



PIANO
CLEVELAND

STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2026



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Dear Friends of Piano Cleveland,

We are pleased to present Piano Cleveland's Strategic Plan, a roadmap that outlines our organization's vision and objectives for the future. As we embark on this journey, we are excited to share our commitment to excellence, innovation, and enrichment of our community through piano.

Our strategic plan is the culmination of thoughtful collaboration, in-depth analysis, and the collective vision of our dedicated team, board members, and supporters. It reflects our unwavering dedication to preserving and advancing the art of piano music in Cleveland and far beyond.

Our key objectives are rooted in a profound appreciation for the significance of piano music in our culture. They encompass a wide range of areas, including artistic excellence, community engagement, donor development, financial sustainability, and effective communication. Each objective is designed to propel Piano Cleveland toward greater impact and success.

We are committed to directly benefitting the community through inspiring events, programs, and artistic development.

We aspire to enhance the experience of our audiences and contestants, ensuring that the Cleveland International Piano Competition remains a world-class event. Simultaneously, we aim to promote the careers of talented artists who grace our stages, championing their artistic accomplishments, and personal narratives. Our commitment to inclusivity drives us to create an environment where all individuals feel welcome and valued.

Financial sustainability is essential to our mission, and we are actively pursuing strategies to secure the resources needed to thrive. These include building strong relationships with donors, both locally and globally, and optimizing our operational efficiency.

Lastly, we recognize the importance of effective communication, both internally and externally, to convey our message and mission. We aim to leverage partnerships and engagement initiatives to strengthen our reputation and fundraising capabilities.

We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and the positive impact we can make on our community and the world. Our strategic plan serves as a compass, guiding us toward our shared goals and aspirations.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. Together, we will continue to celebrate the beauty of piano music and its profound influence on our lives.

Sincerely,

Piano Cleveland Board of Directors and Staff



PIANO CLEVELAND STRATEGIC PLAN:

Elevating the Art of Piano, Building Community, and Ensuring Sustainability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Piano Cleveland, an organization dedicated to the appreciation and promotion of piano music, is embarking on a transformative journey with its newly developed strategic plan. This plan outlines the organization’s mission and vision to provide the world with extraordinary piano experiences and enrich the local community through art, culture, and education. By focusing on five key goals, Piano Cleveland is committed to becoming a global leader in the world of piano music, fostering community engagement, securing financial stability, enhancing external communication, and strengthening organizational effectiveness.

Mission

Building a better world through the transformative power of piano.

Vision

To be the global leader in advancing the piano’s power to transform lives and unite people through world-class international competitions, innovative artist development, and inclusive local engagement.

Goal ONE: Provide World-Class Piano Competitions

Piano Cleveland aims to perpetuate the Cleveland International Piano Competition and the CIPC for Young Artists as preeminent global events. To achieve this, the organization will focus on nurturing talent, celebrating diversity, and creating an environment where the world’s finest pianists compete. By elevating the prestige of these competitions, Piano Cleveland will further solidify its place on the global stage, attracting top talent, music enthusiasts, and patrons from around the world.

Goal TWO: Fostering Positive Community Engagement

Fostering positive community engagement is at the core of Piano Cleveland’s mission. The organization is committed to engaging the community through inspiring, inclusive, and accessible events, programs, and artistic development. By involving the community in its activities, Piano Cleveland will not only create opportunities for cultural enrichment, but also contribute to the overall well-being of the community. With a diverse range of educational programs, concerts, and community outreach initiatives, Piano Cleveland aspires to be an integral part of the Northeastern Ohio community.

Goal THREE: Increase/Diversify Financial Support and Provide Accountable Financial Operations

Ensuring financial stability is crucial to the sustained success of Piano Cleveland. The organization is determined to provide revenue sufficient to sustain its operations and fulfill its mission by implementing a robust development focus. By diversifying funding sources, engaging with donors, and maintaining accountable fiscal operations, Piano Cleveland will create a strong financial foundation to secure its future. This commitment to sound financial management will enable the organization to continue its work, enriching lives through the art of piano.

Goal FOUR: Deliver Effective External Communication

Effective external communication is paramount for Piano Cleveland. The organization recognizes the importance of conveying its message and mission to enhance its reputation, build connections with donors, and develop audiences. Through innovative communication strategies and engaging storytelling, Piano Cleveland will reach a wider audience, attract new supporters, and strengthen its position as a leading advocate for piano music. By building strong relationships with its stakeholders, the organization will ensure the sustainability of its programs and events.

