



2017 Annual Report

2017: Dreams Coming True

2017 saw the spark of new growth for WMGSO. We began our own Twitch channel, playing games that we had performed music from, and interviewing the arrangers of those pieces. This allowed us to provide a more nuanced insight into our arrangers' visions for the music they made for us, while placing the piece in the context of its game of origin. Twitch is also a massive platform in the gaming community, so our fans were able to directly interact with us and our arrangers through it, furthering our outreach.

Further discussed below, our administration started to grow a great deal throughout 2017, and our goals grew more ambitious than ever. We saw our number of concerts increased during the year, and had a massively successful crowdfunding campaign for an historic first!

For our own Members, we introduced Town Hall meetings following season concert performances. This helped us to provide feedback on how we felt the administration handled the season and its events, while encouraging discourse from the Members on what we could do better for the sake of them and our audiences.

The Town Hall was a particularly good opportunity to impress upon the Membership that we are all volunteers - and that if they would like to be a part of enacting change within the ensemble, then our first new elections were coming up! The Members elected a new Development Director and solidified all Board of Executive terms for the next three years.

Furthering Our Mission

2017 furthered our mission in some very big ways. We tabled at Awesomecon, a prominent DC convention that helped us continue to build our community connections. We increased our total number of concert performances to five - two in the Spring, two in the Fall, and a Small Ensemble Showcase in the Summer. We also started planning for our largest undertaking yet: recording a full-length professional studio album!

The album planning was kicked into gear over the Summer, with the launching of a crowdfunding campaign on IndieGoGo. Our initial goal was \$5,000. Before the

campaign even concluded, we had met that goal in mid-December! We set our sights on some stretch goals, hoping that our visit to MAGFest in January 2018 would see even more excitement from our generous backers. A professionally recorded album would allow us to reach fans across the world, sharing our love of video game music with anyone who was able to buy it.

Speaking of MAGFest, our most successful event was being approved to perform at MAGFest 2018 - the Music and Gaming Festival, the largest video game music convention on the East Coast - as a full ensemble! Performing at MAGFest was always a dream of ours, and to know that we would be able to share our music with an entire convention of video game music fans was a phenomenal prospect.

We spent the Fall of 2017 preparing a repertoire that we could be proud to put on for both our Fall concerts, and our performance at MAGFest, while keeping the Spring repertoire in mind - as that would become our first recordings. It was an incredibly exciting time for WMGSO!

Achieving Stability

We found better footing in 2017 by putting together a dedicated team of volunteers in the Development Team. This was the first spark of further growth for the whole Administration, as the Dev Team worked to find more grant opportunities and put on the first of select fundraiser events at local restaurants and cafes in the Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia regions. Our total in grant awards was about \$2,000, and about \$300 for our small fundraisers.

Our ticket sales model allowed us to raise nearly \$10,000 for continued operating costs throughout the year. Between this and our annual Supporters, we were able to keep a regular schedule of performances in the Spring, Summer, and Fall, while striving for even more memorable venues in the area.

By the end of the year, WMGSO had grossed \$28,733.56 between the Album crowdfunding and our regular operations, helping us stay well above our set \$15,000 2017 budget.

Why Does It Matter?

Between making concrete - if ambitious - plans for recording a studio album, being invited to perform at MAGFest, and growing our organization's administration even more, WMGSO was on the path to realizing actual dreams come true. For many, the prospect of being on the main stage at MAGFest was analogous to feeling like a rock star, and many of us had dreamt about it for a very long time. The Board also had set, in the beginning, a goal of recording a studio album within our first 20 Year Plan - and here we were, about to do so within the first five!

However, all of these dreams weren't just on the part of our Members. Being able to play at MAGFest meant the opportunity to share some of our favorite music directly with the most passionate members of our immediate community. Having an

album of our music for sale meant letting members of more distant communities enjoy the work that we've done. Both prospects were very exciting opportunities to fulfill our primary mission - to share video game music with the world.

