures his place in the organization. Seeing Malachi come to life on stage and witnessing his talent shine are wonderful gifts our family shares at each concert. The NCC is an organization of the highest caliber supporting children’s musical education in extraordinary ways.”

— Ros Warby, NCC parent since 2013



Carnegie Hall, New York

performances

Live performances of the National Children’s Chorus are some of the most compelling concert experiences found anywhere. Our students not only sing with world-class technical execution, but in a manner that is connected, expressive and meticulously refined. Each concert is a passionate reflection of the human experience, and never fails to touch the hearts of our patrons. Audiences at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center continue to rave about the quality and substance of our children’s musical artistry. The *Los Angeles Times* commented on our Senior Division’s 2016 premiere of music by Tan Dun, extolling their “winning virtuosity.” As a culmination of months and even years of training, concerts at the NCC are surely cultural gems in the world of the arts. And each year, it only gets better! High-profile artistic collaborations are increasing in frequency, as the ability and reputation of the NCC take flight.

international tours

An important part of the NCC experience is our students' exposure to world history, unique cultures and social diversity. With music as a common and unifying bond, members of the National Children's Chorus travel abroad each year, performing their stellar repertoire and making connections with audiences across the world. International collaborations enable them to meet and sing with children from other countries, while gaining insight and understanding more acutely the world around them. While the NCC's excellent music is thus shared and experienced by a wider array of music enthusiasts internationally, our core goals in coordinating NCC travel are twofold. Firstly, the tours serve to solidify and strengthen the relationships that exist already within the chorus, generating memories and forging friendships that will last a lifetime. Secondly, they are designed to cultivate a higher sense of openness and empathy in our students. NCC tours teach the children that all people around the globe (despite our perceived differences) are most importantly human, just like them, and therefore equally worthy of respect, care and love. The results of NCC tours are magical and life-changing for all of us!

“Attending the NCC summer tour was a last-minute decision that my daughter and I made. Little did we know that it was going to be one of the most transformational experiences of our lives. From the performances to the cultural tours and the delicious food we ate—it was the experience of a lifetime!”

— Meg Jalali, NCC parent since 2014



Kyoto, Japan



Lincoln Center, New York

scholarships

The National Children’s Chorus was founded on the principle that children across socioeconomic lines should have equal access to high-level music education. Our philosophy is that no child with musical talent who wants to participate should be prevented the opportunity to do so.

In a given year, we receive more scholarship requests than we can fulfill. The NCC’s financial aid program awarded nearly \$130,000 in 2018/19. In 2019/20, more than \$143,000 will be awarded, with some students receiving as much as 90% of their tuition as a scholarship. In order to better meet this growing need, the NCC actively seeks additional funding to support these requests.

“We are beyond thankful for the tuition scholarship that was awarded to Luna from the National Children’s Chorus. This scholarship has helped to change Luna’s entire being—from her physical wellness to her social fears. In 2012, she was diagnosed with childhood asthma after she had an acute attack and was hospitalized for one week. She was very little, and only 3 years old. She has been on a daily regime of medication since then, and sees a pulmonologist regularly. He has been elated that as she studies singing, her pulmonary function tests have greatly improved. She feels well, and loves the joy of interacting with the other children. My husband and I know the value of the arts, and we are extremely grateful to the scholarship committee for allowing us the extra monetary help to provide Luna with this opportunity. Luna has bloomed into a confident child as a result of her experience in the NCC. Thank you for all you do to impact so many lives.”

— Nancy Slusser, NCC parent since 2015

financials

Fiscal Year: July 2018 through June 2019

OPERATING REVENUE & SUPPORT

- Programs: \$2,888,853
- Galas: \$345,236
- Individuals & Corporations: \$228,335
- Foundations: \$33,703
- Gifts In Kind: \$27,508

EXPENSES

- Programs: \$2,533,663
- Operations: \$365,460
- Fundraising: \$244,395
- Financial Aid: \$129,712

LEADERSHIP TEAM

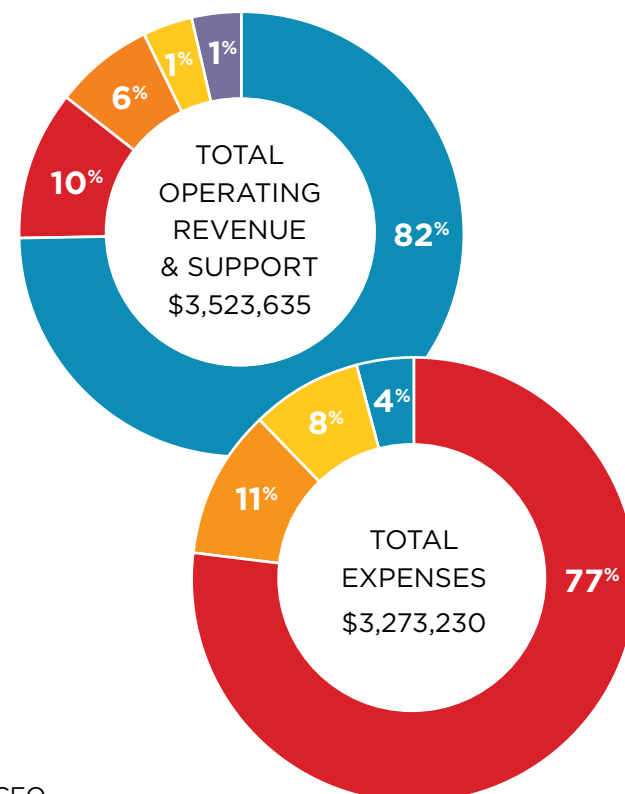
Luke McEndarfer, Artistic Director & CEO
 Dr. Pamela Blackstone, Associate Artistic Director
 Chelsea Morel, Operations Director
 Tucker Wheatley, Marketing & Communications Manager
 Rose Cholakian, Controller & Finance Manager

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Luke McEndarfer
 Deborah Birndorf Zeiler
 Lisa Grode
 Ronald E. Hohauser
 David Mumford
 Karen Murphy O'Brien

HONORARY BOARD

Mark Thallander
 Frank Brownstead
 Grant Gershon
 Morten Lauridsen
 Frederick Swann
 Barbera Thornhill
 Lisa Vroman



Our Community

Our Team

803
students

18
conductors

39
worldwide
venues

11
full-time
staff

1,428
donors

16
musicianship
instructors

5,000
live audience
members

9
private voice
instructors

325
schools
represented

11
pianists

12
production
support
staff

"winning virtuosity"

— LA Times

"amazing"

— Grammy-winning composer Eric Whitacre

"phenomenal"

— British choral composer John Rutter

"accomplished"

— LA Philharmonic

"pitch perfect"

— Washington Parent Magazine

"absolutely stunning"

— Fox News

"the best"

— Grammy-winning composer Tan Dun

"a privilege to hear"

— Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

"incredible"

— ABC News



Contact Us

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