

FMMC Annual Meeting Reports

To be presented on May 8, 2020



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Auditions Chair's Annual Report

April 27, 2020

In-person performance auditions were held on October 16, 2019 at Calvary Baptist Church. In-person auditions scheduled for March 18, 2020 were postponed due the COVID-19 pandemic. For applicants opting for virtual auditions, online video auditions were done throughout the year, whenever applications were received. Applicants whose in-person auditions were postponed were told that they would be invited to audition in person when it was safe. No decision has been made about when that might be. The club paid a rental fee to Calvary for rooms to be used for the March auditions. My understanding with Paul Rosstead, then the church administrator, was that Calvary would hold our fee and not charge us for renting space for the rescheduled auditions. This understanding needs to be confirmed with Paul's replacement.

For every audition and in each category of performance (Voice, Piano, Strings, Winds, and Composition) three judges evaluated the performances. The judges assigned each performance one of three possible recommendations: "Accept", "Return" or "Decline." Applicants with at least two "Accept" recommendations were invited to become performance members. I'm especially grateful to all of the judges for their generous donation of time and talent to this effort, and to the Calvary staff for supporting our auditions.

This was the second season in which video auditions were done entirely online and on a rolling basis. Interest in submitting video auditions continued to be strong, with one third of vocal and instrumental applicants submitting video auditions online. All composition auditions were done with email submission of scores and audio files.

Over the course of the season we heard 8 auditions for solo or chamber performers; 7 were new to the club, and 6 were accepted as performance members, including:

- 3 - solo piano
- 1 - solo violin
- 1 - solo cello
- 1 - chamber clarinet

Six composers, all new to the club, also had successful auditions. Nine additional applications for in-person auditions are being held for the postponed auditions.

Plans for the future are uncertain. We can continue to receive and judge video auditions year round. I expect that rescheduled in-person auditions are best deferred to no earlier than October 2020. If conditions are safe, I would anticipate scheduling in-person auditions in October 2020 and March 21/21 at Calvary Baptist Church. Remaining tasks for this season are to set these tentative audition dates, to recruit next season's judge panels, and as I am completing my term as auditions chair, to pass information about conducting auditions to my successor.

Submitted by Michael Casassa, Auditions Chair

Membership Chair's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 24, 2020

As of April 24, 2020, the FMMC had 570 active members. Of these, 60 were new members—37 regular and 23 winners of local student competitions. (By contrast, last year as of May 1, 2019, we had 554 active members. That year, 77 new members joined.) The Club was saddened to learn of the passing of Jacqueline Birn, Albert Halfon, Winifred Hyson, Dr. Roy Hamlin Johnson, and Jessye Norman. We thank Julia Moline for her service as Second Vice President and Membership Chair over the past two terms.

Below is selected information on our *active* members. (Note that some categories overlap.)

- DC residents = 97
- MD residents = 253
- VA residents = 152

- Honorary members = 23
- Life members = 26
- Associate members = 110
- Solo performance members = 167
- Chamber performance members = 67
- Chorale performance members = 49
- Orchestra performance members = 29
- Composer members = 25
- Competition winners (local and international, some with 5-year memberships) = 78

Submitted by Joanna Taylor, Administrative Coordinator

Recording Secretary's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 20, 2020

As a new member of the FMMC Board of Governors this year, I produced minutes of nine board meetings, including the June joint meeting with the FMMC Foundation, Inc., and circulated them to the full board for their review, which was following by a vote to approve them at the subsequent meeting. In the process, I have learned a great deal about the many wonderful individuals in FMMC leadership positions who are committed to producing all facets of FMMC's programming for members at the highest musical and professional levels.

In March 2020, fellow FMMC member Angelina Wong and I took on the tasks to preserve FMMC records in its Archives. We had just begun to get a handle on the specifics of the position and the location of current documents when the Covid-19 shut down occurred. As a result, we have suspended our activities until we can meet with principals and research historic files, both on site at an FMMC storage facility in Bethesda and at the Historic Society of Washington, D.C.

