

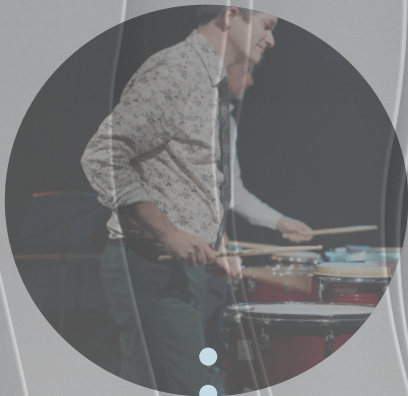
ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25





THIRD COAST PERCUSSION ANNUAL REPORT: **TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**



THIRD:COAST
PERCUSSION
20TH ANNIVERSARY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opening Remarks	04
Year in Review	06
Education	08
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	10
Financial Summary	12
Upcoming Events	14
Meet Our Team	16
Donor List	18
Mission, Vision, and Values	22

Opening Remarks

This year was nothing short of extraordinary.

As Third Coast Percussion marked 20 Years of Impact and Resonance, we celebrated not just two decades of adventurous music-making, but also the vibrant community that has grown alongside us. From the very beginning, TCP has thrived on collaboration, innovation, and a deep belief in the power of music to connect people. Twenty years later, we are proud to be a thriving artistic force and a pillar of a beautiful musical community that continues to expand.

The centerpiece of our anniversary season was Rhythm Fest: a joyful gathering that highlighted the remarkable network of collaborators who have shaped our journey. Alongside this milestone celebration, our 20th Anniversary commissions showcased bold new works that will inspire audiences well into the future. These moments reminded us that our story has always been written together – with artists, audiences, educators, and supporters who believe in what percussion can be.

Beyond celebration, this year also strengthened Third Coast Percussion's capacity for the future. We deepened our educational initiatives, expanded our international reach, and invested in the organizational foundation that will allow us to amplify our impact in the decades to come. Just as our past twenty years have been defined by risk-taking and imagination, our next chapter will be guided by that same spirit – pushing the boundaries of what



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ethelbert Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ETHELBERT WILLIAMS
BOARD PRESIDENT

is possible in contemporary percussion and community engagement.

We are filled with gratitude for everyone who has been part of this journey – from our earliest supporters to the new friends who joined us during this anniversary season. Because of you, Third Coast Percussion is poised to inspire, innovate, and resonate more broadly than ever before.

Thank you for being an essential part of our first twenty years. We cannot wait to share the next twenty with you.





DAVID SKIDMORE
ENSEMBLE MEMBER AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's difficult to overstate just how transformative this last year has been for Third Coast Percussion.

We played more concerts than we ever have (72), we garnered more individual support than we ever have (\$501,000), we spent more days on the road (170), we reached more audience members (47,000), and we collaborated with some of the finest artists of the last century (Twyla Tharp, Zakir Hussain, and so many more).

But for me the full magnitude of our 20th Anniversary celebration was revealed at our central celebratory event of this monumental year: Rhythm

Fest. Our one-day festival for our hometown audience in Chicago clarified something for me: that TCP is a career and an artistic pursuit, but it is also a community that we have built over twenty years of artists, educators, staff (past and present),

board members, supporters, and audience members who are curious, open-minded, kind, and inspiring. I am so incredibly proud that

Third Coast Percussion has catalyzed this vibrant community. I think I speak for the staff and ensemble when I say that we are all proud of what we have built together, and we are so excited for what's to come.



Year in Review

Third Coast Percussion's 20th Anniversary Season was truly monumental

for the organization, exemplified by a broader depth and breadth of performances than ever before. The success of the season is a testament to the power, versatility, and authenticity of TCP's artistic vision, and its capacity to resonate with worldwide audiences. 2024/25 began with the ensemble at center stage, performing two different concertos with orchestra at summer festivals in Wyoming and upstate New York. The epic work *Since Time Began* by TCP's mentor Michael Burritt received its European premiere in Hannover, Germany, just a few weeks after the



At the TCP Fall Benefit with Twyla Tharp and Constance Volk

ensemble worked with his students at Chautauqua Institution — a fitting full circle moment at the start of a celebratory season.

