



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

REPRESENTING THE 2015-16 SEASON // UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN | ANN ARBOR



Dear UMS Family,

I am excited to share with you the story of an amazing year at UMS.

All who gave to UMS, who purchased tickets, or who volunteered can feel immensely proud of what we accomplished together during the 2015-16 season.

Thank you.



As investors in the UMS Victors for Michigan Campaign, you helped UMS achieve new milestones in our shared commitment to Access & Inclusiveness, Engaged Learning through the Arts, and Bold Artistic Leadership.

Last fall, we launched a three-year partnership with the New York Philharmonic as part of our commitment to five years of orchestral residencies, and celebrated 25 years of the UMS Dance Series. Artists as diverse as choreographer Camille A. Brown, oud virtuoso Simon Shaheen, Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés, and theater maker Young Jean Lee inspired and challenged our audiences. **Students from Detroit to Kalamazoo experienced artistic discoveries and new ways of approaching their world, while our ticket sales set record numbers.** We received gifts from 585 first-time contributors, who represented over a third of those who give to UMS each year. This helped us realize, by the season's end, over \$33 million of our \$50 million goal for the Victors for Michigan campaign.

As many of you know, I will be stepping down as President of UMS in 2017. For the last 30 years, I have been honored to steward this incredible organization, leading with the same philosophy as my mentor, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody In, Nobody Out."

To me, this means that everyone's contribution to the vibrancy of UMS is vital — whether they are onstage, backstage, in the audience, on campus, in schools throughout our local communities, or as donors. It means that every gift to UMS matters. And every gift we receive means we can give a gift, too. From Andalucían melodies to a revolutionary new *Antigone* to community workshops led by stars of the American Ballet Theatre, you help us bring the world to Michigan.

Thanks to every one of you for making this exceptional season possible.

With genuine gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Fischer".

Kenneth C. Fischer
President



Access and Inclusiveness

At UMS, we work to ensure that anyone and everyone has the opportunity to be inspired by the transformative power of the performing arts.

We want UMS performances and educational events to be places where every individual feels welcome, included, and connected through uncommon and engaging experiences. U-M students, K-12 students from area schools, students from low-income families, students on limited budgets, those with special needs, people from diverse cultural experiences, young, seasoned, classical musical enthusiasts, adventurous souls — all are welcome.

We offer ticket discounts, School Day Performances, community engagement activities, free educational events, special programming, and more to make this happen.

Special Performances

Lights Up, Sound Down

For some time, we at UMS have wanted to find a performance to present in a sensory-friendly format for those with special needs, including individuals with autism. Part of the challenge is finding artists who are not only willing to offer such a performance, but also have the necessary experience and training to do so with care.

Cue the **National Theatre of Scotland!**

When the Scots brought their version of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* to Ann Arbor, they already had experience offering sensory-friendly events where the lights are kept up, the sound levels are kept down, and the performers are sensitive to the needs of their audience members. At UMS, we took great care in ensuring special members of our audience felt comfortable. Ticket holders could arrive early and get an up-close look at the ghostly puppets that were used in the production. And audience members could prepare for the experience in advance by viewing our online "social story" about the performance, which included images of the Power Center and a gentle reminder to reach for a caregiver's hand if the crowded lobby became overwhelming.

The National Theatre of Scotland's production of *A Christmas Carol*.



School Day Performances

5,500 Students

21 Schools

94 Workshops

One of UMS's most surprising and enchanting shows last season shared the tale of an endearing robot, on the verge of obsolescence, who falls in love with a lonely office girl. Montreal-based scratch DJ and music producer Kid Koala brought a magical re-imagination of his graphic novel and soundtrack to the UMS stage. The live adaptation unfolded via a real-time video of a cast of puppets, while Kid Koala and the Cecilia Quartet provided original live scoring on the piano, strings, and turntable.

***Nufonia Must Fall* was perfect for a School Day Performance and for UMS designed hands-on, in-class workshops that introduced K-12 students from area schools to Kid Koala's work and the art of puppetry, as well as some relevant themes in the work.** Jill Ross, an art teacher at a school in Southgate, MI that serves emotionally impaired students, described the powerful impact the experience had on her students: "My students had little experience with theater and puppetry, but they could relate to the title character because he no longer feels useful. My students have experienced that. But he persevered, showed grit, and had a very happy ending!"

