We were thrilled to connect with our youth audiences and young musicians in-person through live performances at Kleinhans, concerts in the community, musicians working with students in the schools, and special events.

- **Music for Youth Concerts**, including Carnegie Hall’s Link Up, serving 7,195 patrons
- **BPO Kids Family Series** presented virtually and in person, including a bilingual concert presentation and newly created BPO Little Kids event for children ages 0-5
- **Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts** students received mentoring from BPO musicians, culminating in a collaborative performance
- **Community Spotlight** series featured 188 student performers
- **Symphony Hall Pass** program served 55 high school students across 30 schools
- **Summit Center Residency** provided music workshops for students with autism
- **Say Yes Saturday Academies** hosted Hispanic Heritage string quartet presentations
- **Teaching Artist** program served 2,790 students
- **Celebration of Music Education** event welcomed over 100 music educators

**New Pilot Programs**

Three new pilot programs were started in collaboration with school and community partners who share our goals of promoting access, equity, and connection across differences.

- **Building Musical Bridges** connected 3rd grade students at Ellicott Elementary and Buffalo Public School #45 International School in shared musical experiences
- **Buffalo String Works** partnership connected young string players with BPO musicians and guest artists through presentations, private lessons, and concert experiences
- **Omega Mentoring Program, Inc.** partnership with Shea’s Performing Arts Center and the BPO expanded access to arts experiences for youth in East Buffalo

**Digital Resources**

The BPO continued to add digital content and opportunities for learning inspiration, creating a robust library of resources designed for our WNY community.

- **Music for Youth Education Hub** was expanded to include additional video content and 2 full virtual youth concert programs, reaching approximately 29,000 students, teachers, and community members across all 8 counties of WNY with online resources
- **#PlayOnWNY** instrument video series led to the launch of **#SingOnWNY** for vocal students, with a combined 85 videos for 25,500 views
- **West Side Connection** program ran virtually in a video series highlighting *Dances Around the World*, and featured the 2021 Sphinx Competition Junior Division winner, violinist Amaryn Olmeda
A Year of Creativity and New Beginnings

The BPO’s 21-22 season was certainly one of renewal as we all emerged from the earliest days of the pandemic and we began our return to work and activities. Audiences came back to the Hall under gradually lessening health safety restrictions and the orchestra expanded back to its full complement of musicians on the stage.

However, this return to in-person performances was delayed for our school children, more so than our regular audiences. Many schools continued to limit their field trip activities while they focused on student health safety and mitigating learning loss. Despite this, we were able to bring 25 schools back to Kleinhans for several special youth concert events and select BPO concerts. Our family concert series remained digital until the spring, when we were able to host three fantastic in-person events for our youngest listeners, including a new event for children under 5 with their caregivers that surpassed our attendance expectations!

Last year, the BPO’s response to the pandemic included creative solutions and program creation in the digital realm, including the Music for Youth Education Hub, #PlayOnWNY and virtual Teaching Artist visits into schools. This year, these programs were continued and new content was added. But also, the BPO used this year to take some creative risks by starting three pilot programs to address equity of access to music education, support of a diverse pipeline of musicians, and connection across different demographics using music. Inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA) is interwoven with our education and community engagement initiatives, and this unusual year allowed us to experiment with new projects that directly address these values. For a full picture of our goals and strategies in IDEA, please see bpo.org/idea.

21-22 Impact

Estimated 45,700 served

In-Person Events
7,195 education patrons

New Pilot Programs
3 programs
312 students

Digital Resources
135 videos
38,200 served
In-Person Events

Whether it was through live performances at Kleinhans, concerts in the community, musicians working with students in the schools, or special events, we were thrilled to connect with some of our youth audiences and young musicians in-person again this year.

Music for Youth Concerts

In-person youth concerts this year were very much in a “wait and see” mode until mid-spring when we were able to confidently make plans with a handful of districts.