Three major touring programs premiered in 2024/25, all resulting from TCP's ambitious 20th Anniversary commissions. GRAMMY® Award-winning composer Jessie Montgomery appeared onstage with TCP for *Strum, Strike, Bend*: a program showcasing her

excellence as a creator and performer. After premiering her stunning new work *Lady Justice/Black Justice*, *The Song* at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, she joined TCP on a seven-city tour across the Midwest and West Coast. In addition to performing as soloist for Lou Harrison's *Concerto for Violin with Percussion Orchestra*, Jessie engaged in numerous residency activities with TCP that served hundreds of students and community members.

A dream-come-true collaboration with iconic American choreographer Twyla Tharp catapulted Third Coast Percussion's music into venues reaching audiences in the tens of thousands. Tharp created a new dance work for her 60th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee tour called *SLACKTIDE*, featuring bespoke arrangements of Philip Glass's *Agua da Amazonia* with guest flutist Constance Volk. The musicians performed live on tour with Twyla Tharp Dance across ten prestigious institutions including New York City Center, Detroit Opera House, the Kennedy Center, and Zellerbach Hall. Additional tour stops by the dance company featured TCP's studio recording of *Agua da Amazonia*, released worldwide as an album in January 2025. At the conclusion of the tour, TCP was invited to perform live in Venice, Italy, as part of the Biennale Danza, where Twyla was honored with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement award.

In a bittersweet turn, TCP had the honor of commissioning the late tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain to create a new work, *Murmurs in Time*, for the five musicians to perform together. Zakir completed and recorded the work in October 2024, just two months before his unexpected passing. With the encouragement of Zakir's family and partnership of presenters, TCP moved forward with the live premiere and five-city tour of the work as planned with Salar Nader on tabla. A longtime student and disciple of Hussain, Salar added a beautiful solo performance

as an homage to his master, which was received with great appreciation by audiences. Following the world premiere at Modlin Center for the Arts, the program toured to University of Michigan, Sonoma State, La Jolla Music Society, and Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, where *The New York Times* praised "A brilliant and moving performance that paid tribute to Hussain and the humanistic values at the heart of his art." A movement from the work was also presented on a memorial concert organized in Zakir's memory at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

In addition to touring these high-profile collaborations, TCP enjoyed sharing its 20th Anniversary recital program entitled *Time Pieces: The New Classical* as part of a robust series of performances spanning multiple cities and countries. 20th Anniversary commissions featured on the program included Tigran Hamasyan's rhythmically complex *Sonata for Percussion*, Jlin's J.S. Bach-inspired *Please Be Still*, and Jessie Montgomery's *Lady Justice/Black Justice, The Song* — all featured on the album *Standard Stoppages* released in April 2025. The program also offered the ensemble an opportunity to hearken back to music from several of its past GRAMMY®-nominated albums, and was received with great acclaim by audiences from Utah and Rhode Island to Bogotá.

The extensive reach of TCP didn't stop there: the ensemble brought its popular *Metamorphosis*

program to Paris and Lyon in the Spring, after presenting the program several times in the U.S. The ensemble was also invited to perform and record Clarice Assad's *PLAY!* concerto in Albany, performed multiple recitals throughout Detroit as part of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, served as ensemble-in-residence at Denison University, and was featured as the only showcase artist from the United States at the inaugural Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo.



At Rhythm Fest

Third Coast Percussion's 20th Anniversary Season would not be complete without a robust presence in its hometown. Presenting partners at Prairie Center for the Arts, 98.7 WFMT, Northwestern University, and Harris Theater for Music and Dance allowed the ensemble opportunities to share anchor touring programs with audiences across Chicagoland, and the annual sold-out *Currents* concert at Constellation featured three world premieres by Currents Creative Partners. In a season finale event that will not soon be forgotten, TCP presented Rhythm Fest on June 28 at Epiphany Center for the Arts — almost exactly twenty years to the day after TCP's first-ever public performance. Over thirty guest artists and collaborators joined the ensemble for an expansive day of performances that included audience participation, family-friendly activities, and unbridled musical joy. Bringing together the community that Third Coast Percussion has built over two decades under one roof was a meaningful way to honor the impact of an organization that could have only been built in Chicago.