"My students had little experience with theater and puppetry, but they could relate to the title character..."

Jill Ross
Teacher

A *Nufonia Must Fall* workshop with Plymouth-Canton high school students.



Building Cultural Bridges

Few UMS shows exemplified how the performing arts can build appreciation for and understanding of our world's diverse cultures like last year's **Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán**. Widely considered to be the finest mariachi in the world, who meld the old world style of mariachi music with new innovative pieces, it was not surprising that their sold-out concert in Hill elicited spontaneous sing-alongs and standing ovations. And that was just the beginning.

The National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures held a community reception prior to the performance to help celebrate the opening of their new Detroit presence. UMS orchestrated performance exchange opportunities between youth mariachi singers from Mariachi Juvenil Detroit and the youth mariachis from Texas touring with Mariachi Vargas. To help prepare over 3,000 students who witnessed a colorful sold-out School Day Performance, UMS created a classroom learning guide and a Mexican Cultural Immersion for teachers — a day filled with traditional art, music, food, dancing, and more.

Youth mariachis also made special visits to two Ann Arbor elementary schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families and a large Latino population: Carpenter Elementary, and Mitchell Elementary, which works with U-M's School of Music, Theatre & Dance's Michigan Artist Citizen program.

“The concert had students on the edges of their seats. You opened a new world for some, and you reinforced the value of mariachi to many of our English language-learning students from Mexico. It spurred us to learn more about the cultures of all our students.”

Anne Marie Borders
Teacher
Carpenter Elementary
Ann Arbor Public Schools

Local elementary school students with performers from Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán.



Student Tickets

20% of UMS audience
saved over \$529,000
on 17,000 tickets

In 2015, UMS and U-M students lost a great friend in **Bert Askwith** (LSA '31). A true Victor for the Arts, Bert made a meaningful gift each year to provide every first- and second-year U-M undergraduate with a free ticket to a UMS performance, complete with a second ticket for a friend at just \$10. Bert passed away in the spring of 2015. To continue Bert's generosity and legacy, his daughter, **Patti Askwith Kenner**, renewed her father's pledge for two years. "Bert's Ticket," as we affectionately call the program, will continue to inspire U-M undergraduate students new to campus with thrilling performing arts experiences.

In addition to Bert's Ticket, UMS also simplified its ticket pricing policy for all college students. The result? **During the 2015-16 season, college students made up over 20% of our audience and saved more than \$529,000 on 17,000 tickets.** That means one in five audience members was a college student who had the opportunity to experience the power of live performance thanks to discounted, affordable tickets.

At UMS, we believe that all U-M students deserve to connect with world-class artists as part of their Michigan experience.

"These performances have opened up a world for me. I grew up in a poor household so I did not have the luxury to attend many cultural performances. The fact that we, as students, get discounted, often free, tickets to performances has allowed me to explore some parts of my identity."

U-M Student from 2016
UMS Survey



Engaged Learning through the Arts

Thanks to our generous donors, the impact of UMS ripples far beyond the actual performances. Some artists come for extended educational residencies, holding masterclasses and workshops for U-M students, local K-12 students, and community members. Some artists take on U-M students as interns.

Students from area schools streaming into Hill Auditorium for daytime performances may have already studied an artist's work, tried their own hand at similar creations, or even met the artists at pre- and post-performance workshops in schools.

Visiting artists share their insights in Q&A sessions and our “Night School” series. And dancers from professional companies lead free “You Can Dance” workshops open to anyone in our community.

The world-class artists UMS brings to town may turn up almost anywhere in southeast Michigan — encouraging dreams, hands-on learning, and those special moments when a creative experience can transform a life.

In-depth Educational Residencies

At UMS, we work to make the performing arts an integral part of the academic experience for all students, working in partnership across multiple disciplines to bring different perspectives into focus.