Submitted by Mary Alice Davidson, Recording Secretary

Student Activities Chair's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 24, 2020

This season the Student Activities division held two successful local student competitions. The High School String Competition brought us four new members and the Student Vocal Competition 24 new members due to the high quality of all participants, resulting in a great number of honorary mentions. Local competition winners are entitled to one year of free membership in FMMC.

The High School Piano Competition and High School Woodwind/Brass/Percussion Competition were cancelled due to COVID-19. However the competition chairs put in a great deal of preparatory work, even though they were not able to proceed as planned. I would like to recognize and thank all the competition chairs: Jeongseon Choi (strings), Mira Yang (voice), Carole Falvo and Willian Wright (woodwind, brass and percussion) Chen Li Tzeng (piano).

The High School Composition Competition was cancelled due to insufficient applications. The competitions committee will work on creating a more effective planning process and promotion of the event to reach a larger community. We are hoping to open this competition to college students next season, much like the Local Student Voice Competition, which was stipulated in the original gift that initially funded the competition. Mark Simon has stepped down as Competition Chair, so we are in the process of recruiting for the position.

The 2019-2020 season was heavily affected by cancellations due to COVID-19. However, prior to those cancellations, this year had already proven difficult with regards to finding available student performers. I would like to investigate ways to make student membership more attractive to more non-winning students as well as better encourage existing student members to perform in order to alleviate this problem. I understand that it may affect the impeccably high level of our student concerts to expand membership to more student competition participants.

Several of our students participated in the Cavani Quartet Masterclass held at the REACH at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. A part of Francis Kaplan Student fund was used to support it. This was a highly successful endeavor for which the credit goes to Leslie Luxemburg, Judith Silverman, the Kaplan Family, Jennie Weyman, and everyone else who contributed to this project.

We hope to continue collaboration with the following venues next season: Mansion at Strathmore, Goodwin House (Alexandria, VA), Friendship Heights Village Center (2 recitals), Riderwood Community and Steinway Piano Gallery.

Submitted by Christine Kharazian, Student Activities Chair

Treasurer's Annual Report 2019-2020

March 31, 2020

Please note: All financial estimates below are based on Actual Income, Expenses and Investments as of 03/31/20.

In general, the Club's finances are in good shape. It appears that FY20 expenses will come in about 10% below the budget estimate of \$282,645. I believe this is due mainly to the efforts of our Managing Director, Jennie Weyman, our FMMC President, Leslie Luxemburg, and the FMMC Board and Committee Chairs who have focused their efforts on keeping expenses low while trying to increase income to the Club.

There are both financial bright spots and areas of concern. Bright spots are the generous donations from Carol and Chris Fromboluti; the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts; the Nancy Peery Marriott Foundation; Stephen S. Roberts, in memory of Sue Goetz Ross; and the Estate of Sally Potter West. The FMMC Fundraising Drive from our members totaled \$19,228 which was 56% greater than FY19. Dues income (\$36,900) increased 14% over last FY.

Areas of concern are, of course, the devastation and uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus, rising costs in almost every category, lower expected fundraising and investment returns and the fact that dues income covers less than 15% of our expenses.

The Endowment Fund as of 03/31/20 was valued at \$436,031. Chesapeake Asset Management Inc. has done a good job of managing our entire portfolio of \$689,430 during this extremely difficult time. During the 3rd quarter although FMMC investments were down 9.0%, the S&P 500 was 20.0% lower.

I appreciate all the hard work of the FMMC Finance Committee composed of Leslie Luxemburg, Frank Conlon, Nan Cooper, Donald Flanders, Charlotte Saslowsky, and Jennie Weyman.

