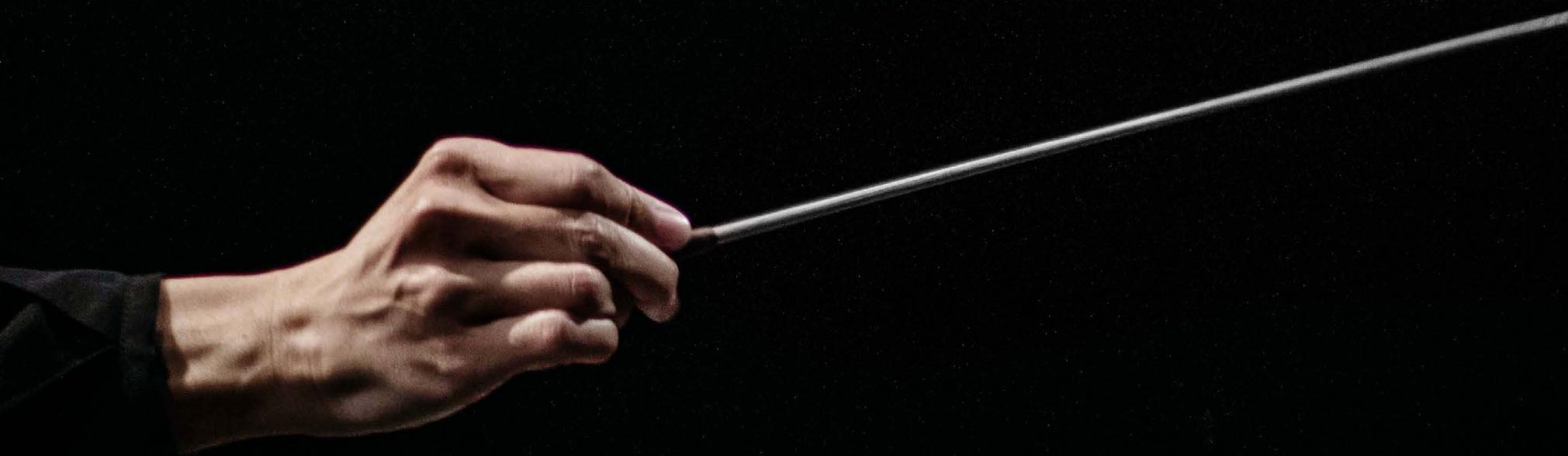


West City Music Incorporated

Annual Report 2025



WEST CITY
MUSIC





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Annual Report 2025

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President's Report

2025 has been another incredible year for West City Music. From summer youth camp, to collaborations with the APO, from community education initiatives to collaborations with avant garde dance artists, from national festival success to warm hearted encouragement of musicmakers young and old, I count it a privilege to be involved with West City Music. The year started with commencement of

rehearsals in a new venue, Liston College. After several years at Laidlaw College, which became Elim Christian College, it has been poetic to return to the place where West City Concert Band rehearsed for many years earlier in its history. We are very grateful for Liston College's support of our activities through provision of rehearsal and storage space.

We have also continued to grow, with the addition of Waitakere Voices choir as an ensemble within the West City Music fold. As our fourth ensemble, Waitakere Voices has its own back story of serving the West Auckland community, and we are looking forward to exploring ways in which choral music can flourish alongside the various genres of instrumental music that our instrumental ensembles perform. Our wonderful musical directors continue to provide outstanding musical leadership. I want to make a particular acknowledgement here of Chad Davenport, who is taking a well earned sabbatical across late 2025 after many years of sterling service to the West City Concert Band. We have appreciated Michelangelo Bisquera's enthusiastic touch on the baton while Chad is away.

The funding environment for community arts organisations continues to be a tough one, and we have begun to feel that with pressure to fund our activities in a wider range of creative ways. I am so thankful for all the members who volunteer in a myriad of ways to keep our ensembles running, to put on our concerts, to look after our players. The heart that is evident in the late night loading and unloading of percussion equipment, or the provision of tea/coffee and baking at concerts and rehearsals, or supporting younger players with transport to and from events is greatly valued.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve this wonderful community of musicians!