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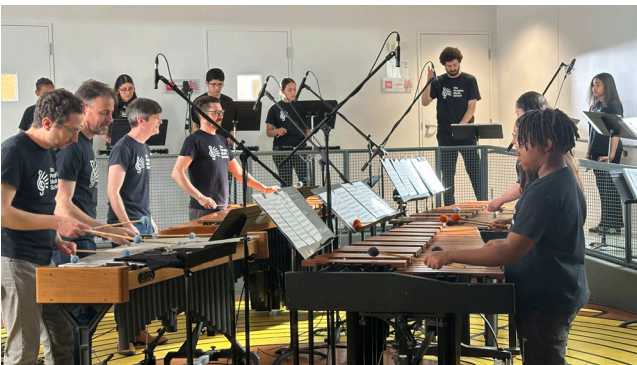
**Third Coast Percussion's
20th Anniversary
Season would not be
complete without a
robust presence in its
hometown.**



Education

For the first time, TCP enlisted an Education and Engagement Guest Artist

for Rhythm Fest, our 20th Anniversary celebratory festival in Chicago. Meaghan Heinrich, a master music educator from the Milwaukee Public School district, curated and facilitated several activities throughout the daylong festival including a Family Music Jam, an interdisciplinary STEAM experience, several talks with artists including composers Jessie Montgomery and Clarice Assad, and an interactive Musical Invocation based on music by TCP member Rob Dillon, featuring TCP friend and GRAMMY®-winning flutist Tim Munro.



Recording with students at The People's Music School

Also for the first time, TCP presented a teacher training session, sponsored by the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center in partnership with our frequent collaborator and dear friend Dr. Jay Brockman. Jay and TCP's Sean Connors presented a day-long professional development session for educators in South Bend, IN, that focused on interdisciplinary collaboration and discussed TCP's previous work developing a STEAM curriculum. This was an interesting first for the ensemble because

it did not require the physical presence of all four members and could be easily replicable with just one member of the team.

We had an incredibly rewarding side-by-side performance and video recording session with percussion students from The People's Music School in our hometown of Chicago! Over twenty students from around the city joined Third Coast in a side-by-side performance of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated piece "Duality" by composer Jlin, in a new, flexible arrangement that also involved TCP's intern from the Arts Leadership Program at the Eastman School of Music and faculty of The People's Music School. The resulting video is now available to watch online, and the arrangement is available for percussion programs around the world to purchase and perform.

Speaking of interns: we don't always give enough praise to our small but mighty team of interns! This season, we had six interns through various partnerships with educational institutions, including the Arts Leadership Program at the Eastman School of Music, Oberlin College, and the University of Illinois-Chicago. The most significant partnership was with Troy University (Troy, AL), resulting in a student from Alabama working with TCP in person for an entire semester and participating in several touring engagements. He is now gainfully employed in Nashville, in part due to professional connections with our instrument sponsors.

For the sixth consecutive season, TCP served as ensemble-in-residence at Denison University in Granville, OH, spending two weeks on campus during the academic year teaching private percussion lessons and coaching the percussion ensemble, as well as working with such eclectic classes as Theorizing

Communication; Mindfulness, Music and Psychology; Elements of Acting; Psychology 101; Chamber Strings; and Introduction to Music Notation. Two highlights of these weeks included presenting a fun and interactive “Music and Games” concert at the Granville Arts Center, and a collaborative project involving Prof. Ron Abram’s Etching/Printmaking students and TCP’s friend and frequent collaborator Jlin. For the second time, we also spent a week at Denison teaching at their “Summer TUTTI” interdisciplinary performing arts camp for high school students. Similar to last year’s camp, the week included a TCP-led drum circle for all participants, an early morning Sound Meditation, a TCP concert, percussion lessons, leading the student percussion ensemble, and plenty of side-by-side performance opportunities. Our recruiting efforts while on tour had a clear impact on the percussion student enrollment: all percussion students enrolled lived outside of Ohio, a rarity for the camp.

