



2016 Annual Report

2016: Moving On Up

The year of 2016 brought some refreshing spring cleaning to the organization. After reviewing the calendars for the past few years, we decided to move our rehearsal schedule to operate on a late-March/early-April and mid-November concert schedule. This was done primarily to accommodate the busy holiday season in December, where our performances often overlapped with other local concerts, and limited our available concert dates. It also allowed us more leeway in losing rehearsal days to snow and winter holidays in January.

In a public-facing change, we upgraded our website to a whole new template, giving our online presence a new look and organization of information. This new approach brought WMGSO's website into the modern day, with engaging imagery and iconic categorization of events and donation options, making it easier for online visitors to follow and support their favorite local game orchestra.

One of the most exciting moments was our first large percussion purchase - timpani! Through an agreement with a venue we often rent for rehearsal space, WMGSO was able to afford four well-kept timpani of our very own. While a high upfront cost, the savings in percussion rental long-term have been instrumental in helping our organization perform at better venues. WMGSO is looking forward to being able to afford even more percussion to better serve that end in the future!

Furthering Our Mission

WMGSO was welcomed back to [Super Smash Con](#) for 2016, where we kept the focus on a single full ensemble stage performance. Tabling here for the second year in a row showed us how many con-goers remembered us from last year, a heartwarming show of success in our mission to share game music with our local communities!

2016 also saw a new, dedicated branch of our mission; in keeping with the format of our full ensemble performances, our "Chambers and Consoles" Small Ensemble Showcase had two showings in the Fall! The first at our classic location of Living Faith Lutheran Church was followed two weeks later by our first performance at BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown, MD, a beautiful venue just the right

size for our myriad of small ensemble groups. This new location opened up the possibility to reach new listeners north of Rockville, and expand our audience.

With a new musical bar raised and met in 2016, the Board of Executives began to discuss planning a studio recorded album. This goal would further WMGSO's mission considerably, with physical CDs and digital downloads available to rapidly spread our video game music far and wide!

Achieving Stability

In 2016, WMGSO again received small arts grants from Montgomery County, which allowed us to continue putting on great concerts in Rockville, and helped us save up our piggy bank for those timpani we talked about earlier. However, the vast majority of our revenue continued to come from our Supporters (18%), individual donations (19%), and concert ticket sales (23%). Our budget increased to nearly \$20,000, for which our expenses came in just under \$18,500.

One major change for 2016 was the introduction of a Diamond Supporter level, which includes Exclusive Season Poster, VIP Seating for 2, our classic Treble Clef Supporter Pin, and the Supporter's name on our website and concert programs. This Supporter level instantly proved a hit, outperforming Platinum, Gold, and Silver levels at its debut concert at the BlackRock Small Ensemble Showcase.

WMGSO also began a shift in creative fundraising by phasing out its old Item Shop of collected items, and replacing it with our very own merchandise. The fall concerts saw our first sales of branded t-shirts and stickers, marking a new era for not only financial stability, but brand recognition for the orchestra.

Why Does It Matter?

All of the support from our audiences and relationships that have been built with venues in the community have helped lead WMGSO to where it is today: well on its way to recording an album in the future, staying sustainable by saving to purchase our own percussion (cutting down on rental costs), and spreading our name and music to the area! We're able to increase our performance frequency, so that our communities can hear more of what we have to offer, and we have been grateful for the increased opportunities.

It is our hope that this trend of growth and enthusiasm continues well into the next year!