

# AMOC

AMERICAN MODERN OPERA COMPANY  
2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



*"...revitalizing what American music theater can mean with  
several of our most revolutionary young talents"*  
/ The Los Angeles Times



We are thrilled, on behalf of the Board of Directors and artists of AMOC, to have this chance to share highlights from our 2019-2020 season.

It's been a year. Amidst the uncertainty, fear, and loss, we are fortunate and proud to have found new ways of collaborating across continents, from New Zealand to Germany, and engaging with our audiences both in person and online. This time of building and sharing would not be possible without your continued support in all its forms, and it is such generosity and care that gives us hope for a more safe and just world.

We hope you enjoy revisiting our moments of gathering 'in the old style' and learning about some new initiatives as we forge ahead, together.

With very best wishes,

Matthew Aucoin and Zack Winokur / Artistic Directors  
Jennifer Chen / Managing Director



# AMOC\*

## AMERICAN MODERN OPERA COMPANY

**AMOC's mission is to build and share a body of collaborative work.**

We are a group of dancers, singers, musicians, writers, directors, composers, choreographers, and producers.

- \* We pool all our resources to tell stories in the clearest and most compelling way.
- \* We are united by a core set of values and collaborate at every stage, from proposal to performance.
- \* We shape-shift to make a wide breadth of ambitious work possible and create new paths that connect artists and audiences in surprising and visceral ways.

*Why is AMOC called an opera company?*

For 400 years, opera has brought different artistic disciplines together into a single piece of work. Opera is a template for collaboration, and we engage with it as an approach rather than a form.

[www.runningamoc.org](http://www.runningamoc.org)

## THE COMPANY

### ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

MATTHEW AUCOIN, composer, conductor, pianist  
ZACK WINOKUR, director, choreographer, dancer

### MANAGING DIRECTOR

JENNIFER CHEN

### PRODUCER

CATH BRITTAN

### CORE ENSEMBLE

JONNY ALLEN, percussionist  
PAUL APPLEBY, tenor  
DOUG BALLIETT, double bassist, composer  
JULIA BULLOCK, soprano  
JAY CAMPBELL, cellist  
ANTHONY ROTH COSTANZO, countertenor  
MIRANDA CUCKSON, violinist, violist  
JULIA EICHTEN, dancer, choreographer  
EMI FERGUSON, flutist  
KEIR GOGWILT, violinist, writer  
CONOR HANICK, pianist  
COLEMAN ITZKOFF, cellist  
OR SCHRAIBER, dancer, choreographer  
BOBBI JENE SMITH, dancer, choreographer  
DAVÓNE TINES, bass-baritone

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KATHY SCHUMAN, president  
MARTA MILLER, vice president  
MATTHEW BIRD, treasurer  
ADAM CHARLAP HYMAN, secretary  
STEPHEN A. NOVICK



## **VEILS FOR DESIRE**

**July 25, 2019 / Caramoor, Katonah, NY**

**July 26, 2019 / Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY**

*AMOC artists Anthony Roth Costanzo, Paul Appleby, and Matthew Aucoin were joined by celebrated poet and scholar Wayne Koestenbaum in an inventive new recital program: a gathering of music that “veils” or transforms unspeakable desires into new, mysterious forms. The program included music by Monteverdi, Aucoin, and Benjamin Britten, woven together with playful, multi-layered texts written by Koestenbaum for the occasion.*

## **AMOC AT THE CLARK / August 25, 2019**

**Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA**

*AMOC returned to the Clark Art Institute for its second annual afternoon of free performances across the museum’s bucolic campus.*

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## **A STARLING RECITAL at Thomas Schütte’s CRYSTAL**

*This intimate program featured AMOC violinist Keir GoGwilt and guest bassist Kyle Motl in an array of baroque, folk, and improvised music, variously composed, transcribed, ornamented, and re-composed by Johann Paul von Westhoff, Dick Gaughan, Motl, and GoGwilt. A running theme of the recital was Christopher GoGwilt’s ‘starling’ poetry form - a template of 27 words that lends itself to musical iteration and re-iteration.*