In 2015, UMS launched a three-year partnership with the New York Philharmonic (NYP), part of our commitment to five years of orchestral residencies. During their fall visit, generously funded by Eugene M. Grant (LSA '38), NYP orchestra members and leadership participated in dozens of educational activities across campus and our community. Among the more unexpected and innovative UMS partners: the Ross School of Business, the School of Information, University Hospital, and the Michigan Marching Band. In all, over 2,500 students from U-M, other area colleges, and three Ann Arbor high schools participated in masterclasses, side-by-side concerts with NYP musicians, and conductor visits to orchestral and choral ensembles.

Of particular note: a Sunday performance where the NYP provided live accompaniment to the iconic 1954 Academy Award winning film *On the Waterfront*, and a memorable halftime performance at the Big House where NYP Conductor Alan Gilbert and 18 NYP brass players joined the Michigan Marching Band to play for a crowd of over 110,000.

38
Residency
Activities

3 Performances
at Hill

One Memorable
Halftime
Performance

New York Philharmonic *On the Waterfront*.



21st Century Artist Internships

Beginning in 2013, UMS and the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD) launched the 21st Century Artist Internship program, which received seed funding for its first three years from the Third Century Initiative at U-M. Through this program, students are placed with an artistic ensemble for a six-week summer internship and receive a stipend to defray costs. They then return to campus in the fall to serve as resident experts for the ensemble they visited.

Tsukumo Niwa '17, an Oboe Performance and International Studies major, spent the summer of 2015 in New York City embedded with highly acclaimed performance artist, playwright, singer-songwriter, director, and producer **Taylor Mac**. Tsukumo was intrigued by Taylor Mac's commitment to inclusivity and LGBTQ+ identities and was excited to see the arts and social justice meet. Among her duties: making a prototype project book for Taylor's *24-Decade History of Popular Music*, with notes on costumes, stage directions, and song lists, and helping organize workshops of new performance material at NYC's Park Avenue Armory.

"One of my biggest takeaways," she says, "is that it takes courage to present something you know isn't perfect. Now I feel compelled to show my imperfection, with the knowledge that I can get better with audience feedback."

"One of my biggest takeaways...it takes courage to present something you know isn't perfect."

Tsukumo Niwa '17
Oboe Performance and
International Studies major
University of Michigan

Taylor Mac's performance at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre.



Taylor Mac with Tsukumo Niwa



Creative Discovery

When **Camille A. Brown** brought her ***Black Girl – Linguistic Play*** to the Power Center last February, the event spread into nearly every part our community. Her work was the focus of one of our “Night School” sessions — a free, six-week series open to anyone interested in exploring UMS performances in greater depth. Members of Camille’s company also led one of our popular “You Can Dance” workshops, a series of free, no-experience-necessary events open to all ages and backgrounds, taught by dancers from visiting dance companies.

The depth of the educational experience for more than 400 students from schools in Ypsilanti, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Kalamazoo who attended a School Day Performance — including five under-resourced schools with no arts teachers and a large contingent of students from diverse backgrounds — was transformative. The dance performance brought a powerful message expressing a positive childhood narrative that was drawn from Camille’s own experience, one not often reflected in the media. Camille and the other dancers came out on stage after the performance to answer questions from the students. They also sought insights from a few audience members, asking what words come to mind when they hear the phrase “black girl.”

Camille Brown meets with audience members at the Power Center.



Bold Artistic Leadership

With generous support from our donors, UMS has been able to successfully realize its important priority of bold artistic leadership. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the 2015-16 season's extraordinary presenting program, which included performances that inspired, challenged, and stretched our audiences in new ways.

Extended educational activities with the New York Philharmonic and National Theatre of Scotland engaged thousands of students. The new UMS Song Remix Series juxtaposed traditional vocal performances, including an evening with accompanist Martin Katz and renowned opera singers, with the more provocative performance artist Taylor Mac.

And Renegade programming introduced our audiences to a different dimension of UMS — from the season opener with *My Brightest Diamond* and the Detroit Party Marching Band at Downtown Home & Garden to *Untitled Feminist Show*, where fully nude dancers performed a wordless celebration of feminist identity.

