

FLYNN

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



THE RESILIENT, AMAZING FLYNN

READY TO REBOUND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

*Charlie Smith,
Interim Executive Director*

Like all Vermonters, the Flynn team eagerly awaits the day when the pandemic is behind us and life can return to normal. For us, that means the bright lights and action of diverse live performances returning to the Main Stage, audiences pulsing with excitement before the curtain goes up, hundreds of students climbing off buses and coursing through the lobby doors to experience the magic of the performing arts, intimate shows gracing the Flynn Space stage, and so much more.

The Flynn is resilient and poised to rebound.

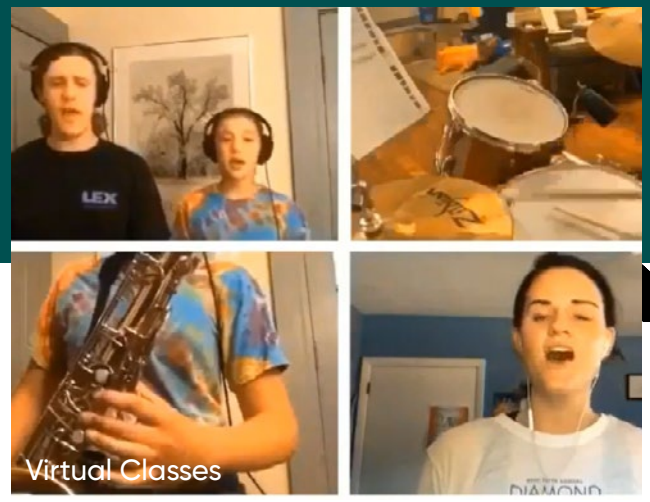
With new promise of safe and effective vaccines, we have cautious hope that at least a limited new season might kick off on time in September 2021. To be sure, large indoor venues will be the last gathering places that are allowed to reopen. And it will take time for audiences to regain the confidence to come back. Moreover, the Flynn's full rebound is linked to the whole performing arts industry; shows and artists must be ready to go back on tour and enough venues must be open to make those tours possible. Reopening will take time and care. But every journey starts with the first step, and the Flynn team is ready and eager to make it happen.

Though we have not been able to entertain large indoor audiences, the Flynn team has found ways to keep the arts accessible. This summer, the Hurly Burly series used a flatbed truck as a stage and brought eight great shows to the beautiful parks of Burlington and Winooski. We will build on this success next summer and also as a possible future format for student matinees.





Kristina Wong



Virtual Classes

We presented summer classes online that were very popular—with many classes filling up—enriching the lives of young people whose usual camps and summer activities were curtailed. This fall, we streamed the comedy show *Kristina Wong for Public Office*, and in December, we streamed Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy as well as Marcus Roberts. So the work goes forward in new and creative ways.

There is no denying that the pandemic months have been rough. In March, we canceled the remainder of the 2020 season and the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival. Since then, we canceled the fall and now the winter/spring of the 2021 season. Ticket sales, our main revenue source, instantly dried up, forcing us to downsize and significantly reduce the hours of the remaining key people. One wonderful bright spot is that Flynn members, ticket holders, and sponsors have been incredibly generous, making donations that have kept the Flynn alive and viable. In addition, the federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP), and various state and private grants, have been instrumental in reducing the flood of red ink.

Still, before the pandemic is over and full operations are restored, the Flynn will most certainly run an operating deficit in the millions of dollars. Thank heaven for the amazing past leaders and donors who planned for the rainy day and built a strong endowment. We have made arrangements to borrow up to \$5 million to bridge the Flynn back to financial health. I doubt we will need it all but I am very happy that the backstop is in place.

Last but not least, the Flynn's search for a new, permanent executive director is coming to a head. It has been a pleasure to comb through the resumes of dozens of extraordinary candidates who aspire to lead the Flynn into the future. It has been inspiring to hear these arts leaders from around the country remind us that the Flynn is recognized nationwide as a beacon for quality, innovation, and access.

You, the members of the community that make the Flynn what it is, have helped create a remarkable institution. You are sustaining it through hard times, and the arts will be back soon!

THE MOST AMBITIOUS FLYNN SEASON EVER, CUT SHORT

— Steve MacQueen, Artistic Director



Given the multiple lifetimes that we've all gone through since March, it's difficult to recall the good old days of shows on stages. But despite nearly innumerable obstacles placed between the start and the aborted conclusion of the Flynn's season, there are successes to report.