## **AMOC AT THE CLARK (cont’d)**

### ***NINE BELLS on the Ando Terrace***

*AMOC artists animated the Clark landscape with a vast sound and movement journey, from Henry Purcell’s ethereal “Dido’s Lament” to the visceral and spatialized music of Iannis Xenakis and Tom Johnson. This hour-long extravaganza featured violinist Miranda Cuckson, cellist Coleman Itzkoff, percussionist Jonny Allen, countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, and dancers/choreographers Julia Eichten and Zack Winokur.*

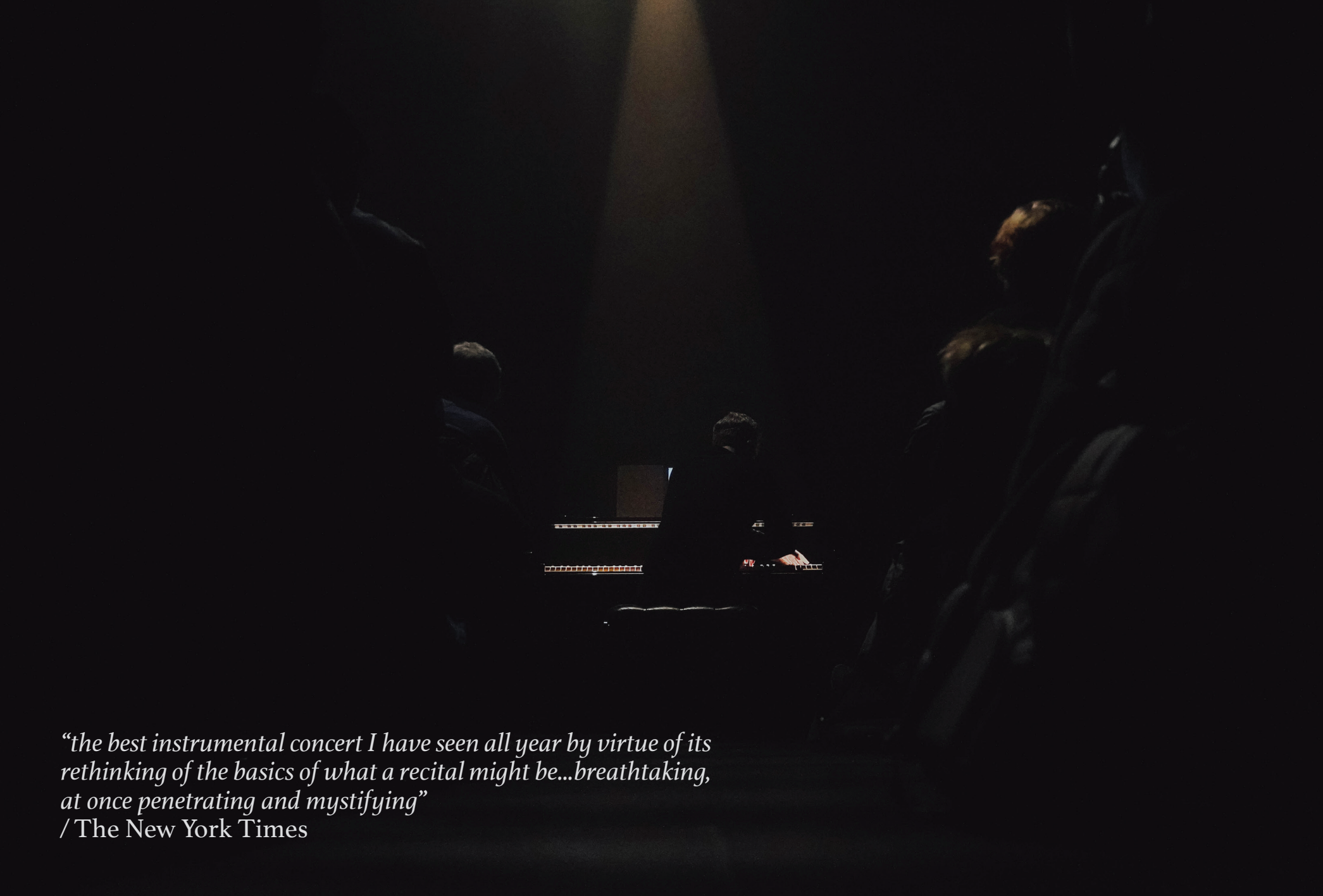
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### **AMOC IN CONCERT**