On March 9th, 2022, almost exactly two years after our last live youth concert, we were able to welcome the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders from Amherst’s Smallwood and Windermere Elementaries to Kleinhans. The students sang along with the BPO in Carnegie Hall’s Link Up program called *The Orchestra Sings*. 650 students participated in the program and roughly 400 family members came to enjoy the concert. It was a joyful return of young people to the Hall!

On April 5th the BPO performed the youth concert *The Orchestra at Work* for all of Williamsville district’s 1st-4th graders. 1,377 students and 90 adults traveled from Country Parkway, Dodge, Forest, Heim, Maple East and Maple West Elementaries and it was a wonderful sight to see almost 40 buses filling the parking lot of Kleinhans once again!

On May 24th, the BPO traveled south to Olean High School once again to perform for students from the Southern Tier in a longstanding partnership with Cattaraugus Allegany BOCES. 1,400 1st-4th grade students from Franklinville, Olean, Hinsdale, Scio and Wellsville enjoyed one of two performances of *The Orchestra at Work* youth concert. This is the 15th year of this partnership which allows the BPO to serve students from our neighboring rural counties.

In addition to these special performances, we also welcomed 519 attendees from 12 schools at a variety of regular BPO concerts throughout the season.

All in all, we served 4,436 students, parents, and community members with in-person concert experiences during this unusual year. We look forward to regaining a more robust youth concert schedule next season.
BPO Kids Family Series

We began our BPO Kids family series concerts virtually, capturing both the Symphonic Spooktacular Halloween themed concert and our annual holiday Jingle Bell Jam for digital release. The two videos had a combined 1,200 views during their limited releases. Happily, in February we were able to perform *Tales From the Movies* to a small but appreciative audience of 474 people.

In April, we presented our first ever BPO Little Kids event, which was an incredible success. The casual event welcomed children five and under with their caregivers to participate in hands-on musical activities and enjoy short musical presentations from five BPO musicians. These included Exploring Percussion with Mark Hodges, String Sensations with violinist Diana Sachs, Meet the Oboe with Henry Ward, Musical Storytelling with French hornist Sheryl Hadeka and Conducting with Associate Conductor Jaman Dunn. Activities were provided by our community partners and included arts & crafts, drum circles, dancing, making instruments and a mini Instrument Zoo, all thanks to Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo and Erie County Libraries, Little Buffalo, Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo Suzuki Strings, and Monkey See, Monkey Do… Children’s Bookstore. 522 people filled Mary Seaton Room for the experience!

The final BPO Kids concert of the season was a bilingual presentation, Peter & the Wolf/Pedro y el Lobo. This was also a big success, bringing in 838 patrons. Local performer Victoria Pérez presented this iconic tale both in English and Spanish and also led the audience in the Mexican folk song *De Colores* to round out the program.

We are fortunate to have many community partners that provide pre-concert activities for our BPO Kids concerts. This is a wonderful partnership that provides a rich experience for our patrons while giving our partners more exposure and engagement with BPO audiences. Partners this year included:

- Albright-Knox Art Gallery
- Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries
- Buffalo Museum of Science
- Buffalo Suzuki Strings
- Holiday Inn Express
- Little Buffalo
- Monkey See, Monkey Do… Children’s Bookstore

In total, our BPO Kids family series served 1,834 patrons at three live events and many more through our two virtual concerts.
Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts

Our annual side-by-side concert with the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts is an incredible opportunity for the students of BAVPA to work with and learn from the professional musicians of the BPO. Each year, BPO musicians come into the schools to work with the music students in-depth on a variety of repertoire. The project has culminated in a concert at Kleinhans Music Hall with the music students embedded in the BPO, with students from the dance, theatre and media arts programs participating in a multi-media production.

Due to vaccine requirements for performers at the BPO, we were unable to have a final performance with BPO and BAVPA musicians sitting side by side this year. However, in conversations with the administration and staff at BAVPA, we determined that one of the most important aspects of this program is the mentorship that takes place in preparing students leading up to the performance. Therefore, we developed a multi-faceted series of engagements between BPO musicians and BAVPA students to have a comparable impact on students' learning.