The 2019/20 season was intended to be the Flynn's most ambitious season ever, with projected records for attendance and revenue, and an innovative year-long residency with violinist/composer/activist Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR).



Kinetic Light

The season opened at a gallop, with 21 ticketed performances between September 20 and October 30, plus 10 student matinees. Fears that this would overwhelm our ticket-buying audience proved unfounded; audiences flocked to performances by Rhiannon Giddens, Paula Poundstone, Chick Corea, Little Feat, and Kinetic Light. For the first half of the season, we were well on our way to meeting—even exceeding—our ambitious plans.

We all know what happened next. The Flynn canceled its season on March 14. A sign of the season's strength: we still set a Flynn season record for ticket revenue, bringing in \$2,150,065, despite the loss of 11 Main Stage shows, including performances by the Wild Kratts, Renée Fleming, and the touring company of *Chicago*.

Even with those losses, season attendance was strong, with 34,818 people attending Flynn-presented shows, good enough for eighth-best in the Flynn's storied history.

Perhaps the season's most powerful event was an appearance by the civil-rights legend Congressman John Lewis, who appeared as part of the Vermont Humanities Council's Vermont Reads program.



In addition to three sold-out performances (two student matinees and an evening show), Lewis made himself available to adoring crowds, greeting cheering children as they disembarked from school buses. His performance will reverberate with attendees for years to come. Sadly, Congressman Lewis died on July 17. Artistic highlights abounded, from the Philip Glass Ensemble's awe-inspiring, multi-media performance of *Koyanisqaatsi* to Rhiannon Giddens' galvanizing Americana, from the brilliantly staged Broadway show *Beautiful: The Carole King Story* to the physical virtuosity of the cirque performers in Circa's *Humans*, from the mind-boggling beauty of the Dance Theatre of Harlem to the theatrical majesty of Kinetic Light's *Descent*, which featured the finest set and light-design I've seen on the Flynn stage.



And on a personal note, I fulfilled a childhood dream by interviewing William Shatner—James Tiberius Kirk himself!—following a sold-out screening of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. It wasn't an easy gig, but it sure was fun.

The Flynn continued to support and encourage local/regional artists, presenting performances by the Middlebury Actors Workshop, film/music hybrid Llamadoll, storyteller Mark Redmond, comedian Josie Leavitt, the Red Kite Green Mountain ensemble, jazz saxophonist/composer Brian McCarthy, and three performances by the new-music ensemble TURNmusic. We collaborated with regional organizations, including the Vermont Abenaki Artist Association, Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, TURNmusic, Higher Ground, and UVM Lane Series. In tandem with the VSO, Vermont Public Television, and Lyric Theatre Company, we also presented a sold-out second version of Burlington Does Broadway.



The DBR residency was a resounding success, reverberating within the Flynn and the greater community.

DBR's 24-hour *Protest Song* in front of Burlington City Hall on October 23/24 was a community event the likes of which the Flynn had not attempted before. With participation from dozens of community members, this durational event was a highlight of the season. Sadly, the May 2 world-premiere performance of DBR's *Riots & Prayers*, an orchestral work co-commissioned by the Flynn, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, and Lane Series, was a COVID casualty. Fully written with all the parts printed and ready to roll, it sits on a shelf somewhere. Hopefully, we'll hear it at some point in the future.



DBR's presence at the Flynn was so profound that it inspired the Flynn's latest innovation, the position of creative chair. This rotating post will be held by an artist for a two-year term, and this artist will immerse themselves in all aspects of the Flynn—administrative, educational, programmatic. By doing this, the Flynn reflects an artist's perspective at every level of the organization, and the shape and content of the position will change according to the artist who occupies it. As you may have guessed, our first creative chair is Daniel Bernard Roumain. We are incredibly excited about this idea.



As for the future, it comes whether we're ready or not, and we are determined to be ready. We will be a changed organization on the other side; we lost administrative, front-of-house, and box office staff, as well as teaching artists and crew. But we're ready to meet the challenges ahead and uphold the Flynn's reputation moving forward. We'll have a new executive director in the beginning of the new year. We will take risks, support artists, offer educational opportunities to students of all ages, present all kinds of amazing shows, and strive to improve in the field of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

More than ever, I look forward to seeing you all in the theater.

