

2019/2020

annual report

All of Us!



Vision

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

Mission

Cantare Con Vivo 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 2,350 underserved youth, Cantare is committed to advancing social change and cultural equity by building bridges where there is division.



**CANTARE
CON VIVO**
IN THE KEY OF LIFE

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cantareconvivo.org



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Letter from Board President

What a year! Despite recent COVID-related challenges, I couldn't be more proud to be a part of Cantare! During this year we have so clearly demonstrated our core value of compassion through choral music. Not just our singers, our staff and our students, but also all of our supporters—everyone reading this letter—has contributed to a wonderful year. Thank you!

In this annual report, David, Julie and Conway highlight many marvelous moments in concerts, recordings and classrooms. If you experienced *Considering Matthew Shepard*, then you might have been as deeply affected as I was. This music went beyond my intellectual understanding of prejudice into the heart of humanity, in both its most corrupt and its most beautiful forms. That's what great music can do. That is why our adult and children's programs are transformative in the lives of our 150 adult singers, our 2,350 students, our audiences, and our communities.

As an organization, we were in a time of transition before the pandemic hit. Linden Young retired from her several years of faithful service as our Executive Director. My predecessor as Board President, Henry Hirschel, completed an extended term, and we added several new Board members.

Even in the midst of adapting to radically new circumstances, we are thinking about the future of Cantare. We have seen 30+ years of remarkable community impact, and we continue to hold to our mission of creating communities of compassion through adult, youth and children's choral music. The need for such communities is greater than ever, as together we confront the inequities and prejudices within our society. We look forward to working together to envisage how Cantare's mission and vision can be expanded and carried forward for many decades to come.

Together, we have risen to the challenges of these times. I am excited about the coming season in seeing how much more we will accomplish. Thank you again for joining us on this journey.

- Graham Seel

Cantare Con Vivo ("To Sing With Life") is a nonprofit choral music organization founded in 1987 that engages participants from ages 4 to 85 primarily from Alameda and Contra Costa counties. We provide tuition-free choral music residencies in Title 1 (socio-economically disadvantaged) Oakland schools. Our 100-voice symphonic Chorale and 24-voice Chamber Ensemble offer six different annual concert programs that are affordable and accessible. Our audition-free summer adult choir attracts 130 singers and performs in July.

Cantare's adult choirs have performed over 170 different concert programs, presenting more than 1,500 compositions, including numerous major choral/orchestral works. All of our choirs, children and adults, perform for more than 4,000 people each year.

Message from Artistic Director: All of Us!



19-20 was a season not soon to be forgotten. While our musical accomplishments were significant, we were called upon to make dramatic programmatic shifts in mid-March when COVID-19 became a dominant force in everyone's lives. I am so very grateful for my staff colleagues, our board of directors, and all the singers, donors and funders who ensured our continuity with integrity through the end of the season. It truly reflected our season's theme: All of Us!



Our adult choirs presented four diverse in-person concerts before the pandemic restrictions came into play. Our second annual summer choir engaged 130 singers in a program of African American spirituals and gospel songs along with a recounting of the history of these musical genres, both rooted in slavery in America. Our December holiday concert featured our adult and youth choirs and a full orchestra in setting the stage for the season. We performed the East Bay premier of a new oratorio, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, in early March. Twenty-three of our singers covered all the solos and narrative parts while the Chorale "shone as a whole" (San Francisco Classical Voice). This work offers hope for a better tomorrow by joining together in acknowledging the divinity that resides in All of Us. The Chamber Ensemble performed in November and were just two weeks shy of performing their March concert before stopping.



We finished our season by staying in touch through email, phone calls, and Zoom conferences in order to support one another through these times of chaos and separation. We are geared up for some virtual recordings, various online teaching series, and a steady flow of Zoom connections until we can again gather face to face, hopefully in the coming year.

Times like these remind us of what we too often take for granted: the bonds of friendship that extend beyond physical proximity. How grateful I am for all those who have come to be my friends through the power and beauty of choral music.

- David Morales

Black Lives Matter



From its inception, Cantare has focused on telling the history of diverse world cultures through its repertoire selection. African American history remains at the top of that list. Cantare's adult choirs have performed well over a dozen concerts sharing aspects of this history with our audiences, using music, poetry, film and narration. Our children's programs have done the same, going back to our celebration of African American History Month in 2000 with our first children's choir, the Samaritan Singers. In July 2019, our Summer Adult Choir of 130 singers continued this process

through its performances of African American spirituals and gospel songs, reflecting on America's history of slavery and oppression and understanding the creative and imaginative forces displayed within these genres.