These uncommon and engaging performances demonstrate the rich depth and texture of experiences UMS brings to the stage — all made possible by our donors' generous and courageous support.

Renegade

A generous 2011 gift from Maxine and Stuart Frankel launched five years of Renegade programming, making it possible for UMS to present courageous, provocative, and even controversial work that has stretched our audiences, challenging us to think in different ways.

It's perhaps impossible to capture with words the rich texture, and at times risqué nature, of the innovative and cutting edge performances featured in the 2015-16 season. Through Renegade, UMS brought an incredible cast of creative artists and provocative performances to town, including performance artist Taylor Mac, Young Jean Lee's Theater Company exploration of identity through two wildly different works, the Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Ivo van Hove's version of Sophokles' *Antigone*, starring Juliette Binoche.

In 2015, the Frankels renewed their commitment with a generous two-year gift. It's this type of leadership support that guarantees even more adventurous and innovative experiences to keep our community and audiences buzzing.

“Fabulousness can come in many forms, and Taylor Mac seems intent on assuming every one of them.”

New York Times

Performance Artist Taylor Mac brought UMS audiences through three decades of American song



The Art of the Song

Longtime UMS friends **Maury and Linda Binkow**, whose love of opera dates back to their childhood in New York, have made a generous campaign gift to UMS to support a new biennial series called **UMS Song Remix**.

Who better to help curate this new series than University of Michigan (U-M) professor **Martin Katz**, whose 45-year career as the “gold standard of accompanists” (*New York Times*) has spanned five continents, and who has collaborated with the world’s most celebrated singers in recital and recording? For the inaugural performance in January 2016, Katz assembled singers, all U-M alums with successful careers, to explore “What’s in a Song?” The wildly successful concert focused on the special marriage of poetry and music, exquisitely interpreted by mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, tenor William Ferguson, countertenor David Daniels, soprano Janai Brugger, and baritone Jesse Blumberg, along with special guests William Bolcom and Joan Morris.

By supporting this new series through gifts during their lifetime, and establishing the Maurice and Linda Binkow Endowed Vocal and Chamber Arts Endowment Fund through their estate plan, the Binkows have ensured that music lovers will enjoy the art of the song for generations to come.

Martin Katz at the piano with an ensemble of four U-M alumni: David Daniels, William Ferguson, Janai Brugger, and Jesse Blumberg, along with Frederica von Stade (center).



Teaming Up for Dance

UMS and Michigan Opera Theatre launched the first in a three-year dance partnership together with one of the largest, most opulent productions on the ballet scene today.

More than 12,000 people — including nearly 900 youth from underserved neighborhoods — witnessed the spectacle of American Ballet Theatre’s new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Detroit Opera House last spring, complete with three performances that included ABT superstar Misty Copeland.

By presenting such a large-scale work, UMS and MOT were also able to provide once-in-a-lifetime training and performance opportunities for local communities. Young people from across Southeast Michigan were cast as extras, and ballet students in Detroit and Chelsea participated in free masterclasses. High school students in Detroit were able to meet several of the company dancers. And anyone yearning to join the action could participate in two free “You Can Dance” workshops for the community at the Carr Center in Detroit and at the Ann Arbor YMCA.

American Ballet Theatre’s *The Sleeping Beauty*. Photo by Gene Schiavone.



Your Gifts, Your Community's Future

We can't do what we do without you.

Your generosity provides over half of our annual operating support. New endowed funds assure that UMS has the financial capacity and flexibility to make future long-term artistic commitments. And three special fundraising events — UMS's **Victors for the Arts** fall benefit, an opening night dinner before **American Ballet Theatre's *The Sleeping Beauty***, and a new spring event for UMS, our **Ovation** gala presented by Ford Motor Company Fund — helped grow philanthropic support for UMS.

Our concerts, our public school programs, our community events — they are your concerts, your public school programs, your community events. Your continued generosity assures that UMS can bring world-class performing arts to campus, Ann Arbor, and our surrounding community. The future artistic and cultural vibrancy of our region depends on it.