Goal FIVE: Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness

Piano Cleveland is committed to enhancing its operational efficiency and achieving a high standard of excellence. By strengthening its effectiveness, the organization will ensure a solid foundation for delivering its core objectives and services. This effort will involve streamlining internal processes, nurturing leadership talent, and embracing innovation to remain agile and responsive to the changing needs of its community.

Conclusion

Piano Cleveland’s Strategic Plan is a bold commitment to advancing the world of piano music, enriching the lives of its community, and ensuring its own sustainability. By focusing on these five key goals, the organization will secure its place as a global leader in the field, continue to serve its community with passion, and create a legacy that future generations can celebrate. This strategic plan not only outlines the path forward but also embodies the essence of Piano Cleveland’s mission: to elevate the art of piano, build community, and ensure a harmonious future for all who share in the joy of music. Together, we look forward to celebrating the piano and fostering a vibrant cultural community.



METHODOLOGY

The development of the Piano Cleveland Strategic Plan was a collaborative and data-driven process, drawing insights from a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and informed approach. The following tactics were employed to gather data and perspectives from April to September 2023:

1. FOCUS GROUPS:

Piano Cleveland Board of Directors/Steering Committee:

A series of focus group sessions were conducted with members of the Piano Cleveland Board. These sessions facilitated candid discussions about organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, helping to shape the strategic direction.

Piano Cleveland Staff:

An in-depth focus group was held with the organization's dedicated staff members. These sessions provided insights into the day-to-day operations, challenges, and aspirations of the team, guiding the planning process.

Former Cleveland International Piano Competition Contestants:

A focus group engaged former contestants of the Cleveland International Piano Competition. These conversations provided unique insights into their experiences and perspectives on the competition, enhancing our understanding of how Piano Cleveland can continue to support and engage with past participants.

Community Partners:

In a separate focus group, we engaged key community and education partners. These conversations illuminated the impact of Piano Cleveland's initiatives on our community and identified areas where collaborative growth opportunities lie.

2. INDIVIDUAL PHONE INTERVIEWS:

Donors:

Individual phone interviews were conducted with generous donors who have been instrumental in supporting Piano Cleveland's mission. These conversations explored donor motivations, expectations, and insights into strategic priorities.

Foundation Leaders:

In-depth discussions with foundation leaders shed light on potential opportunities, alignment with strategic goals, and the evolving landscape of philanthropic support.

International Piano Competition Experts:

Interviews with individuals closely associated with other prominent international piano competitions offered insights into best practices, artistic standards, and strategic positioning within the global piano competition landscape.

3. ONLINE SURVEY:

An online survey, widely distributed to our stakeholders and supporters, garnered responses from 151 participants. The survey encompassed a range of topics, including audience feedback, program preferences, and perceptions of Piano Cleveland's impact.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The data collected from these diverse sources were systematically analyzed, allowing us to identify recurring themes, critical priorities, and areas of consensus among stakeholders. This analysis formed the foundation upon which the strategic plan was constructed.

Piano Cleveland is deeply grateful to all participants, whose valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping this strategic plan.





MISSION

**BUILDING A
BETTER WORLD
THROUGH THE
TRANSFORMATIVE
POWER OF PIANO.**



VISION

To be the global leader in advancing the piano's power to transform lives and unite people through world-class international competitions, innovative artist development, and inclusive local engagement.



STAFF, OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Leslie Dumm
FINANCE MANAGER

Corey Knick
ARTIST & PRODUCTION MANAGER

Yaron Kohlberg
PRESIDENT

Ryan Ireland
MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Emily Shelley
EDUCATION &
COMMUNITY LEAD

Chris Fornadel
DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY
& MARKETING

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Astri Seidenfeld
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Celia Sinclair
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Wulf Utian
Rose Wong



OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

Piano Cleveland seeks to provide musical encounters where individuals from all backgrounds and identities are welcomed and respected.

We promote the full range of piano music by exploring traditional classical repertoire, a broad array of genres, and works by underrepresented composers, all of which celebrate the piano's versatility. As an internationally focused organization, we include individuals from varied backgrounds on our juries, as contestants, and as featured artists.

