



2022 / 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Mso MILWAUKEE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

KEN-DAVID MASUR / MUSIC DIRECTOR



In looking back at past MSO seasons, themes of envisioning, designing, building, moving, pausing, and recovering emerge. Now, as I look back on the 2022.23 season, I realize that, in many ways, the common theme was learning.

Music Director Ken-David Masur and our orchestra continued to learn the acoustics in Allen-Bradley Hall as we adjusted reflective services and experimented with orchestra set-ups on the stage. Our musicians tried different equipment, such as drum sticks, woodwind reeds, mouthpieces, and more, to maximize the acoustic qualities of our new home.

Our front-of-house team learned how to handle ever-growing audiences and ensured that patrons were able to utilize the spaces in the Bradley Symphony Center effectively and efficiently. One of the biggest lessons of 2022.23 was how to make sure that 1,500 students could exit their buses safely and quickly, then return to their buses and leave in time for another 1,500 students to arrive 45 minutes later.

We learned how to more effectively activate the Ellen & Joe Checota Gallery and Atrium. Audiences were able to enjoy displays during our Water Festival, the music of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Youth Jazz Ensemble (UJAY) prior to our *Zodiac Suite* performances, and our activities for young people before our family concerts. Learning also included the addition of our regular Friday and Saturday offerings of Soundbites sit-down dinners.

With a wonderful gift of projectors from the Marcus Corporation, we learned how to be a great place for film with orchestra performances geared toward audience members of all ages. We continue to perfect cleaning up popcorn.

Our great production team launched new types of offerings besides solely orchestral concerts with Billy Porter and Chris Botti, with film releases like *Chevalier*, and participating in community events like Hip Hop Week.

Across the organization, we continued to listen and learn about how to better serve our patrons, audiences, and broader community with intention and purpose. We continue to make progress on our EDI Action Agenda, which guides our efforts as we strive to make our space the most inclusive and welcoming experience for everyone.

And please don't think we are done learning, as we aim to improve in every area and enhance the experience of every visitor to the Bradley Symphony Center. We continue to learn about refining our pre-concert activities, and we continue to influence what we can with the parking near the Bradley Symphony Center.

Finally, we are grateful to you for learning with us. Your feedback and encouragement are inspiring to us as we learn how to fully activate this amazing space that was gifted to us by our wonderful supporters and patrons. Thank you to each and every one of you for sharing in the joy of music with us throughout the season. It is a pleasure to be a part of this wonderful community and your lives. We can't wait to see you in the hall.

Mark Niehaus

President & Executive Director
Michael and Jeanne Schmitz Chair

ABOUT THE COVER: MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP BY **ELLEN & JOE CHECOTA**, THE MSO WELCOMED SUPERSTAR VIOLINIST **JOSHUA BELL** TO THE BRADLEY SYMPHONY CENTER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN KIRN, VALERIE HILL, AND SCOTT PAULUS

YEAR IN REVIEW

2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



SEPTEMBER

At the beginning of the 2022.23 season, acousticians Paul Scarbrough and Christopher Blair from **Akustiks** returned to the Bradley Symphony Center to work with the orchestra and Music Director Ken-David Masur to fine tune Allen-Bradley Hall, the MSO's "new instrument."

The MSO and Music Director Ken-David Masur opened the 2022.23 season with performances of Richard Strauss's tone poem *Alpine Symphony*. Stretching the stage to its limits, the performance called for **85 musicians on stage** and 12 off-stage horns. Elaine Schmidt of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* wrote, "From exquisitely delicate passages to the unbridled roar of the storm, the tone poem was delivered with polish, control, and tremendous musical momentum. It received a shouting, cheering ovation."

October also included the MSO's Season Opening Gala, where generous supporters donated more than **\$600,000** in support of programming both on and off the stage.

OCTOBER





NOVEMBER

With schools returning to pre-COVID-19 activities, including field trips, **Concerts for Schools** saw increases in attendance throughout the season. The Concerts for Schools program brought **20,215 students** in total to the Bradley Symphony Center throughout the year.

