

## Annual Report 2021-2022



### Vision

Inspiring people to live in harmony, treating one another with dignity.

### Mission

Cantare seeks to foster a diverse community of compassion and understanding across generational, cultural, and economic boundaries through the beauty and power of choral music.

### Work

Through our work with our adult choirs, youth choirs, and more than 2,450 youth who are underserved, Cantare is committed to advancing social change and cultural equity by building bridges where there is division.





# Letter from the Executive Director

### Lifting Voices, Uplifting Lives!

I remember reading those words during one of my first meetings with the Board and thought, *What a great catchphrase.* Now

I understand that it's much more than catchphrase or a good marketing tool, it's who we are and what we do.

When I arrived in November of 2021 we were still at the height of the pandemic. The Chamber Ensemble was on hiatus, we canceled one of our scheduled Holiday Concerts and our after-school choirs were unable to rehearse. While all of this was disheartening, we did have wonderful successes. Over 400 people attended the December concert in Walnut Creek. Brahms' Requiem, performed by the Chorale with original poetry read by students from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center was deeply meaningful and provided insight into the challenges facing our young people. Our Stand Up! concert in May, with Nova and a showcase of three elementary after-school choirs, provided such a wonderful way to close the concert season. Young people finding their voices, showing their courage and spreading their joy will always stay with me. Julie and Conway did exemplary work putting

together a two-week summer camp in June. Over 50 children experienced the joy of choral music, most for the first time!

We served over 2,450 children in FY 21-22 even with the protocols and issues surrounding the pandemic. Our staff and Teaching Artists were resilient and adaptive. We brought quality, equitable music programs to the children of Oakland—not to mention the joy of singing!

I have been deeply touched by the welcome that I have received from our singers, donors, funders and staff. The strength of any organization is the people who comprise it. We are truly blessed with a dedicated, caring and committed group of people who believe in our mission and work to achieve our goals.

Our financial outlook is strong and our growth in both adult and children's programs is significant. We finished the fiscal year in a positive position and with gains in our reserve fund. This is due to your generosity and support. **Thank you!**

Mary Finch, Executive Director



# Letter from the Artistic Director



Our 2021-22 season was very special for all of us on the performing end as we returned to live performances after a 20-month hiatus. The Chorale was able to perform three diverse concerts, including a unique performance of Brahms' Requiem in collaboration with youth from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland. We once again collaborated with Nova and selected singers from our children's choirs both in December and May, singing alongside one another and offering each other support that displayed our mutual respect and enthusiasm. The Chamber Ensemble remained on leave throughout the season but several of these singers joined the Chorale in performance.

Most importantly, we walked alongside one another through the shifts that occurred with the onset of new Covid strains that affected several of our singers, their families and friends. In the end, we affirmed the value of Cantare's mission, nurturing a compassionate community through the beauty and power of choral music.

In May, I was honored to be a recipient of the Jefferson Award in celebration of public service. It is an award that we share together. Through Cantare, you also demonstrate your commitment to serve others. It is this service that continues to bring me joy.

David Morales, Artistic Director

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## 2021-2022 Concerts



### Lift Every Voice and Sing

December 4, 2021  
Walnut Creek

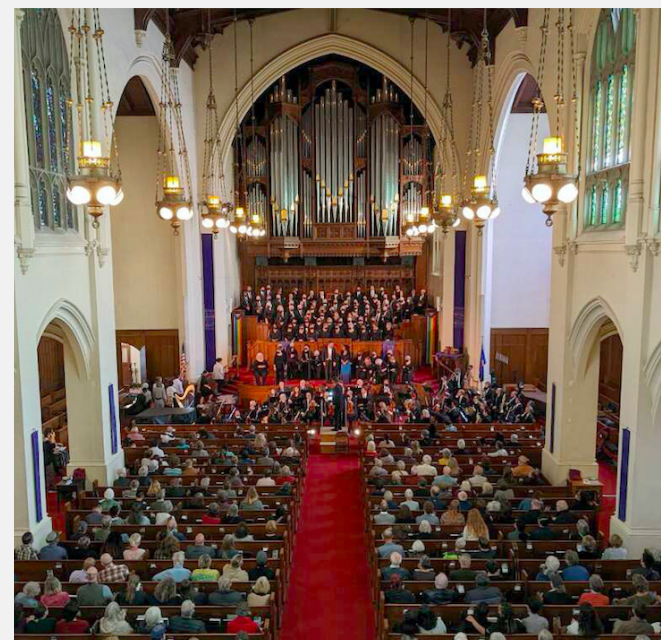
### Brahms' Requiem

March 25, 2022  
Walnut Creek

March 27, 2022  
Oakland

### Stand Up!

May 21, 2022  
Lafayette



**Cantare**:  
Lifting Voices  
Uplifting Lives



## Brand Refresh



When David Morales founded Cantare in 1987, he built it around a powerful mission. Decades later, that mission is as strong and relevant as ever—but relatively unknown beyond our singers and select audiences.