While on tour, we reached at least (from our



Masterclass in Belgrade, Serbia



*Masterclass with
Jessie Montgomery*

very lowest estimate) 3,866 in-person students through non-concert educational engagements worldwide, including workshoping and premiering new works by student composers at Denison University, and leading masterclasses for students at 16 high schools and universities across 11 states, and at the Conservatoire Regional de Paris. We performed international education-oriented concerts in Lyon and Paris, France,

We performed international education- oriented concerts in Lyon and Paris, France, and Hannover, Germany, as well as 4 states in the U.S.

and Hannover, Germany, as well as 4 states in the U.S. In addition, TCP facilitated community-wide interactive concerts and drum circles in three states and in São Paulo, Brazil. The warm reception from each community we visited affirms that formal concerts are not the only way to engage our audiences, future collaborators, and the global music community’s new young talents.



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

As we continue to celebrate our 20th Anniversary this season, we are thinking more and more about our work in the larger context of politics and current events.

Though art can rise above these day-to-day concerns, we still live and create our work in this place and time. As we reflect on last season, we are reminded that deeply held values may evolve over time, but they do not change overnight, regardless of current events or politics.



Metamorphosis at Lyon National Auditorium

Our music and our world are made richer, more joyful, and more inspiring when we celebrate the diversity of voices that make up our country and our world; when we welcome everyone who wants to be

part of our community with open arms; and by doing these things, we play our part to make the world a more equitable and just place. We are inspired by the amazing artists we've been able to interact with over the years: most recently Twyla Tharp, who blazed a trail as one of the leading figures in the dance world at a time when female choreographers were rare; Zakir Hussain, who brought Hindustani Classical music to millions of people around the

We welcome everyone who wants to be part of our community with open arms.

world who had not yet experienced it; Jessie Montgomery, who is one of the most in-demand composers of our time in a field that historically vastly underrepresents Black female voices; and Missy Mazzoli, one of the two first women commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, to name a few. These are examples that we look to, and we are privileged to have made music with each of these phenomenal artists and many more like them. As we look ahead to new collaborative projects with electronic musician Jlin, tabla player Salar Nader, and many more, we are excited to continue growing and learning by centering our DEI practices in our work.





