Strategic Plan for 2016-2021
Planning for Our Future
Bach Festival Society Board and Staff

Board of Directors
Victor Garcia, K’97, President
Richard Van Enk, Vice President
James Burkett, K’76, Treasurer
Kirsten Haverberg, Secretary

Stacy Caudill
Mark Craig
Greg Diment, K’84
Michael Dombos
Marti Fritz
Judith Halseth
Tom Krol
Deb Russell, K’76
Richard Van Enk
David Wells
Steven Woloszyk
Mary Beth Birch, emerita
David Scarrow, emeritus

Staff
Cori Somers,
Executive Director

Linda Van Dis, K’80,
Assistant Director

Mary Foley-Wilson,
Financial Manager

Robert Taylor,
Stage Manager

Music Directors
Dr. Henry Overley, Founder
1946-1961

Dr. Russell Hammar
1962-1985

Judith D. Breneman
1986-1989

Peter J. Hopkins
1990-1996

James Turner
1996-present

Proud member of
CHORUS
AMERICA

Kalamazoo
Bach Festival Society
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Our Process

As the Kalamazoo Bach Festival looks ahead to its seventy-fifth year and beyond, the organization strives to have a strategic plan in place ensuring a financially stable and healthy organization that is fulfilling its mission, allows for and encourages growth in the organization, and that continues to provide Kalamazoo with outstanding performances and outreach opportunities.

In the past year the Kalamazoo Bach Festival has undergone significant transitions and continues to work through changes within the organization. New Executive Director, Cori Somers, assumed her role in August, 2015. Music and Artistic Director, Jim Turner, announced that he would be retiring at the end of the 2017 season.

To help us be prepared for the near and long-term future, the former Executive Director, Mary Lam-Rodriguez, secured funding with a grant from the Gilmore Foundation, and with the help of the Board of Directors, hired Paul Knudstrup of Midwest Consulting Group to facilitate our efforts. A committee was formed in April of 2015 and meetings began in May, 2015. The committee met in May, July, and September, 2015. It was then decided to postpone the planning process while the Bach Festival’s new Executive Director became settled into the organization and experienced a full season to better understand the organization. The committee meetings took place again in May, June, and July, 2016. Paul Knudstrup also worked closely during the 2015-16 season, meeting individually with all Bach Festival staff and specific meetings were held with the Board of Directors. Community-wide surveys were assessed as well as surveys tailored specifically to Chorus members and the Board of Directors.

This Strategic Plan outlines our goals in targeted areas of our organization that we find to be the highest priority over the next five years. This document’s purpose is to keep us focused on our goals and help facilitate the effective work that needs to be done.

Targeted Areas of Focus

Artistic Commitment
Patron Development
Marketing Strategies
Educational Partnerships
Operation Support of Staff and Board
Financial Planning

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Gordon M. Bolar  Godfrey Grant  Laurie Krahn  David Scarrow  Linda Van Dis  
Victor Garcia  Judith Halseth  Larry Montei  Richard Van Enk  Cori Somers
Mission

The Kalamazoo Bach Festival Society’s mission is to bring excellent vocal, choral and instrumental music to the widest possible audience in southwest Michigan through performances of major works by the Bach Festival Chorus and orchestra, the sponsorship of renowned vocal artists and choral groups, and educational outreach activities.

The Bach Festival Society focuses on the music of J. S. Bach and composers from the Renaissance to the contemporary era and is committed to practicing, promoting, and preserving the art of choral music and the legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach.

History, Commitment, and Dedication

Founded in 1946 by Kalamazoo College Professor Dr. Henry Overley, the Kalamazoo Bach Festival Society sought to bring “town and gown” together to experience the joy of music-making—in particular, to present high quality performances of the choral and instrumental music of J.S. Bach and his contemporaries. Participants included visiting guest artists, local professional musicians, college and high school students and many amateur performers. During the early years, the season comprised of a Christmas concert and a Spring music festival week featuring many distinguished artists. A performance of J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion inaugurated the Festival in March 1947. Now embarking upon its 70th season, the Bach Festival Society is led by Music Director Jim Turner.

In his 21st season as Music Director, Jim Turner conducts the Bach Festival Chorus, a 70 volunteer-member community choral ensemble. Turner is dedicated to the high caliber performance of choral music and is a collaborator with other community organizations. Besides presenting choral masterworks featuring the Bach Festival Chorus, the organization hosts internationally renowned guest choirs and vocal ensembles during the year as well as presents an outstanding music festival highlighting Michigan’s finest artists.

In addition to performances, an important function of the Bach Festival Society is its commitment to providing high quality choral music education and outreach programs for the community. The Bach Festival Society is the ONLY organization in Southwest Michigan that provides choral outreach opportunities to students. Every year, the Bach Festival sponsors a High School Choral Festival, provides on-site choral coaching for area middle schools, offers masterclasses for college and high school students, and hosts other special community events free-of-charge to participants. From elementary age to adult, the Bach Festival’s programs reach out to varying segments of the community in its pursuit to advance the choral music art form.

