

# AFA ANNUAL REPORT 2020



## Arts for Art is Ready

In many ways, Arts for Art, as an organization, a staff, and a culture, is always ready for Change. As artists and organizers, we are utterly committed to serving a community whose members believe deeply in the concept of improvisation as a system to creatively respond to change, in real time.

So when AFA found itself forced to adapt to the realities of a global pandemic, we moved swiftly to retool our existing programmatic model. One week after presenting the highly successful Sounds of Justice at The Town Hall, celebrating 25 years of Arts for Art, we were working remotely, conducting surveys and designing online programming. In doing so we began to reach a new and international audience. The contents of this annual report will give you details about how we accomplished this.

The pandemic continues and now an important electoral victory has been won. We will enter 2021 in a state of ongoing uncertainty that will require resilience and adaptability. Many are celebrating the arrival of a new administration. Yet there is much to be done to heal the trauma and create a culture where all can live their lives in safety and freedom. None of us truly know what will happen in the coming year. But one thing is certain.

We are ready.

### STAFF

Todd Nicholson  
Patricia Nicholson Parker  
Sean Madigan

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Melanie Dyer, Education  
Bill Mazza, Design/Branding  
Zak Sherzad, Video & Sound  
Michael Lucio Sternbach, Video

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## Mission

*Arts For Art is dedicated to the exceptional creativity that originated in the African American multi-arts jazz culture that utilizes improvisation to express a larger, more positive dream of inclusion and freedom.*



  
120  
artists

  
40  
performances

  
16  
days

## In Gardens / Free Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon

Free events in the fall for the general public featuring FreeJazz by diverse, emerging and midcareer artists.

### In Gardens

Saturdays and Sundays, September 7 to October 5, 2019



FOR THE 12th annual season of In Gardens, we presented a total of thirty six performances at three community gardens on the Lower East Side: Children’s Magical Garden, 6BC Botanical Garden, and First Street Green Culture Park.

### Free Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon

Sunday afternoons. October 27 to December 15, 2019



Photo: William Mazza

FOR THE second year in a row, we presented eight music performances as part of our family friendly series, Free Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon. The series was presented in partnership with Teatro LaTEA in The Clemente, at 107 Suffolk Street in Manhattan.

## Small Festivals / East Harlem and Crown Heights

39  
artists

15  
performances

6  
days

Making FreeJazz accessible to new diverse audiences.

### Healing for a Suffering World at El Taller Latino Americano

Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day in East Harlem

October 11 to 13, 2019

Photo: Robert Sutherland-Cohen



THIS FESTIVAL is focused on the revolutionary art of Black and Latinx musicians and poets. We presented a total of nine performances in partnership with El Taller Latino Americano.

### Jazz at Weeksville

October 18 to 20, 2019

Photo: William Mazza



WE CONTINUED our partnership with Weeksville Heritage Society to bring great African American FreeJazz music to underserved communities in Crown Heights, presenting three bands and three poets.

## Special Events

### Steve Cannon Tribute

September 6, 2019



Photo: Eva Kapanadze

TO HONOR the writer, A Gathering of the Tribes founder, and Arts for Art collaborator Steve Cannon, this event was presented in partnership with Tribes and featured readings by eight poets, performance by the poetry music band “What It Is”, and the Sun Ra Arkestra. This event helped us make further inroads and connections to the poetry community of NYC.

### Celebrating Patricia Nicholson’s 70th Birthday with an AFA Benefit

November 19, 2019



Photo: Eva Kapanadze

PRESENTED at The Flamboyant Theater at The Clemente, Arts for Art’s home base, the OMG!!! event showcased seventeen performances by 60 artists including Cooper-Moore, Dave Burrell, Fay Victor, Tony Malaby, Ingrid Laubrock, Matthew Shipp, Ava Mendoza, William Parker, and John Zorn, and others. Ms. Nicholson received a much deserved citation from District 1 City Council Member Carlina Rivera, acknowledging her service to the community.