We strive to present programming that is financially, geographically, and musically accessible. And, we seek to engage the community by inviting people from all backgrounds and experiences into our organization in order to shape its future.





GOAL

1

Provide World-Class Piano Competitions

Perpetuate the Cleveland International Piano Competition (CIPC) and CIPC for Young Artists as preeminent global events.

GOAL 1: Provide World-Class Piano Competitions

Objective 1

Enrich the experience of contestants participating in the Cleveland International Piano Competition by providing a comprehensive world-class experience that encompasses exceptional artistic, logistical, and support elements while intentionally making a positive impact on their careers.

Areas of Focus

Artistic Excellence and Performance Environment:

- Carefully curate a selection of venues to host various stages of the competition, ensuring that contestants' performances are featured in exceptional settings.
- Continue to foster collaboration between the competition and the Cleveland Orchestra, providing contestants with the unique opportunity to perform with a world-class ensemble.

Community Engagement for Contestant Enrichment:

- Continue to provide events involving contestants, connecting them with the local community. Engage contestants in activities that inspire and uplift aspiring musicians while contributing to the cultural enrichment of the Greater Cleveland area.
 - A special consideration is to be made to those contestants who are eliminated early in the competition.
- Facilitate collaborative performances between contestants and local musicians or cultural organizations, fostering cross-cultural and cross-genre artistic interactions. Create opportunities for contestants to share their musical talents with the community, enhancing the cultural vibrancy of Cleveland.

Promotion of the Artist:

- Highlight not only the contestants' artistic accomplishments, but also their personal narratives, emphasizing that each individual possesses a compelling and valuable story worth sharing.
- Create high-quality video recordings of contestants' performances, capturing their artistry and skill in a way that can be used for promotional purposes. Provide professionally edited videos that feature their talent, ready for online sharing and portfolio use.
- Develop individualized media kits for each contestant, including professional photographs, performance videos, biographical information, and press materials. Empower contestants with a comprehensive package of materials they can utilize to promote their careers, apply for opportunities, and engage with the music industry.

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Understanding of the Contestant's Financial Commitment:

- Empathize with the financial challenges that contestants may face and create a supportive environment that encourages open dialogue about financial concerns, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding.
- Establish a dedicated communication channel for contestants to inquire about financial matters, providing responsive and transparent answers to their questions and ensuring clarity on financial expectations.
- Collaborate with partners and sponsors to explore potential avenues for financial assistance, scholarships, or grants that can alleviate the financial burden for contestants, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

Accommodations and Logistics:

- Secure comfortable and conveniently located accommodations for contestants, considering their well-being.
- Streamline transportation logistics, offering travel arrangements between venues, accommodations, and rehearsal spaces.

Wellness and Support Services:

- Establish a dedicated support structure to assist contestants with non-artistic needs, ensuring their well-being, and reducing stress during the competition.
- Provide access to wellness resources such as relaxation sessions and medical support, promoting physical and mental health.

Networking and Cultural Engagement:

- Organize social and networking events to facilitate meaningful connections between contestants, jurors, and industry professionals.
- Offer opportunities for contestants to explore the local cultural scene, enhancing their overall Cleveland experience.

Transparency and Feedback:

- Maintain open communication channels to address contestants' inquiries and concerns promptly.
- Collect feedback through surveys and post-competition discussions to continuously improve the contestant experience.

Legacy Engagement:

- Nurture a sense of community among past participants by fostering connections and collaborations beyond the competition.

Objective 2

Develop an exceptional in-person, virtual, and recorded audience experience for the CIPC that immerses attendees in the profound artistry of the piano, educates and enriches through insightful content, and fosters a connection with contestants' stories. This holistic approach will showcase not only exceptional talent, but also the contestants as individuals with compelling narratives thereby enhancing appreciation for both their art and humanity.

Objective 3

Advance the CIPC and CIPC for Young Artists as an enduring platform that champions and empowers young pianists, fostering their growth and skill development while ensuring the vibrancy of the classical piano art form.

Objective 4

Present branding and awareness events to the Cleveland area in order to enhance our reputation within the Northeast Ohio community.

Objective 5

Bring back competition Laureates for opportunities that directly enhance the Ohio community.



GOAL

2

Foster Positive Community Engagement

More fully engage the community through inspiring, inclusive, and accessible events, programs, and artistic development, directly benefiting the community and building appreciation for the piano.