BPO musician coaches worked with students during in-person coaching sessions at the school throughout the spring. Two string coaches – violinist Amy Glidden and bassist Jonathan Borden, two woodwind coaches – oboist Henry Ward and bassoonist Hunter Gordon, two brass coaches – trombonist Tim Smith and French hornist Sheryl Hadeka, and percussion coach Dinesh Joseph made multiple visits to work with the instrumental students. Jaman Dunn, the BPO’s assistant conductor also made regular visits to work with the instrumental ensembles. Jaman is also a vocalist and gave coaching sessions to the vocal student ensembles as well.

In addition to these important mentoring sessions, we live streamed a BPO rehearsal at Kleinhans Music Hall conducted by Jaman, giving them a peek into the process of a professional orchestra preparing for a concert.

The months-long experience culminated in a performance at Kleinhans Music Hall on May 31st, 150 students performed pieces that they prepared with BPO coaches’ help. Collaborative components from the theatre and dance departments were also incorporated into the final concert. The performance, which took place in the Mary Seaton Room, had standing room only with about 350 people in attendance.
Community Spotlight

We were very pleased to be able to bring back our Community Spotlight pre-concert performances beginning in March of 2022. This program showcases the fantastic music programs in our community to our general BPO audience while giving the performing students a chance to also attend the BPO concert that follows, at no cost. The program provides access to the BPO for many communities that may not otherwise come to Kleinhans.

During this season, six school and community groups were able to participate, with a total of 188 performers. In addition, 225 of their friends and family members purchased discount BPO tickets as well. The participating groups included: Music Forum for Piano Teachers of WNY, Mary Handley Piano Studio, Lancaster High School Swingin’ Strings, Canisius College Chorale, Lancaster High School Concert Choir & Symphony Orchestra, and Kenmore West Saxophone Ensemble.

Symphony Hall Pass Membership

Symphony Hall Pass, formerly known as Symphony Scholars, got rebranded this year in order to make it feel more friendly and welcoming to all high school students. This program offers a pass to most BPO concerts, as well as a few meaningful behind-the-scenes events at Kleinhans. This year, we were able to invite students once again to live weekend performances. However, students who were unable to attend a BPO performance in person were able to tune in to several virtual concerts on a regular basis. We had 55 active members this year from 30 different schools across Western New York that pulled from the following districts and schools: Amherst, Buffalo, Canisius, Christian Central Academy, Clarence, Cleveland Hill, East Aurora, Eden, Grand Island, Kenmore-Tonawanda, Lancaster, Lewiston-Porter, Mount St. Mary Academy, Nardin Academy, Niagara Wheatfield, Orchard Park, Pioneer, St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute, West Seneca and Williamsville.

In the Spring, we were able to welcome a handful of members for exclusive insider access events, including an open rehearsal of our Tchaikovsky & The Mermaid concert, featuring guest violinist Augustin Hadelich. Students were able to sit in on rehearsal, meet Augustin and other BPO musicians, and attend a backstage tour of Kleinhans hosted by BPO Assistant Conductor Jaman Dunn.

Students also attended a meet and greet with guest pianist Drew Petersen in April at one of our Classics concerts.
Teaching Artists in the Schools

Our teaching artists were able to venture back into the schools this year, bringing workshops and residencies to students across Erie county. The majority of these visits were in person, but we were also able to utilize our newly developed technologies to livestream to northern Niagara county, broadening our geographic reach. A number of district and community partnerships enabled our musicians to make a great impact. These programs include:

- **Summit Center Residency for students with autism:** A new partnership kicked off in November with The Summit Academy, the educational branch of the Summit Center serving students with autism. Specialist Kate Bassett and BPO musician Anna Mattix provided music workshops for 150 students with severely limited verbal skills at both the elementary and high school level. Workshops included topics such as, “Meaning, Mood, and Movement in Music,” as well as activities focusing on auditory, kinesthetic and visual music experiences designed to promote physical engagement from students. Summit Academy students and their families also attended the BPO Kids Peter & the Wolf/Pedro y el Lobo concert on May 1st.

