DEAR FRIENDS,

The twelve months comprising the 2017 fiscal year have been wonderfully productive for Project STEP. In her first, full year as Executive Director, Gabriella Sanna hit the ground running. Together with the Project STEP staff, students, parents, and Board of Directors, Gabriella has worked to build on the remarkable accomplishments of the last 35 years – and she has quickly become an invaluable member of the extended Project STEP family. Board President, Dianne Luby, has collaborated closely with Gabriella throughout this year of transition, and Project STEP is the beneficiary of their strong partnership.

A highlight of the year was speaking to, and performing for, members of the National Council for the Arts in Washington D.C. This opportunity was extended to Project STEP by an invitation from Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Jane Chu. Continuing what has become a tradition for Project STEP, world class musicians conducted masterclasses and included us in their performances. We are thankful for the support and colleagueship of: cellist Gabriel Cabezas, the members of the Apple Hill String Quartet, the members of A Far Cry, and the Ashmont Hill Chamber Music organization.

The mission of Project STEP - to address the underrepresentation of certain minorities in the classical music profession - remains as critically important today as it was when we were founded in 1982. In order to ensure the ongoing fulfillment of our mission, the Board is actively engaged in a strategic planning process, and with input from all of our stakeholder groups, we anticipate creating a new five-year agenda for our continued growth and future sustainability.

We want to acknowledge with deep gratitude the three years of service that Dianne Luby has given to Project STEP in her capacity as Board President. Similarly, we are indebted to you for your generous support; the successes described in this year’s annual report could not have been achieved without your commitment to the mission of Project STEP. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Austin
President, Board of Directors

Gabriella Sanna
Executive Director

Diane M. Austin
President, Board of Directors

Gabriella Sanna
Executive Director
OUR MISSION

Project STEP recognizes that certain racial and ethnic minorities are vastly underrepresented in classical music. Our mission is to address this imbalance by identifying musically talented children from underrepresented populations from Boston and surrounding communities and providing these children with comprehensive music and string instrument instruction. We set the highest standards for our students, provide mentoring and performance opportunities, and create a network of support for our students, their families, and their communities.

Core Values
(1) We believe that the classical music profession should reflect racial and ethnic diversity.

(2) We believe that children, if identified at an early age and immersed in long-term, rigorous music instruction, can flourish as professional classical musicians and as individuals, regardless of their ultimate career choice.

(3) We believe that our students can reach their full potential when held to high standards and provided with the support and active engagement of teachers, mentors, family members, and alumni.

(4) We believe that music can change lives and that the disciplined study of classical music enhances educational opportunities and opens doors for our students and their communities.
PROGRAMS

Project STEP provides a continuum of music instruction that begins when we enroll 50-100 five-year-olds from the Boston Public School system in our FOCUS Program, and continues through Grade 12. FOCUS introduces kindergartners from underrepresented populations to the study of music at an early age, generating enthusiasm and providing a bridge for further study at Boston-area music schools. It is also a gateway to the next level of Project STEP.

Each year, about four students from FOCUS are selected to continue their musical studies in Project STEP’s core program (grades 1-12). Each student receives weekly private lessons, theory and/or solfège classes, chamber music, orchestra, summer music camp support, and an instrument. In addition, they receive enrichment opportunities including masterclasses and residencies with renowned chamber ensembles, and tickets to dozens of concerts each year. Project STEP is a model for creative youth development. In the course of studying music, young people develop social, creative, problem solving, collaborative, and critical thinking skills. These skills are widely transferable and enable youth to reach their full potential as musicians, students, and productive members of society.
By building extensive student and family support systems into the program itself, Project STEP is able to hold students to - and help them reach - high standards of achievement. Incoming families are paired with “buddy” families, which allows older children to mentor incoming children and experienced parents to provide guidance for new parents. Families spend hours together each Saturday in the lounge at Symphony Hall while their children are in class, and all parents are part of the Parents’ Council which meets monthly for ‘parent pulse checks’ and workshops on practical issues related to their children’s music education. That Council elects two representatives to the Board of Directors who serve as full voting members and help shape the organization’s policies. These parent representatives facilitate communication between parents and staff. At the end of each year, Project STEP hosts a Spring Recital with a fundraising component planned and executed by the Parents’ Council. STEP’s depth of support for parents and families creates an atmosphere of encouragement, ownership, and responsibility. Parents are crucial to our students’ success, and their active involvement is one of STEP’s greatest strengths.

