

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Utah Symphony | Utah Opera's Impact in the 2020-21 Season

OUR MISSION

Connect the Community Through Great Live Music
Perform — Engage — Inspire



UTAH SYMPHONY
THIERRY FISCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS,

Around the world, 2020-21 was unlike any other time. But even amid unforeseen change, Utah Symphony | Utah Opera's loyal supporters enabled us to do something that few other performing arts organizations could: You allowed us to keep live performances playing on. With the dedication of our Board of Trustees, unprecedented philanthropic actions of many individuals, businesses, foundations, and government entities; sacrifices, determination, and creative resiliency of our musicians and staff; and even a partnership with the University of Utah to study airflow in our venues—we had the resources and confidence to bring our communities safely together for in-person symphonic and operatic experiences. These performances were extraordinarily meaningful to Utahns, providing a source of solace and joy.

Your generosity also made it possible for us to support students and teachers throughout our state—and across our nation—with high-quality, virtual music education offerings. The opportunity to reach more of Utah's rural populations while building personal relationships between students and artists via digital platforms was a bright silver lining.

Dedicated to serving all Utahns, USUO continually sought out new ways to connect with individuals and build community through music. We inspired hope and optimism with our virtual *Light on the Horizon* program, crowdsourced citizens for concert themes relevant to their lives, presented the world premiere of a work commissioned by our musicians that poses ideas about combating racism, and toured statewide—to give just a few examples.

With great innovation, USUO delivered on our mission despite the challenges. And focusing on fiscal responsibility while prioritizing keeping our world-class symphony musicians and opera singers employed, we remained the largest employer of full-time performing artists in our state.

On behalf of our performers, Symphony Music Director Thierry Fischer, Opera Artistic Director Christopher McBeth, Board of Trustees, and staff, thank you for your remarkable support. The music played on—and we entered our 2021-22 season in a strong and secure position—because of you.

WITH GRATITUDE,








Steven R. Brosvik
President & CEO



Thomas M. Love
Chair, Board of Trustees

Left:
Violist
Whittney
Thomas gets
ready for a
concert in
Kanab on
the Forever
Mighty® Tour.

COUNTING UP, 1 TO 10 HOW WE CONNECTED

1 World Premiere: Quinn Mason's <i>Changes/Transitions</i>	 2,930 instructional hours with students	3,732 gifts made to support USUO
 4 concerts celebrating Hispanic heritage	 500 miles traveled on our statewide Forever Mighty® Tour	Nearly 60 live symphony and opera performances
 Nearly 700 school classrooms engaged with our virtual resources	All 87 full-time performing artists remained employed	 91,000 students served by our education program
	10 sold-out concerts at the Deer Valley® Music Festival	

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

The concert experience sometimes looked different, but with creativity, USUO continued to impact the lives of citizens in our state—and across the U.S. and beyond.

LEADING THE WAY

USUO was one of the first performing arts organizations to boldly return to in-person performances—with carefully designed safety protocols in place—with our *Celebración Sinfónica* concert in September 2020 and a pair of one-act operas in October 2020. Although increased health risks due to the pandemic made it necessary to go digital during the winter months, we reopened once again in March.

At an early in-person symphony concert, one woman could not help but to shout “THANK YOU!” from the audience as Music Director Thierry Fischer announced the final works. “Tears came to my eyes as the orchestra began to tune,” remarked another concertgoer.

KEEPING UP TRADITION

Utah Symphony and Utah Opera collaborated to carry on the beloved annual tradition of the *Messiah Sing-In* during the holiday season of 2020. More than 1,000 people added their voices to the performance virtually, singing along with our professional musicians and opera singers.

One attendee noted that USUO holiday concerts had been a longtime tradition for his family, but because they now live so far apart, they had not been able to attend together in many years. The online format made it possible for his family to once again experience the performance together. “I will always treasure the memories of watching that concert with my dad,” he shared.

FOCUSING THE SPOTLIGHT

As we found creative ways to keep the music playing, our own Utah Symphony musicians and Utah Opera resident artists stepped into the spotlight like never before, further revealing their star power.

With small ensemble sizes and programs often crafted by the musicians themselves, our audience had the opportunity to hear the artistic voices of our performers even more clearly. We featured works by 11 women composers and 28 composers of color, and performed music that might not be found on a typical season—such as short operatic gems featuring just a few performers, string orchestra works, and fascinating chamber music by composers such as Jessie Montgomery, Valerie Coleman, and Arnold Schoenberg.

“It was so interesting to see and hear each section so well!” praised one patron—a sentiment echoed by many.

Plus, we finally had the opportunity to give an in-person performance of *Fanfare of Hope and Solidarity* by Augusta Read Thomas, after premiering the work virtually in our previous season.

HITTING THE ROAD

By the summer, we were able to resume state-wide travel, performing in a dozen venues outside of Salt Lake City. Many concerts for communities along the Wasatch Front—such as West Valley City and Taylorsville—were free of charge, and we resumed our annual Deer Valley® Music Festival in Park City with music performed against the beautiful mountain backdrop for more than 38,000 people.