JONNY ALLEN, percussionist  
MATTHEW AUCOIN, pianist  
MIRANDA CUCKSON, violinist  
KEIR GOGWILT, violinist  
COLEMAN ITZKOFF, cellist

*The afternoon’s marathon of performances concluded with an intimate concert existing at the edge of silence. This reflective hour of music included works by Frederic Rzewski, Salvatore Sciarrino, and Monteverdi, among others.*





*“the best instrumental concert I have seen all year by virtue of its rethinking of the basics of what a recital might be...breathtaking, at once penetrating and mystifying”*  
/ The New York Times

***RUN AMOC! FESTIVAL / December 13-14, 2019***  
***American Repertory Theater, Cambridge, MA***

*AMOC returned for its third annual Run AMOC! Festival at the American Repertory Theater with three critically-acclaimed original productions.*

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***CAGE / December 13 & 14, 2019***  
***Loeb Experimental Theater***

Music by JOHN CAGE  
Conceived by ZACK WINOKUR and CONOR HANICK

CONOR HANICK, piano  
JULIA EICHTEN, dance & choreography

*CAGE* sees Conor Hanick perform the entirety of John Cage’s epochal Sonatas and Interludes, a hugely influential set of pieces inspired by Indian philosophy and written for prepared piano. Directed by Zack Winokur and featuring dancer-choreographer Julia Eichten, this radically intimate experience is a Cageian collaboration between otherworldly pianistic expression, light, and dance.







**RUN AMOC! FESTIVAL / December 13-14, 2019**  
**American Repertory Theater, Cambridge, MA**


**EL CIMARRÓN / December 13, 2019**  
**Farkas Hall**

Music by HANS WERNER HENZE  
Libretto by HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER  
based on the autobiography of ESTEBAN MONTEJO  
as related to Miguel Barnet

DAVÓNE TINES, bass-baritone  
EMI FERGUSON, flute  
JONNY ALLEN, percussion  
JORDAN DODSON, guitar

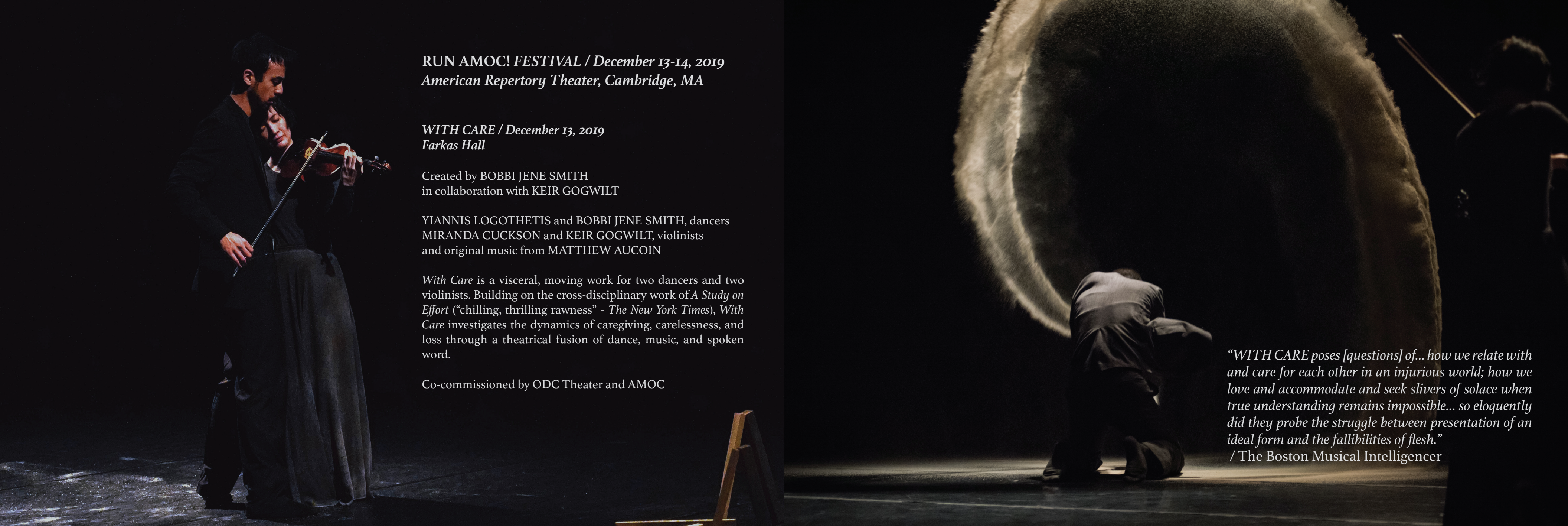
ZACK WINOKUR, director  
JOHN TORRES, lighting designer  
CARLOS SOTO, costume designer  
CATH BRITTAN, producer