“Project STEP is more than talented children and expert faculty; it is also made of a network of real families who juggle multiple obligations. Despite all the other facets of our lives, we have chosen to prioritize Project STEP. We can’t help but follow in amazement as the program guides our children to new heights we couldn’t have imagined.” - STEP Parent
The 2016/2017 year was filled with outstanding achievements from our students, events, concerts, collaborations with world renowned musicians, workshops, and over 80 hours of community service performed by our students.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**PRESIDENT OBAMA’S WHITE HOUSE STATE DINNER**
Project STEP students and alumni performed for over 200 guests at the White House. As the event drew to a close, President Obama even thanked Project STEP by name! The students were honored to meet the President and First Lady for an official photo in the Blue Room.

**PERFORMANCE AND PRESENTATION FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA)/THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS**
An incredible opportunity for STEP, we shared the success of our program with the distinguished members of the Council and NEA Chairman, Jane Chu. STEP student Amir performed and spoke to the panel whose members responded with a standing ovation.

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**
The Project STEP community celebrated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. This event included performances and a panel discussion about the role of race in classical music.

**ART IN BLOOM AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (MFA)**
During this beautiful event, STEP students impressed the crowds at the MFA as they performed amongst artwork and impeccable floral arrangements.

**ASHMONT HILL CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT WITH DBR**
Our Honors Quartet performed the first movement of a piece written by contemporary composer Daniel Bernard Roumain. The piece contains four movements, each of which focuses on a different American civil rights leader.

**JORDAN HALL AND A FAR CRY**
A rotating group of Criers has been coaching the Project STEP Honors Quartet, and on March 17, that STEP ensemble gave a pre-concert performance at Jordan Hall before A Far Cry’s concert. In addition, one student joined A Far Cry onstage to perform with them side by side!
Project STEP was asked back to Washington, D.C. for the third time in two years to give a presentation and perform for the National Council for the Arts and Chairman Jane Chu of The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This honor came only months after having the opportunity to perform at President Obama’s State Dinner recognizing the United States’ fifty year relationship with Singapore. During the most recent visit with the NEA, it was 7th grade violinist Amir who earned a well-deserved standing ovation. We are so proud!

“One of the greatest opportunities that Project STEP has given me personally occurred when I was 8 years old and it was my fourth year in the program. I distinctly remember when my mother received the email from Project STEP saying that my sister and I were going to be playing in front of a large crowd in Symphony Hall. At the time, I was very young and I didn’t quite realize how big this performance was, but the second I walked up on that stage and saw all the faces staring back at me, oh boy did I start to feel the butterflies in my stomach! Now at 13, I am performing in Washington, D.C. for the National Endowment for the Arts!”

– Amir, violin, grade 7
In 2015, the Center for Collaborative Education and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform documented the major opportunity gaps that persist for Black and Latino males in the Boston Public Schools. These gaps impede their learning and lead to lower 4-year graduation rates than those of their white peers (Black students: 70%, Latino students: 64%, white students: 76%). In contrast, 100% of Project STEP’s graduates have gone on to college or conservatory after graduating from high school, and excel in music studies, competitions, and academics. During their studies at Project STEP, students receive high levels of training and support that likely would not be accessible to them otherwise. They are able to break through socio-economic barriers to become excellent musicians, creative and successful students, and productive members of society.