Lastly, the organization holds dear the traditions of its namesake composer Johann Sebastian Bach and honors his legacy by celebrating his life and music during an annual Bach Festival Week in May. During this time, the Bach Festival Society collaborates with various community organizations to present a Bach-Around-the-Block Organ Crawl, Young Vocalists Competition Winner’s Concert, Bach Legacy Lecture, Bach’s Lunch Concert, Bach Community Sing or Guest Artist Recital and a special Spring Bach Festival Chorus performance.
Bach Festival Society of Kalamazoo Inc.
Organizational Chart

Bach Festival Board of Directors

Kalamazoo College

Student Assistants

Music Director

Rehearsal Accompanist

Executive Director

Financial Manager

Assistant Director

Student Assistants

Lead Singers

Last updated: 1/29/07
Artistic Planning

Appoint a New Music and Artistic Director in Collaboration with Kalamazoo College

- August, 2016: Create a search committee.
- August, 2016: Approval of position with Kalamazoo College.
- September, 2016: Kalamazoo College to create a webpage for applicants to upload materials.
- September, 2016: Ad will be posted on several organization websites: ACDA, CMS, Chronicle, Higheredjobs, Chorus America, and Conductors Guild.
- November 14, 2016: Closing date for applications.
- By December 9, 2016: The internal committee will have reviewed applications in teams, and will meet the first week of December to collectively narrow this down to a ten to fifteen candidate short list.
- Early January, 2017: Skype interviews and reference checks on the short list of candidates.
- Late January/early February, 2017: On-campus interviews.

Increase Chorus Members and Musicianship

- Develop a plan with the new Music Director to identify a regular process for auditions.
- Create a web page for chorus members only and audition information.
- Continue to create a culture within the chorus that encourages and nurtures the commitment and dedication to produce a high quality level of musicianship.
- Create a smaller performing ensemble to engage in performance, outreach and development opportunities in the community.

Collaborate with other Arts Organizations and Artists

- Develop new performance opportunities for the Bach Festival Chorus with other area arts organizations such as the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, The Arcato Chamber ensemble, The Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, Michigan Festival of Sacred Music, Festival, Wellspring/Cori Terry & Dancers, The Kalamazoo Singers, Western Michigan University, and Kalamazoo College.

Expand Bach Festival Week to 14+ Days over a 10-Year Period/Every Other Year

- Form a Bach Festival Committee
- Research new venues within the community.
- Create a series of new concert formats that will attract new audiences
- Offer ticketed and free concerts
- Include instrumental and vocal chamber music
- Include a variety of genres
- Create a new format for the Community Sing event
- Create family-friendly events
Educational Partnerships

Strengthen and Develop Relationships with Kalamazoo College

- Create performance opportunities for students with the Kalamazoo Bach Festival. Work closely with Kalamazoo College’s Music Department to align performance calendars.
- Create masterclass opportunities for Kalamazoo College students. Invite Kalamazoo College vocal ensembles and soloists to take part in masterclasses and workshops.

Collaborate with Artists and Organizations

- Create opportunities to collaborate with Education for the Arts. Provide a guest artist opportunity with EFA Presents!
- Create programs to collaborate with the Kalamazoo Public Library. Present a new family storytime program with a guest vocalist.
- Create opportunities to bring Guest Artists in for masterclasses. Include masterclasses as a part of visiting artists’ contracts.
- Create performance opportunities and residencies for guest artists in schools. Include school visits and outreach as a part of guest artists in schools.
- Continue to build a stronger relationship with Western Michigan University’s choral department. Invite WMU vocal ensembles and soloists to take part in masterclasses and workshops.

Continue and Create Outreach Programs for All Grade Levels

- Continue to provide a highly successful High School Choral Festival. Continue to invite new schools to participate. Maintain relationships with school administrators and choral directors.
- Continue to provide and expand a Middle School Choral Residency. Continue to invite new schools to participate. Maintain relationships with school administrators and choral directors.
- Develop a vocal outreach program to reach grades K-5. Present a pilot program for families with the Kalamazoo Public Library in 2017.

Develop Regular Opportunities for Adults

- Offer regular composer and masterwork lectures during Bach Festival Week.
- Continue to offer masterclasses and workshops that are open to the public.
- Offer post-concert discussions with artists and audience members.
- Continue to offer and increase the number of pre-concert talks.
Patron Development

Increase donor relationships and appreciation events
- Host special donor dinner and reception appreciation events to cultivate and build relationships with our current donors.
- Communicate more frequently with our donors through e-news, hand-written letters, creative mailings, and social media.
- Discover new ways to engage and thank our donors in thoughtful and meaningful ways.

Increase Corporate Sponsors
- Identify new sponsors with the help of the networks provided by the Board of Directors.
- Research and identify businesses and organizations in the community that have an interest in and support our mission.