Hans Werner Henze's *El Cimarrón (The Runaway Slave)* is a tour-de-force sonic onslaught based on the oral autobiography of Esteban Montejo, an enslaved Afro-Cuban who escaped bondage on a sugar plantation, survived in the jungle, fought for Cuban independence from Spain, and lived to tell about it all before dying at the age of 113. Henze's visceral score is a cry for freedom that transcends time and place.



*“spellbinding... a true ensemble performance”*  
/ Financial Times





**RUN AMOC! FESTIVAL / December 13-14, 2019**  
*American Repertory Theater, Cambridge, MA*

**WITH CARE / December 13, 2019**  
*Farkas Hall*

Created by BOBBI JENE SMITH  
in collaboration with KEIR GOGWILT

YIANNIS LOGOTHETIS and BOBBI JENE SMITH, dancers  
MIRANDA CUCKSON and KEIR GOGWILT, violinists  
and original music from MATTHEW AUCOIN

*With Care* is a visceral, moving work for two dancers and two violinists. Building on the cross-disciplinary work of *A Study on Effort* ("chilling, thrilling rawness" - *The New York Times*), *With Care* investigates the dynamics of caregiving, carelessness, and loss through a theatrical fusion of dance, music, and spoken word.

Co-commissioned by ODC Theater and AMOC

*"WITH CARE poses [questions] of... how we relate with and care for each other in an injurious world; how we love and accommodate and seek slivers of solace when true understanding remains impossible... so eloquently did they probe the struggle between presentation of an ideal form and the fallibilities of flesh."*  
/ The Boston Musical Intelligencer



# A SINGLE POINT OF VIEW

*This summer, the Company dedicated significant time to cohering around a set of values that guide our choices, programming, and art making.*

## ***PARTNERSHIP***

We recognize the limits of our knowledge, and because of this, we value relationships and collaborations with artists and other partners outside the company. When we engage with outside partners, we respect their contributions and welcome them fully into the creative process.

## ***APPROACH TO AUDIENCE***

We believe that the context in which an audience experiences a work is as important as that work's content, and so we strive to create pathways to entry for our work.

## ***SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS***

We ask what the intended outcome is of each work that we create as a company. We come to a consensus that the work at hand does not harm, and that it communicates clearly.

## ***SUSTAINABILITY***

We are a company that is generative and re-generative in its core values, creative process, and membership, and that strives to nurture, create, document, and reflect on a body of work.