– Nigel Smith, President





2025 At A Glance...

199

Society Members

- 58 – Concert Band
- 70 – Youth Band
- 32 – String Orchestra
- 40 – Waitakere Voices
- 14 – Life Members

1,000 (est)

Concert Attendees

- Nov '24 – New Horizons (WCCB/WCYCB/WCSO)
- Jan '25 – Summer Youth Camp concert
- Apr '25 – Angels Ascent (WCCB)
- Apr '25 – Sundays at Three (WV)
- May '25 – True Colours (WV/WCSO)
- Jul '25 – Shadow and Light (WCCB/WCYCB)

8

Community Events

- West City Mall playouts – Small ensembles
- Farmer's Santa Parade – WCCB
- Te Atatu Christmas parade – WCYCB
- MOTAT Christmas lights – Small ensembles
- ANZAC Day at Titirangi – WCCB
- La Traviata collaboration – WCCB
- Te Manawa Library – WCSO and small ensembles
- Miriam Corban Retirement Village – WV

\$14,882

Grant funding awarded

- \$2,232 – Auckland Council Community Grants
- \$5,000 – Community Organisation Grants Scheme
- \$4,000 – Foundation North
- \$3,650 – The Trusts Community Foundation



Photo by Richard Lummus

West City Concert Band

OVERARCHING GOALS: West City Concert Band (WCCB) continues to build on the same priorities that have guided its progress for over 10 years.

We implement strategies to increase the skill of musicians. This year, we have continued to choose new repertoire which features sections and soloists in new and exposed ways, challenges and stretches the bounds of what players have tried before, and fosters players' skills and strengths. Warmups and specific rehearsal techniques continue to be chosen to stretch musical and technical skills of players. The long-term benefits of this goal can be seen in the ability to prepare challenging works in a shorter time frame and, indirectly, in the increasing number of members teaching music, performing professionally, and studying Music at university. A special highlight for many players was the opportunity to play the diegetic "Banda" music with the Auckland Philharmonia's concert performance of *La Traviata*. This included being a part of a highly professional production with technically challenging music, and getting to work with the Musical Director Giordano Bellincampi.

We create musical 'impact' moments. This year, highlights included the inclusion of a singer and organist in Frank Ticheli's *Angels in the Architecture*, interweaving passages played in "free time" in Yo





Goto's *Songs for Wind Ensemble*, and the asymmetrical morse code spelling out "California" in James David's *Urban Light*. Audiences across all performances have shared positive comments about their experiences listening to these pieces.

We contribute to the wider community. WCCB provides several free performances to the public including the ANZAC day service at Titirangi RSA, the Farmers Santa Parade, and the MOTAT Christmas Lights event (in small ensembles along with other West City Music members).

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS:

Angels' Ascent joint concert with Manukau Concert Band – In April this year, WCCB performed a joint concert in Auckland's Town Hall, along with another band in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, embodying the collaborative and community spirit of concert band music. The purpose of this concert was to bring concert band music to the forefront of the "classical music" world in central Auckland. Alongside Manukau Concert Band, we delivered a varied and exciting performance that, according to some audience members, rivalled professional classical concerts in the Town Hall.

La Traviata in Concert with the Auckland Philharmonia – WCCB was asked to put together a traditional Italian "banda" for the Auckland Philharmonia's performance of *La Traviata*. 24 of our members volunteered their time and playing to produce a waltz and a Bacchanale which would meet the high standard of the APO and their Maestro

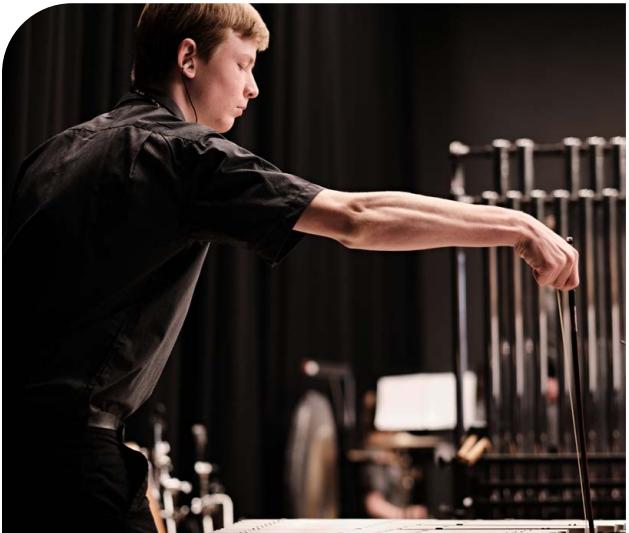


Musical director, Chad Davenport, conducting the West City Concert Band

Giordano Bellincampi. This was a completely new experience for most of the group, and also included working alongside the NZ Opera Chorus. WCCB got to enjoy a special treat of having one of our pieces for NZCBA festival workshopped with Giordano Bellincampi as well.