GOAL 2: Foster Positive Community Engagement

Objective 1

Enhance audience experience at Piano Cleveland events by providing meaningful, mission-related community engagement programs that focus on the artistry of the piano and ensure every participant, audience member, and stakeholder can learn, experience, and interact with the organization without barriers or discrimination.

Strategy A: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of Piano Cleveland's existing community engagement programs, including Piano Cleveland Live, Piano Lab, Senior Concerts, Piano Kids Trio, After School Lessons, the Piano Truck, etc., to determine their alignment with the organization's overarching mission. This evaluation aims to identify areas of success, opportunities for improvement, and strategic priorities for future investments.

Strategy B: Develop an integrated strategy that encompasses the clear communication, sustainable operation, and strategic leveraging of Piano Cleveland's community engagement programs. This approach aims to enhance program visibility and effectively harness their impact to elevate Piano Cleveland's reputation and fundraising capabilities.

Strategy C: To enhance the safety and well-being of event attendees, performers, and staff, Piano Cleveland will systematically review, revise, update, and implement recommended safety protocols for all events, ensuring a secure and enjoyable experience for all stakeholders.

Strategy D: Piano Cleveland will establish a comprehensive crisis communications plan and protocol designed to effectively manage and mitigate potential crisis situations that may pose a threat to the reputation of Piano Cleveland and its associated competitions.

Strategy E: Define a comprehensive framework for inclusivity that guides Piano Cleveland in creating an environment where individuals from all backgrounds, identities, and abilities feel welcomed, respected, and safe. This framework will lead to an inclusion statement.

Objective 2

Expand and cultivate strategic partnerships with organizations and entities that align with Piano Cleveland's mission.

Strategy A: Establish transparent and well-defined expectations that outline the roles, responsibilities, and benefits of organizational partnerships. These expectations are to be clearly communicated to all impacted parties. This approach aims to foster mutually beneficial relationships that advance the collective goals of all participating partners.

Objective 3

Build connections with local pianists, teachers, students, and their families by providing resources and opportunities that enhance their professional and educational development while fostering a love of the piano.



GOAL 3

Increase/Diversify Financial Support and Provide Accountable Financial Operations

Provide revenue sufficient to sustain Piano Cleveland now and into the future by implementing and staffing a robust development focus while providing overall responsible and accountable fiscal operations.

GOAL 3: Increase/Diversify Financial Support and Provide Accountable Financial Operations

Objective 1

Create a comprehensive fundraising and revenue generation plan that outlines strategic initiatives, diverse funding streams, and targeted campaigns to ensure a sustainable and diversified financial base for Piano Cleveland's operations, programs, and artistic endeavors. This plan will incorporate the four phase fundraising concept of: 1) Identify 2) Cultivate 3) Secure 4) Honor.

Strategy A: Develop a segmented personalized donor communication strategy that tailors messages to different donor preferences and interests, emphasizing how their contributions directly support Piano Cleveland's current mission and initiatives.

Strategy B: To retain and organize staff focused on managing the key development functions (identifying, cultivating, securing, and honoring all donors.)

Strategy C: Engage lay leaders (Board, Development Committee) crucial to identifying and engaging new donors and those currently on the Board who have greater potential – to ensure we have sufficient targets of opportunity to meet overall financial goals.

Strategy D: To create a robust, up to date and well-organized CRM system that is crucial to our ability to "shop in our closet" for donors currently in the mix that have significantly more potential – make this a high priority for any new development personnel hires.

Objective 2

Manage Piano Cleveland's financial resources with transparency, accountability, and responsibility to effectively achieve the organization's goals while maintaining a sustainable and ethical financial foundation.



GOAL

4

Deliver Effective External Communication

Deploy communications strategies that will convey Piano Cleveland's message and mission to enhance the organization's reputation, build connection with donors, and develop audiences.

GOAL 4: Deliver Effective External Communication

Objective 1

Establish well-defined and quantifiable marketing priorities that encompass specific target audiences, the most effective communication channels, and the messaging strategies that yield the greatest benefits to the financial health and overall reputation of Piano Cleveland.