*Trent Jeray (L) and Cameron
Murphy (R) in rehearsal for
Metamorphosis*



*Recording with
Jessie Montgomery*



With Salar Nader

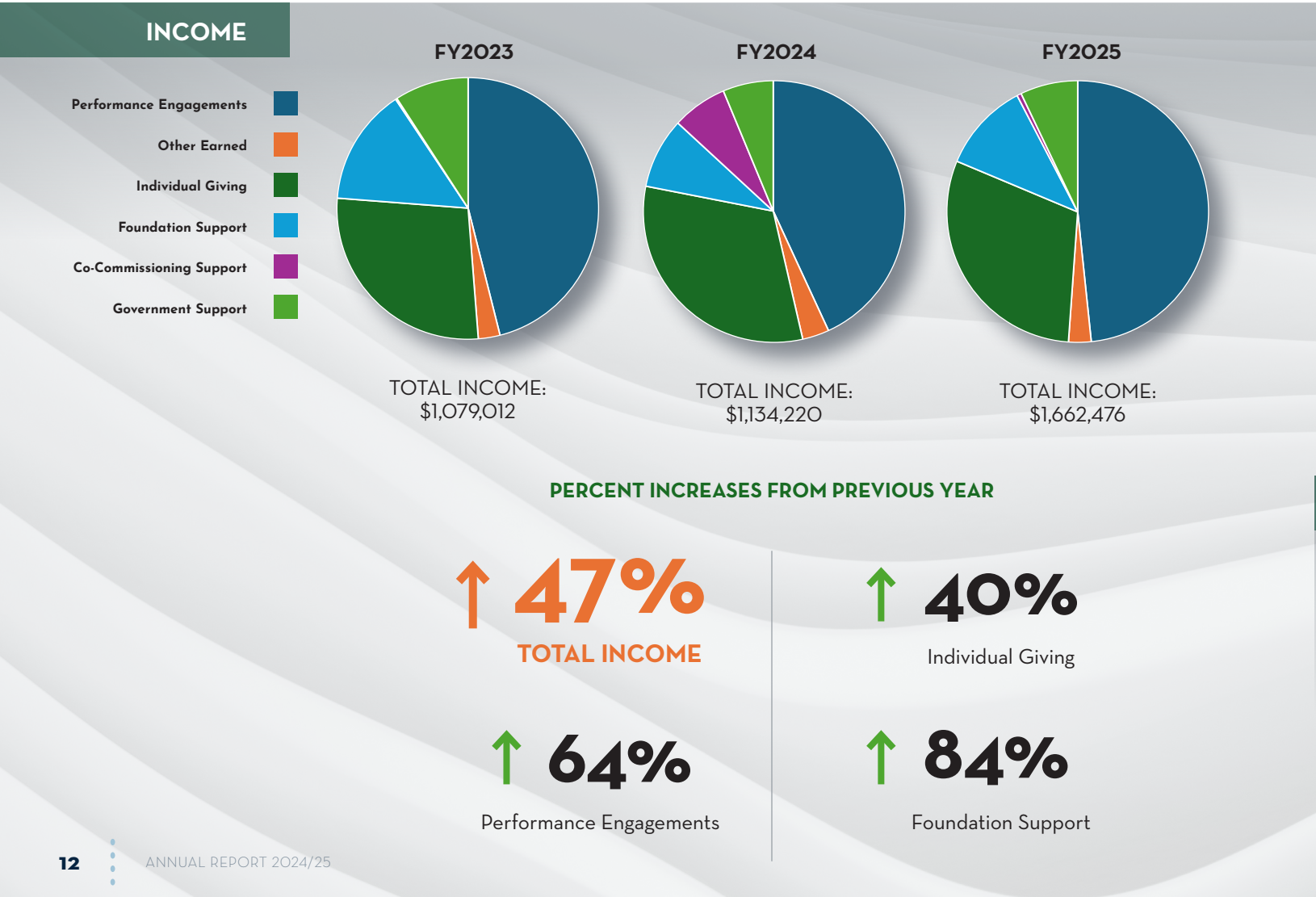


Financial Summary

TCP's 20th Anniversary activities, including a jam-packed performance schedule, ambitious new collaborations and commissions, and the inspiring Rhythm Fest event, are reflected by an explosion in the organization's finances in FY25. Some aspects of these financial figures are one-time spikes, and others will be sustained over time. Even with certain outliers, the overall direction of the organization's budget continues on an upward trajectory long-term.

Total income was up a dramatic 47% in FY25. With the most rigorous touring schedule to date, earned revenue saw a gigantic increase during this fiscal year, along with certain expenses associated with touring. The most notable expense increases were travel costs and guest artist fees for collaborative projects, including extensive tours with Jessie Montgomery and Salar Nader, as well as flutist Constance Volk who joined the ensemble for 25 performances of the Twyla Tharp Dance program.