In the spring, Cantare endorsed the Black Lives Matter movement, seeking justice for African Americans across our nation. We desire to establish social, legal and economic justice for all, ensuring that each person is given access to quality education, career opportunities, food, health care, and housing, as well as be treated with dignity and respect. Our direct action is displayed in our efforts to provide access to high-quality music education that will contribute to the social-emotional development of the Oakland children and youth in the Title One schools we serve.

Through our teaching and singing, we continue to educate about the unsettling history of our nation, from European capture and trade of African slaves on America's shores 400 years ago, to



inequalities and injustices still prevalent today. Truth-telling and civil discussion will fuel our courage to support systemic changes that will advance a healthy and just society. We remain determined to be advocates in our East Bay community through our artistic platforms.



Watch on YouTube

Nova singers and alumna virtual performance of "If You're Out There" in support of the movement:

<https://youtu.be/yz4ESha9P3o>

Considering Matthew Shepard

In early March, the Chorale offered the East Bay premier of a new choral oratorio, *Considering Matthew Shepard*, composed by Craig Hella Johnson.

Matthew Shepard was the young gay college student killed in Wyoming in 1999. Craig has addressed what is at the core of this brutally murderous act: out-of-control hatred fueled by ignorance and fear, and often rationalized by misguided righteousness. Through this work, Matthew is transformed beyond someone we heard about through the media into someone who was like us, as Craig says, an *ordinary* person. Craig also has us identify with the two men who took Matthew's life, not allowing us to simply point fingers at others.

"It is a challenge both artistically and emotionally. My vocal cords and understanding of the different views involved with Matthew Shepard are both being stretched to new heights!"

Melissa Morgenstern, Chorale singer

"Cantare Con Vivo Shines in Considering Matthew Shepard"
- San Francisco Classical Voice
[\[https://www.sfcv.org/node/89633/workflow\]](https://www.sfcv.org/node/89633/workflow)

Through our three concerts, singers and listeners alike grew in conviction that understanding, displayed through genuine acts of respect, provides us away out of the destructive cycles that dominates our nation today. We experienced the power that art possess in transforming us into instruments of peace, standing against hatred and discrimination.

Cantare Youth Programs: Removing Barriers of Access

Classroom Music Education

Every student deserves a quality music education. Students at our partner schools—Cleveland, Hillcrest, La Escuelita, Laurel, Lincoln, Melrose Leadership Academy, and Vincent Academy—build fundamental musical skills and an appreciation for diverse cultures through meaningful, experiential music-making. We tailor each partnership to meet the individual needs of the school community. Weekly lessons include:

- Singing
- Developing music literacy
- Creative movement
- Interdisciplinary connections
- Ear training

Our highly-trained, professional teaching artists use a Kodály-based sequential curriculum based on the National Standards for Visual and Performing Arts. Surveys from our partners and student assessments show that through experiential musical making, our students make strides in fundamental musical skills, critical thinking, language development, and social-emotional learning.

After-School Choirs

Our tuition-free after-school choir programs provide in-depth performing experiences for students who love to sing. Cantare removes barriers of access by holding rehearsals right on site at our partner schools; by providing snacks, transportation, and all activities free of charge; and by building an inclusive community where all students are respected and celebrated. Nova, our citywide choir for 6th -12th grade students, performs music in diverse styles throughout the East Bay Area and in special concerts alongside Cantare's two adult choirs.

Cantare Con Vivo Youth Programs bring choral music education to K-12 students in underserved Oakland neighborhoods weekly. Through in-school music education and tuition-free after-school choirs, our program removes barriers of access so that every child can develop and share their voice.

WE SERVE

2,350
STUDENTS

81 CLASSROOMS **6** TUITION-FREE AFTER-SCHOOL CHOIRS



70% ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
40% ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



STUDENTS DEVELOP ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

- Teamwork
- Social Emotional Intelligence
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Poise
- Leadership
- Resilience
- Respect for Diverse Cultures

SINCE 1999, WE HAVE SERVED OVER

16,000 STUDENTS

www.cantareconvivo.org

Nova Youth Choir Working Together

In September 2019, our advanced youth choir, Nova, gathered on a Saturday for a special team-building day. Nova singers come from middle and high schools all over Oakland. Learning to work together is just as important for us as developing our singing voices and learning our parts. That Saturday, we built bonds as a group by playing games, got moving with a Zumba session led by a guest instructor, and worked together to craft a vision statement for Nova.



