



Academy of Music Strategic Plan Strategic Priorities for 2018 - 2023

October 11, 2017

Mission

Our mission is to enrich the Pioneer Valley's quality of life by offering first-class performing arts and film presentations in an historic theatre of national significance. Encouraging the use of the historic stage for social, educational and professional events, the Academy of Music seeks a broad and diverse audience through its programming and outreach efforts.

Overall five-year strategies

1. Sustain the Academy's reputation as the City's premier performing arts center with a well-balanced mix of national and local performances and film.
2. Reach out to new and under-served audiences with outreach programming and youth education programs in accessible community venues.
3. Secure public and private investments in the facility and equipment to support performers' increasingly sophisticated technical requirements, to assure excellent patron experiences and safety, and to preserve the City's historic building.
4. Increase contributed revenues and sponsorships to reduce reliance on earned revenue and bring the Academy's business model closer to national performing arts center norms.

Long-range Goals

1. **Programming** Present quality performances and films that advance our artistic vision, resonate with our community, raise awareness of the arts and compelling issues, and lift the cultural discourse.
2. **Community access** Assure community access to Academy facilities and programs.
3. **Education** Produce and present youth educational programs that empower children and youth to explore the creative process in a safe and nurturing environment.
4. **Facilities** Preserve our building as an historic landmark and downtown cultural anchor, and sustain technical capacity to present first-rate performances.
5. **Academy capacity** Sustain the Academy's organizational capacity to fulfill its mission with effective governance, management, and funding.

Summary Artistic Vision

The Academy produces and presents programs aligning with our artistic vision:

- Address ideas, concerns, values, and hopes that resonate in our community
- Connect works of a national and global stature with the work of community-based, community-engaged organizations
- Lift the level of cultural discourse and awareness in the Pioneer Valley community
- Connect and encourage the local creative community

- Cultivate new and underserved audiences

Long-range Goals and Five-year Objectives

Goal 1. Programming Present quality performances and films that advance our artistic vision, resonate with our community, raise awareness of the arts and compelling issues, and lift the cultural discourse.

1. Present nationally recognized performances and film.
 - a. Sustain balanced programming by for-profit presenters, local nonprofits, Academy productions, and corporate rentals.
 - i. Avoid dependence on any one presenter or sector.
 - ii. Match programming with the capacity of the Academy facilities and staff.
 - iii. While overall programming must meet budget targets, some performances may take financial or artistic risks that further the artistic vision.
 - b. Maintain a balanced offering of programming disciplines, genres, new works, emerging and established artists to be responsive to our community.
 - c. The executive director plans programs following the artistic vision with board advice and fiscal oversight.
2. Present community-produced performances and film.
3. Produce and present the Academy's own performances.
4. Stage Academy-produced outreach programming through other community venues and with community partners.
 - a. Cultivate new audiences in alternative and intimate spaces.
 - b. Engage with non-traditional partners and local creators to enhance Academy offerings.

Goal 2. Community access Assure community access to Academy facilities and programs.

1. Sustain the Resident Companies and partners that further the Academy's mission.
2. Nurture community groups to build their capacity to present successful programs at the Academy.
3. Maintain affordable rents and access for local nonprofit organizations, balancing the Academy's needs for revenue with community groups' need for access.
4. Program to cultivate and reach new, underserved, and diverse audiences.
5. Assure accessibility for people with disabilities.

Goal 3 Education Produce and present youth educational programs that empower children and youth to explore the creative process in a safe and nurturing environment.

1. The Academy Youth Production company produces spring staged musical theater performances.
2. Offer two summer sessions of musical theater workshops.
3. Plan and build support for year-round, satellite-space opportunities for youth education, drop-in programming, extended productions, youth-scripted productions, and youth technical development.
 - a. Seek additional grant funding with community partners.
4. Provide a performance home for community arts education programs as schedules allow.

Goal 4. Facilities Preserve our building as an historic landmark and downtown cultural anchor, and sustain technical capacity to present first-rate performances.

1. Partner with the City of Northampton to maintain and improve the municipally-owned building, its infrastructure, and grounds.
2. Implement priorities in the capital improvement plan as funding permits.
 - a. Upgrade dated technical equipment.
 - b. Implement audience-experience, patron comfort, and safety improvements.
3. Advocate to secure state bond funding.
4. Seek outside facilities for additional storage, set-building, and/or rehearsal capacity.