Strategy A: To create and implement a communications plan that spans traditional and emerging platforms, strategically targeting local, regional, national, and international audiences. This plan will serve as a roadmap to effectively convey Piano Cleveland's initiatives, events, and accomplishments, ensuring our messages resonate across geographical boundaries and with a diverse spectrum of stakeholders. Through this initiative, we endeavor to foster a deeper connection, cultivate wider recognition, and amplify the impact of Piano Cleveland's mission on a global scale.

Strategy B: To create concise and comprehensible messaging statements that succinctly encapsulate Piano Cleveland's purpose, goals, and the impact it seeks to achieve. These statements will be formulated in a manner that is easily comprehensible by both internal stakeholders and external audiences, enabling them to confidently and effectively convey the distinct value that Piano Cleveland brings to its various audiences.

Strategy C: Develop intentional collaborations with The City of Cleveland, Cleveland-based organizations, and the State of Ohio to amplify the recognition and celebration of the CIPC (presented by Piano Cleveland) as one of the world's most prestigious events, fostering a shared sense of regional pride and positioning it as a symbol of artistic excellence.

Strategy D:

Part One: Update website landing pages before the 2024 competition.

Part Two: Conduct a comprehensive audit of Piano Cleveland's current website to evaluate its functionality and effectiveness in conveying a clear and impactful message. Based on the audit findings, recommend the optimal course of action, which may involve either rebuilding the website or implementing modifications to ensure seamless functionality and enhanced message clarity.

Strategy E: Utilize engaging and respectful storytelling techniques to effectively communicate the stories of contestants, promoting their individual artistic journeys while also enhancing the visibility of the CIPC, Piano Cleveland, and its overarching mission. This approach seeks to captivate audiences, generate interest, and underscore the organization's commitment to both exceptional artistry and community enrichment.



GOAL

5

Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness

Enhance Piano Cleveland's operational efficiency and achieve a higher standard of excellence. This effort will ensure a stronger foundation for delivering its core objectives and services.

GOAL 5: Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness

Objective 1 | Enhance Piano Cleveland's Staff operational efficiency.

Strategy A: To conduct a comprehensive review of Piano Cleveland's existing policies and procedures, assessing their alignment with best practices and identified organizational goals, and recommend updates that enhance operational efficiency and transparency.

Strategy B: Develop comprehensive job descriptions and accountability charts for all staff members at Piano Cleveland, ensuring clear delineation of roles, responsibilities, and performance indicators to empower each team member to contribute effectively to the organization's overall success.

Strategy C: Define and communicate explicit expectations for the roles, conduct, and etiquette of all board members, as well as the specific roles, behavior, and etiquette of those serving as chairpersons. This initiative aims to ensure a cohesive and productive governance structure, fostering accountability, alignment, and effective leadership within the board of Piano Cleveland.

Strategy D: To optimize the operational efficiency and focus of Piano Cleveland, our objective is to conduct a comprehensive review of the current administrative tasks essential to the organization's function. This review aims to identify areas where administrative processes can be streamlined, refined, and improved to free up valuable time and resources for our core mission.

Strategy E: Implement a comprehensive professional development program that offers staff members targeted learning opportunities and resources aligned with Piano Cleveland's mission. This initiative aims to equip staff with enhanced capabilities, ensuring optimal alignment with organizational goals, fostering job satisfaction, and promoting a culture of continuous growth.

Strategy F: Establish a systematic process of encouragement and recognition that fosters a "Culture of Appreciation" within Piano Cleveland. This initiative aims to acknowledge positive actions and behaviors, boosting team morale, reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and empowering the organization to operate at its optimal potential.

Strategy G: Conduct a thorough and comprehensive competitive wage analysis to assess and compare compensation structures within similar professions and industries. The size of the organization will also be a factor when doing the comparative analysis. This initiative aims to equip Piano Cleveland with the necessary insights to attract, recruit, and retain exceptional staff members by ensuring competitive compensation that reflects industry standards and values their contributions.

Strategy H: Implementing standardized internal communication practices and encouraging compliance among staff and board members. The strategy includes establishing, distributing, and reinforcing specific expectations and protocols for internal communication, providing clear guidelines for communication etiquette and professionalism, and offering training and support to all board and staff members.

Objective 2 | Enhance Piano Cleveland's Board operational efficiency.

Strategy A: Establish a structured board development process that focuses on enhancing the skill sets of current board members, identifying prospective members with expertise to advance the board, and actively promoting diversity within the board's composition to enrich its perspectives and capabilities.



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