Project STEP offers a different path for Black and Latino youth by cultivating their talents, maintaining high expectations, and providing them with the support they need to succeed.

“Project STEP helps you in school. It improves how you think.”—STEP Student
MEET OUR STUDENTS
In 2007, Barbara N. Kravitz established a scholarship for one advanced STEP student to be selected each year in memory of her husband, Dr. Arthur Kravitz. As Past President of the Board, he loved classical music and believed strongly in the mission of Project STEP.

In the same year, Judge Levin H. Campbell established a scholarship fund in honor of his wife, Eleanor L. Campbell, a long-time Project STEP supporter.

Scholars are chosen on the basis of merit, dedication, and community involvement.

Project STEP is pleased to award the 2017 **Eleanor L. Campbell Scholarship** to Lauryn (left) and the **Arthur Kravitz Scholarship** to Noah (below).

Kirk Johnson (above: 1999 STEP graduate) graduated with a BM in Viola Performance and a M.Ed from Indiana University where he was introduced to the world of string pedagogy under the guidance of Mimi Zweig. Inspired by his experiences with Project STEP, New England Conservatory of Music, and The IU String Academy, Kirk founded Owen County S.O.U.N.D.S. (Students Opening Up New Doors with Strings) in the Fall of 2003. SOUNDS Academy is a non-profit music education organization that teaches, mentors, and provides musical experiences and opportunities for underserved youth. Students also learn to use their music to help others by participating in performances at hospitals, shelters, or retirement homes. SOUNDS Academy works with over 30 organizations to bring musical opportunities to the schools and children in lower income areas. SOUNDS has 150 students in its strings program and exposes an additional 4,000 students to musical experiences.
Music camps are often some of the most productive and influential experiences for our students. In gorgeous country settings, students have many hours each day to play chamber and orchestral music with students from all over the world. Away from academic and other day to day obligations that compete with music, they enjoy relaxed but determined goal-oriented music making in combination with fun and healthy outdoor experiences. Their identities as music students are heightened by being surrounded with campers who share and celebrate their passion. The combination of intensity, beauty, structure, physical freedom, and bonds formed among campers and members of the faculty contribute to lifelong memories.

This summer, our students attended camps that included Rivers Summer Music, Four Strings Academy, Community Music Center of Boston, Encore/Coda, Music on the Hill, Greenwood, Point CounterPoint, Junior Strings Intensive, Apple Hill, Cremona, and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

This incredible opportunity is provided to every Project STEP student for two to six weeks each summer. In order to help cover the costs of these programs and make them accessible to all of our students, we combine funds from Project STEP with special support from Susan Rothenberg and the Janey Fund, Winsor Music contributions, The Willow Tree Fund, The Mary Saudek Jaffee Fund, The Ramsey McCloskey Family Foundation, and scholarships from the camps themselves.

“Another great thing about STEP is that they send everyone to music camp every summer. My first summer I attended Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music. That camp is the best thing that has ever happened to me in my whole life...” - STEP Student
LEADERSHIP & STAFF

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Cheri Robartes
Kerby Roberson, Parent Rep
Diana E. Rodriguez
Jessica Schmidt, BSO Rep
Benz Theodore, Parent Rep
Marcus Thompson
Catherine J. Toppin

New incoming Board members for fiscal year 2018:
Carla Haith
Alex McCray

*At the conclusion of fiscal year 2017, Board President Dianne Luby stepped down after serving in that position for three years. Diane M. Austin now serves as President of the Board. Diane is the Vice President of Student Affairs at Lasell College, is very involved with the classical music community, and has been an active Board member for many years.

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Jodie McMenamin,
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Mariana Green-Hill, Artistic Advisor
Matthew M. Smith, Artistic Coordinator

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Boston Symphony Orchestra
Boston University
New England Conservatory

*At the conclusion of fiscal year 2017, Javier Caballero stepped down in his role as Artistic Director to accept a position at From The Top. Jin-Kyung Joen now serves as Artistic Director.