- **Hamburg Residency:** With support from a local family foundation, we were able to bring BPO musicians into Armor Elementary School in Hamburg, serving the 3rd-5th graders. This included introductions to the instrument families of the orchestra for 160 3rd grade students who are beginning to choose an instrument; a Science of Sound presentation for 50 4th graders; and a Music, Math & Time presentation for 63 5th graders.

- **Say Yes Saturday Academies:** In recognition and celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, a string quartet performed for students and families at two of Buffalo Public’s Spanish bilingual schools in September. Saturday Academies, run by Say Yes Buffalo, draws families to schools for enrichment activities, resources, and food on select Saturdays. The BPO quartet visited Sedita Academy #30 and Herman Badillo Academy #76, two schools on the West Side, to give a bilingual Hispanic Heritage presentation featuring music by Hispanic composers.

- **High School Musician Workshops:** High School band and orchestra programs often utilize our teaching artists for musician development. This year, young musicians at Holland High School received Woodwind, Brass & Percussion clinics for 120 high school students. Assistant conductor Jaman Dunn worked with over 100 Orchard Park students from both the Middle and High Schools, as well as 50 students at Lancaster High School.
Livestream to Niagara County: With our newly developed technologies we were able to partner with Wilson Central Schools to do a virtual livestream of Anna Mattix & Josh Lauretig’s Conflict Resolution program for 400 K-5th students. Over 40 K-5th graders also enjoyed Anna’s presentation called “Music By, For, and About Women.”

Professional Development for Music Educators: Through our enduring partnership with the Erie County Music Educators Association, we are often asked to provide professional development for area music staff. This year, Jaman Dunn presented to the full music department staff of the Clarence Schools in the Fall. In the Spring, Robin Parkinson, Vice President, Education & Community Engagement gave a virtual presentation during the annual WNY Music Educators Conference which serves music staff from districts across Western New York.

Summer Programming: Several partnerships enable the BPO to provide programming to the community during the summer months as well. Arts Partners for Learning supports presentations at rural libraries located in Warsaw and Castile in Wyoming County. The Jewish Community Center of Buffalo presents a BPO musician as part of their Cultural ARTSventure Family Series. Also, the Seneca Street Development Corporation hosts summer bucket drumming workshops for their youth program.

In addition to these partnerships, we served the Buffalo Academy of Science and Notre Dame Catholic Academy with musician engagements. A total of 2,790 students participated in our teaching artist program during the school year.

Celebrating Music Educators

Each year we celebrate and recognize our most important partners and advocates - Western New York’s music educators. We do so with an awards ceremony and reception at Kleinhans Music Hall in which we invite music educators to celebrate with us and attend the BPO concert afterwards.

The awards ceremony recognizes the recipients of the Erie and Niagara County Excellence in Music Education Awards which are peer chosen awards for music educators. The Friends of the BPO and the Yadzinski Foundation recognize musically exceptional high school seniors with scholarships for college. The BPO also awards the BPO Leadership in Music Education Award, which this year went to our biggest champion in the Buffalo Public Schools, music supervisor, James Schwanz. Over 100 music educators joined us for this celebratory reception, followed by the Reflections on Rachmaninoff concert featuring violinist, Bella Hristova.

2022 Music Education Awards Recipients
New Pilot Programs

This unusual year afforded us the opportunity to try new things, pursue important goals and focus on access, equity and connection across differences. Three new pilot programs were started in collaboration with school and community partners who share our goals.