Submitted by Anne W. Zim, Treasurer

Program Director's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 23, 2020

This season was heavily impacted by the Covid19 pandemic. All FMMC chamber music concerts were cancelled from mid-March through the end of the season. This impacted more than 75 individual performances in 25 cancelled concerts. The performance applications of the affected musicians will be prioritized in the 2020-2021 season.

For the 2018-2019 season, 220 performance applications were submitted by our performance members. Every FMMC member who applied was invited to perform at least one time; however, not every application that was submitted was selected, as performers often submitted multiple applications for consideration. Venues included: Calvary Baptist Church, Collington Retirement Community, Dumbarton House, Goodwin House in Alexandria, Greenspring, Jordan Kitts in Rockville, Lyceum, Miller's Grant Retirement Community, Old Town Hall in Fairfax, Riderwood Retirement Community, Steinway Gallery in North Bethesda, the Mansion at Strathmore, Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, and Jewish Community Center in VA.

Special thanks to the following venue chairs: Jeongseon Choi, Bonnie Cohen, Janet Crossen, Bobbie Gholz, Albert Hunt, Jung-Yoon Lee, Lois Jones, Joan Mizrahi, Henry Plotkin, Steve Schwarz and Barbara Teng.

In 2019-2020, performance application moved online. (Previously, performers had emailed individual application forms to a volunteer who manually coordinated them.) This was a significant improvement. It was not perfect, and has been tweaked for the coming season. We will continue to take feedback from performers and venue chairs to improve the application process. A huge thank you to Jennie Weyman and Charles Mokotoff for their expertise in making this happen.

Changes for the 2020-2021 season include:

- Bonnie Cohen will become Co-Program Director.
- Nancy MacArthur Smith will be the Venue Chair at Old Town Hall, Fairfax concert series.
- Albert Hunt will be Venue Chair of the Strathmore Mansion concert series.
- Miller's Grant concert series (two concerts per year) is discontinued.

This report marks my second as program director. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Albert Hunt, Program Director

Newsletter Editor's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 14, 2020

The Friday Morning Music Club newsletter was produced nine times from September 2019 through May 2020. (At this writing, the May newsletter is at the printer.)

The newsletter was distributed to the membership from September until April through MailChimp, and in print for those not online. Throughout the year, copies are posted on the website. Along with the electronic copy, the printed issue was mailed to over 190 addresses, a savings from prior years. Articles ranged in interest from monthly columns by the President, Foundation Director, and Managing Director, to upcoming concerts, reviews of past concerts, information on current and former competitions and competition winners, and special interest stories submitted by current and former members. The latter were enthusiastically received.

The new column, entitled "For the Members," began picking up interest in the first quarter of 2020, where members could advertise their non-FMMC concerts. Members are encouraged to submit their performances and to send in articles that might be of interest to the Club.

A hearty thanks to Ramona Matthews for tirelessly compiling the monthly calendar and to Ramona and Joanna Taylor for their assistance in proofreading the monthly issues. Without them there might be more awkward blunders.

Submitted by Carol Fromboluti, Newsletter Editor

Yearbook Editor's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 24, 2020

For the 2019-20 Yearbook, Jennie Weyman (Managing Director) and Joanna Taylor (Yearbook Editor) shared production tasks. We used Karen Smith Design for the page layout, and MasterPrint for printing the book, as in previous years. In early June we consulted with the designer and printer to determine production schedule and specifications, and then requested updates via email from the 25 FMMC contributors, with a deadline of July 3.

Joanna inserted these updates electronically into a Word version of the previous year's book using a shared file on Google Drive. Jennie executed a number of design and formatting changes. In mid-August, we emailed the updated file to the designer so that she could format the pages for the printer. In the meantime, Jennie had acquired and produced the advertisements, and compiled the Membership Directory listings based on membership dues received. The designer incorporated the ads and Directory listings into the book in mid-August. Over the next few weeks, we reviewed and corrected several proofs.