In 2020, David and Board President Graham Seel recognized that, to grow and sustain Cantare's positive impact, they needed an actionable, differentiating brand positioning that would help tell Cantare's story, guide operations and grow community engagement and support.

That fall we embarked on a brand refresh that included stakeholder interviews and visioning sessions. The complete alignment of stakeholders and staff was remarkable and made the work ahead fun.

Brand Designer Chris Lauer joined the effort in summer 2021, translating the learnings into a new brand identity system. This included a vivid new color palette and a contemporary, vibrant logo and tagline—"lifting voices, uplifting lives"—that instantly expressed Cantare's vision and energy. Chris then refreshed Cantare's website and communication templates, in time for our 2022 season.

Cantare now has a powerful, consistently recognizable platform for telling our story, inspiring others, and growing our community and impact. And through this brand refresh journey, I now have a deeper appreciation for this organization and the people who bring it to life.

—Janet Venturino, Board Vice President

## Awards

### 2022 Chorus America Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award

For commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and furthering African American and other diverse choral traditions

### 2022 Jefferson Award to David Morales

In great recognition of David's lasting community impact and Cantare's mission of fostering a diverse community of compassion and understanding across generational, cultural, and economic boundaries.



## Nova Choir

Our Nova singers were thrilled to return to the stage after meeting online for 18 months. Despite the challenges of singing with masks while spaced apart, Nova gave some of its best performances ever thanks to great work by our student choreographers, who brought new energy and joy into our performances. Nova collaborated on several pieces with the adult choir and also created [this music video](#) where students shared their reflections about the importance of inclusion. Our student leadership team played an important role in motivating and organizing the group and mentoring younger singers.

Singers also worked with professional voice coaches to prepare for our annual Nova recital in March. For many students it was their first time ever performing a solo. They showed tremendous courage and gave outstanding performances, accompanied on the piano by Nova alum Mary Nguyen. Our students truly embodied the qualities they identified in September to define Nova:

–Julie Haydon,  
Director of Children's and Youth Choirs

TEAMWORK

INNOVATIVE



SUPPORTIVE

POSITIVE

ENERGETIC



ARTISTIC

COMMUNITY

“ I love singing because I can send a message through my voice and that's powerful to me. ”

– Nova Student

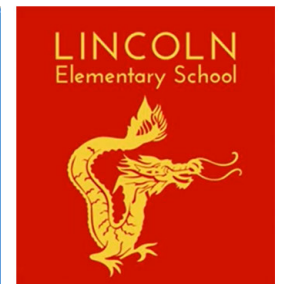
## Children's Program

After 18 months of distance learning, Cantare's Classroom Music Education returned in-person August 2021.

2,450 students in

- 92 classrooms
- 4 after-school choirs
- 73% economically disadvantaged
- 40% English language learners
- 10% special education
- 21% African American
- 38% Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI)
- 23% Hispanic
- 9% 2 or more ethnicities

100% of Cantare middle/high school singers graduate high school (vs OUSD rate of 72%)  
98% attend college or vocational school, many the first in their families to do so



# Children's Music Education



Our Teaching Artists demonstrated tremendous flexibility and creativity teaching in a year with many iterations of Covid safety protocols. Most lessons and rehearsals took place outdoors. Despite the challenges, our children thrived. In person, students learned how to sing a round in parts and enjoyed the sound of harmony; they learned to socialize and take turns in a game, or stand confidently to perform as a group. Teaching staff saw the importance of maintaining the performance goals for our students: even though we couldn't hold large group gatherings, many of the students' performances were recorded on video and shared with the school community.



**Click here to view these concerts**

Cantare introduced a newly revamped interdisciplinary curriculum for third graders, "Around the World with Music", and in Spanish "Viajando por el Mundo con la Música". This joins the fourth grade course "California Trailblazers: Music of California History" and fifth grade "Lift Every Voice: Music of US History", in integrating arts into culturally responsive social/history curricula, aligning with OUSD's initiative to create joyful learning environments through arts integration.



## Baseline and year-end Progress Assessment

- 85% of participating students met rhythmic learning objectives
- 83% for melodic objectives
- 87% of the partner schools staff surveyed said that Cantare's Classroom Music Education helped their students develop listening and communication skills.
- 95% increase in socio-emotional/life/career skills among 6-12 graders

The academic year ended joyfully with the Cantare's Children & Youth Choirs concert. Singers from Melrose Leadership Academy and Lincoln Elementary performed in-person alongside Nova. The excitement was evident among the students and the audience and a sense of pride filled the concert like a warm embrace.

