



2018 Annual Report

2018: Dreams Came True!

Our greatest and perhaps most memorable success in 2018 was the opportunity to perform at MAGFest, a video game and music convention held in January with over 2,000 attendees. MAGFest is a thriving nexus for the gaming community. Performing at MAGFest allowed us to showcase our talents to the very community that inspired many of our members to join our ensemble. More than 2,000 fans attended the WMGSO's performance on January 6, the second largest audience of all musical guests who performed this year. We were able to sustain the enthusiasm and energy from this performance to put together an excellent concert in May, a celebration of our fifth anniversary made up of our favorite pieces from the past five years.

The spring season's rehearsals did not end with our concert in May, however. Our members' dedication extended into the summer with rehearsals to prepare for the studio recording of our first album, which is also the first professionally-recorded album of any community orchestra devoted to video game music. Over the course of seven days scattered throughout June, July, and August, the instrumentalists, choir, and chamber ensembles each took turns in Omega's largest recording studio, with Chris Apple acting as Lead Producer in the sound booth. Omega's technicians claimed that our group was the largest orchestra they'd ever fit in Studio A! The recording and production of this album was funded solely by the generosity of our fans, and was released in November 2018.

For the first time, our membership surpassed 100 instrumentalists and choristers. We have a passionate and talented group, and with this growth, we have also identified a greater interest in performing for the community. In February, we set up video game stations and had a small ensemble perform at the National Institutes of Health Children's Inn for a "Comic-Con" event. WMGSO also held its first educational outreach event in June at the Silver Spring library. Our volunteers coordinated a short chamber performance in conjunction with instrument demos and an instrument petting zoo. The event was well-received by the families who attended, along with library staff.

Furthering Our Mission

As mentioned above, our mission of sharing video game music with our community was furthered through our educational outreach program and partnership with Montgomery County Libraries. The Summer Library Series helped us reach local families and, hopefully, spark new and continued interest in instrumental music. Many of our members are also school teachers, and were integral to engaging the children in attendance during the lessons. These series are planned to continue in the coming years.

As the Development Team grew from 2017, so did the organization's goals. More frequent fundraisers at local restaurants, cafes, and breweries continued to help keep our name circulating, with more intimate community engagements and small ensemble performances.

Achieving Stability

With 2018 celebrating our five year anniversary, the Board found it suitable to have our next five year planning meetings. These were heavily involved discussions surrounding particular growing pains the organization was facing, and how best to address them. The next five year plan has not been written in stone, but great questions were asked: how many concerts do we want to put on a year? How many outreach events are we capable of running in a year? How frequently do we want to go into the recording studio?

Those planning meetings helped the Board determine our largest restructuring since 2016 by developing our Three Primary Pillars. At the suggestion of the Treasurer, the Board agreed to adopt an operational model based on the three largest operations of our organization: Concerts, Outreach, and Albums. Many of these changes were inspired by the work of the existing Development Team and their successful workflow throughout 2017 and 2018, which gave us a successful model to emulate. Splitting our operations into these pillars also helps us manage our continuously growing scope of tasks, such as a team of Concert Producers, who can handle all the logistical challenges of putting on multiple concerts a year at different venues across the DMV region. While most of our operations would focus on Concerts and Outreach each year, operations could be better managed for our next album recordings, thanks to the layout of the third Album pillar.

The Board also voted to allow the Treasurer to move away from an annual budget, and approve instead semi-annual budgets, one for the first and second half of future years. This will allow the Board to better manage and distribute funds while working with pay schedules for rehearsal and performance venues.

Why Does It Matter?

WMGSO continues to successfully share the art of video game music with the community through concerts, and now through educational outreach and recorded tracks. With a better plan for scaling in place, we can continue to engage our

audiences and inspire them to learn about, participate in, and create their own inspiring art.

The bottom line is that 2018 allowed WMGSO to make its member's dreams come true, and it is our hope that our audience picks up on the passion we make music with.