

Three Year Strategic Plan and Action Plans for the New Hampshire Music Festival: 2021-2024

Mission Statement

The New Hampshire Music Festival is a summer music festival in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire presenting superb musicians and nationally known artists performing symphonic, choral and chamber music. Educational programs for students of all ages as well as community, regional, and national collaborations are a hallmark of this important cultural institution.

Goals of this three year strategic plan

- 1) Identify, attract and retain superb artistic leadership and musicians ensuring performances of the highest quality
- 2) Artistic performances will align the interests and preferences of our present and future patrons with those of our performing musicians
- 3) Provide year-long educational programs for young people that provide music education instruction as well as foster an appreciation and understanding of the importance of the arts in our culture of today.
- 4) Ensure financial and artistic sustainability
- 5) Continue to develop multiple, meaningful collaborations that align and enhance our artistic, educational and sustainability goals
- 6) Develop actionable diversity programs that can use the arts as an instrument to foster cultural diversity and understanding

Under each of the above goals, action plans will be developed that can be implemented and assessed within the three year timeline and can become guides for long term sustainability.

Goal 1: Identify, attract and retain superb artistic leadership and musicians ensuring performances of the highest quality

Action Plans:

1. Maestro Polivnick retires in season 2022. A search committee comprised of management, Board and musician representation will reinforce mutual agreement on artistic leadership, programming goals, and their further expansion to be more inclusive and diverse.
 - a. Search Committee began meeting in 2020 via Zoom.
 - b. Determine if an Artistic Director, Music Director, format is the best way forward or whether to pursue a new model that is more responsive to these goals.
 - i. Deep dive for input on the formation of the formation of a conductor training program, tentatively called the Conducting Academy of New Hampshire, built on a model that is similar to the Aspen Institute. The Academy model would feature and provide:
 1. Use of the sitting Festival Orchestra to serve as the Academy's orchestra
 2. David Zinman as Artistic Director—Zinman's commitment to the project assured, subject to final contract and final recommendations and buy-in of all key stakeholders: Board, musicians, management, patrons, donors, and community partners
 3. World-wide conducting student applicants and finalists
 - a. Diversity in conducting students—different countries, ethnicities, genders
 4. Audience opportunities to engage with and learn from the diverse student conductors in various open training sessions.
 - ii. Deep dive for input on a different artistic model that may include only guest conductors not a sole Music Director. This guest conductor model would feature and provide:
 1. Audience opportunity to see a much broader, more diverse, and differing artistic viewpoints
 2. Musician opportunity to work with and share musical knowledge and experiences with more diverse guest conductors
 - c. Musician surveys developed for key input on modeling
 - d. Patron surveys developed for key input on modeling
 - e. Discussions and meetings with stakeholders on future planning conducted by management and Board
 - f. By May 2022, a full plan is developed and announced at the conclusion of the final season of Maestro Polivnick
2. Musician Audition Announcements and Audition Protocols
 - a. The Orchestra Committee (representatives elected by the collective "Festival" musicians) will work with the Executive Director and Board Artistic Chairman to review the audition announcement process with an aim to ensure candidates for openings come with the highest artistic credentials.

- b. Publicize openings with a goal for diversity by collaborating with organizations such as Sphinx, historically black-colleges with strong music programs, and via our current rostered musicians who perform with sitting orchestras across the United States.

Goal 2: Artistic performances will align the interests of our present and future patrons with those of our performing musicians

Action Plans:

1. Management will analyze ticket sales and trends for the past ten years to determine programmatic preferences of the Festival's patrons through sales and will report those findings to the Orchestra, Search, and Artistic Committee members.
2. The Orchestra Committee will survey the current rostered musicians to determine programming and guest artist preferences. Those survey results will be in hand by June 2021.
3. A series of two town hall Zoom meetings with the Festival musicians will be conducted by management and Board to discuss freely with the musicians ideas for the future direction of the Festival. One town hall took place in the fall of 2020, and the next will occur just prior to the start of the 2021 season.
 - a. With the input of patrons and musicians, the Orchestra Committee along with management and Board representation will chart out a three-year programming plan that addresses the key findings. The three-year programming plan will incorporate the following key components:
 - i. The final modeling plan of the three options studied: Music Director, Guest Conductors, and/or the Conducting Academy of New Hampshire; the Conducting Academy could be paired with either the Music Director or the Guest Conductor model so that the Festival's orchestral offerings would be a combination of concerts conducted by the Music Director or by a series of Guest Conductors together with concerts conducted by Academy fellows.
 - ii. Programs offered and any expanded programming as needed to respond to patron input as well as musicians' goals.
 - iii. On-going scheduled committee and town hall meetings throughout the three-years to assess the success of the plan. Protocols for assessment will be developed by management, Board, and Orchestra Committee.
4. Continue the live-stream chamber concert series begun in response to Covid 2020 which resulted in building new audiences and new donors to the Festival.
 - a. Live-stream the 2021 Chamber Series and negotiate a contract with Festival musicians to continue the live-streaming throughout the three-year strategic plan.
 - b. Assess number of households watching the live-stream series and determine the effectiveness of this new initiative in developing:
 - i. New audiences
 - ii. New donors
 - iii. National awareness of the New Hampshire Music Festival and its high degree of artistic product.