In August, the symphony’s Forever Mighty® Tour stopped in Wellsville, Helper, Bryce Canyon, Kanab, and Hurricane, bringing classical and pops favorites to more than 8,000 rural citizens who otherwise might not have the opportunity to see a live, professional orchestra.

CONTINUED CONNECTIONS WITH OUR AUDIENCE

A loyal audience, thoughtful communication with our patrons, and ambition to keep the music playing enabled Utah Symphony|Utah Opera to earn \$2 million in ticket revenue—a decreased figure compared to typical seasons, yet a significant accomplishment in light of the circumstances. With audience sizes reduced for safety reasons, 16,525 people attended live concerts at Abravanel Hall and Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre, and we re-imagined ways to bring music to many additional people.

ON DEMAND

- USUO: On Demand virtual concerts reached far and wide—20% of ticket buyers lived more than 50 miles from Salt Lake City and 13% tuned in from out of state.
- 26% of ticket buyers for virtual concerts were newcomers to USUO.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- To express our gratitude for their extraordinary efforts battling the pandemic, we provided complimentary tickets to health care workers (and helped support their efforts with masks created and donated by our costume shop!).
- While large indoor gatherings of audience members were not possible, symphony musicians and opera resident artists performed surprise outdoor concerts in downtown Salt Lake City, at Utah Valley University, along the MacLeod Trail in Park City, and more!
- A very special performance took place at the Huntsman Cancer Institute, lifting the spirits of patients and medical staff.

Right:
Virtual concerts provided access to music when live performances were not possible.

Bottom:
We joyfully welcomed audiences back to the Deer Valley® Music Festival and other outdoor venues over the summer.



EDUCATION THROUGH INNOVATION FOR A UNIQUE TIME



Top:
Young musicians performed for our audience before the mainstage concert in Wellsville.

Left:
91,000 students learned about music through our online education resources.

Right:
Percussionist Eric Hopkins visited with students over Zoom.

Without missing a beat, USUO adapted to go digital with its education programs. And with these programs taking place online, we expanded our reach, engaging more than 91,000 students in 40 of Utah's 41 school districts.

SERVING STUDENTS, SUPPORTING TEACHERS

Utah Symphony produced two virtual education concerts—*Mood Music for the Pandemic*, which helped provide an emotional outlet for students by exploring how music can express feelings, and *March of the Women*, featuring music entirely by women composers.

Continuing the focus on women, Utah Opera produced a virtual education performance of *The Better Man* by Margot Murdoch and Kathleen Cahill, a short opera about the first Utah woman elected to public office. More than 222 students created their own classroom operas, which were shared via digital platforms, and *All About Opera: Classroom Edition* featured performances by resident artists and gave students a virtual tour of the Utah Opera Production Studios and Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre.

Supplemental reading and lesson-plan materials were customized for various grade levels, making our education programs accessible to students K-12.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO ARTISTS

Although we couldn't visit with students in person, in many ways, young learners were able to interact with our professional performers more than ever before!

Teachers had the opportunity to request live Q&A sessions with the artists following each virtual concert or opera program—plus, over the spring, 349 students representing 21 school districts received free, one-on-one instruction with symphony musicians via Zoom or FaceTime.

"My daughter left her lesson with a new-found confidence in her abilities to play the violin," remarked one parent. "That was such a fun and unique experience for her."

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION

For middle and high school choral singers, the *Opera Up Close* program sent Resident Artists to classrooms—virtually—to share career advice and conduct mock auditions, opening students' eyes to the possibility of a future as a professional musician.

“
Thank you for exposing my 7th graders to a slice of the professional music world. It really expanded many of their ideas for what their own futures could hold.”

—CHOIR TEACHER, WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT FROM OUR FRIENDS

Donors continued to demonstrate remarkable commitment to the USUO mission during this challenging time.



Concertmaster Madeline Adkins hosted a virtual meet-and-greet with donors.

- Consistently, we saw USUO friends doing all they could to support the organization—sometimes, despite their own challenged financial circumstances. From weekly guidance from our Trustees in virtual meetings, to donors who made gifts beyond their typical contributions, to patrons who waived refunds on ticket purchases, to volunteers who worked a combined total of 8,000 hours, countless people did their part to keep the music playing.
- Thanks to more than 1,000 donors, we met and exceeded the Challenge Grant from The George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, which matched gifts from new donors, those who increased their gifts, and those who donated back tickets, up to \$500,000.
- We continued to connect with our loyal donors through programs such as our virtual “Meet a Musician” with Concertmaster Madeline Adkins, who was peppered with questions from curious patrons and provided fascinating insights into her life as a performer.



Donations came from 24 of Utah's 29 counties and from 40 U.S. states.



NON-PROFIT EXCELLENCE

USUO continued to earn 4 out of 4 stars on Charity Navigator, which rates non-profits on financial health, accountability, and transparency.