In May 2022, two of Cantare's long-time partners, Cleveland and Lincoln Elementary Schools, were honored with 2022 California Pivotal Practice Awards.

—Conway Tan-Gregory,  
Director of Music Education

**“The Lincoln community has received the 2022 Pivotal Practice Award recently for sustaining strong community engagement during the pandemic. The partnership with Cantare has played an important role in connecting students deeply to themselves, to each other, to the community, to music and culture and to the world.”**

— Mukta Sambrani, Principal,  
Lincoln Elementary



## Summer Music Camp

Cantare's 2022 Summer Music Camp "Harmony" was a great success! For two weeks, 45 students in fourth - ninth grade from 15 different schools participated in choir rehearsals, musicianship classes and games, building musical skills, friendships and confidence. Campers also participated in a special recording session with a professional recording engineer and had a field trip to the San Francisco Opera, where we got to be the demonstration choir for teachers participating in a professional development program.

Many students had their first choir experience or a chance to sing their first solo in these two weeks. It was so exciting to watch their poise and confidence grow. We are especially proud of our six counselors, 11-12th grade student leaders who showed incredible leadership during the camp while gaining their first paid work experience.

[Click here to watch a slideshow](#) and listen to the campers sing "How Great is the Pleasure," a product of our recording studio experience!



# President's Remarks

Dear Cantare Friends,

It is hard to know what to feature in my letter this year. There are so many highlights, many of which are covered in other parts of this annual report. We completed our navigation of Covid through careful choices and extraordinary creativity by our staff. We hired an outstanding Executive Director, Mary Finch. We expanded our student reach this year by more than 20%. We implemented the first year of our ambitious strategic plan and refreshed it with even bigger plans for the future. And I believe we have established a platform for moving forward that will withstand new challenges and grow new leadership. Our mission has been more powerfully carried out than ever, as you will have seen through stories from our student and adult participants. All this has been done while strengthening our financial base and growing our reserves against future difficulties (such as another pandemic or economic downturn).

So much has changed, and yet our mission has not. We are now impacting more individuals and families than ever. More notice is being taken of Cantare, as is evident from the awards received in the past few months. Isn't this a great time to be a part of this powerful work of lifting voices and uplifting lives? I am proud to be here and grateful for your support of time and finances and sharing the Cantare story with friends and family. Thank you!

–Graham Seel, Board President



# Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 Treasurer's Report

We are pleased to report that Cantare closed the 2021-22 fiscal year with income exceeding expenses by

over 17%. This is largely due to reduced expenses, substantial increases in government funding and increased support from foundations and generous donors who believe in our mission. 41% of the total income received was from foundations and government programs.

The government funding was received in the form of one-time payroll tax credits (ERC), forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Plan loan and the first installment of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Recovery Act grant. Additional government funding came from the California Arts Commission and our regular NEA grant. Our foundation supporters stood with us again this year, but we did see some long-time funders discontinue arts or arts education programs. We have already begun seeking new sources both on the local and national level.

Individual donations increased to 36% of total income because of the generosity and continued

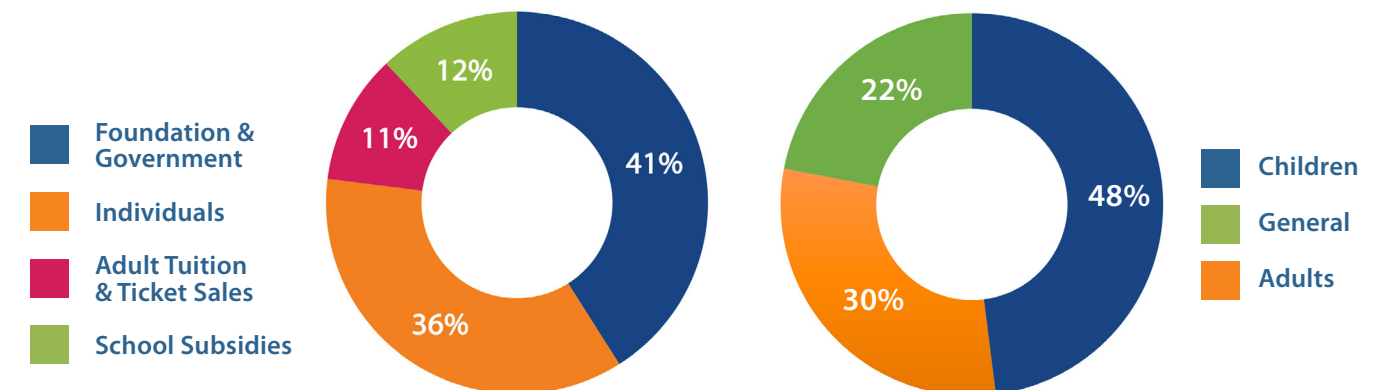
support of Cantare's donors. We continue to rely on the support of our individual donors who have remained steadfast as we navigated the challenges of the global pandemic. We anticipate a return to concerts in 2022-23 with a full season planned.