Goal 3: Offer year-long educational programs for young people that provide music education instruction as well as foster an appreciation and understanding of the importance of the arts in our culture of today.

Action Plans:

1. Educational programs will include hands-on participation by Festival musicians with student music learners. This will be achieved by providing:
 - a. Master-classes throughout the summer season when our musicians are in residence in Plymouth
 - b. Master-classes throughout the school year by musicians located in or near New Hampshire
 - c. On-line instructional videos for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students
 - d. Partnership with state band and orchestra teachers as well as with string and orchestra programs.
 - e. Side by Side rehearsal and performance opportunities will be sought out, funding will be raised to provide these services free of charge to all students and organizations whose mission aligns with the Festival.
2. Continue the project “Lonely Instruments in Need of Kids—L.I.N.K.” which provides fully restored/repared instruments at no cost to young music learners.
3. Continue to build on the success of the Festival’s on-line programs which can reach a larger number of student learners and assess the success of on-line learning initiatives.
4. Programming developed through Goal 2 will focus on providing concert opportunities for young learners and their families. This programming will include some of the finest core repertoire in the orchestral library presented in a way that is accessible to all.

Goal 4: Ensure Financial and Artistic Sustainability

Action Plans:

1. Yearly operational budgets will be thoroughly reviewed by the Board Treasurer prior to presentation to the Board. Earned and contributed revenue projections will have detailed assumptions. Those assumptions and the goals they represent within the budget will be assessed quarterly through a year to date financial analysis overseen by the Board Treasurer and Executive Director.
2. All new programs developed through the Strategic Plan must pass through a rigorous income and expense review by the Board Treasurer, Executive Director, and full Board to ensure the financial sustainability of these programs.
 - a. Develop new artistic offerings that reach a broader demographic which will provide new single ticket and subscription patrons

- b. Develop a plan to interact directly with new single ticket and subscription patrons to foster a meaningful relationship with them that will help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Festival
- 3. Through Annual Reports and direct 1:1 communication, continue to sustain and build upon the Festival's individual donor database.
- 4. To ensure artistic sustainability, the Festival will continue its present course of including musicians and patrons in the process of developing programs designed to meet the needs of the Festival's stakeholders. Greater involvement by musicians and patrons is critical to sustainability.
- 5. Evaluate quantitatively and qualitatively all existing and new programs introduced to determine public and private financial support as well as earned revenue garnered against program/s expenses. Report to the full Board and Orchestra Committee the results of these findings in order to work together to make informed strategic decisions as needed.

Goal 5: Continue to develop multiple, meaningful collaborations that align and enhance our artistic, educational and sustainability goals

Action Plans:

- 1. Ensure that the Board is expanded and includes individuals who can help to build or maintain important partnerships and collaborations to include:
 - a. Plymouth State University Board representative
 - b. NH State Music Education representative
 - c. Leaders from the top 5 areas identified by a review of our donor/subscription database
 - d. Include a Board member from the Festival's new office—Plymouth Congregational Church where the Festival held its chamber music series beginning in the summer of 2020 and will present its enlarged ensemble concerts in the summer of 2021.
 - e. Reach out to New Hampshire colleges and universities with strong cultural diversity programs to enlist their aid in identifying future Board members—those new members will be key in forming the development of outreach programs that can be assessed quantitatively and qualitatively for effectiveness.
- 2. Work with the Plymouth State University Music Department faculty to develop programs that meet the missions of both organizations.
 - a. Develop paid summer internships that include full position descriptions with measureable job performance goals.
 - b. Promote Plymouth State University arts performances through eblasts, social media, and direct mailings using the Festival's 8500 member database.
 - c. Include representatives of the Plymouth State Music Department faculty in the development of artistic and education programs.
 - d. Highlight Plymouth State University faculty as guest performers whenever possible.
- 3. Support the new music series developed by the Music Director of the Plymouth Congregational Church and provide streaming of the series as well as promotion of the series to the Festival's database.

4. Continue to seek out and collaborate with non-profits organizations that share a common mission with a goal to be a true collaborating partner. Examples of strong collaborations include: the Fiddlehead Fields Orchestra Program, which is supplied with instruments through “L.I.N.K.” and obtains 1:1 support from Festival musicians through master classes, side by side rehearsals and performances; the Rey Cultural Center, which partners each year with the Festival to provide concert opportunities to residents and visitors of all ages to the area. Examples of programs with the Rey Cultural Center include: the Young People Concerts, the Musical Petting Zoo, and the Nature Walk that features Festival musicians providing entertainment throughout the Walk.

Goal 6: Develop actionable diversity programs that can use the arts as an instrument to foster cultural diversity and understanding

Action Plan:

1. Ensure diversity representation on the Board of Directors
 - a. That/those members will chair the newly-formed “outreach” committee which will be tasked with developing strong, real, and assessable programs designed to enhance the accessibility, value, and inclusiveness of the program.
2. Ensure diversity representation on all musician committees
 - a. Artistic Committee to ensure programming that provides a wide and inclusive representation of composers and guest artists
 - b. Orchestra Committee – to ensure representation as well as focus on the Festival’s priority of providing auditions and positions to musicians of color.
3. Ensure that hiring practices for vacant or newly-formed staff positions include a robust candidate outreach plan.