

BUFFALO STRING WORKS ANNUAL REPORT



2020-2021



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Dear BSW Family,

Here at Buffalo String Works, we often speak of how our work has the potential to reach far beyond the walls of the music classroom. While playing with a beautiful tone and perfect intonation are certainly honorable goals, it's the listening skills, the teamwork, and the intensity of working for countless hours, days, and months just to master 4 measures of music, that we hope our young BSW musicians will carry with them into their homes, their schools, and their own communities. Our greatest goal at BSW is for our students to forge social bonds that will last far longer than the harmonious chord of our last concert.

We certainly needed that togetherness throughout 2020-21 when our program began completely virtually with no understanding of when we might make music again in the same room. The unknown weighed heavily on us but in true BSW fashion, our board, staff, and faculty rallied and devoted ourselves to transforming the BSW mission into the virtual space. We drew out every ounce of creative energy possible, leaning heavily on our backgrounds as musicians, community organizers, nonprofit professionals, educators, and more.

Most of all, our families showed up. They fought through every moment of Zoom fatigue, glitchy technology, and extreme stress. They showed up day after day, ad together we created a community bound together by music despite the technology that often kept us apart. We have learned a tremendous amount over the last year, but most importantly, we now truly understand that we need our families as much as—or even more than—they need us.

So, we hope that you will soak up every word and image in the pages to come because it is a testament to the power of music to bind us together.

With deep appreciation for your continued support and cheerleading,



 Yuki Numata Resnick, Executive Director



 James Sampson, Board President

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

Student Spotlight

MOHAMED



MOHAMED

"IT'S FUN NOT BEING ALONE. IT'S COOL PLAYING AND LEARNING WITH SOMEONE, AND SOMETIMES YOU CAN LEARN FROM THEM, TOO."

Watch Mohamed and Andrew's conversation at: <https://bit.ly/MohamedInterview>

Mohamed is a 5th year BSW Cellist. He is a founding member of BSW's Student Council (pg. 6) and just began his freshman year at the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts.

Andrew (BSW Education Director): What have some of your favorite experiences been so far in Advanced Ensemble?

Mohamed: Playing, because most of them are all my friends. So I'm getting to play with my close friends.

Andrew: What else do leaders do?

Mohamed: They guide . . . they show people the right thing to do.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

2020

MAR

We crafted our first-ever BSW Student Site, which remains our **online home** beyond the pandemic.

JUN

We premiered our **first-ever online concert**, which has garnered over 1,000 views!

JUL

We held a six-week long **virtual summer camp** and a Black Lives Matter camp for our Student Leaders.

SEP

A year of virtual BSW? We bravely launched our **first Zoom classes** for all 96 students!

OCT

We recorded "**They Would Only Walk**", a piece composed for our students, at Asbury Hall, our new administrative home.

MAR

After months of preparation, we premiered "They Would Only Walk" at our **2021 virtual Benefit Concert**.

JUL

We held a 6-week, full day, **in-person summer camp** for 60 students! (see pg. 6 for more)

SEP

We welcomed BSW students back to true music class at our **new West Side home, in-person**, with friends, AND snacks!

2021

96

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN VIRTUAL CLASSES



95%

ATTENDANCE RATE DURING VIRTUAL CLASSES



43

LAPTOPS, HOTSPOTS, AND HEADPHONES DISTRIBUTED



"BUFFALO STRING WORKS HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE, AND ASK NOT ONLY ABOUT ME BUT ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY. THEY ARE ALWAYS THERE TO HELP AND SUPPORT US."
- BSW PARENT

"WE EVEN RECEIVED A NOTE IN THE MAIL FROM BSW! IT SHOWS HOW MUCH BSW CARES ABOUT ME AND MY FAMILY."
- BSW PARENT



STUDENT LEADERS

Yuki Numata Resnick, Executive Director

In January 2021, BSW launched our inaugural Student Leadership Program as the umbrella for three new initiatives: **Student Council, Practice Partners, and Internship**. The overarching purpose of this stipended program is to develop the leadership skills and agency of our maturing students through mentorship, professional development, and hands-on experience. Our intention is for our young leaders to take these skills beyond BSW walls and into their own communities.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Our **Student Council** proposed the “BSW Cafe,” a student-directed space for our young musicians to have informal gatherings, work on shared projects, play music together, and have access to mental health counseling and support. To fund this concept, the Council participated in the grant-writing process and provided supplemental recorded materials to strengthen BSW’s application for support. We were ultimately successful in receiving funding through **Generator Z** for one pilot year of the Cafe.

STUDENT COUNCIL MISSION

To give our students a collective voice, inspiring lasting friendships and passionate playing within our program through student-led initiatives.

STUDENT COUNCIL VISION

To give voice to our peers and our community, one note at a time.