The holiday months are always exceptionally busy for the MSO. In addition to perennial favorite concerts like **Holiday Pops** and **Handel's Messiah**, as well as **The Snowman**, at Allen-Bradley Hall, the MSO performed in venues throughout the area, including the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, the Cedarburg Performing Arts Center, The Riverside Theater, and West Bend, Brillion, and Arrowhead high schools.

DECEMBER





JANUARY

At the beginning of 2023, the MSO and Music Director Ken-David Masur celebrated a three-week **Water Festival**. With our community partners, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences and WaterMarks, the MSO explored Milwaukee's unique relationship with water. The festival opened with Tan Dun's *Water Concerto* performed by percussionist Christopher Lamb, who originally premiered the concerto under Masur's father Kurt Masur, with the New York Philharmonic in 1999.

The Water Festival included **solo performances by MSO musicians**, including Jennifer Bouton Schaub, Julia Coronelli, Robert Klieger, Chris Riggs, Ilana Setapen, Sonora Slocum, and Catherine Van Handel. The performance of David Ludwig's *Pictures from the Floating World*, which featured Van Handel, was recorded for future release.

FEBRUARY





For the first time, the MSO welcomed travel advocate, author, podcaster, tour operator, and television personality **Rick Steves** for "Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey." As Steves described in an interview with *OnMilwaukee*, "It's a show where I get to take people on a musical tour around Europe."

Last season also brought the return of the **Teen Choral Partners Concert**. Students from four Wisconsin high schools worked directly with Music Director Ken-David Masur to perform Mozart's *Requiem* with the MSO in the Allen-Bradley Hall for their peers.

Dashon Burton joined the MSO and **Milwaukee Symphony Chorus** in March to perform Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. It was also announced that Burton would be the orchestra's new artistic partner in 2023.24.



APRIL

The Bradley Symphony Center hosted a free screening of the Searchlight film *Chevalier*, based on the life of the French-Caribbean musician Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. More than **450 community members** were able to enjoy a free event that was made possible through our partnership with Marcus Theaters.

The MSO hosted its **second annual sensory-friendly performance** in April, "Symphony Spring Break II: Cruisin' Along," with nearly **600 tickets sold**. Of the individuals and families who attended this popular event, 215 patrons enjoyed free tickets through the generous support of the Wispact Foundation.

In 2022.23, **5,959 students** participated in the Arts in Community Education (ACE) program, which provides an arts-integrated curriculum, in-school visits, and grade-specific concerts in Allen-Bradley Hall that are tailored to each grade's theme. Those include family, storytellers, detectives, architects, explorers, and inventors. In addition, the winners of the **Bach Double Competition** performed for the third grade concert.



Last season, **37 young musicians** auditioned for the 2022.23 **Stars of Tomorrow** competition. Of those musicians, three were selected to perform concerto movements with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra for the Stars of Tomorrow concert. The finalists included Anais Griffith-Oh (marimba), Abhinay Reddy (flute), and Jane Story (violin). Semi-finalists and those who received honorable mentions were then invited to perform side-by-side with the MSO for the performance.

The 2022.23 season included a number of partnerships with local and national concert presenters. In partnership with Frank Productions (FPC Live), the Bradley Symphony Center welcomed Grammy, Emmy, and two-time Tony Award winner **Billy Porter** to Allen-Bradley Hall. In addition to the new partnership with FPC Live, the MSO continued its partnership with the Pabst Theater Group, with performances of the Music of Led Zeppelin, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* in concert, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Pianist **Aaron Diehl** concluded his artistic partnership with the MSO and Music Director Ken-David Masur with performances of Mary Lou Williams' *Zodiac Suite*. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the MSO partnered with Milwaukee Public Library and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Youth Jazz Ensemble (UJAY) to celebrate the art of jazz. UJAY performed prior to the Saturday, May 27, performance and enjoyed a master class with Diehl. Milwaukee Public Library presented five story-hour events featuring MSO musicians, plus created a further reading list as well as a playlist curated by saxophonist Johnny Padilla.