## ***FELLOWSHIP***

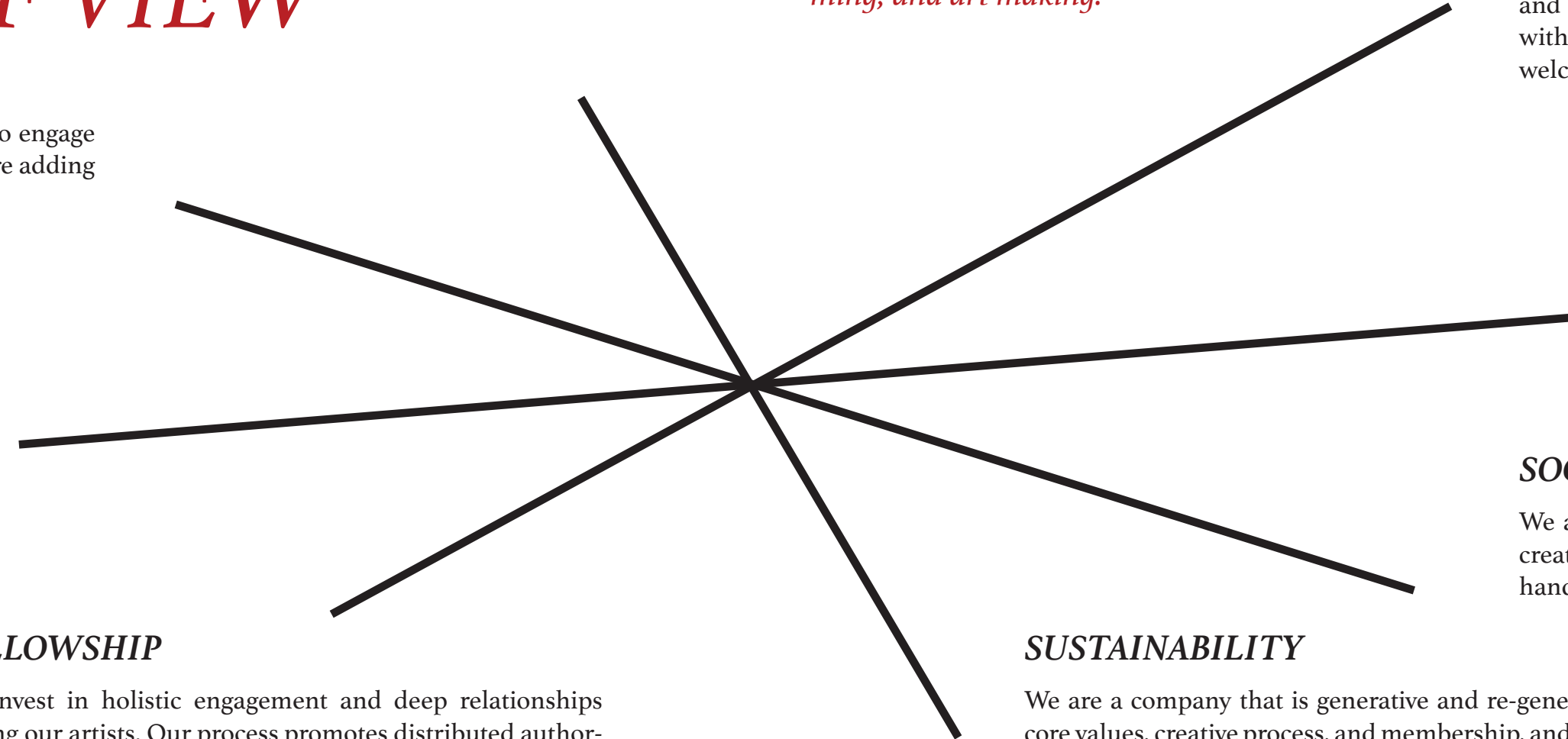
We invest in holistic engagement and deep relationships among our artists. Our process promotes distributed authorship and varied forms of engagement across all artists and disciplines.

## ***NEW WORK***

We focus on the creation of new work. When we do engage with a canon of existing works, we ensure that we are adding new dimensions and perspectives to it.

## ***POWER IN THE COLLECTIVE***

We value the artistic agency and individual contributions of every company member, and we create work that is explicitly made possible by the multi-disciplinary perspectives and accumulated learning we have fostered as a company. When a given project requires a hierarchical structure (i.e., a director, conductor, or project leader), we examine that structure and make sure it is being deployed appropriately for the project at hand.