Successful performance at NZCBA Festival 2025 - WCCB was awarded a Gold and the Royal NZ Navy

trophy for Outstanding Performance by a Band for the seventh consecutive time at the NZ Concert Band Festival. On top of this, WCCB was also awarded the Robert Lutt Trophy for the most Outstanding Performance of a Select Piece, for *Songs for Wind Ensemble*, a particularly challenging piece for the band. Pieces chosen were unlike any repertoire we have done before, including a baroque organ fugue arranged for concert band.



West City Youth Concert Band

The past year has been a significant one for the West City Youth Concert Band. Following an outstanding performance at the festival in 2024 under the leadership of Lauren MacMillan, Charlie Bi stepped in as director. The transition was smooth, and the band has continued to build on the strong musical and community foundations built up by Lauren during her tenure.

Our annual summer band camp was once again a highlight, bringing together players in an intensive, fun, and rewarding environment. It was especially

exciting to have the string programme joining us this year, adding a new layer of collaboration and energy to the experience. Another key highlight was the involvement of the Royal New Zealand Navy Band. For the second year in a row, they joined us at camp, performing alongside the band and offering masterclasses that gave our young musicians invaluable inspiration and guidance.

In July, the Youth Band travelled to Wellington to take part in the NZCBA Festival and we are proud to have received a Gold award. Beyond the full band's

success, many of our members also shone in solo and small ensemble categories, taking home some excellent results that reflect the depth of talent across the group.

Looking ahead, we are excited about our themed concert with the String Orchestra, Reel to Real, celebrating the magic of movie music. We are also preparing for our combined November concert, Pictures in an Exhibition, before rounding out the year with our traditional Christmas playouts. With so many opportunities still to come, the remainder of 2025 promises to be both busy and rewarding.



Summer Youth Band Camp

21–24 January 2025

This year the Band was joined by a String Group which although small was most enthusiastic and made huge progress under the expert tuition of Kali Halapua.

The Band was directed by Charlie Bi and Lauren MacMillan. There were 52 band participants, half of whom were WCYCB members.

Highlights from the week included:

- A Feldenkrais session with practitioner Caryn Truppman, held for all camp participants on the

first day. She taught many techniques suited to all instrumentalists, focusing on awareness of sitting, posture and relaxing muscles.

- The RNZ Navy came for the day as part of their community outreach programme, and they ran Sectionals, played in the band alongside camp participants and performed a short concert and Q&A session for everyone at the end.
- Anne-Marie Forsyth from the Auckland Scottish Fiddle Club came to teach Scottish Folk fiddling.

This was very stimulating as it entailed interpreting given music or even playing with no music, and using techniques that at times made the violins sound like bagpipes.

- Breakout sessions were held in Conducting, Composition, Drumline, Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Band. The Strings and Band combined to rehearse Michael Jackson's 'Earth song' written for the camp by former Youth Band member Kate Scandle.





- Riley Wang (Youth Band French Horn player) conducted his composition for the Band, *Hymnsong*, which was a mighty work of complexity and variety.
- The traditional Band Camp Pizza Party. This year cup cakes were provided to celebrate the 10th Band Camp anniversary.

The evening concert was a grand celebration of an intense but happy camp, and showcased the many groups and activities that were held. Many thanks to our amazing MD's, assistants and to awesome Camp participants for another great camp.



West City String Orchestra

This last year has been one of innovation and collaboration for our String ensemble.

In September 2024, to celebrate Auckland Heritage Festival, the orchestra performed CrossCurrents: Music as Navigator, in a free concert at Te Manawa library. This included a performance of an innovative original New Zealand work based on a traditional Tongan tale: "The Mouse and the Octopus".

Audience feedback from this performance was very encouraging, for example; "As the orchestra played,

I felt as though the moana itself was whispering secrets of kinship and unity, guiding us through the currents of tā and vā (time and space) and 'ulungaanga (culture). Your talents illuminated the evening like fetu'u (stars) twinkling above the vast sea, reminding us that we are all vessels sailing together on this wondrous journey of life." Elena Manu

In late 2024, our "New Horizons" concert was a collaboration with WCCB and WCYCB. It was a very special way to bring our growing West City Music

whānau together. During the Christmas season we collaborated with players from other ensembles to offer varied entertainment at MOTAT Lights. As always the crowds loved it and so did the MOTAT organisers!

For NZ Music Month 2025, WCSO collaborated again with Te Manawa library for a musical zoo followed by an innovative fusion between String Orchestra music and Waacking dance, featuring a talented cello soloist from the University of Auckland, for the concert Strings in Motion: Tango and Beyond.

In May, the orchestra also performed True Colours: A celebration of hue, in collaboration with Waitakere Voices Choir. The blend of strings and voices resonated through Te Pou theatre and enchanted the captive audience.