Goal 5. Academy capacity Sustain the Academy's organizational capacity to fulfill its mission with effective governance, management, and funding.

1. Sustain effective board governance.
 - a. Cultivate and recruit qualified leadership to sustain the board as trustees cycle off.
 - b. Simplify the committee structure to employ more ad hoc task forces.
 - c. Recruit non-board members to advise and assist as needed.
2. Staff programs and operations with highly competent personnel.
 - a. Sustain and support professional staff and contractors.
 - b. Maintain good relations with Union personnel.

- c. Maintain an active volunteer program.
- 3. Raise adequate funds to support the mission.
 - a. Aim for 60%/40% earned to contributed income ratio within five years.
 - b. Cultivate major individual donors, foundations, and business sponsors.
 - i. Academy Development committee organizes board member fundraising.
 - c. Compete for federal grants.
- 4. Manage finances.
 - a. The board oversees budgeting and financial accountability.
 - b. Establish a cash reserve policy and maintain adequate operating cash reserves.
 - c. Budget for capital replacement to adequately fund depreciation.
- 5. Maintain high-quality marketing and communications to reinforce the Academy's brand and promote its programs.
 - a. Social media...
 - b. Advertising...
- 6. Provide patron services.
 - i. Maintain box office services.
 - ii. Provide concessions and plan to restore upper lobby concessions.
- 7. Manage the facility (we didn't talk about this in the retreat).

Academy of Music Artistic Vision (Approved by Board, 2011)

The Academy of Music is a values based, non-discriminatory 501c3 organization with the mission enriching the Pioneer Valley's quality of life by offering first class performing arts and film presentations in a historic theatre of national significance. The Academy of Music Theatre seeks the use of the venue for social, educational, and professional events, and to serve a broad and diverse audience through its programming.

In order to carry out this mission, an artistic vision of the Academy of Music includes these goals:

- To nurture and sustain community based organizations and causes that address the needs, concerns and hopes of the Pioneer Valley to serve the widest audience possible while benefiting said organizations and causes.
- To identify less recognized local and regional performing arts organizations with potential to contribute to the cultural landscape of the Pioneer Valley. To guide and nurture those organizations toward successful projects at the Academy of Music by: strategizing optimal costs, using creative solutions to work with other organizations, maximizing impact, building audiences, and networking with like-minded arts groups.
- To identify and present globally and nationally recognized events that address ideas, concerns and hopes that resonate in our community. To affiliate these works of a global/national stature with the work of community based, community engaged organizations with the goal of lifting the level of discourse and awareness in the Pioneer Valley and connecting and raising like-minded creators.
- To determine underserved audiences and new audiences that have not yet been developed and craft programming that serves those audiences. To create programming that weaves recognized emerging artists with local artists to bring about that goal. Potential areas of growth: Dance, Education, New Work, and LGBT Work.
- To identify organizations that have a history in our community of creating performing arts of merit in the Pioneer Valley, to invite them to be resident companies, and to provide a home, support, guidance, and consultation to them. To guide and nurture those organizations toward successful projects at the Academy of Music by: strategizing optimal costs, using creative solutions to work with other organizations, maximizing impact, and building audiences. To enhance and clarify the branding of the Academy of Music by educating the public that resident companies provide the family within the household of the Academy, and that supporting the Academy supports the resident companies.
- To produce and present educational programming that offers the opportunity to explore the creative process in a safe and nurturing environment while meeting each child where he or she is in her development regardless of experience or ability. To provide a performance home for a variety of performing arts educators and organizations locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

Planning Process

This plan builds on the Academy's existing Mission and Artistic Vision. The Academy's broad vision was confirmed and updated with new strategies during a five-hour board/staff planning retreat, September 30, 2017. The draft plan was subsequently refined by board and staff leaders and approved by the Board of Directors on February 15, 2018.

Academy of Music Board of Directors

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Academy staff

Debra J'Anthony, Executive Director*

Addison MacDonald, Theater Manager*

Emily Curro, Development Manager*

Hugh Hall, Technical Director*

Martha Potyrala, Education Director*

Tanya Ritchie, Box Office Manager

* Indicates participation in the planning retreat