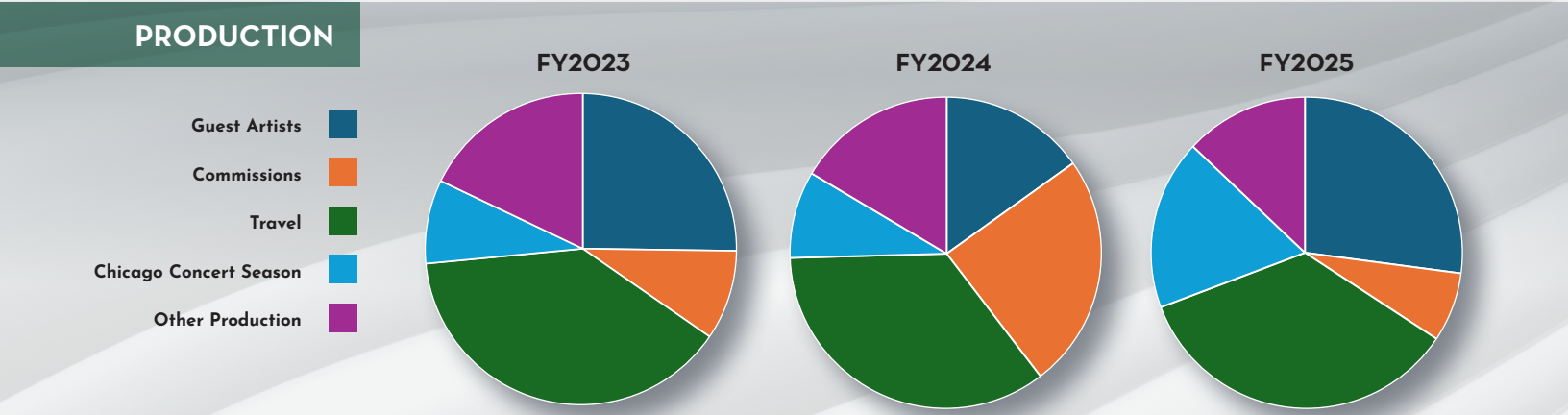
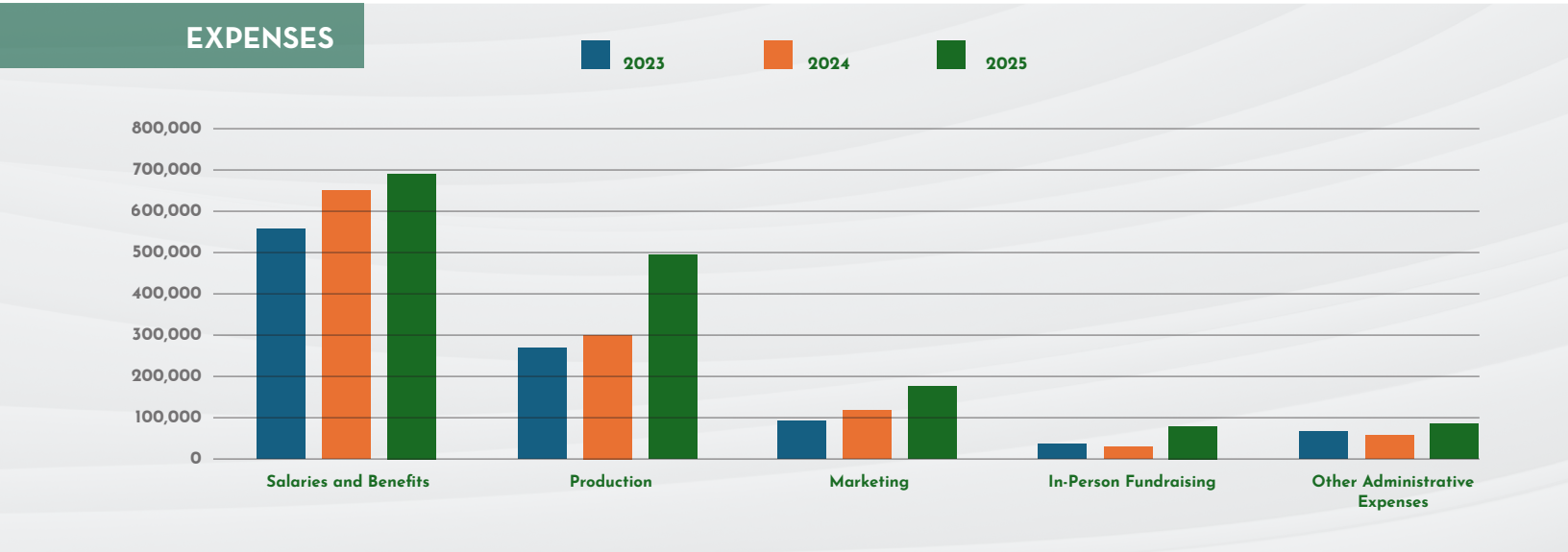
Due to a rigorous fundraising campaign around the 20th Anniversary, contributed revenue – particularly individual giving – also increased dramatically, with the organization raising over half a million dollars in individual donations in



a single year for the first time. This fiscal year also saw the largest single grant that TCP has ever received: a one-time \$80,000 grant from the DEW Foundation in support of TCP’s Rhythm Fest event to celebrate this landmark anniversary.

