



GROTON HILL  
MUSIC CENTER



REPORT OF GIVING AND IMPACT 2023



**“Groton Hill is clearly a labor of love, you can feel it. It is a monument to the musical arts. I’m making sure to support this place.”**

**- CONCERTGOER, LEOMINSTER**

## Greetings, Friends of Groton Hill Music

Well, we’re doing this! What an achievement in 10 jam-packed months that comprised FY23! We opened up a brand new music education and performance center, with an even more fervent commitment to serving the needs of our expanding community. Educationally, this translated into enrolling 1,726 students in our music school, hosting 175 recitals, creating 10 new ensembles and classes and 11 new summer programs, and giving \$57,200 in need-based scholarships. Not to mention large-scale free class and lesson days and free concerts, all open to the community.

Groton Hill was abuzz with a wide variety of professional performances every week, starting in October last year. We presented 54 concerts, many of which were sell-outs, attracting nearly 25,000 enthusiastic attendees from over 500 cities and towns across New England.

Outside our walls, we increased by 180% the number of students we serve each week throughout the year in Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner, Lowell, Clinton, and Lawrence. One of our teachers who works with Lowell band students, said, “This has been the thrill of a lifetime. The kids come in not knowing how to hold an instrument to learning to play Beethoven and concert marches. It’s a phenomenal partnership all around.”

Over 675 generous people donated to our Annual Fund, which was an amazing 45% increase over FY22; 320 of these were brand new donors! Volunteers play a critical role in our operations and we have been fortunate to work with an extremely committed, warm, and welcoming group of volunteers (200 and growing) who care about Groton Hill Music as much as we do.

Beyond showing the impact of our work, this report lists the hundreds of you who share our belief that music connects us all, uplifts us in countless ways, and softens life’s hard edges. We are bonded when we play together, experience a live performance together, or support students in regional schools. There’s nothing like music to create a profound sense of community. And we are deeply grateful for your generosity so that we may continue to offer life-changing opportunities to all.

With enormous thanks and excitement for Year Two!



Lisa Fiorentino  
Chief Executive Officer



Simon Jones  
Board Chair

## Teaching's many rewards — at Groton Hill and in the community

"I feel so happy teaching at Groton Hill," says Peter Hughes, who has been on the Groton Hill Music School strings faculty for two years. He notes, "There are many more elementary school students taking violin than anywhere else I have worked, which means I can really give them a foundation. As a result, I feel a brand new sense of purpose in my teaching." Peter's studio recital in June was one of the proudest moments of his 20-year teaching career.

Peter also teaches in Fitchburg's Memorial and Longsjo middle schools as part of Groton Hill's partnership with that district, providing free lessons and ensemble coaching to students. "There's a network of people at Groton Hill and in the schools who care about this music program. To a large extent that is a big part of why it has been such a success."

This year Groton Hill brought two exciting music experiences to Fitchburg students. Musicians from the iconic Boston strings ensemble A Far Cry visited their school and worked with them individually on an advanced piece they were learning. The musicians then played a duet for them.

Later in the spring, the students joined others from Lowell middle schools and the Groton Hill Youth Orchestra, when world-renowned Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and cellist Natalie Haas conducted an amazing afternoon workshop. The students learned a song by ear and, that evening, played on our world-class Concert Hall stage as part of Alasdair and Natalie's performance! Peter was awed, "That was something I could never have dreamed was even possible and, yet, there it was."



Through that experience, Peter says, "I learned to be more of a leader myself. Because of the diversity of skill level and learning styles and because there was a concert with serious work, I needed to figure out how to reach everyone and bring the kids together." He especially appreciated Laura Altendor, our Manager of Community Engagement and experienced classroom teacher, who gave him valuable coaching.

***"You trust us teachers to do what we need to do. So many times I got the encouragement that I needed. You have to think on your feet, be creative, and you can't give up!"***

- PETER HUGHES, GROTON HILL STRING TEACHER

## Performances at Groton Hill Music

Since our opening night in October 2022, Groton Hill has presented 54 professional concerts in our two world-class concert halls, serving 24,330 patrons from over 500 communities. We maintain a commitment to presenting a diversity of exceptional artists—both renowned and emerging—in a wide variety of genres.



### Clockwise from left:

Singer/songwriter **Lori McKenna** has traveled the world, won awards, written smash hits, and thrilled Groton Hill audiences TWICE in our first year.

**Leslie Odom Jr.** packed the hall with fans for one of our favorite shows of the season.

**Cellist Mike Block and balafonist Balla Kouyaté** gave our Meadow Hall audience the gift of energizing global dance.

The **Vista Philharmonic Orchestra** explored new sonic possibilities and configurations—including with chorus—in their new home.

