

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Indian Hill Music's third strategic plan. Led by consultants from EmcArts, we have been on a journey of reflection and discovery that has led to an exciting and energizing plan for the next three years and beyond.

The board, staff and musicians of Indian Hill Music began this planning process grounded in a strong sense of identity and purpose. One person stated, "Indian Hill Music is a place for making music a part of people's lives, both as music-makers of all abilities and all ages, and as audiences of all types." Everyone agreed, but our first conversations revealed that we also felt "something is missing" and we didn't know what "it" was. And most compelling of all, we had a problem to solve - our expenses exceeded our revenues, and had been doing so for several years. We all felt strongly that whatever else the strategic plan did, it had to solve this problem.

The Organizational Assessment by EmcArts confirmed that IHM has many strengths. Among them are programming of consistently high quality, a strong reputation in the community, highly satisfied clients, an excellent facility and, "A notable culture of respect and good will among its primary stakeholders. Knowledge of one another's level of commitment and activities is greater than found in most arts organizations." This Assessment and subsequent Comparative Study also confirmed the challenges we face in the areas of community engagement, marketing and branding, fundraising and internal systems, including building upgrades and maintenance.

Using the learning from these studies, we set to work. Our conversations were deeply engaging and left no stone unturned. In having hard conversations about our finances, we decided that the solution was not to make radical cuts in programs or expenses. This would change our identity and we had no heart for such action. At the same time, we realized that our contributed revenue (as a percent of the overall budget) is well below that of other music organizations. And we learned there is considerable fundraising potential in our community that we have not tapped. Financial analysis indicated that by doubling our development ratio (dollars contributed for dollars spent) over three years we could solve our budget problem. This became our first strategic objective.

To be successful in doubling our development ratio, IHM will need to implement other cross-functional objectives. The interdependent nature of these objectives is a given in this plan. Each needs the others to succeed. Inspired by our colleagues at the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, we saw that in order to increase contributions we must think

completely differently about our business and our people. Thus, “transforming transactional relationships with customers into long term patron relationships” became a second strategic objective. But how? And what stories will we tell our potential patrons?

It was in the discovery of our third strategic objective that we answered these questions and also found what was “missing”. We realized that we have always given to the community, our own and others’, in a variety of significant ways, because of our philanthropic spirit. And we want to give more. To us, “deepening IHM’s philanthropic musical presence in our community” means more than “doing outreach.” Through relevant community partnerships, we will “give the gift of music” to best serve the unique needs of each situation. This is now a driving force in our mission and a lens through which we will examine all of our work.

How will we deliver this expanded mission? By “creating and retaining a team of professionals uniquely suited to the mission of Indian Hill Music,” our fourth and final strategic objective. This objective starts us on the path of creating a core of musicians for whom Indian Hill Music will be their primary source of income. These musicians will be vital to our efforts in patron development and musical philanthropy. They also will be full participants in the life of the organization by serving on organizational committees, thus deepening the connections between our board, staff and musicians.

We have what we hoped for at the beginning of this process: clarity for the near and long term, passion for a renewed purpose, and deeper connections between the parts of our organization. It is exciting that the positive financial outcome in this plan is a result of a number of ideas we feel certain will energize Indian Hill Music and its board in an unprecedented way. Focusing on the philanthropic elements of our mission, developing new, more intimate relationships with our patrons, reaching out to our communities in ways that will have impact, and building a core of musicians to support all this are exciting ideas even if they didn’t solve our budget problem. That they are this exciting AND solve the budget problem - well, that's just very exciting.



Susan Randazzo, Executive Director