All of this support moved TCP toward its goal of raising one million dollars for its 20th Anniversary, with a campaign launched near the end of FY24. With some supporters making multi-year commitments in their 20th Anniversary pledge, new donors joining the mix, and an elevated model for the organization’s fundraising events rolled out in FY25, TCP is optimistic that it can maintain strong momentum in future seasons to continue pursuing exciting new projects, even if there may be a slight decrease in FY26 compared to FY25.

TCP is more grateful than ever for its dedicated and generous supporters that make exhilarating new art possible, for the fantastic board of directors that helps the team dream big, and for TCP’s remarkable staff, who work tirelessly to book performances, navigate complex logistical challenges, bring in new audiences, and secure funding to keep things running at the highest level. All of these folks have made TCP’s 20th Anniversary a year to remember!



Upcoming Events

BY NATURE, THIRD COAST PERCUSSION IS FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.



With Jessie Montgomery



As an ensemble that thrives on creating opportunities to foster unique collaborations and commission new work, there is endless artistic potential to explore. With the incredible momentum of the 20th Anniversary carrying the ensemble forward, they continue to innovate in ways that invite new audiences to discover the power of percussion ensemble music.

TCP and longtime collaborator Jlin will spend a week in residence at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity this January, building a new evening-length program that is set to tour extensively in the 2026/27 season. The program includes Jlin performing the electronic renditions of her compositions alongside acoustic realizations of the pieces performed by TCP. A brand-new work commissioned by 92NY combines the forces of all five musicians performing live together, conjuring an entirely new sonic universe. The world premiere of the new work at 92NY is set for mid-February 2026, followed closely by a premiere of the full program at UC Santa Barbara.

In the coming year, the ensemble is thrilled to workshop and premiere new pieces by collaborators both familiar and new: classical guitar icon Sérgio Assad, world-renowned composer Augusta Read Thomas, percussionist / rising star composer JaRon Brown, and David Longstreth who is widely known as frontman of the indie band Dirty Projectors.

Throughout the 2025/26 season, TCP will continue touring several of its marquee 20th Anniversary programs. In Fall 2025, Salar

Nader will join the ensemble to perform Zakir Hussain's *Murmurs in Time* in Atlanta, Washington, DC, Berkeley, and Los Angeles. Winter 2026 will see two performances of its *Strum, Strike, Bend* program featuring music by Jessie Montgomery in Pennsylvania and New York City. Audiences in Paris will be treated to TCP's enchanting arrangements of Philip Glass's *Aguas da Amazonia*.

The ensemble is excited to make its Latvian debut as part of the prestigious Hanzas Perons series, and expand its international presence to countries that have never been visited by a professional percussion ensemble from the United States: Montenegro and Serbia. Closer to home, other highly anticipated tour stops include performances at Boston Celebrity Series, Allentown Symphony, Penn State Behrend, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. As ensemble-in-residence at Denison University in Granville, OH, Third Coast Percussion will deepen its impact across the campus and community with three weeklong visits.

TCP looks forward to a strengthened presence in Chicago, including debut performances with Chicago Chamber Music Society, Sound & Gravity Festival, Nova Linea Musica, and Francis W. Parker School. In November, TCP returns to its alma mater Northwestern University to appear as soloists with the NU Symphonic Wind Ensemble in Viet Cuong's acclaimed concerto *Re(new)al*. Art Institute of Chicago presents TCP performing new arrangements of player piano music by renowned architect Bruce Goff in conjunction with a major retrospective exhibit of Goff's work in January. UChicago Presents in Hyde Park brings Third Coast Percussion and jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan together in a one-night-only double bill in March that is not to be missed, and the season concludes in June with the annual *Currents* concert at Constellation to showcase the new works of three Currents Creative Partners.



At Carnegie Hall with
Salar Nader



Meet Our Team

ENSEMBLE



Sean Connors
*Ensemble Member, Technical
Director, and Education Director*



Robert Dillon
*Ensemble Member and
Development Director*



Peter Martin
*Ensemble Member and
Finance Director*



David Skidmore
*Ensemble Member and
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Mission

The mission of Third Coast Percussion is to inspire and educate through the creation of exciting and unexpected musical experiences.