Harpist **Maeve Gilchrist's** lively storytelling and boundary-pushing playing is inspiring a new generation of Celtic fans.

Composer **Kevin Harris** brought James Baldwin's voice and messages of hope to life during our Juneteenth celebration.



*“We are so excited about the growth our orchestra is experiencing as we reinvent our sound in this new space.”*

– VISTA PHILHARMONIC MUSICIAN

## Meet Our CEO!

You may have seen Lisa Fiorentino, Groton Hill's CEO, in action: greeting concertgoers and school families, enthusiastically welcoming you from the stage, attending concerts and events, appearing as a keynote speaker at a business event, or hosting a building tour. She makes leading Groton Hill Music look effortless. What you may not see is her strategic input into every major programmatic, educational, financial, communications,

and operational decision of this world-class facility. And the way she maintains a warm, welcoming organizational culture, fair and inclusive policies, and a bold, but flexible, long-term vision. Lisa is quick to emphasize that the success of this ambitious venture is due to "a large group of incredibly talented, hard-working people, bolstered by a community of people who love this organization—it's a wonderful thing."



Armed with a business degree and MBA, Lisa started her career in tech and was a key player in bringing NETSCOUT public in 1999. She joined Groton Hill Music in 2008. When she talks about Groton Hill, she says, "We're a mission-driven organization that operates like a business. We enhance the quality of life for those we serve while also being responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We strategically evaluate each opportunity, decide the best course of action, then move the organization in that direction—all while remaining nimble so that if something happens, we figure out how to adjust and do the best we can."

***"Thank you for inviting us to Groton Hill. You've opened up a whole new world for us!"*** - B.R., ORCHESTRA CONCERTGOER, MAYNARD

When she speaks of Groton Hill's new building, Lisa is humbled. "We have a responsibility with this incredible gift, and I don't take that lightly," she says. "We have to make sure we do everything we can do to support the community." That means providing free concerts and events, community partnerships, and scholarships; supporting populations who are underserved; making sure surrounding towns and businesses benefit from our presence in the region, and more.

"When I was in the corporate world," she reflects, "I didn't feel like I was making a difference in people's lives. But here, every day, I see people just lighting up. Whether it's a student who's learning to play, or the musicians themselves, or a concertgoer, or a senior who's coming in for a concert, what we do here changes lives. I'm so grateful to be a part of it."

## Volunteers are happy to help!



The growth of our volunteer program since last September has been tremendous, with numbers soaring from 21 to 200! Folks of all ages and backgrounds are finding camaraderie, community, and connections as volunteer greeters, ushers, and parking guides. They are helping thousands of visitors find their way to exceptional music experiences at Groton Hill.

***“When I’m volunteering at Groton Hill I really feel part of a team, of something special. Giving back this way feels great!”*** – RICH L., TYNGSBORO, MA

Volunteers Doran and Jacki Dibble of Westford (*above*) came on board this year. “We both get something wonderful out of different kinds of music. We are recent retirees and the stars were aligned,” said Doran. Jacki added, “It’s fun to do this as a couple...it’s almost like a date night!”

Doran likes “doing my share for the greater good.” He personally experienced the transformative power of music while bringing senior patrons to Groton Hill Bach’s Lunch concerts. Jacki and Doran both took voice lessons at Groton Hill and attended concerts. “I love the venue and how happy and excited people are when they come for a concert, and how grateful they are when they leave.”

If you are interested in learning more, visit [grotonhill.org/volunteer/](http://grotonhill.org/volunteer/) to submit an inquiry.

## Facts and Figures

This was a year of tremendous growth and opportunity, compared with FY22.



*"I have always felt that being a 'servant leader' was most helpful in my success, but it's really OUR success! It was all of us!"*

- SUSAN RANDAZZO



## Farewell to a Founder

After 48 years of steadfast dedication, Susan Randazzo—a founding Groton Hill staff member, cellist, and former Executive Director—has taken her leave. On June 7th, 160 of Susan's longtime friends, business associates, and colleagues gathered in Groton Hill's Skyview Room to honor her legacy and storied career. "I kind of grew up through the organization," she says, "first teaching, then managing the Orchestra, serving as Director of Performance, and then being named Executive Director in 2001."