Cantare is fortunate to have dedicated and committed staff. We believe that providing a living wage to our employees not only is fair, but it helps to retain quality, talented, mission-motivated personnel. Both expenses and income were higher than fiscal year 2020-21 due to Cantare being unable to perform concerts and due to children's programs, while still running, being reduced in size and scope.

Cash flow for the fiscal year was strong and we did not need to utilize any lines of credit. We finished fiscal year 2021-22 with a reserve fund in the amount of \$100,000. The goal is to increase the fund to \$250,000 by the fiscal year 2025-26. The Wong Fund has just over \$60,000, which we anticipate drawing down over the next 2 years per the restrictions set forth in the gift.

Cantare, through the generosity of donors, funders and government support, is poised to move forward with significant growth in our children's programs and expansion in the community through our adult choirs.

–Al Peters, Board Treasurer



**Income = \$909,539**

**Expenses = \$747,562**

## Board of Directors

- Graham Seel | President
- Janet Venturino | Vice President
- Al Peters | Treasurer
- Roxane Foster | Secretary
- Nai Trawick | Youth Board Member
- Mercedes Harrison
- Linda Mackey
- David Morales
- Dominic Savant

## Teaching Artists

- Julie Haydon
- Conway Tan-Gregory
- Katerine Carmona Arbelaez
- Rhonda Crane
- Amanda Hahn
- Lydia Mills
- Brian Moran
- Eli Wise
- Rebecca Kleinmann
- Valentina Shaddox
- David Kelly-Tuason, Accompanist

## Executive Director's Advisory Council

- Daniel Bolsen
- Beverly Bourazak
- Mary Etrick
- Patricia G. Hayes
- Teresa Kennell
- Kevin McQuade
- Linda McQuade
- John D. Morris
- Michael Murtagh
- Ruth Nott
- Jess Perry
- Kenneth Rafanan
- Christopher Tom
- Kali Wilson

## Staff

- Mary Finch | Executive Director
- David Morales | Artistic Director
- Julie Haydon | Director of Children's and Youth Choirs
- Conway Tan-Gregory | Director of Music Education
- Toni Bermudez | Office Manager
- Treva Obbard | Marketing and Development Manager

# Foundation Support

## Funders

Cantare is funded in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts and by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

## \$50,000 and Beyond

National Endowment for the Arts

## \$25,000 to \$49,999

California Arts Council  
Crescent Porter Hale Foundation  
Neil & Amelia McDaniel Charitable Fund  
Quest Foundation

## \$10,000 to \$24,999

Stulsaft Foundation  
Trio Foundation

## \$5,000 to \$9,999

Arts for Oakland Kids  
The Barrios Trust  
Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation  
Nicholson Family Foundation

## \$1,000 to \$4,999

Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund  
The Distaff Singers  
Kiwanis Club of Moraga  
The Mechanics Bank

## \$500 to \$999

Cast Wines  
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

## \$499

Amazon Smile Foundation

## Donor-Advised Funds

Fidelity Charitable  
IP Symphony, LLC  
Levi Strauss  
Schwab Charitable  
Vanguard Charitable

## Matching Your Gift

AbbVie  
Bank of the West Employee Giving Program  
Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program  
Google Matching Gift Fund  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory HOME Campaign  
Workday

2022-2023 Season

# IMAGINE

...Living Life in Peace

**Oct 23 2022**  
3pm  
St. Perpetua Church, Lafayette



**MEMORIES & DREAMS**  
Featuring the Ensemble

**Dec 3 2022**  
7:30pm  
Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church

**Dec 4 2022**  
4pm  
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland



**HOLIDAY CONCERT**  
Featuring the Chorale, Ensemble, Nova and Youth Honor Choir

**Feb 11 2023**  
7:30pm  
Lafayette Community Center

**Feb 12 2023**  
4pm  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley



**SONGS BY THE BEATLES**  
Featuring the Ensemble



**March 19 2023**  
4pm  
Scottish Rite Center



Ernest Bloch's **SACRED SERVICE**  
Featuring the Chorale with orchestra

**May 21 2023**  
4pm  
Skyline High School Auditorium



Music from **ASIA'S PACIFIC RIM**  
Featuring the Chorale, Ensemble, Nova and Youth Honor Choir