This coming year, Jennie and Joanna plan once again to collaborate on Yearbook Production.

Submitted by Joanna Taylor, Yearbook Editor

Public Relations Director's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 21, 2020

I. PR subcommittee and meetings

Richard Sawyer continued as the lead for public relations and the PR committee during the past year. PR committee members also included Anne Zim, Carol Fromboluti, Leslie Luxemburg, Jennie Weyman, and Albert Hunt.

II. Public Relations Plan

A PR plan, developed initially in December 2016 and approved by the Board in early 2017, has continued in place to guide PR work. Key elements of the plan include:

- Enhance the prestige, name recognition, and community awareness of FMMC
- Increase membership at all levels, recruiting new members, and targeting a broad age range
- Increase attendance at performance events
- Generate additional funds
- Advertise and communicate in a wide variety of mediums
- Tailor public relations, as needed, for different performance events

III. 2019-2020 PR Activities (Completed and in Process)

- Add audio and video clips to FMMC website.
- Create new content for the website (particularly in the News and Stories sections). A brief interview protocol was developed and used to interview members to feature on our website and in our newsletter.
- Sustain and expand our presence on Facebook.
- Strategically promote programs throughout the season. We regularly communicated with members about FMMC work and upcoming performance events. Our membership database was used to send email blasts on a monthly basis to strategically highlight 2-3 upcoming concerts, with a link to all other upcoming concerts. We continued to encourage FMMC performers to invite their friends to performances.
- Explore possible strategies to increase attendance at the Calvary church venue, but a final decision about this was not made beyond the efforts already in place at other venues. We may also explore moving the Friday concert series to another venue for purposes of trying to increase attendance.
- Provide written guidance for performers to better engage audiences. Written guidance (previously developed) was disseminated again for FMMC performers to use in providing brief introductory remarks, prior to performances, about the musical program to facilitate greater engagement and understanding among audience members.
- Publicize our events in print and digitally. We continued to participate in the Spring and Fall Washington Post Guide to the Arts, and the Culture Capital online platform. We expanded use of Eventbrite, primarily for Avanti and Arioso events.
- Consolidate FMMC's branding with consistent marketing materials. This effort included creating a professional season-long program for the Chamber Series, a new program design for the Arioso Chorale, letterhead, and informational materials (such as a trifold). Most printed materials will be printed and disseminated for the 2020-2021 season.

Submitted by Richard Sawyer, Public Relations Director

Rules and Revisions Director's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 24, 2020

I am pleased to submit my fourth annual report to the Friday Morning Music Club as Rules and Revisions Director. Changes in the Club by-laws require Board approval and approval by the membership. Changes to the Policies and Procedures manual are made by vote of the Board.

This past year, there were no proposed changes to the Policies and Procedures manual.

The Board of Governors has approved a change to the by-laws and submitted it to the membership for approval. Article VI (e) of the by-laws currently reads in relevant part: "The accounts of the Treasurer shall be audited annually." The Board has discussed and approved a proposed amendment to this provision that would provide alternating an audit with a financial review. Thus an audit would be done every other year, alternating with the financial review. The reason for this change is to save money in light of the Club's current financial situation. A financial review costs about one-half the cost of an audit. The Foundation has been operating successfully on this alternating system for a number of years with no decrease in having a reliable understanding of its financial position. Thus the Board has approved the following language to amend Article VI (e) of the by-laws.

"The accounts of the Treasurer shall be either audited or reviewed by an auditor on an annual basis."

In accordance with Article XIV (d) of the By-laws, this proposed amendment has been submitted to the membership for approval through e-mail. The Board recommends that the membership approve this proposed amendment.

A continuing project for the upcoming year will be making sure that the Club has an authoritative updated copy of both the By-laws and the Policies and Procedures Manual in hard copy and on-line. Work on this matter has been delayed as a result of the pandemic.