Building Musical Bridges
Connecting students from urban and suburban communities through music

During the 2021-2022 season, the BPO embarked on a new pilot program called Building Musical Bridges targeting 3rd grade students from two different school districts. The purpose of the project was to create connection, dialogue and understanding between students of different geographic, socio-economic and cultural environments using music and English Language Arts as the vehicles of exploration and expression. Ellicott Elementary in Orchard Park, representing a suburban district, paired with Buffalo Public School #45 International School to explore shared musical experiences, facilitated by BPO Teaching Artist, Anna Mattix. By using the universal language of music as a bridge to understanding our similarities and celebrating our differences, students and their families came away from the project with a greater appreciation and connection to their neighbors in Western New York.

The project kicked off in early October 2021 with recorded videos introducing each “home base.” Lead music teachers Heather Holden (Orchard Park) and Kelly Salas (Buffalo) gave virtual tours of Ellicott Elementary and The International School, respectively, while BPO musician Anna Mattix provided a behind-the-scenes look at Kleinhans Music Hall. The videos were shared with students from both schools with each teacher introducing students to the “pen pal” concept of the project. Students who shared similar interests or hobbies were partnered, and teachers led students in dialogue about similarities and differences among individuals and respect for individuals of all backgrounds. Each student created a video introducing themselves to their pen pal.

Over the course of many months, students explored patterns in song, melody, and rhythm, then worked on composing their own rhythmic patterns. Students at School #45 recorded videos of themselves playing the first two beats of a four-beat pattern on drums. The students at Ellicott listened to the rhythmic pattern in real time and then “answered the call” of their pen pal by playing their own unique rhythms on drums. Anna Mattix visited both schools to present musical pairing lessons as each remote school “zoomed in” to the live presentation.
Building Musical Bridges culminated in May with students from School #45 and Ellicott Elementary and their families joining at the final BPO Kids concert, Peter and the Wolf / Pedro y el Lobo. 47 people were in attendance, along with lead music teachers from the schools. Anna greeted family members and met with students inside Kleinhans before the concert. At least one pair of pen pals met each other in person for the first time!

Despite the significant impact the pandemic had on our ability to connect students and their families in person, we were able to adapt and create program content to engage students over digital platforms and through synchronous and asynchronous presentations. 187 participating students were exposed to diverse cultures, backgrounds and customs through the lens of shared musical experiences. We are grateful for the opportunity to generate dialogue among diverse partners and look forward to the potential growth of future collaborations.

Buffalo String Works
Investing in the pipeline of diverse talent on the West Side of Buffalo

In alignment with the BPO’s strategic theme to invest in the pipeline of diverse talent, we began developing a new partnership with the Buffalo String Works (BSW) this year. BSW serves mainly immigrant and refugee children through accessible, youth-centered music education, with a focus on string instrumental instruction. We began discussions with a team of BPO staff and musicians with BSW staff around ways that the BPO could provide access to additional music resources for the students. Our brainstorms included musician workshops, BPO concert tickets, guest artist presentations and private lessons. We all agreed that we must ensure that the partnership is truly responsive to the needs of the participating children and families and so we will prioritize continuous open and honest communication.

Several BPO musicians came and toured the home site of Buffalo String Works’ afterschool program which is located on the West Side of Buffalo. Our first musician presentation this year was our West Side Connection Sphinx guest artist, 14-year-old Amaryn Olmeda, who came to work with several groups of students on their concert repertoire.

We culminated our activities this year with a week-long residency May 9th-14th involving BPO musicians and guest violinist Bella Hristova. The week of events began on May 9th with violinist Xiaofan Liu coming to work with 30 beginning string students.
On May 11th BPO guest artist, violinist Bella Hristova played for and worked with 25 advanced string students. Associate concertmaster Amy Glidden visited on May 12th to work with 25 intermediate string students. Bassist Jonathan Borden came on May 13th to work with 25 advanced string students, as well as presenting a workshop for all bass players. The week culminated in a celebratory pizza dinner at BSW, followed by students and family members attending the May 14th Reflections on Rachmaninoff concert at Kleinhans to see BPO musicians and guest violinist Bella Hristova perform. Over 100 students participated in this first residency.