**Sounds of Justice**

**AFA's 25th Year Celebration at The Town Hall**

March 4, 2020

Photo: Robert Sutherland-Cohen



Photo: Eva Kapanadze



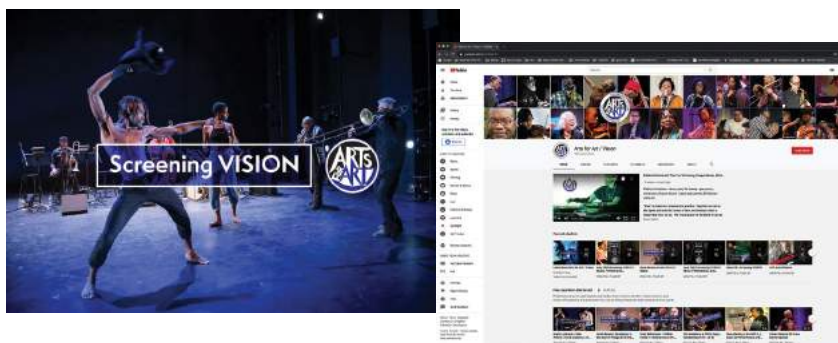
TO CELEBRATE Arts for Art's 25th year we presented a momentous program at The Town Hall called Sounds of Justice. The evening featured William Parker's Inside Songs of Curtis Mayfield and Marshall Allen and the Sun Ra Arkestra. We welcomed approximately 900 people to this special performance, making it the single largest attended event we have produced. This ended up being our last in-person event of the fiscal year. (Our fiscal year ends July 31).

## Screening Vision / Artist Meetings - Transition Online

In Mid-March, the pandemic hit and all events had to be cancelled. AFA launched the COVID-19 Artist Impact Survey and found that 16% of the artists in our community lack health insurance and 100% were losing an average of \$2,500/month ranging from \$500 to \$25,000. We began editing archival footage to present on YouTube and set up a resource page for artists.

### Screening Vision

ON APRIL 7, 2020 “Screening Vision” was initiated to share great performances from the archives, making music available for free online. Since then over 90 new and archive videos have been published, garnering over 31k views, and the AFA YouTube subscriber base has increased by 124% (from 420 to 941).



### Artist & Friends Gatherings

IN APRIL AFA set up weekly artist gatherings on Zoom to address isolation and to share ideas on how to make live music online. These conversations helped AFA to better understand shifting priorities around ongoing issues of survival, including artists’ need to play and pay rent. We also identified new concerns around providing music education for young children. From these meetings we formed a new Music Education Committee (see page 9 for details on their work).







83  
artists



30  
performances



2,110  
audience

## On\_Line Salons

ON MAY 1 AFA began streaming live performances from artists homes via Zoom. We guaranteed fair pay for the artists while presenting donation only performances to a global audience. The salons addressed our audience's need to experience the music, to connect with one another, and with the artists. The performances included conversations with the artists focused on their artistic practice and social justice issues, followed by Q & A with the audience.



In June, to achieve a better sound recording, we prerecorded sessions in partnership with Park West Studios in Brooklyn. This also allowed us to provide artists with free, professional recordings.

In total from May 1 to September 17, AFA presented eighty-three artists in thirty Salon performances serving a total of 2,110 viewers and paid out \$14,400 in artist fees.

## Education

Workshops at PS20 & ICE, VYO and the Music Education Committee

ARTS FOR ART'S education programs give underserved and diverse youth opportunities to strengthen their creative and social skills and cultural awareness.

THE VISION YOUTH BAND (formerly VYO) is a cost-free after school program for ages 11 to 18. Working with professional musicians, students met every Thursday from early October 2019 to late February 2020 at the Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE) in Manhattan. Due to the onset of COVID-19 and the resulting school closures, we were unable to continue the program.



475 ELEMENTARY and middle school aged children participated in workshops and demonstrations by two William Parker groups. These took place at ICE and PS 20 Anna Silver School. This was funded by Chamber Music America's Residency Partnership program.



## Moving Forward

ONE RESULT of the Artist & Friends Meetings was the formation of a new AFA Education Committee. The founding members are the experienced teaching artists Michael TA Thompson, Jean Carla Rodea, Ras Moshe and Daro Behroozi. They have designed an online afterschool program for students ages 8 to 11 at PS 20 for the FY2020-21 school year, and are now preparing a music mentorship program for young musicians aged 12 to 18 at the Urban Assembly School of Music and Art and ICE.