STUDENT COUNCIL VALUES

Leadership & legacy



“THEY [STAFF] REALLY LISTENED TO OUR IDEAS AND I FELT LIKE WE WERE REALLY IN CHARGE FOR ONCE.”

- MOHAMED, STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBER

PRACTICE PARTNERS & INTERNSHIP

Our Teacher Training programs, **Practice Partners** and **Internship**, are designed to inspire our students to view teaching as an honorable profession and to provide them with the skills and experience necessary to pursue education as a career. Practice Partners and Interns have weekly opportunities to teach 1-on-1 or in a small group setting. They learn essential skills including email usage and etiquette, lesson plan creation, and self-evaluation. They are guided throughout the process by a Mentor who offers weekly debriefs for self-critique and consistent support. **Our long-term vision is a community where the demographics of educators reflects the demographics of the student they are teaching.**



BY THE NUMBERS

94%

STUDENT LEADER RETENTION FROM SPRING 2021 TO FALL 2021

30

MINUTES TAUGHT BY INTERN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE INTERNSHIP: GOAL REACHED!

126

TOTAL HOURS OF PRACTICE PARTNER TEACHING SESSIONS AND TRAININGS

72

TOTAL LESSON PLANS CREATED BY PRACTICE PARTNERS

“I ENJOYED BEING THE TEACHER. I LOVE HOW WE KEEP IMPROVING AND LEARNING ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ALL DO OUR DEBRIEFS . . . I ALSO ENJOYED THE FACT THAT WE’RE VIEWING OUR TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVE.”

- HTEE, PRACTICE PARTNER



INTRO TO BSW

Laura Jay, BSW Teaching Artist

In September 2020, BSW was ready to make the next step to implement a music readiness program for brand new students. In this proposed program, first-timers would be introduced to the basics of music notation and performance before beginning a stringed instrument. I was honored to be asked to design the program we now affectionately call "Intro to BSW."

Intro to BSW launched in January 2021. Students study bucket drumming, singing, and recorder. However, our goals are not just musical—our curriculum emphasizes collaboration, creativity, and classroom etiquette.

Students are encouraged to share their thoughts, and are included in leading the direction of their own learning as much as possible.

A music readiness class with very young students in the midst of a pandemic was probably one of the most challenging things I have ever done. Although the transition to virtual learning was challenging, the payoff was immense. I will never forget the joy of seeing our Intro to BSW students perform "Dragonhunter" at our Spring concert with our entire BSW community!



BY THE NUMBERS

32

STUDENTS IN THE INAUGURAL SEMESTER OF INTRO TO BSW



100

BUCKETS DONATED BY THE HOME DEPOT



84%

RETENTION RATE FOR INTRO TO BSW STUDENTS RETURNING IN FALL 2021



Parent Spotlight

JEROME SUAHA & BICAMPAKA BASHIZI

Jerome and Bicampaka are the parents of two BSW students who went through the first semester of Intro to BSW (pg. 8). Jerome is also a musician!

Yuki (Executive Director): What dreams do you have for Allen and Ariel?

Jerome: What they're doing right now ... that's my dream. If I had an opportunity back in Libreria, I would learn how to play an instrument.

Yuki: What does music mean to your family?

Jerome: Music is the way I express myself. It means the world to me ... to see my boys jumping in joy just opens a whole other world. I love music.



Watch Jerome, Bicampaka, and Yuki's conversation at: <https://bit.ly/JeromeBicampakaInterview>

"WATCHING THEM LEARN SOMETHING THAT I LOVE SO MUCH, IT JUST OPENS AND MELTS MY HEART, AND MAKES ME LOVE THEM SO MUCH."

JEROME SUAHA

SUMMER CAMP

Julia Anne Cordani, Operations Director



Academics...



...crafts & snacks...



...and music, of course!

In summer 2021, we held an in-person summer camp filled with learning, laughter, and of course, music! Thanks to support from **Say Yes Buffalo** and the **Children's Foundation of Erie County**, we were able to provide 6 weeks worth of programming for 60 students, employ 22 teachers and 6 staff members, and host a combined 11 interns and volunteers.

Our students worked hard each day during 1 hour of music class, 3 hours of academic classes, and 1 hour of various enrichment activities, including playground time, yoga, and heated rounds of freeze dance. We also welcomed countless guests to our weekly Fun

Fridays, including Younkonde, a reggae band featuring BSW parent, Jerome Suah (page 9)! And what would a day at camp look like without snacks?! A cherished team of BSW supporters, now affectionately dubbed "the Snack Ladies", visited every day bearing fresh fruits, veggies, cheese sticks, and more.

This camp was an important step towards building our relationships both with the Buffalo Public Schools and the broader community. And of course, we could not have done it without the incredible support of **West Buffalo Charter School**, our home for those 6 weeks and a longtime Buffalo String Works partner!