We look forward to building our relationship with Buffalo String Works and finding ways to connect young musicians with the resources needed to develop their skills and love of music.

Another new partnership grew between Sheas Performing Arts Center, the BPO and the Omega Mentoring Program, Inc., with the intent of expanding access to arts experiences for youth on the East Side of Buffalo. Omega Mentoring is an organization of volunteers and mentors who inspire and motivate at-risk youth through leadership training and mentorship support. About 25 middle and high school students attend this program at the Johnnie B. Wiley Pavilion on Jefferson Avenue in Buffalo.

The Leadership of Omega Mentoring met with the education staff of the BPO and Sheas to envision an accessible, interactive series of arts experiences for students to gain confidence and exposure to new modes of expression. The pilot program that developed began in March 2022 on Saturday afternoons at The Wiley and ran through June. Each Saturday, about 10-15 students would come to participate in a variety of experiences. The BPO began these afternoons with a bucket drumming ensemble, teaching rhythm and percussion techniques while encouraging the students to work together, create their own music, and even learn to read some musical notation. Clinician and part time BPO percussionist Steve Solook led these sessions.

Following bucket drumming, the students would transition into an improvisational theater and movement segment led by Sheas teaching artists, giving them another unique interactive arts experience. Each session ended with a share-out which gave the students an opportunity to teach each other (and the adults) a mode of expression.

The Omega Arts program ran from March through June and allowed us to develop a relationship with the Johnnie B. Wiley Pavilion in addition to the Omega Mentoring Program. These new partnerships give us another community anchor for neighborhood relationship building.
Digital Resources

The pandemic created conditions for an accelerated increase of music education resources online. This year, the BPO continued to add digital content and opportunities for learning and inspiration. We now have a robust library of resources designed for our WNY community.

Music for Youth Education Hub

Our digital hub of music resources came online in the 2020-21 school year as a direct response to the shift to online learning in our schools. It received incredibly positive feedback, and so we invested in additional performance captures during the 21-22 season.

Added Content to Thematic Units: We added content to the original five thematic units (Musical Stories, American Voices, World Dances, Art & Music, and Celebrating WNY). In World Dances, new selections included a piece by Chinese-American composer, Chen Yi, entitled Duo Ye - a form of traditional Chinese song and community dance, and Antonín Dvořák’s Škočná, a Slavonic folk dance. Pablo Sarasate’s Carmen Fantasy with violin soloist Amaryn Olmeda, the 2021 Sphinx competition winner was also included. Florence Price’s Symphony No. 3, Juba Dance, Alberto Ginastera’s Four Dances from Estancia and Léo Delibes’ Festival of the Clocks & Dance of the Hours from Coppélia were also included to represent a variety of dance forms from around the world. In the Musical Stories thematic unit, a retelling of the classic Aesop fable, The Tortoise and The Hare using selections from Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suites was also added.

Two full youth concert programs: The Orchestra at Work (Grades 1-4) and Melody and Meaning (Grades 5-8) programs were released as full concert-length videos, as well as broken up into shorter videos based on topic/reertoire. Our virtual holiday Jingle Bell Jam concert video was added to the hub in order for our Exceptional partners, St. Mary’s School for the Deaf, and all current hub registrants to view.

Total reach: As measured through registrations from teachers and administrators, we currently have 275 users registered from 204 schools across all 8 counties of Western New York. We also have registrants from other counties in New York, as well as Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and even Texas! The Music for Youth Education Hub has a total of 50 videos with 2,669 classroom views which represents approximately 29,000* students, teachers and community members.

*20 students per classroom view for 1,471 new views during the 21-22 school year.
At the beginning of the pandemic when schools shut down all in-person learning, the BPO received requests from educators for assistance in their annual band and orchestra recruitment efforts. Our musicians rose to the task and we developed a series of instrument demonstration videos for every instrument in band and orchestra. This expanded to include practice videos, play-along scales, beginners’ toolkits and instrument specific tutorials. Many schools have embedded our videos into their own web platforms and we even have users from out-of-state.