I appreciate the continued opportunity to serve the Club on the Board of Governors as Chair of Rules and Revisions

Submitted by Robin Friedman, Rules and Revisions Director

FMMC Foundation Director's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 23, 2020

Grace McFarlane and Junko Takahashi (Washington International Competition Co-Chairs), with generous advice from Chen-Li Tzeng (last year's Assistant Competition Chair) have worked tirelessly and most diligently to promote, organize, and run this year's WIC Piano Competition, which attracted 147 applicants from 15 different countries. Preliminary judges Scott Beard, Rhoda Jeng, Bok Hwa Kim, Paul Leavitt, and Charles Timbrell chose 16 pianists and a number of alternates to perform in the semi-final round at George Washington University on Saturday, May 23rd, with six of them proceeding to the final round at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater on Sunday, May 24th. However, the coronavirus pandemic has caused us to reschedule the competition to Saturday, October 3rd, and Sunday, October 4th, at the same locations. Dr. Robert Baker, the Director of Performing Arts at George Washington University, moved mountains to allow us to take over the Music Department venues on the Saturday of Homecoming Weekend. We are most grateful to him! Our three distinguished judges – Simone Dinnerstein, Robert McDonald, and John Perry – have all made themselves available for these new dates. Hopefully, this horrible pandemic will subside to allow our competition to take place.

Harriet Kaplan, Director of the Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, and her brilliant steering committee have been busy spreading the word about the 2021 Competition, scheduled from March 16th through the 20th at Calvary Baptist Church, and Mark Simon is preparing for next year's Composition Competition.

It has been my privilege to work with our wonderful Board of Trustees this season. Thank you all for your expertise and commitment! May you and your loved ones stay well and in good spirits during this most challenging time!

Submitted by Frank Conlon, FMMC Foundation Director

Chorale Chair's Annual Report 2019-2020

April 21, 2020

This marks the sixth season with Paul Leavitt as the Director of the Chorale. With a stable core of about 60 singers, he has been able to bring the Chorale to higher and higher levels of musical achievement. It also was a year marked by an early termination of the season brought on by the Corona Virus Pandemic that has affected activities in all areas of life world-wide.

The programs selected for the 2019-2020 season were musically diverse as the Chorale planned for a total of 4 different concerts over the course of the year. The plans included a collaborative effort with the German American Heritage Foundation to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Beethoven's birth and a final concert just prior to a trip to Italy to participate in the Amalfi Festival in Maiori, Italy.

The Chorale began its season on November 1 and 2, 2019, with a concert entitled "Psallite" and was designed to honor Lutheran Church of the Reformation (the Chorale's home) 150th year of operations. The principal works on the program were Bach's *Magnificat* in D and Brahms's Psalm 115 (*Nicht unserm Namen, Herr*). Also included were short works by Schultz, Diemer and Leavitt. Sopranos Ashley Larkin, Alyssa Cox and Gabrielle Levy, Countertenor Biraj Barkakaty, Tenor Terriq White, and Bass John T. K. Scherch were the featured soloists.

For their second concert held on January 16 and 18, 2020, the Chorale turned to one of the most famous Requiems in the literature. Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* vies with Mozart's *Requiem* as to which is the more well-known and certainly is considered a difficult piece to perform. With soloists Soprano Alyssa Cox, Messo-Soprano Elizabeth Mondragon, Tenor Patrick Cook and Bass John T. K. Scherch, the Chorale and its orchestra executed two solid performances that clearly set a new standard of excellence for a FMMC organization. The performance was recorded and appropriate movements were provided to the club for inclusion on the website.