SOUND FINANCES FOR RECOVERY

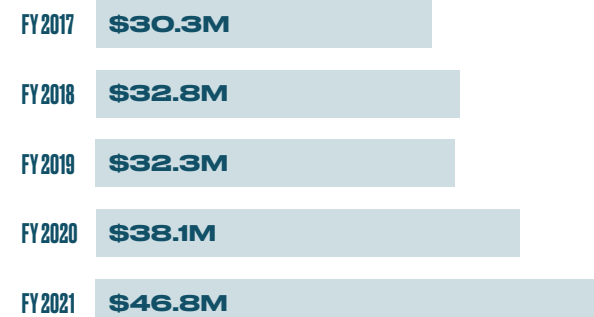
The pandemic had a dramatic impact on USUO's income—and in response to the reduction in ticket sales and event income, we reduced our expense budget by \$6.5 million (or 26% of our total operating budget), including salary cuts for musicians and staff through April 2021 that made a significant difference.



We received 9 new legacy gifts totaling more than \$500,000, helping to secure USUO's future.

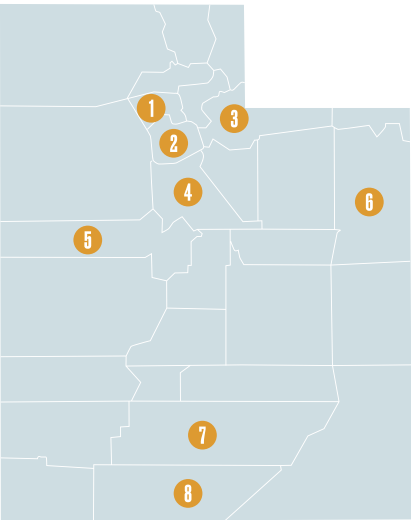
- Federal assistance programs, support from Salt Lake County and the State of Utah, and special contributions were important in mitigating a portion of our income loss—together with the generosity of patrons who continued to support USUO.
- Having carefully managed our finances in FY21, we are in a secure position in FY22 and looking toward the future. We have an operating reserve of \$3 million, segregate ticket sales until performance expenses occur in order to protect patrons' purchases, and are making strides toward matching expenses with consistent revenues.

Total Endowment Assets FY 2017–2021

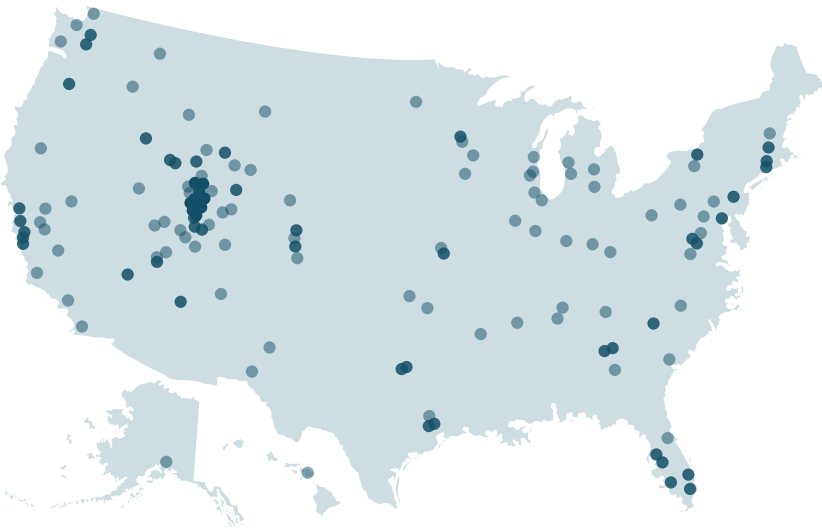


USUO's endowment ensures long-term sustainability and helps the organization weather financially challenging times.

SERVING OUR STATE AND FAR BEYOND



USUO performances and education programs engaged residents in every Utah county.



Virtual offerings were accessed across the United States.

STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Davis County**
Students at Layton High school were some of the first to experience the live-streamed *Opera Up Close* program.
- 2. Salt Lake County**
We helped the city of Taylorsville celebrate its 25th anniversary with a free concert for the community.
- 3. Summit County**
Audience members danced along to classic hits by the Beach Boys at two sold-out concerts at the Deer Valley® Music Festival.
- 4. Utah County**
Utah Valley University music students participated in masterclasses with USUO musicians.
- 5. Juab County**
A teacher remarked that many of her students “would never see this degree of musical ability” without the Utah Symphony’s virtual visit.
- 6. Uintah County**
More than 1,700 students accessed our virtual education programs in their classrooms.
- 7. Garfield County**
We began the Southern Utah leg of our statewide Forever Mighty® Tour with a performance overlooking Bryce Canyon.
- 8. Kane County**
A string quartet of Utah Symphony musicians performed a free concert for families in Kanab.

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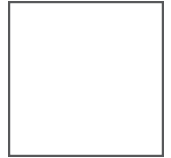
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THANK YOU!

Thank you to the generous individuals, businesses, foundations, and community partners who support Utah Symphony | Utah Opera through contributions each season. The successes highlighted in this report—including our extensive music education programs, community engagement initiatives, and continued artistic excellence—are made possible by your support.



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