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Jonathan Butler
Mark Churchill
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Sassan Haghighi
Mariana Green-Hill
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Yasuko Ishibashi
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Mickey Katz
Anna Korsunsky
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Dubravka Moshfegh
Farhoud Moshfegh
Mai Motobuchi
Chris Rathbun
Magdalena Richter
Aristides Rivas
Daniel Stepner
Deborah Thompson
Gwendoline Thornblade
Emileigh Vandiver
Peter Zazofsky
John Ziarko

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SUPPORTERS & FRIENDS

COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT
A Far Cry
Boston Symphony Orchestra
B SO Education Department/Symphony for Our City
Boston University
Gabriel Cabezas
Carriage House Violins of Johnson String Instruments
Johannes Moser
New England Conservatory
Peggy Pearson and Winsor Music
Wendy Putnam and the Concord Chamber Music Society
Rutman’s Violins
Marcus Thompson and the Boston Chamber Music Society
Triple Helix Piano Trio
Tufts University
Owen Young

IN MEMORIAM
*Louis H. Hamel, Jr.

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Joseph Zorn

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Boston Symphony Orchestra
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Johnson String Instrument
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Jean Mason
New England Conservatory
Rutman’s Violins
Scholars Bistro and Lounge
Elihu and Janis Young

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Dudley Street Food Market
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Inly School
Johnson String Instrument
Just Next Door Cards and Gifts
Kevin Max Hair Design, Inc.
Mario’s Restaurant Corporation
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New England Philharmonic
Rivers School Conservatory
Rutman’s Violins
Silvia Curry/Rivers School of Music
Schneider Electric North America Fnd.
Scholars Bistro and Lounge
South End Community Health Center
Summit Educational Group
Teak Media + Communications
Triple Helix Piano Trio
Winsor Music
Barr-Klarman Arts Capacity Building Initiative
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Eastern Bank
Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation, Inc
GE Foundation
Charles and Sara Goldberg Trust
Harvard Musical Association
The Janey Fund
Kanter Kallman Foundation, Inc.
Klarman Family Foundation
Liberty Mutual Foundation
Linde Family Foundation
Martha and Donald Farley Family Foundation
Massachusetts Cultural Council
YouthReach
Ramsey McCluskey Family Foundation
Richard P. and Claire W. Morse Foundation
Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
Savage Family Foundation
Still Waters Fund
The Willow Tree Fund
Winsor Music
FINANCIALS

Sources of Income

Support from Individuals $ 404,296
Support from Foundation & Government Grants $ 282,000
Investment Income $ 28,500
Donated Space, Instruments, Services $ 82,529
Program Fees & Honoraria $ 12,486
Total Income $ 809,811

Use of Funds

Program $ 448,934
Administrative $ 169,455
Fundraising $ 102,948
All expenses $ 721,337

Surplus before investment losses $ 88,474
Gains / Losses on investments $ 150,891
Surplus $ 239,365
# FINANCIALS

Project STEP, Inc.  
Statement of Financial Position 
June 30, 2017 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Account</td>
<td>27,825</td>
<td>50,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>1,730,018</td>
<td>1,482,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables, net</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>160,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid expense</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office equipment, net of depreciation of $15,736 and $13,870 in 2017 and 2016, respectively</td>
<td>9,503</td>
<td>12,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music instruments, net of depreciation of $278,100 and $264,970 in 2017 and 2016, respectively</td>
<td>112,574</td>
<td>81,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,014,920</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,788,244</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>15,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>15,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>1,473,087</td>
<td>1,283,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>152,071</td>
<td>102,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td>387,100</td>
<td>387,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,012,258</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,772,893</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,014,920</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,788,244</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Symphony Hall
301 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617-267-5777
ProjectSTEP.org

Photos by Abdi Ali,
Michael J. Lutch, and Project STEP