This year we were able to expand our #PlayOnWNY project with the help of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus. #SingOnWNY launched in the Fall with videos for vocal students on topics such as proper breathing, alignment and articulation and other fundamental singing techniques. The series also includes videos with tips on preparing for vocal solos at All County and NYSSMA. Adam Luebke, director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and Jaime Burritt, director of Vocalis Chamber Choir contributed videos for the project.

The #PlayOnWNY and #SingOnWNY projects have a total of 85 videos with about 25,500 views, of which 9,200 are new views this year. The videos are free and accessible to anyone on the BPO website or the BPO YouTube channel. We do not have demographic data on geographic use, however, we have anecdotal evidence of users from across our region and beyond.

Digital Connection with Buffalo Public Schools

We are proud to have a strong partnership with our largest school district which serves over 30,000 students in the city of Buffalo. Over the years we have grown our service to the district from 6,000 students a year to over 18,000 through a variety of programs. This year, the district chose to limit field trips across all schools and shift our contracts to a mostly virtual model, with the exception of our mentorship with the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts. We were able to maintain our impact on students through digital offerings available on demand for use in classrooms across the city.

Buffalo Public Youth Concerts

The BPO usually welcomes all students in grades 1-6 into Kleinhans Music Hall for our signature youth concert series, serving 12,000 BPS students a year. Last year in the wake of virtual learning, we developed the online hub of educational content for BPS to take the place of these annual in-person youth concerts. This hub contains performances of youth concerts and other concert repertoire captured on video along with lesson plans for use in classrooms. This year we continued to add resources to this hub and now have a very robust video library with lesson plans for each video.
The video performances include standard repertoire from the curriculum, locally relevant topics, and culturally diverse selections. We are especially proud that many of our resources feature Buffalo Public students, teachers and graduates as performers. We made the Hub available to all teachers within the Buffalo Public Schools, enabling use for every classroom in the district.

**West Side Connection: Dances Around the World**

This annual program brings diverse guest artists, both local and national, as well as repertoire and curricula that is culturally and linguistically responsive to the school population. Historically, we serve roughly 1,800 students each year through this program that includes visits in the schools and culminates in a final concert at Kleinhans Music Hall. One of the most exciting results of the creation of our online Education Hub last year has been the expanded reach for content from this NEA award-winning program. We can now share West Side Connection content with teachers and students in all city schools.

With the growth and evolution of this program, we have stayed committed to its core strength of presenting multi-cultural programming and diverse guest artists who reflect our city’s population. Our culminating virtual capture on March 23rd, featured dances from around the world. The video series showcases the BPO engaging with Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin, African, European and American dance music. The online interface for this program includes an interactive world map that students and teachers can engage with.

The following composers are included in the world dances repertoire:

- Agnes Bashir, Iraq
- Léo Delibes, France
- Antonín Dvořák, Czech Republic
- Alberto Ginastera, Argentina
- Arturo Marquez, Mexico
- Florence Price, America
- Fela Sowande, Nigeria
- Chen Yi, China

We also featured the Junior Division winner from the 2021 Sphinx Competition, Amaryn Olmeda, as our guest soloist with the BPO for the West Side Connection concert. The Sphinx Competition is a national competition for Black and Latinx string players. Amaryn, a 13-year-old violinist, performed a stunning rendition of Pablo de Sarasate’s *Carmen Fantasy* with the orchestra.

The video performances are available for viewing by *all* students within the district on demand within the online Music for Youth Education Hub.
In Summary

Despite the challenges inherent in this unusual year, the BPO worked creatively and strategically to ensure access to music education for our Western New York students. Through in-person opportunities when possible, and through digital resources when not, we continued to adapt our offerings to meet our community’s needs. We also pursued important goals of access, equity and connection across differences through the development of new pilot programs. We are proud of our continued work serving youth through music.

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