Prophet Ogbemor, a Nova ninth grader and member of our choir leadership team, says: "The choir retreat was a community environment that helped us develop music skills as well as to connect with our families, peers and director."

In November, we put those teamwork skills to work at the Capitol Choral Festival in Sacramento. Our students were able to watch youth and adult choirs from all over the Bay Area and Sacramento perform. Nova also gave an outstanding performance in the State Capitol building and participated in a clinic with a local choral director. Students had the opportunity to tour UC Davis, guided by one of our alumna.

Nova Vision Statement 2019-20

Nova is a safe, supportive and welcoming space where students can express their passion for music. When we perform, people will see a group of professional, talented youth, striving to create inspiring performances with their voices.

In order for us to succeed, we need our families to be supportive and to help us be on time. Our director will be encouraging and help us grow. Our leaders will be responsible role models who help organize our group. We will all be respectful, passionate and committed to choir and our community.

This past season marks 50 years of our Founding Artistic Director, David Morales, uniting literally thousands of people of all ages through the beauty and power of choral music, in order to create a more compassionate community. He has impacted the lives of many, both singers and listeners.



Celebrate! David Morales 50 Years of Uniting Voices

Whether it is a challenging major work like Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis", a brand new work such as "Considering Matthew Shepard", or exuberant Black gospel pieces, David knows just how to break down the musical elements for amateur singers to attain high standards of musical excellence. He motivates us to risk sharing our very souls to deliver authentic performances that will move and inspire our listeners. The opportunity to sing and listen to music from so many diverse genres and traditions under David's skillful leadership lets us experience the world through different lenses and realize our connection to one another.

David's first choral conducting position was at Lennox-Bethany Baptist Church, in Los Angeles County, at age 19. In 1970, he formed his first community choir, the Firebranders. In 1974, he moved to Oakland to become the first conductor of the Oakland Youth Chorus. He led the music ministry at several East Bay churches, including First Presbyterian Berkeley (12 years) and Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian (9 years), and was a Music Professor at Merritt College in Oakland for 25 years. He founded Cantare in 1987, fueled by a personal desire to diversify repertoire selection. In 1999, he expanded Cantare to include the Chorale, Chamber Ensemble and initiated its Children's Music Education program, which to date has served over 16,000 youth.

We missed the opportunity to celebrate this golden anniversary in person last April, but want to express our heartfelt gratitude to David. You have inspired us all "To Sing...with Life!"

David is an extraordinarily gifted musician and director. I, along with the thousands of people who have witnessed his talent, know it, and have been enriched by it. Congratulations on 50 laudable years of glorious music-making and for your work to make every community more humane and compassionate.

– Joanne Dale, Celebrate! speaker

Special thanks to our Celebrate! Planning Committee:

Barbara Bisel, co-chair
Ann Tipton, co-chair
Sue Farmer
Melody Herder-Jimison
Julie Haydon
Karin Kelley
Bobbi Scott
Kathy Way



Education & Outreach

Last fall, we welcomed Education and Outreach Chair Mercedes Harrison to the Cantare board and revived our Education and Outreach committee. The E&O Committee brings together teachers, parents, and community members who support our music education program in three major ways:

- Providing logistical support for youth concerts and events
- Raising awareness and advocating for our education programs
- Developing resources through network with local businesses

The E&O Committee provides an important sounding board for our staff as we look ahead and strategize how to reach wider and deeper with our programs. To learn more about serving on this committee, contact the Cantare office at info@cantareconvivo.org or 510-836-0789.



Photo: Chair of the Education and Outreach Committee, Mercedes Harrison representing Cantare Con Vivo at the Lunar New Year Event at Lincoln Elementary.

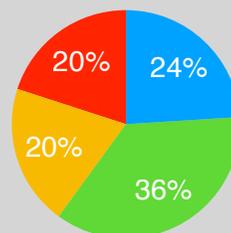
With the final four months of our 2019-20 fiscal year being impacted by COVID-19, Cantare is pleased to have closed with only a modest loss of approximately \$18,000. Revenue declined 4% compared to the prior year due to cancellations affecting adult choir tuition and concert ticket sales, partially offset by unspent concert expenses and the three-month-early retirement of our Executive Director. We were fortunate to have our children's and youth programs continue online through the remainder of the season.