Vision

A world-wide audience that embraces creativity, curiosity, and community through music.



Values

Highest standard of excellence
Curiosity and experimentation
Responsibility and stewardship
Collaboration
Equity, diversity and inclusion
Kindness and respect



With Currents Creative
Partners Erik Hall, Alexander
Noice, and lili m. namazi

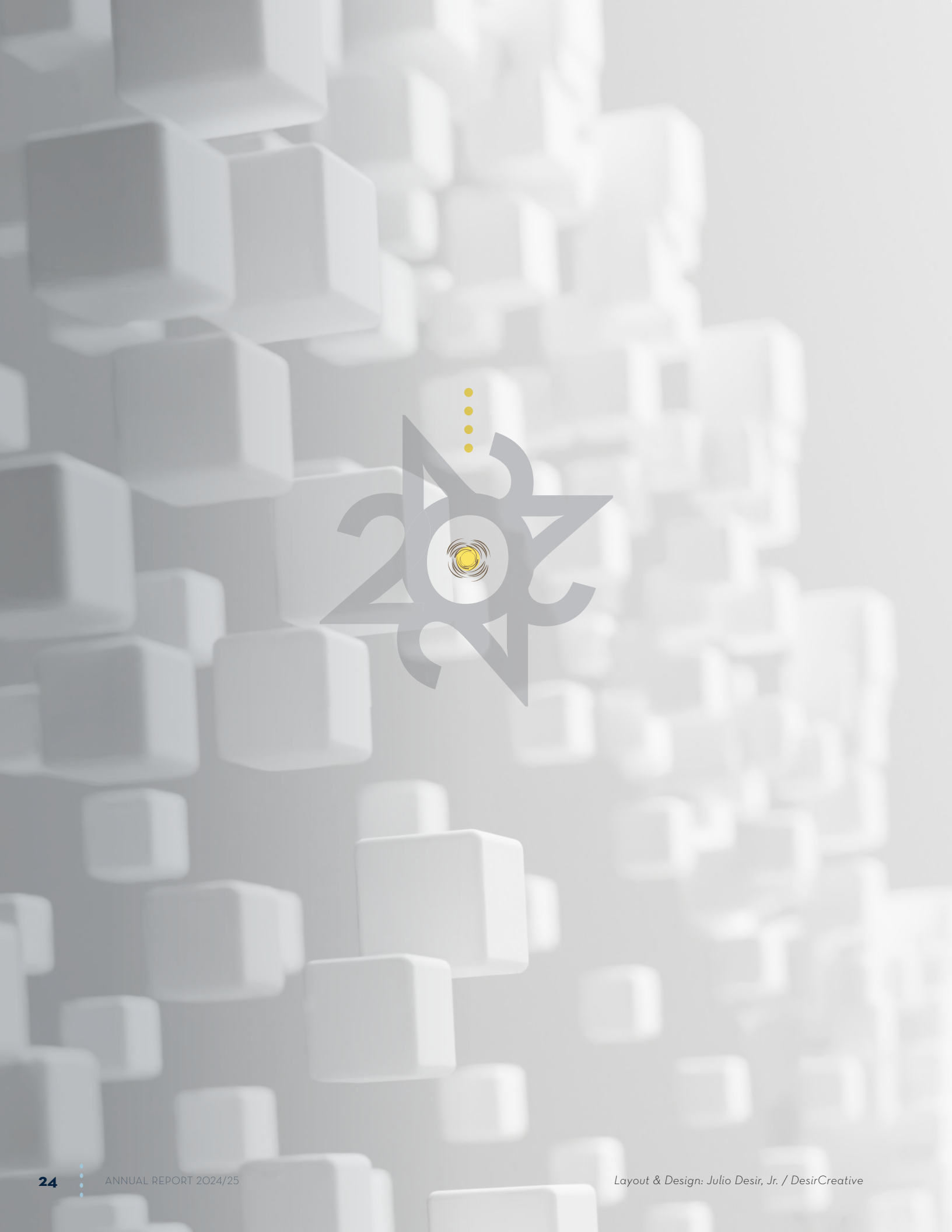


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Zakir Hussain




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