*AMOC AT THE RESNICK PASSLOF  
FOUNDATION / January 11, 2020  
New York, NY*

*featuring*  
MIRANDA CUCKSON, violin  
COLEMAN ITZKOFF, cello  
EMI FERGUSON, flute  
JONNY ALLEN, percussion  
CONOR HANICK, piano

*AMOC kicked off the new decade with an adventurous program presented at the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation. A quintet of musicians performed music ranging from Charles Ives's canonical Piano Trio to newer pieces by Scott Wollschleger and Rob Honstein. The program also featured a brand-new arrangement by Emi Ferguson of Matthew Aucoin's piano études, created specifically for AMOC's musicians.*

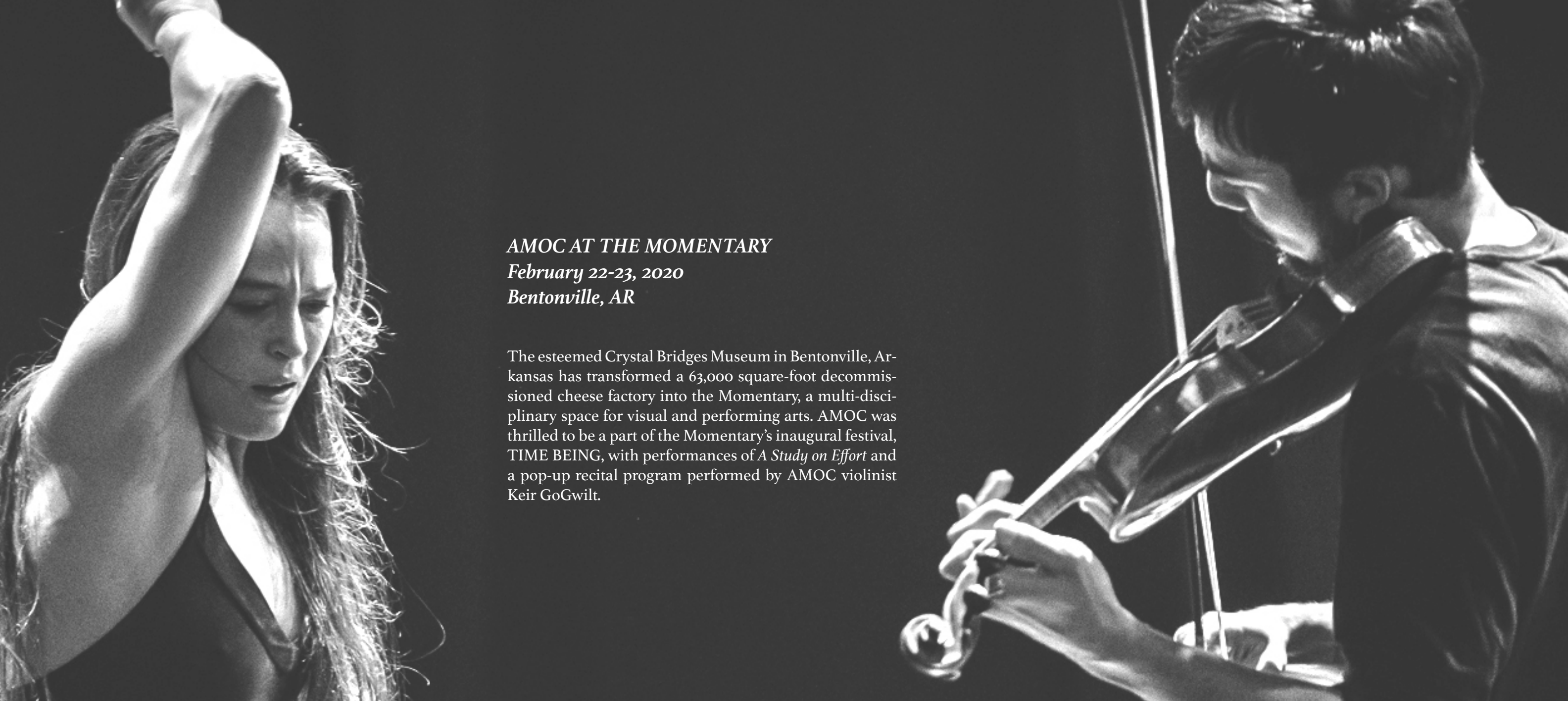
*AMOC AT UNION COLLEGE / January 26, 2020  
Schenectady, NY*