In September 2025 West City String Orchestra joined forces with West City Youth Concert Band to present Reel to Real: Movie music II.

The range of music played and the different types of collaborative performances we have done is an indication of the growing breadth and strength of this ensemble's musicality. We look forward to further creative endeavours in the coming year.





Waitakere Voices

2024/2025 has been a year of growth, musical enrichment, and an ever-stronger sense of community for Waitakere Voices and marks a year since Rachel Sutherland commenced as musical director.

Membership & Engagement

Weekly attendance has grown to 30–40 singers, with a wider member pool nearing 50. This consistency has



supported more ambitious programming and stronger ensemble sound. Members' commitment and energy continue to be a source of pride.

Looking forward, we hope to connect with local schools and youth organisations to create pathways for younger singers, especially those without access to school choirs. Offering entry points into community singing has real potential to enrich both the choir and the wider community.

Highlights & Performances

St Andrew's Epsom (April) – Our first concert of the year was part of the Sundays at Three series, giving us a chance to share repertoire in preparation for later concerts and providing a gentle first performance for several new members.

Combined Concert with West City Strings (May) - A vibrant collaboration blending instrumental and choral music. Despite some logistical challenges, the event was a success and reinforced the value of detailed planning for future joint performances.

Miriam Corban Village (August) - A joyful recital revisiting earlier repertoire and previewing new works. A highlight was a combined item with the Miriam Corban Village Choir - a moment of true community connection. We hope this marks the beginning of an ongoing relationship.

Spring Concert (Upcoming) - After some challenges securing a venue, we are pleased to be preparing for this event at Glen Eden Methodist Church.

Development & Mentoring

Rehearsals have continued to integrate short, focused vocal warmups, building technique, blend, and musical confidence. A Sight-Reading Workshop in mid-year was well attended and received, providing practical skills and reassurance for tackling new repertoire. This kind of capacity-building will remain a priority.

Key goals for the year ahead include:

- Growing regular attendance to 40–45 singers
- Building youth and intergenerational partnerships
- Collaborating with other choirs and ensembles
- Incorporating more Aotearoa/New Zealand works and composer-led projects
- Establishing a clear year-long musical plan to give members a strong sense of progression

We are grateful to the committee for their ongoing support of Rachel in her musical directorship, and to every singer for the joy, commitment, and generosity they bring each week. Waitakere Voices has a vibrant culture and great potential, and we look forward to all that lies ahead.

In Our Community



The West City String Orchestra premiering the orchestral version of Tales from Tonga: Ko Kuma Mo Feke (The Mouse and the Octopus) during the Auckland Heritage Month: Moana Oceania at Te Manawa Library.



Riley and Charlie demonstrate their instruments to a rapt audience for Music Month at Te Manawa library May '25



"Strings in Motion" at Te Manawa Library

In celebration of New Zealand Music Month, on the 10th May 2025, West City String Orchestra presented Strings in Motion: Tango and Beyond, a free event for the community, open to all ages at Te Manawa library.

The day started with a Musical Zoo where passionate musicians presented different instruments to a captive audience. Musical Zoos are becoming a fixture of our community events, they are open to all our ensembles and are always a huge hit for the younger members of our community. This year some members of the Waitakere Voices Choir also performed their own song, created for this very occasion, to lead the audience to the main concert.

On the top floor in a full auditorium, the orchestra performed an eclectic program featuring cello soloist Caleb Raymond of the University of Auckland. Offering an opportunity to perform as a soloist to a talented young musician made this concert even more special.

Some of the pieces were also accompanied by dancers from IHOW. The mix between orchestral music and Waacking dance was very innovative and very well received by the audience, who enjoyed classical music being transcended by contemporary movement.

This free event was a success, we presented an entertaining show with a focus on education, innovation, collaboration and inclusion. It was inspiring particularly for younger viewers, who could relate to our younger members and some expressed an interest in learning an instrument to be able to join in the fun.



Several small ensembles performed at West City Mall, throughout the year.



The West City Youth Concert Band at the Te Atatu Christmas Parade (Dec '24)



Concert Angels

Thanks to the generosity of Langakali Halapua, a group of students were able to hear Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8 in April last year. For some, it was not only their first time hearing the NZSO, but also their very first concert experience in the Town Hall.

At West City Music, we are committed to fostering a new generation of musicians. Our ensembles thrive on the energy and talent of dedicated young people, and it is vital for them to experience live performances in order to deepen their musicianship and broaden their

musical horizons. However, economic and logistical barriers often make this difficult.

To bridge that gap, we launched the Concert Angels initiative. Through this programme, we provide affordable tickets to outstanding concerts, and assist with transportation.