2019/2020 Financial Results

Both our adult and youth programs are dependent on the continued and generous support of individuals, who collectively contributed 36% of the total revenue, up from 29% in the prior year.

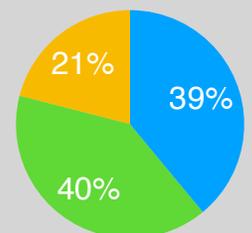
Cantare has talented and dedicated employees. Their compensation represented approximately 75% of total expenses. Fortunately, Cantare applied for and was granted a Paycheck Protection Program loan in the amount of approximately \$89,000 that has facilitated the continuing employment of its staff, from the end of the 19-20 fiscal year into the current 20-21 season.

- Al Peters, Treasurer



Income

- Foundations & Government
- Individuals
- Adult Tuition & Ticket Sales
- School Subsidies



Expenses

- General & Admin
- Children
- Adults



Sharing Our Voices

Students in all of our music education programs learn about musical traditions reflecting who they are, and who their neighbors are. Last year, our students represented their schools by performing for special events honoring the rich cultural traditions in the Oakland community. Performances empower our youth to find, develop and celebrate their individual and collective voices.

In January 2020, Lincoln Elementary held its annual Lunar New Year celebration, with performances from classroom students, the Purple Bamboo Chinese Orchestra, and our own Lincoln Music Stars and Nova youth choir. Lincoln and Nova joined together for a special performance of a traditional Chinese folk song, the "Feng Yang Song." Singers in Nova and Music Stars had the opportunity to socialize and enjoy traditional foods. Nova students shared personal words of encouragement with our elementary singers.



Watch on YouTube

Lunar New Year performance
at Lincoln Elementary School
https://youtu.be/z_a3jAjBoEs



Watch on YouTube

Vincent Academy Black
History Month Celebration
<https://youtu.be/sSI4kz10EcY>

In February 2020, students from our classrooms and after-school choir at Vincent Academy performed in celebration of Black History Month. Each grade level performed songs celebrating African-American leaders like Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr. with families enthusiastically singing along from the audience.

Director of Music Education Conway Tan reflected: "One of the most powerful moments for me that evening was witnessing students who spoke not a single word of English just a couple years ago, now singing and rapping expressively about Civil Rights heroes."

Going Virtual

During shelter-in-place, when so many activities came to an abrupt halt, our music education programs persisted. Our virtual lessons provided a sense of normalcy and connection for our school families. Our teaching staff conducted over 40 sessions weekly, maintaining our commitment to excellence and strong partnerships with our school sites.

Our teaching artists' virtual lessons were substantive, with expanded connections between music and social studies. We collaborated with our school partners to send take-home packets and lesson materials to students with limited internet access. Every Friday, we held virtual, intergenerational sing-alongs. It was such a joy to witness children singing and playing singing games from home with their families!

On April 30, our after-school choirs gathered for our virtual "Spring Sing." Our singers smiled while playing musical games and dancing together on Zoom. We celebrated our artistic achievements from the year and cheered each other on while singing from home the music we were scheduled to perform on stage.

La Escuelita principal, Faris Jabbar, says, "Cantare Con Vivo is a phenomenal program and students are always excited to sing along with the teaching artist. Now that they've gone virtual to continue supporting our scholars due to the shelter-in-place, it's added another layer of allowing for parents, staff, as well as our own children, to join and participate... Seeing children from all the different schools which Cantare serves participate in the weekly sing- and dance-alongs is evidence of the strong community that the program is fostering even during these tough times!"



Watch on YouTube

See a sample of our distance learning lessons
<https://youtu.be/qONvsplszPg>



Watch on YouTube

Highlights from our 2019-2020 after-school choirs
<https://youtu.be/AOriyXeCa0w>

Testimonials

What our partners say about our music education programs, in-person and beyond:



Photo: Rhonda Crane leading an ice-breaker game during a combined children's choir on February 13, 2020.

"It has been a challenge to keep my daughter motivated to attend so many zoom calls and classes during this COVID-19 stay-at-home time, but week after week, she has looked forward to and proactively attended choir rehearsals. Without a doubt it has been her favorite school-related task, and hearing her singing along with her friends, and seeing how happy she is after the rehearsals has been a joy for everyone in our family."

- After-School Choir parent

My students loved Mr. Tan's weekly Zoom music lessons and "attended" them every week since we have sheltered in place. The lessons had an effective mix of singing, movement, and theory, and were very well-paced. Thank you to Mr. Tan for providing the students a sense of normalcy and connection to school during this pandemic crisis.