*featuring*  
PAUL APPLEBY, tenor  
MIRANDA CUCKSON, violin  
COLEMAN ITZKOFF, cello  
CONOR HANICK, piano

*AMOC joined the Capital Classical Concerts season with a program of chamber music performed in Union College's historic Memorial Chapel. An AMOC quartet performed a program featuring Matthew Aucoin's Merrill Songs for tenor and piano, as well as arrangements of Berg's Seven Early Songs by AMOC violinist and writer Keir GoGwilt.*







## ***AMOC AT THE MOMENTARY***

***February 22-23, 2020***

***Bentonville, AR***

The esteemed Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas has transformed a 63,000 square-foot decommissioned cheese factory into the Momentary, a multi-disciplinary space for visual and performing arts. AMOC was thrilled to be a part of the Momentary's inaugural festival, TIME BEING, with performances of *A Study on Effort* and a pop-up recital program performed by AMOC violinist Keir GoGwilt.

## ***A STUDY ON EFFORT***

***February 22, 2020***

Created by BOBBI JENE SMITH in collaboration with KEIR GOGWILT

BOBBI JENE SMITH, dancer  
KEIR GOGWILT, violinist

*A Study on Effort* explores connections between sound, body, and duration. An hour-long dialogue between dancer Bobbi Jene Smith and violinist Keir GoGwilt, the piece transposes different physical and emotional tasks between music and movement. Efforts are supported and transformed in the exchange between gesture and sound, finding pleasure at the boundaries of the two artistic disciplines.

## ***KEIR GOGWILT IN RECITAL***

***February 22 & 23, 2020***

AMOC violinist Keir GoGwilt performed two free, pop-up recitals in the Momentary's Interior Tower. Included were works by J.S. Bach and Celeste Oram, as well as recitations of starling poems by Chris GoGwilt and Keir GoGwilt.



## ***NEW PROGRAMS FOR A NEW TIME***

### ***VIRTUAL DANCE CLASSES WITH BOBBI JENE SMITH AND OR SCHRAIBER / March 27 - April 24, 2020***

*Over the span of a month, Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber led four virtual classes for over 1,000 participants across the globe, teaching material from their works *With Care* and *Lost Mountain*, and offering a Q&A about their process and time in quarantine.*

### ***AMOC ESTABLISHES PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM***

*In response to the unexpected loss of income and time together, and made possible by a generous gift from Patricia and Bill O'Connor, AMOC established a Project Grant Program in April 2020, which provides \$500 seed grants to AMOC artists and their collaborators as they explore and develop new ideas at an early stage. By the end of June, AMOC had supported nine artists participating in five projects. We're thrilled to now have an enduring system in place for appropriately compensating the critical work that is necessary for graduating an idea into something that can be shared with audiences.*

### ***AMOC PARTICIPATES IN THE PROJECT: MUSIC HEALS US 'VITAL SOUNDS' INITIATIVE***

*This spring, AMOC company members Matthew Aucoin, Keir GoGwilt, Miranda Cuckson, Coleman Itzkoff, Doug Balliett, Emi Ferguson, and Paul Appleby participated in 15 one-on-one concerts via video livestream platforms to patients hospitalized with COVID-19 across the US in collaboration with the organization Project: Music Heals Us. We are honored to be a part of PMHU's 'Vital Sounds Partnership Grants' initiative, which will provide funding for eight arts organizations and ensembles to bring over 6,000 hours of music throughout the next year for patients and staff at hospitals and in-patient health centers across the country.*