Watch our Summer Camp 2021 Video on YouTube above, or at <https://bit.ly/BSWSummer2021>

"I LOVE HOW QUICKLY THE STAFF LEARNED MY CHILD'S NAME, AND ALWAYS GREETED US WITH A BIG, WELCOMING SMILE. MY SON CAN'T STOP TALKING ABOUT HOW MUCH FUN HE HAD EVERY DAY AT CAMP!"
- BSW PARENT



Staff Spotlight

AYE MIN THANT

Yuki What is something you're really excited to take on this year as you get to know us at Buffalo String Works?

Aye: I really look forward to working with [the staff] and empowering [the students]. I'd also like to strengthen our relationship with the parents.

Yuki: One of your responsibilities at Buffalo String Works is to work with our Student Leadership program. What does student leadership mean to you and why is it so important?

Aye: Student leaders are important because they are the hope and the future of our communities. We need a generation of youth leaders who can keep their multicultural roots while succeeding in the mainstream.



Watch Aye and Yuki's conversation at: <https://bit.ly/AyeInterview>



Aye Min Thant is BSW's new West Side Site Manager. As well as being active in Buffalo's Burmese community, Aye has a passion for the arts.

"REGARDLESS OF THEIR ROOTS AS REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS, I WANT THEM TO REALIZE THAT THEY ARE AN IMPORTANT FABRIC OF AMERICA."

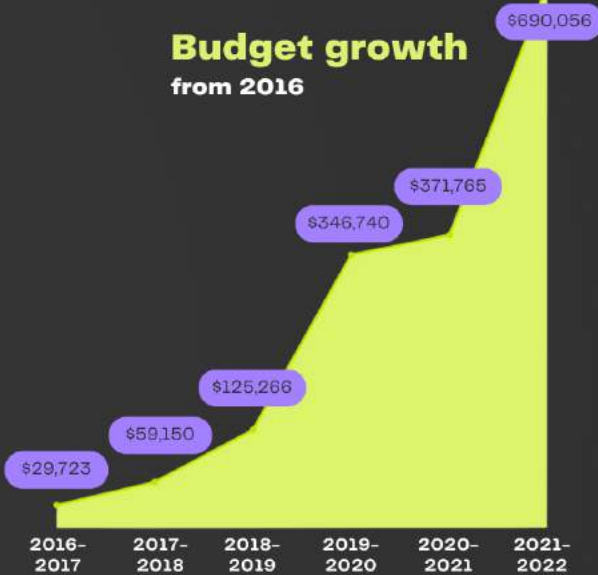
AYE MIN THANT

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

Revenue 2020-21

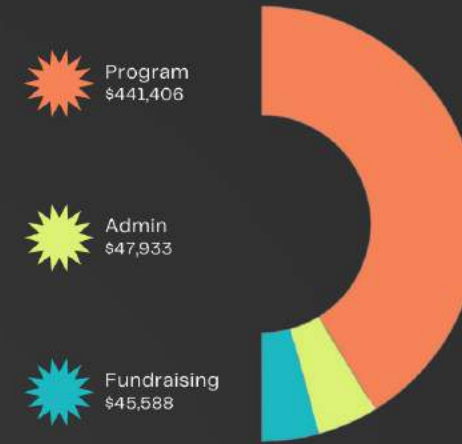


Budget growth from 2016



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Expenses 2020-21



2021-2022 PRIORITIES

Establish our new West Side home at 1270 Niagara Street

Develop our staff and faculty to support our continued expansion

Develop partnerships to launch new satellite locations across Buffalo



INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Individual giving total Number of individual supporters

Thank you so much to our individual supporters who give us the momentum to move forward another day.



STUDENT EVALUATION



100%

of Level 1, 2, and 3 students are working at or beyond their level in **musical skills**, including note-reading, technique, and creative musicianship.



100%

of level 1, 2, and 3 students are working at or beyond their level in **personal and group development skills**, including constructive self- and group-criticism and positive teamwork.



100%

of K-2 students report they can **help others** at BSW.



100%

of grade 3+ students report they are **proud** to be a part of BSW.



"EH CALEB IS PROBABLY READY TO BREAK OFF INTO A HIGHER LEVEL CLASS. HE HAS LEARNED OUR PIECES SO FAST THAT I'VE HAD TO THROW EXTRA CHALLENGES HIS WAY!"

- MS. AMY

"HTEE IS JUST SO GREAT. I'M SO GLAD THAT SHE MOVED UP A LEVEL BECAUSE SHE IS CRUSHING IT WITH THE MORE ADVANCED LITERATURE."

- MS. EVE

FOUNDATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Due in large part to the generous contributions of our Foundation & Government grantors, Buffalo String Works continues to thrive.



BAIRD FOUNDATION
CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION OF ERIE COUNTY
ERIE COUNTY CULTURAL FUNDING
GARMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

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**EMPOWERING
MUSICIANS.
TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES.**

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