BURLINGTON REDISCOVER JAZZ FESTIVAL

From June 4-14, we went virtual with the Burlington ReDiscover Jazz Festival—11 days of jazz in partnership with Vermont PBS, Vermont Public Radio, and Burlington area restaurants. As John Coltrane said, “you’ve got to look back at the old things and see them in a new light.” So we dug into the archives to celebrate the spirit of the festival and the healing power of jazz.



Tia Fuller



\$1,250
Poster Net
Revenue

22 PARTICIPATING
restaurants & retail stores

Meet the Artist
4 PREMIERES
15 ARCHIVAL

87,409
Total Reach

16,019
Video Views

11
Nights
on PBS

6
Nights
on VPR

GOVERNING BOARD

2019/2020

OFFICERS

Staige Davis, Chair

Debra G.B. Leonard, Secretary

John Bossange, Vice Chair

Fran Rathke, Treasurer

Beth Beldock
Jan Blomstrann
Christal Brown
Sara Byers
Hal Colston
Clarence E. Davis
Deborah R. Estabrook
Eric Flegenheimer

Linda Barth Goldstein
Justin M. Heilenbach
Mark A. Langan
Eli Lesser-Goldsmith
Aida Reed Luce
Nancy J. McClellan
Paul H. Ode Jr.
Leigh K. Phillips

Rich Price
Chiuho Sampson
Michael Seaver
Fran Tobin
Greg Vaut
Leslie McCrorey Wells

TRUSTEES EMERITUS

Brianne E. Chase
Robert F. Cooper
Bari Dreissigacker
Heather Dwight
James Foster
John Gravel

Chico Lager
Walter Levering
Bonnie Reid Martin
Robert E. Mille
Remo Pizzagalli
Ernest Pomerleau

Del K. Sheldon
Joan A. Sylvester
Amy E. Tarrant
Elizabeth Woods

HONORARY DIRECTORS

John & Mary Abele
Bill & Debra Gottesman
Lois McClure

Patrick Robins
& Lisa Schamberg
Katharine & Charles Tipper



2019-2020

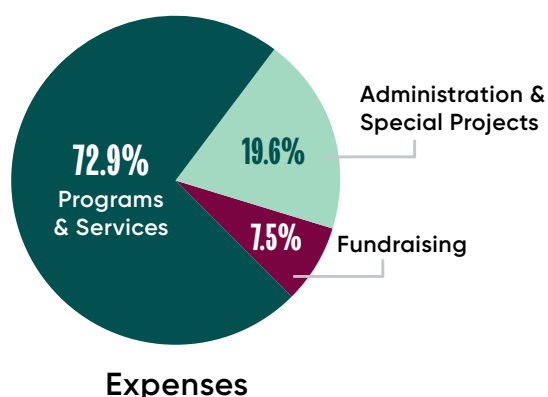
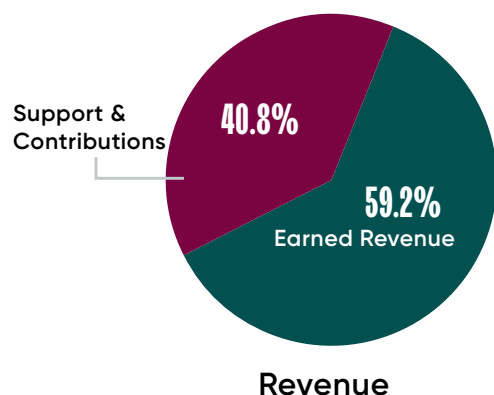
FLYNN RECAP

CLICK TO OPEN THE VIDEO LINK!

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

Statement of Financial Position	Operating	Endowment	Total
ASSETS			
Current assets	2,423,100	—	2,423,100
Contributions and grants receivable	853,000	147,600	1,000,600
Property and equipment	6,124,300	—	6,124,300
Investments	1,108,700	10,439,800	11,548,500
Restricted Cash	222,400	—	222,400
Beneficial interest held by others	—	445,300	445,300
Total Assets	10,731,500	11,032,700	21,764,200
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS			
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities	846,500	27,100	873,600
Noncurrent liabilities	668,700	—	668,700
Total liabilities	1,515,200	27,100	1,542,300
NET ASSETS			
Without donor restrictions	7,036,000	360,100	7,396,100
With donor restrictions	2,180,300	10,645,500	12,825,800
Total net assets	9,216,300	11,005,600	20,221,900
Total liabilities and net assets	10,731,500	11,032,700	21,764,200



Please contact Ingrid Pels at ipels@flynncenter.org for additional financial information.