*Excerpt from The New Peripatetics*

*A profile in CULTURED Magazine by Emma McCormick-Goodhart*

*March 20, 2020*

Mid-August dusk on a mountainside in Stamford, rural Vermont, contoured by cascades of apple trees, blueberry bushes, natural ponds and open fields. Henry Purcell's incantatory "The Cold Song" from his 1691 opera, King Arthur, punctuates the air through barn walls. Soon, artists trickle out from this sound source towards the farmhouse, edging to dinner, some with pages of Rosalind Krauss's seminal 1979 text, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in hand. Preparations are already deep underway for a multi-course feast of foods grown and raised on the mountainside: a nightly occurrence. Artists take their places around the long wooden table. Before dessert, musicians erupt, unannounced, into offerings of shared sonic nourishment. Then a pitch-dark plunge instigated by dancers into a well water pool; an ensuring shot of whisky to warm. All this, an archetypal day's menu to be echoed and riffed upon in the ensuing days.

"Utopia," "absolute space," and "air" are among the words these artists use to evoke their stints here, built upon alchemies of action that echo the ethos of Black Mountain College. Named "Certain Bird," dancer Marta Miller's home, a former llama farm whose barns have morphed into sites for rehearsal (and impromptu performances), has become an incubator for a three-year-old—and already acclaimed—tribe of itinerant, category-confusing dancers, singers, and instrumentalists known as AMOC (shorthand for the American Modern Opera Company), who converge here for a month every summer to play, read, produce and perform work, hone their process and, ultimately, be.







## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

### FOUNDERS CIRCLE

*AMOC gratefully acknowledges the supporters who donated \$10,000+ in its inaugural year:*

Susan Baker & Michael Lynch  
Bay Family Foundation  
Lois Conway Foundation Fund  
The Kovner Foundation  
William and Helen Little Family Foundation  
Barbara Goldstein and Margot Falkner  
Ellen Marcus / The James S. Marcus Foundation  
The Steve Novick Charitable Gift Fund  
David Parker  
Schutzer Family Charitable Trust  
Howard and Sarah D. Solomon Foundation  
Elizabeth Tunick  
Robert L. Turner / The RLT Foundation





## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

### \$50,000+

The Kovner Foundation  
Ellen Marcus / The James S. Marcus Foundation  
Bill & Patricia O'Connor  
Howard and Sarah D. Solomon Foundation

### \$20,000 - \$49,999

Matthew Aucoin  
Mogens Bay / Bay Family Foundation  
Kaori Kitao  
William and Helen Little Family Foundation  
The Steve Novick Charitable Gift Fund  
Robert L. Turner / The RLT Foundation

### \$10,000 - \$19,999

Susan Baker & Michael Lynch  
Philippe Bigot  
Lois Conway  
Edythe Gladstein  
Barbara Goldstein & Margot Falkner  
David Parker  
Kathy Schuman  
Carol & Richard Seltzer  
Shutzer Family Charitable Trust  
Elizabeth Tunick  
Anonymous (1)

### \$1,000 - \$9,999

Norman Benzaquen  
Matthew Bird  
Gracie Brown  
Paul Buttenwieser  
Adam Charlap Hyman  
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Deborah & Estia Eichten  
Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman Venture Fund  
for Opera  
Stephanie French & Armand Bartos  
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Graham Parker  
Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation  
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Ann Teixeira  
Peter Wender  
Judy Zankel  
Anonymous (1)

### \$0 - \$999

Samuel Adams & Moises Fernández Vía  
Dennis Boutsikaris  
Gordon Brodfuhrer  
Noreen Buckfire  
Jan Constantine  
Bruce Creditor  
Pamela Drexel  
Bridget Haile  
Stephen Haskell & David Stark  
James Kaddaras  
Kenneth Kanter  
Faina Kofman  
Karen Leopardi  
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Meredith Rubin  
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Katie Schick  
Ellen Schon  
Nancy Schon  
Jill Steinberg  
Ann Teixeira  
George Venson  
Martha & Jeff Winokur  
Lisa Wong & Lynn Chang  
Sidney Worthen

*Lifetime giving as of August 27, 2020*







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