Over the past year, thanks to the support of our donors, we were able to offer four wonderful opportunities for our young members.



The Planets

NZ Symphony Orchestra
Nov '24 – 12 students, \$5

Angels Ascent

WCCB and Manukau Concert Band
Apr '25 – 5 students, \$10

La Traviata

APO and WCCB
Jul '25 – 5 students, free

Mahler Symphony No. 6

NZ Symphony Orchestra
Sep '25 – 12 students, \$5

"Getting the chance to watch professional musicians can be difficult, due to costs and accessibility. Being able to attend an NZSO concert with West City was an inspiring experience.

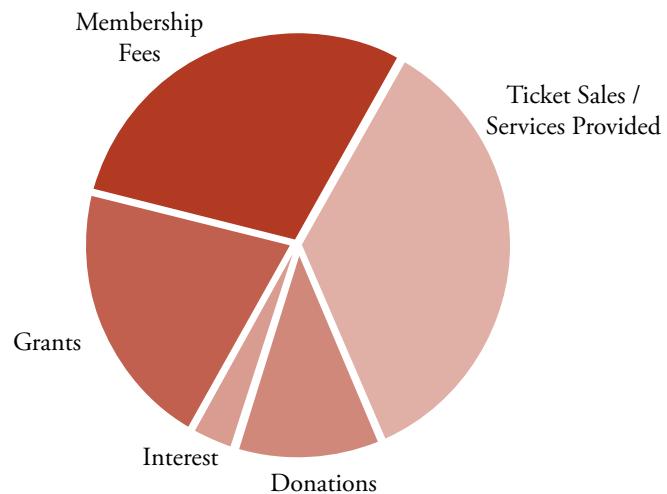
This event had a huge impact on us as young musicians as it was one of our first times watching NZSO. Additionally, because of this experience we had the opportunity to hang out with our friends beforehand in the CBD which bonded us and fueled our inspiration for music activities. We are looking forward to future Concert Angels initiatives!"



Financial Overview

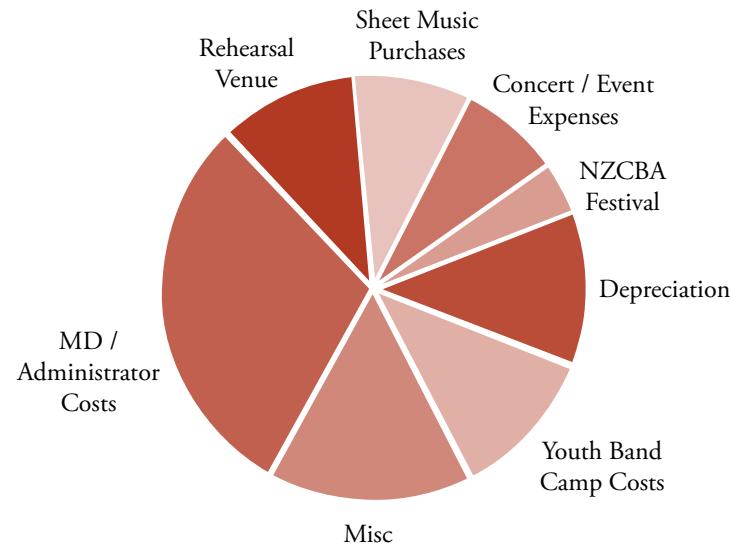
Revenue

\$70,500



Expenses

\$74,011



For financial year ending 31 Mar 2025.

For detailed financial statements, please refer to the reviewed West City Music Performance Report 2025.

Executive Team

The Executive Team is the governing body of West City Music, elected annually by the society's members.

The team is responsible for ensuring that West City functions according to its purposes and constitution. This includes appointing musical directors and band managers, maintaining proper financial records and resolving any disputes.



Nigel Smith

President



Michelle Johnston

Treasurer



Luke Raymond

Secretary



Paula Scandle

Executive Officer



Evelyn Boyack

Executive Officer

Management Committee



Chad Davenport

Musical Director
– West City Concert Band



Philippa Mandeno

Ensemble Manager
– West City Concert Band



Marie Deverell

Administrator



Charlie Bi

Musical Director
– West City Youth Concert Band



Paula Scandle

Ensemble Manager
– West City Youth Concert Band



Jess Chase

Assets



Kali Halapua

Musical Director
– West City String Orchestra



Luke Raymond

Ensemble Manager
– West City String Orchestra



Antonina Marriott

Music Library



Rachel Alexander Sutherland

Musical Director
– Waitakere Voices



Viviane Vagt

Ensemble Manager
– Waitakere Voices



Sam Nicholson

Granting