## Balancing Budgets

THE 2019-2020 fiscal year was heavily impacted by the global response to the pandemic. As a result, Arts for Art saw earned revenue decrease by 49% (ALL post March events were free to the public) and artist fees decrease by 42% due to the cancellation of Vision 25. AFA continued to pay artists fair pay for all online events, and all the artists who were scheduled to perform at Vision 25 were paid a cancellation fee. Due to a shift to online programming we were able to increase foundation & government income by 97%. We were also able to increase the number of unique individual donors by 270%.

<b>Income</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Earned Revenue	70,192	72,252	35,057
Government Grants	75,650	42,915	121,620
Foundation Grants	85,978	93,600	146,857
Individual Donors	142,518	173,745	152,097
<b>Totals</b>	<b>374,338</b>	<b>382,512</b>	<b>455,631</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Artist Fees	112,635	106,975	62,277
Administration	137,453	198,775	226,317
Marketing	6,571	6,061	7,219
Technical/Production	49,597	36,686	16,357
Space/Office Rent	25,650	27,188	23,023
<b>Totals</b>	<b>331,906</b>	<b>375,685</b>	<b>335,193</b>

## New Foundation & Government Support

Jerome Foundation, Chamber Music American’s Residency Partnership Program, The New York Community Trust NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund, Federal Loans (forgivable): PPP and EIDL

## Increased Foundation Support

Howard Gilman Foundation, Ruth and Jacob Epstein Foundation and Silicon Valley Community Foundation

## Continued Foundation and Government Support

SMS Foundation, Jazz Foundation of America, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts and Council Members Margaret Chin and Carlina Rivera

## Diversity

OVER THE LAST 10 years there has been a steady increase in the number of high caliber women Free-Jazz artists. AFA celebrates this shift and works to shine a light on both their contributions and their struggles by featuring them in our concert series and holding panel discussions to give the community a chance to engage with and better understand the complexities around gender inclusion.

### Performers by Gender \*

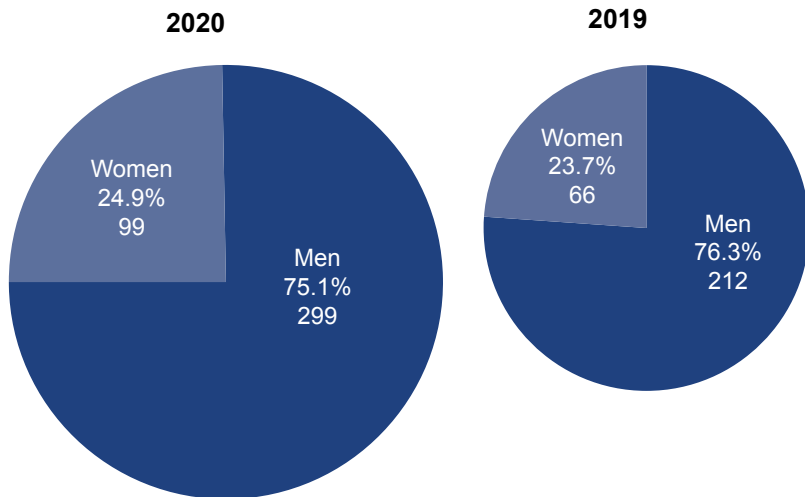
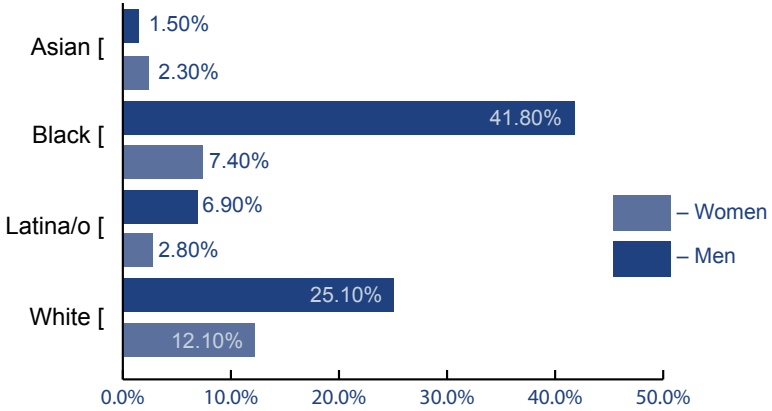