- 2nd grade teacher, Lincoln Elementary

It is important for students (and adults) to see the connection between the Cantare program and literacy development. With my fifth grade students, I reinforce some of the themes of the songs they sang during the Friday Sing and that the songs are related to history and different cultures. Not only does singing relax and bring joy to an individual, it also develops auditory skills and verbal communication.

- Dorcas Chan

5th grade teacher, Cleveland Elementary

Ms. Rebecca from Cantare Con Vivo added so much joy to our first grade class. With finely honed lessons that wasted no time and got right into learning melody, rhythm, movement and so much more, Ms Rebecca engaged our learners immediately.

**- Isa Polt-Jones (Ms. PJ),
1st grade teacher, Laurel Elementary**



Photo: Rebecca Kleinmann in a 1st grade class on January 27, 2020 at Laurel Elementary, our newest school partner.

2019-2020 Teaching Artists



Conway Tan

Director of Music Education
Lincoln Elementary
Cleveland Elementary
Allen Temple Baptist Church



Rhonda Crane

Vincent Academy



Robert Lee

Piano Accompanist



Julie Haydon

Director of Children's &
Youth Programs
Nova



Marie Haws

Cleveland Elementary



Annie Hargraves

Piano Accompanist



Katerine Carmona Arbelaez

Melrose Leadership Academy
La Escuelita Elementary



Rebecca Kleinmann

Hillcrest Elementary
Laurel Elementary



Geoffrey Torres

Piano Accompanist

2019-2020 Board & Staff

Board of Directors

Graham Seel, President
 Al Peters, Treasurer
 Roxane Foster, Secretary
 Mercedes Harrison
 Katie Kleinberg
 Jeffrey Lau
 David Morales
 Dominic Savant

Staff

David Morales, Artistic Director and
 General Manager
 Linden Young, Executive Director
 (through March)
 Julie Haydon, Director of Children's and
 Youth Choirs
 Conway Tan, Director of Music Education
 Toni Bermudez, Administrative Coordinator
 Treva Obbard, Development Associate

Classroom Music Education Teaching Artists

Katerine Carmona Arbelaez
 Rhonda Crane
 Marie Haws
 Julie Haydon
 Rebecca Kleinmann
 Conway Tan

Children's Program Accompanists

Annie Hargraves
 Geoffrey Torres
 Robert Lee



Hearts Filled with Gratitude

Cantare relies significantly on the talents, skills and passion of its volunteers. These include our singers, those serving on our board and various organizational committees, and countless others who undertake key assignments that enable us to advance our mission.

For 15 years, **Kathy Bairey** has contributed hundreds of hours in producing all of our concert programs, gathering materials and laying them out in a format that has engaged our concertgoers with both concert and organizational information. In addition, she undertook our Annual Reports, special mail inserts and other materials we routinely use to inform our funders and donors.



Melody Herder-Jimison has served Cantare in different capacities for over a decade, including as Chorale Coordinator, Costume Coordinator, children's after-school choir volunteer, Board Member and various other assignments.

We are immensely grateful for their benevolent service that acknowledges our connectedness and responsibility to serve others through our musical undertakings.

Funder Support

Maestro's Circle - \$25,000 and over
 Crescent Porter Hale Foundation
 Quest Foundation

Conductor's Circle - \$10,000 to \$24,999
 City of Oakland Cultural Arts - OA
 City of Oakland Cultural Arts - AIS
 California Arts Council - AIS
 California Arts Council - YAA
 Neil & Amelia McDaniel Charitable Fund

Director's Circle - \$5,000 to \$9,999
 The Clorox Company Foundation
 Arts for Oakland Kids



Benefactors - \$2,500 to \$4,999
 First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Patrons - \$1,000 to \$2,499
 *Shell Oil Company Foundation Matching Gifts Program
 Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
 *Google Matching Gift Fund
 The Murdy Foundation
 Kiwanis Club of Moraga of Moraga Valley

Sponsors - \$500 to \$999
 Perforce Foundation

Friends - \$250 to \$499
 *Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program
 *Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory HOME Campaign
 The Distaff Singers
 Sagrada Sacred Arts
 United Lutheran Church of Oakland Giving is Receiving Benevolence Fund

Members - \$100 to \$249
 Allen Temple Baptist Church
 Amazon Smile Foundation

**A special acknowledgment to these matching gift donors*