As noted earlier, our third concert of the year was an all-Beethoven event that included both pure orchestral and choral works including the fourth movement of the 9th Symphony. The concert was to be held at the Church of the Epiphany in the heart of downtown DC on April 16 and 18, 2020. However, as the Chorale was in the final run up to the Verdi Concert, the question of finding and confirming sufficient funding for the Beethoven concert became a serious issue without a firm answer available. As a result, the Chorale pulled out of the effort and, after considering its options, elected to return to the Church of the Reformation and to prepare the second and third sections of Handel's *Messiah* for performances using the same April 16 and 18 dates. However, even as the Chorale started rehearsals and the orchestra was preparing to initiate their rehearsal sequence, the DC area was effectively shut down by the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The fourth concert of the season was planned to be a "bon voyage" performance of the Leavitt Requiem and other works to be performed at the Amalfi Festival in Italy. The Chorale was to be joined by singers from the National Philharmonic Chorus and singers from George Mason University's Music Department. However, the Amalfi Festival had to be postponed for a year due to the Pandemic. The Chorale had planned to use the June 11 and 13 dates to perform *Messiah*, assuming that normal operations had begun. Unfortunately, it was clear that that would not happen in the near future and we made the decision to cancel the June concert as well.

The Chorale is again planning on a series of four concerts for the 2020-2021 season in October, January, April and June. At this date, no specific works have been selected. Since the Amalfi Festival invitation has been re-issued for 2021, the Chorale is planning that the June concert dates will be used for a performance of the Leavitt Requiem.

Submitted by Peter Baum, Arioso Chorale Chair

Avanti Orchestra

Pablo Saelzer, Conductor

2019-2020 Annual Report



Highlights

A shortened season due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Avanti Orchestra performed two concerts instead of the scheduled four. The first concert featured Violinist Julian Rhee, 2018 Johansen International Competition winner, performing Mozart's Violin Concerto in G major and the second concert featured Soprano Amanda Palmeiro, 2019 Washington International Competition winner, performing Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and selections from Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*.

This year Conductor Pablo Saelzer and Avanti Orchestra announced two special projects. "Beethoven: The Piano Concertos is a cycle through all five of the Beethoven piano concertos with pianist Christopher Schmitt. The cycle will take place over three seasons. The second is the commission of a new piece titled *Pasión de Violetas* by composer Antonio Juan-Marcos whom Pablo Saelzer met when he worked as cover conductor with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

In conclusion, this season we celebrated the 15th anniversary of Conductor Pablo Saelzer's exceptional leadership and transformation of Avanti Orchestra.

2019-2020 Concert Schedule

- Saturday, September 28, 2019, 7:30 pm, Cultural Arts Center, Silver Spring, MD. Soloist: Julian Rhee, violin, 2018 Johansen International Competition winner. Program: Mendelssohn, *Hebrides Overture*; Mozart, Violin Concerto in G major (#3); Schubert, Symphony No. 9, D. 944.
- Sunday, November 10, 2019, 3pm, Cultural Arts Center, Silver Spring. Soloist: Amanda Palmeiro, soprano, 2019 Washington International Competition Winner. Program: Copland, *Quiet City*; Barber *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*; Stravinsky, "No word from Tom – I go to him" from *Rakes Progress*; Falla, *Dances*.
- Cancelled: Friday, March 13, 2020, 7:30pm, Church of the Epiphany, Washington, DC. Soloists: Julian Rhee, violin, 2018 Johansen International Competition Winner; Tony Rymer, cello, 2018 Washington International Competition Winner; Christopher Schmitt, piano.
- Cancelled: Saturday, May 30, 2020, 7:30pm, Cultural Arts Center, Silver Spring. Masterwork Festival. Program: Antonio Juan-Marcos, *Pasión de Violetas*; Stravinsky, *The Firebird*.

Acknowledgments

Avanti gratefully acknowledges all donations and the generous gifts: FMMC Foundation, Washington International Competition, Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, Anne W. Zim, Carol and Chris Fromboluti, Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts, Jane Fidler and Ben Rosenblum, Jay and Leslie Chadwick, John Jaeger, Lindsey and Doug Morton, Lori Laitman and Bruce Rosenblum, and the kind support of the FMMC Board of Governors.