Continue to Build a Diverse Audience and Increased Ticket Sales
- Create joint efforts with local businesses and organizations.
- Create joint efforts and have better communication with local churches.
- Create ticket packages and opportunities for local retirement communities.
- Continue to provide free and five dollar tickets for students and youth.
- Continue to provide free festival events.
- Continue to improve communication with area schools, colleges, and universities.

Sponsor an Annual Fundraising Event
- Identify an annual event that can become a yearly tradition.
  Bachtoberfest was successfully implemented for the first time in September, 2016.
- Identify a venue suitable for an event that will appeal to all ages.
  Bell’s Brewery was the selected venue for the first Bachtoberfest.
- Create a volunteer committee to work year-round organizing an event.

Plan for 75th Anniversary
- Fall, 2016: Create a volunteer committee to develop organizational goals.
- Winter and Spring, 2017: Identify goals for the organization’s 75th season.
- Fall, 2017: Create a time-line and begin to execute goals.
Marketing

Heighten Community Awareness

- Continue to creatively maintain and update all digital sources of information.
  Research outsourcing website design.
- Utilize different avenues of social media to market events, celebrate members of the community, share information, and communicate to our patrons.
- Create effective time-lines and continuous communication with media sources for interviews and advertisement.
- Continue to find new avenues, venues and resources for marketing events and activities.
  Yard signs, banners, billboards, Encore Magazine, Lori Moore Show, public radio.

Financial Responsibility

The Bach Festival’s Executive Director, Assistant Director, Financial Manager and Board Members will work together to maintain financial accountability of the Kalamazoo Bach Festival.

- Allow all staff members to have access to the operating budget throughout the fiscal year.
- Adjustments made throughout the year will be communicated to the Board of Directors.
- Maintain and annually review financial management safeguards.
- The Executive Director will seek out opportunities of Professional Development that facilitate the understanding of growth in an organization and what that means for financial management.
- Create a document that outlines and describes all of the financial transactions that occur in the administrative office.
Administration and Board of Directors

Increase the Board of Directors to twenty-two members

The nominating committee is dedicated to recruiting new members that have desirable qualities and experience that align with our organization’s mission.

The Board of Directors and members of the nominating committee seek to identify and nominate individuals with one or more of the following attributes:

- Philanthropic capacity
- Commitment to the arts
- Dedicated to education and outreach programs
- Interest in patron development and marketing
- Experience in accounting and bookkeeping
- Social networking and digital media capability
- Experience and interest in cultivating corporate sponsorships

Appoint a New Music Director by March, 2017 (see p. 5 for details)

The Music Director position is a collaborative position between The Department of Music at Kalamazoo College and the Kalamazoo Bach Festival. The Music Director’s time is divided between teaching within the Department of Music (equivalent to 75% of the position) and assuming the Music Directorship of the Bach Festival and its chorus (equivalent to 25% of the position).

The main role of the Music Director is to:

- Provide artistic leadership for all the Festival’s activities and for its chorus of seasoned community and professional singers, including planning repertoire, organizing rehearsals, and selecting/Managing the musical staff (including section leaders, accompanists, and guest soloists).
- Serve as the public face and voice of the organization in media and throughout the community, maintain active membership in national associations of choral singing, and work closely with the Executive Director and Board of Directors to stay within the annual budget and assist with development efforts as needed.
- Bring to the position a strong background in leading instrumental ensemble accompaniment, deep knowledge of both the choral masterworks of J.S. Bach and the diverse repertoire of music from all periods, and a desire to collaborate with other artistic organizations.
Increase Staffing Based on the Growth of the Organization

- Executive Director: Steady growth from a 1/2 to a 3/4 time salaried position based on the Festival’s artistic and outreach growth.
- Executive Director: Increase salary based on the administrative needs of the organization.
- Executive Director: Create a benefits package to include retirement, vacation, and health insurance.
- Assistant Director: Steady growth from a 1/2 to a 3/4 time salaried position based on the Festival’s increased donor base, ticket sales, and programming needs.
- Hire an hourly Operations Assistant for Marketing and Bach Festival Week Operations.
- Survey other local and regional arts organization to identify similar position descriptions and salaries.

Conclusion

The Kalamazoo Bach Festival is simultaneously experiencing transition in artistic leadership and in operational and administrative growth. The Board of Directors and current administration is faced with the exciting challenges of effectively moving the organization through this transition. The strategic planning process has helped foster this growth and has helped facilitate the Bach Festival’s capacity to organize its priorities and set goals for the next five years as it approaches its seventy-fifth season. This document will be a very useful tool to help serve as a reference for current and future members of the Board of Directors, keeping the organization focused on its goals and mission to the community.

Thank You

The Kalamazoo Bach Festival would like to thank the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation for their support that allowed us to create this Strategic Plan.

We would also like to thank Paul Knudstrup of Midwest Consulting Group for his guidance and facilitation of the Strategic Planning process.

Finally, we thank the Kalamazoo Bach Festival’s Strategic Planning Committee, Board of Directors, Staff, Chorus, and Patrons for helping to create a new vision and plan for our future.