Power of Endowment

A long-term gift that continues to give by generating annual operating support

Philanthropy can be a family affair. In 2015, **Karl V. Hauser** and his wife **Ilene Forsyth** joined a number of generous donors who have established endowments at UMS. Together they created the Karl V. Hauser and Ilene H. Forsyth Choral Union Endowment Fund, which will support an annual performance in the UMS Choral Union Series — an important gift toward our goal to permanently endow as many UMS performances and performance series as possible.

When endowing a performance, concert series, or educational residency, donors provide a very special gift — one that assures continued financial support for UMS by generating annual earnings. Endowed gifts give UMS the capacity to make long-term artistic commitments in bringing the world's best to the UMS stage.

An endowed gift also provides UMS future flexibility. In the early 1990s, long-time UMS friend Mary Palmer wanted to make a meaningful gift to help UMS purchase a grand piano for Hill Auditorium. Though a generous gesture, it didn't seem practical at the time to install a valuable instrument permanently as Hill wasn't yet air-conditioned. But what if Mary's gift could be made permanent, yet flexible enough to allow visiting artists to choose their own piano? By establishing a permanent endowment to support a piano at Hill Auditorium, Mary's gift continues to give — enabling UMS to rent a piano for each performance that is the visiting artist's choice. And since the William and Mary Palmer Fund was first established, every visiting pianist has always been pleased with the "Palmer piano."

\$2,265,711
Endowed Gifts to
UMS in 2015-16.

\$786,569
Operating
Support from
Endowment
Earnings.

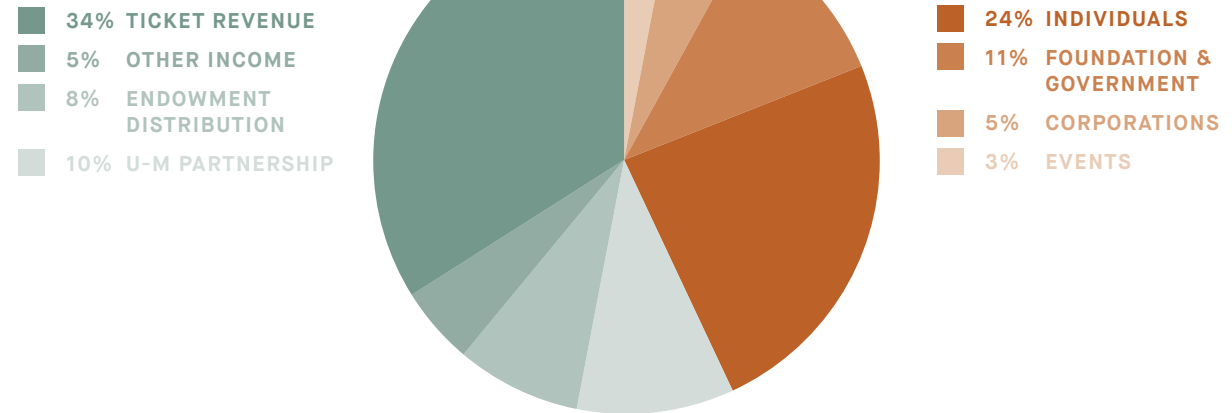
The Steinway piano used in this recital is made possible by the William and Mary Palmer Fund. Photo by Felix Broede.