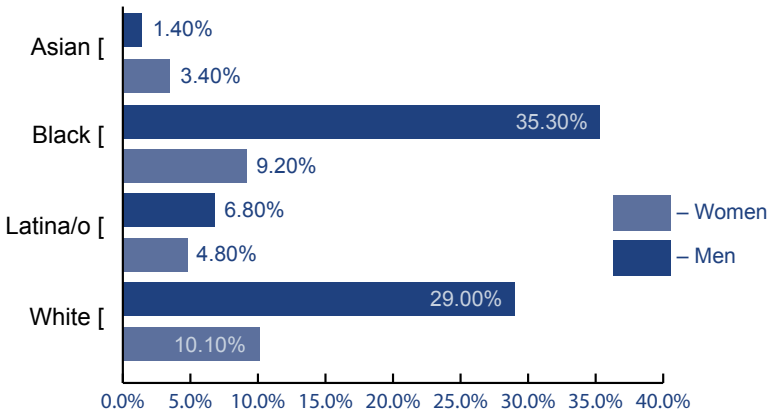
Photo: Lauren Nolan

*\*AFA recognizes that gender is a nonbinary spectrum. However as we do not collect self-identified gender data on either performers or attendees, we find the common use of “woman, man, or gender non-conforming” useful in this context.*

**Appearances by Race + Gender**



**Unique Performers by Race + Gender**



Diversity cannot be assumed nor should it be a numbers game. AFA believes it is equally important to hold all artists to the same standard of excellence.

Arts for Art promotes diversity by seeking out and shining a light on African American improvising Free-Jazz musicians of all ages. This art was born out of the African American struggle for equal rights. However, the practices of free improvisation and Jazz are increasingly dominated by white men. While resisting this trend AFA encourages the highest standards in improvisational and compositional art.

Arts for Art recognizes that all of us living in the United States must always make an effort and work towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**DONORS****Vision Angels \$5,000+**