MAY



In May of 2023, the MSO announced that violinist **Jinwoo Lee** was appointed as the orchestra's new concertmaster following a four-year international search. About Lee, Music Director Ken-David Masur said, "His natural leadership gifts as well as his mindful and integrous approach to each work are qualities that will be a tremendous asset to the orchestra and a wonderful gift for Milwaukee audiences."

MAY



JUNE



The sixth annual **Lullaby Project** Celebration Concert occurred in June. Each year, teaching artists work with parents and caregivers who have been affected by domestic violence to write personal lullabies for their children, supporting maternal health, aiding child development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child. The lullabies are professionally arranged, recorded, and shared in the final performance. Partnering with Sojourner Family Peace Center, the program served seven survivors and their families this season.

Classical music star **Joshua Bell** returned to perform with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Ken-David Masur in June. The concert, which was sponsored by Ellen & Joe Checota, was a wonderful opportunity for patrons to hear one of the most talented violinists in the world.



JUNE

MSO patrons experienced a special performance of Marvel Studios' *Black Panther* in concert in June. The film with orchestra concert included Massamba Diop, one of the most renowned masters of the tama, a talking drum from Senegal, West Africa, who was featured in the original film soundtrack.

The MSO announced in June that **Ryan Tani** had accepted the position of assistant conductor. Tani's primary role is conducting the MSO's many youth, family, and community engagement concerts throughout the season, as well as Pops Series concerts and film with orchestra performances. In addition, he will take an active role in the MSO's education initiatives, including the Arts in Community Education (ACE) program, hosting pre-concert lectures, and giving in-school presentations.

The end of the 2022.23 season marked the end of **Yaniv Dinur's** tenure with the MSO as resident conductor. As the headline in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* said, Dinur has been the MSO's superman for the last eight years, leading the orchestra in **372** performances since he joined us in 2015.

JULY





AUGUST

On August 25, the Bradley Symphony Center welcomed over **300** community members for A Conversation with Damon “Dame” Dash as part of the City of Milwaukee’s **Hip Hop Week**, which celebrates the history and culture of the genre.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The 2022.23 season was the second full season of in-person programming at the Bradley Symphony Center. There were a number of notable financial achievements:

- Performance revenue was over \$4.1 million. Subscription revenue increased by more than 3% over 2021.22; unfortunately, single-ticket sales declined as the lingering effects of the pandemic continued to suppress audiences
- Unrestricted contributions jumped 35%, or \$2.9 million, over prior year thanks to the amazing support of our donors
- Other revenue increased 54%, or \$999 thousand, as the building was utilized to drive new, diverse revenue streams
- Operations drove \$3.8 million of cash flow
- The positive cash flow from operations was utilized to repay \$3.9 million on the construction loan and thereby reduce the total amount of the outstanding loan to under \$5.0 million

We are grateful for the enthusiasm and support of our donors, patrons, and the wider community who share our vision of success and look forward to the opportunities ahead in the next fiscal year.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

MSO OPERATIONS

\$ IN THOUSANDS

	August 31, 2023	August 31, 2022
Performance Revenue	4,186	4,506
Unrestricted Contributions	11,296	8,383
Government Support	361	3,149
Other Revenue	2,844	1,845
Total Operating Revenue	18,687	17,883
Program Expenses	17,205	16,353
Management & General	6,935	6,527
Fundraising	1,453	1,652
Total Operating Expenses	25,593	24,533
Restricted Contributions	1,032	9,369
Change in Beneficial Interest in Net Assets in Perpetual Trusts	5,214	(3,497)
Other	1,010	121
Other Changes in Net Assets	7,256	5,993
Total Change in Net Assets	350	(657)
Endowment, beneficial interest in trusts	26,219	21,005
Consolidated Net Assets without Restriction	82,960	82,332
Consolidated Total Net Assets	116,345	115,896

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*Leave of absence 2022.23 Season

**Acting member of the Milwaukee
 Symphony Orchestra 2022.23 Season

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** Indicates an employee who is no longer with the MSO as of the printing of the 2022.23 Annual Report on November 30, 2023.*

All employee titles will reflect their titles as of August 31, 2023.

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