2015-16 Financial Data

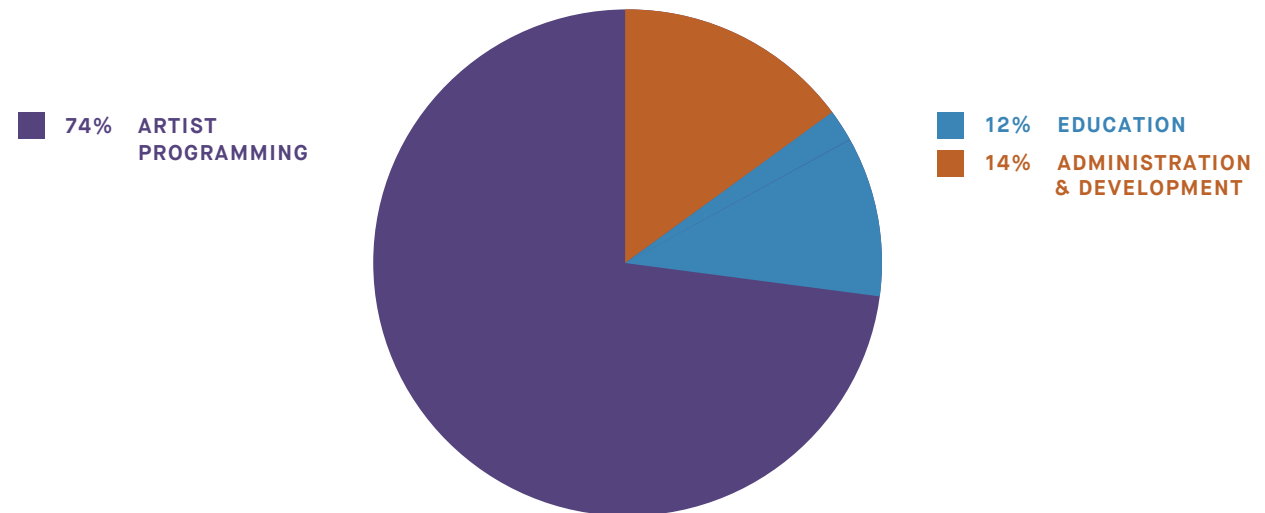
Season Revenues

ACTUAL



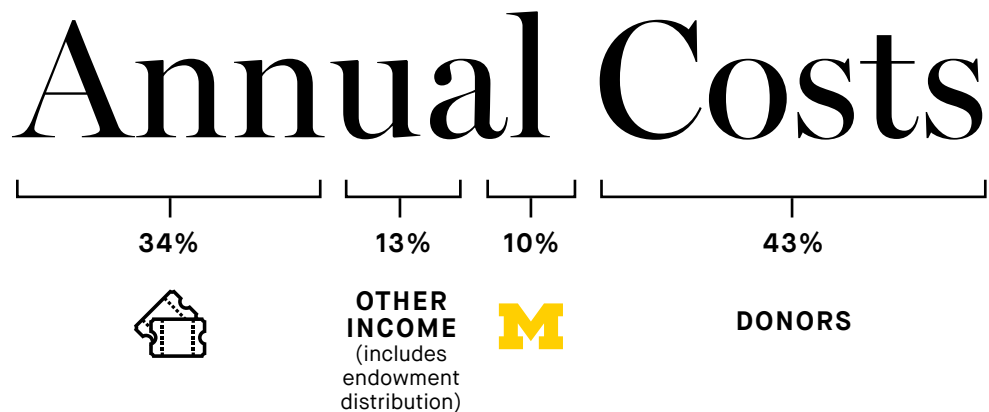
Season Expenses

ACTUAL



NOTE: All figures derived from actual revenues and expenses as listed in the FY16 financial statement.

Our Generous Donors



In 2015-16, ticket revenue covered only 34% of our annual operating costs. UMS relies on generous philanthropic support to bring renowned artists from around the world to Ann Arbor.

Our donors' generosity makes it possible for UMS to make an impact far beyond the stage — including discounted student tickets; School Day Performances; artist visits to local schools and community workshops; immersive educational residencies with masterclasses, workshops, and public lectures; commissioning new works; and introducing bold and innovative new programming.

Our donors' generosity includes both annual and endowed gifts. Earnings distributions from UMS endowment funds account for 8% of our annual operating support. A permanent source of income that gives UMS greater flexibility in programming and enables UMS to plan further in advance, UMS's endowment funds are invested and managed with the University of Michigan's endowment, which provides one of the highest returns on investment among all university endowment funds.

To all of you who give to UMS -- we can't thank you enough.

[Click here for a complete listing](#) of the generous and deeply committed individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies who supported our efforts in 2015-16.

You have a part to play...
helping UMS continue to
inspire individuals and
enrich communities by
connecting audiences and
artists in uncommon and
engaging experiences.