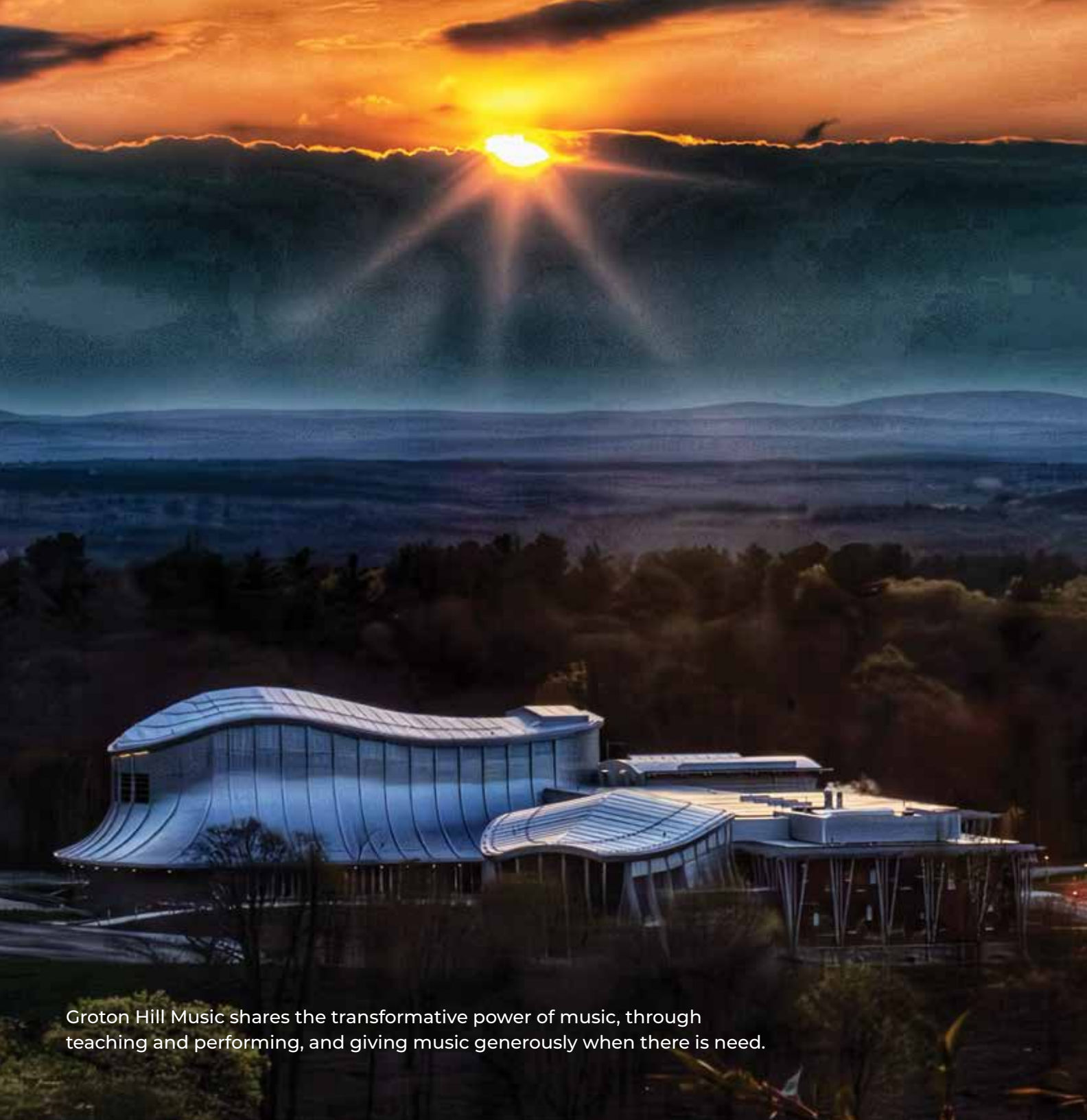
Susan recalls that the most defining moment for Indian Hill/Groton Hill was "sitting in a donor's office in a meeting in 2014 and having a grand vision articulated... and then

understanding that the vision could become reality. That was a spine-tingling moment – and an articulation of what the founders saw as possible all those years ago."

Looking ahead to the future, Susan says, "I'm not disappearing! I'm going to keep playing in the Orchestra and coming to concerts." She leaves her life's work with a strong sense of pride and gratitude for the countless people who helped shape Groton Hill over the years: "We all should be really proud of the fact that the essential core mission and values of our organization have endured from the very beginning. It has been the honor and privilege of a lifetime to know you all and to be a part of this extraordinary and unlikely story."

### DONATIONS IN HONOR OF SUSAN RANDAZZO

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For a copy of our full audited  
financial statements, please contact  
finance@grotonhill.org.

Design and printing of this Report  
generously supported by

**Curry Printing**



**DESIGN:**

Mary-Lynne Bohn/Accent Design

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Karen Riggert (Lisa Fiorentino, pg. 2)  
Steve Lieman (Kevin Harris, pg. 4)  
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Groton Hill Music shares the transformative power of music, through  
teaching and performing, and giving music generously when there is need.