Fred Allen • Tom Carhart • Whit Dickey

**Vision Improvisers \$1,000-\$5,000**

Maria Arias • Closey Giffen • Dennis Girard • Susan Nicholson

Anthony Radice • Frank Sakalinis • Peter Shwartz

**Vision Supporters \$500-\$1,000**

Ronen Amit • Tom Buckner • Mark Dresser • Lois Eby • Jeffrey Evans

Alan Feller • Kathy Hendrickson • Ira Kaplan • Julie Nicholson • Bruce Raynor

Jane Smith • Emery Snyder • Marion Wyatt

**Vision Friends <\$500**

Timothy Abbott, Joshua Abrams, Lewis Achenbach, Stephen Adams, Clifford Allen, Gordon Allen, Toni Altenstrasser, Richard Anderson, Marc Andren, Guglielmo Arno, Terri Ashton, Monique Avakian, Nathaniel Baldwin, David Ballinger, Kaitlyn Barnes, Lewis Flip Barnes, Jacqueline Barnett, David Barrett, Richard Bates, Amy Bauer, Jill Becker, Noah Becker, Gordon Beeferman, Armando Bellmas, David Belmont, Louie Belogenis, Gordon Benett, Richard Berger, Harry Bernstein, Christopher Besinger, Hans Young Binter, Rachel Young Binter, Michael Bisio, Lars Bjorn, Mark Blacher, Larry Blood, Wayne Bognar, Michael Boone, Patrick Booth, Karen Borca, Stuart Braman, Myrna Brandwein, Robert Brenner, Grace Brett, Tony Brewer, Ray Brock, Drew Bronson, Nicole Brooks, Keith Brooks, Rob Brown, Donald Brown, Carol Brown, John Brown, Lauren Brownstone, Franklin Bruno, Jochen Buck, Juan Bueno, Mike Bullock, Barbara Burch, Peter Burk, Gregory Burk, Michael Burke, Jeff Caltabiano, Duane Capizzi, Juan Pablo Carletti, Brendan Carniaux, Martin Carrizo, Vienna Carroll, Eric Casey, Joe Chambers, Barrie Chercover, Richard Chin, John Chiurazzi, Joel Chriss, Ellen Christi, Jordan Clifford, Jim Clouse, Jeff Coffin, Greg Cohen, Sylvie Cohen, Harold Connolly, Jean Cook, James Cook, Linda Cooper, John Corbett, David Cox, Katherine Croft, Jill Crouther, Owen Cruise, Ai Csuka, Scott Currie, Ivy Dane, Darryl Dardenne, William Darkes, Jasmin Davis Shearer, Claire de Brunner, Anabelindade Castro, Wilbert De Joode, Tiffany DeFoe, Nicholas DeLuca, Paul Delucena, Jon Diaz, Robert Dick, Bjoern Dirlack, William Driggers, Diana DuMelle, Brian Earley, Dan Edes, Michael Ehlers, Ken Eisen, Erik Ellestad, Annette Ensley, Nona Estrin, Leonor Falcon, Mike Faloon, Avram Fefer, Mary Feyjini, Ken Filiano, Jason Finkelman, Arthur Fleiss, Alejandro Florez, Guy Fraser, Jacob Freeman, KAR Ila Turner Freeman, David French, Patrick Frisco, Satoko Fujii, Scott Fultz, Elise Gardella, James Gardiner, Ian Gendreau, John Ghizzoni, John Gilbreath, Janis Gildin, Frank Gill, Thomas Gilmore, Kipp Gilmore-Clough, Will Glass, Bob Gluck, Abram Goldstien, Jeffrey Golick, Bob Gorry, Timothy Graham, Lou Grassi, Anders Griffen, Stephanie Griffin, Eric Gudas, Elizabeth Guido, Megan Hait, Chris Hall, Frances Halsband, Holly Halvarson, Kazunori Harada, Paul Harless, Julie Hastings, Joan Hawkins, Akili Haynes, Ed Hazell, Ajay Heble, Peter Heller, Anne Hemenway, Jody Henefeld, William Herbert, Gabino Hernandez, Nancy Hoffman, Dave Hofstra, Bob Holman, Kathi-Jane Holmes, Patrick Holmes, Lyn Horton, Jon Howell, Clif Hubby, Georgia Hubley, Devin Hurd, Jason Kao

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## Arts for Art Values

AFA keeps growing our community of innovative musicians, dancers, poets and visual artists with a public that cares about culture and justice.

The Art is built on democratic community ideals. Its disciplined intensity speaks of equity, justice, and freedom. So AFA has worked to create an inclusive, diverse and equitable space in which the artists, and the public we serve, can thrive.

**Community:** Diversity of race, age, and gender define community. AFA creates community by creating opportunities throughout the year for diverse artists to meet and share ideas as well as perform.

**Justice, Diversity, Inclusion, Respect:** We make safe space for artists to experiment, develop and excel creatively. AFA respects artists by ensuring fair compensation, and audiences by ensuring economic access to programs and performances. AFA organizes artists efforts to respond to contemporary social issues in collaboration with grassroots activist efforts.

**Improvisation:** Improvisation is the sophisticated integration of all aspects of creation in real time. This highly developed form is at the core of our mission. It is also an element of AFA's organization culture. We plan for our future and operate flexibly to respond to opportunities as they arise.

**Commitment:** AFA respects artists' commitment to their lives' work, and reflects that commitment by seeking and supporting new works, audiences and partnerships that help artists' sustain creative and professional growth.

## A Permanent Home

A home for AFA and the art we serve is important to create opportunities for the art to thrive. We at AFA, along with the artists and supporters will make this a reality, Our temporary home is provided by partnerships with Teatro LaTea, The Clemente, Weeksville and others to keep the art streaming, strong and present in all of our lives.

If you want to become a part of moving AFA forward, contact us at [info@artsforart.org](mailto:info@artsforart.org) or 212-254-5420.