



2013 Annual Report

2013: A Summary

In summer 2013, the Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra officially began operations to lay its foundation. Acting Board members were chosen to begin writing the organization's Bylaws and other business documents, including Form 1023: Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Board meetings were held and research began on solving key issues, including rehearsal and performance space, fundraising, member recruitment, repertoire building, and searching for a music director.

Living Faith Lutheran Church offered space in their Fellowship Hall where WMGSO could begin rehearsing, and Board members reached out to potential investors in the video game industry. Our repertoire started small, borrowing some arrangements from internal sources. In late summer, a call was put out to local conductors to find a music director and after a successful interview by the Board, Nigel Horne was then appointed the position. Following the autumn-long recruitment push, WM's membership grew to 40 musicians. By December 2013, WMGSO was slated to hold a performance in Spring 2014, with enough time to complete a few new arrangements and further push recruitment.

All the while, the Board continued to meet regularly to write the organization's Bylaws and attended workshops for nonprofits, provided by the Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts (WALA). Through WALA, the WMGSO was put in contact with lawyers from D.C. firm McDermott, Will, & Emery, who provided integral counsel ensuring our Form 1023 application was as successful as possible.

Furthering Our Mission

WMGSO furthered its mission, to educate members of the community about orchestral and choral music via music from video games, by focusing its early efforts on laying a stable groundwork from which to build on. Through word-of-mouth and targeted advertising for musicians, we gained forty members by the end of the season, ensuring that we would have an ensemble large enough to form a well-rounded musical program in the spring. Our selected repertoire highlighted the variety of musical styles for orchestra and choir.

By laying the groundwork for the organization's operation early on, the administration created policies to more efficiently recruit more musicians and reach our target audiences through the use of mailing lists and social media. At the close of 2013, our mailing list had nineteen addresses. We also created policies in our operating documents to make the ensemble meet our performing members' needs.

Lastly, WMGSO furthered its community-based mission by interviewing and selecting a community-oriented music director. As a supporter of community ensembles and an experienced musician and conductor, the administration felt that Nigel Horne was best suited to assist our mission.

Achieving Financial Stability

The WMGSO began its operations in 2013 with only donations from its budding administration. As budgets and expenses were calculated, it was determined that in order to be self-sustaining, dues would be provided by joining members. At \$30 per season, or \$60 per year, the first WMGSO members helped allow the ensemble to save for rehearsal and performance space in the coming year, obtain non-profit assistance by becoming a member of the Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts, pay for various fees associated with officially incorporating, and applying for federal tax exemption.

As the member base grew, we also accepted a few generous investment donations from a few of our very first supporters. Late in the year, the WMGSO began implementing a well-tested tiered donation model - the Supporter levels. Starting with just Gold and Silver levels, Supporters would receive additional benefits for donating to the ensemble, including VIP seating and an appreciative gold pin in the shape of a treble clef, to show their support for our mission.

By maintaining a model of dues and supporter donations, the WMGSO was able to set the groundwork for further financial stability in 2014, and raised a total of \$2386.76 by the end of December.