

centrum
creativity in community



CENTRUM 2020

IMPACT REPORT

Centrum Impact Report

A review of 2020 and a preview of the year to come.



HELLO!

Centrum believes in a future where anyone from anywhere can nurture their creativity in an environment that is supportive, challenging and uplifting—building a world of greater civility and inclusion through the arts.

Because of you, Centrum met the challenges presented by the 2020 pandemic and all that has followed.

Working with members of Centrum's generous and supportive family—workshop participants, concert attendees, artist faculty, artists in residence, donors, volunteers, members of the staff and our Board of Directors—we adapted to changing conditions and found new ways to make lives better and more meaningful through the arts.

The year had Centrum postponing most programs and delivering modified versions virtually when possible, all while meeting the health and safety standards required to keep us safe from COVID19. In a spirit of sturdy resilience, Centrum's staff kept *creativity in community* alive for 43,113 people in 2020. And Centrum ended the year with more financial security than any of us anticipated at its rough and tumble beginning (a 1% surplus!).

In this 2020 Impact Report, you'll learn about the artists, participants, residents, and thinkers that took part in Centrum's programming this past year, and about Centrum's plans for programs and residencies in 2021.

The coming year holds the promise of highly effective vaccines that will make it possible for Centrum to get back to some of the face-to-face, knee-to-knee, in-person sharing of art and culture we value so highly. And, we will also press forward—the pandemic has been a catalyst for transcending geography and expanding Centrum's capacity to welcome anyone from anywhere to the Centrum family.

Thank you for caring, and thank you for reading! Feel free to call us—Centrum's phone number is 360.385.3102, and our general e-mail address is info@centrum.org—or find us on the web at centrum.org.

Robert Birman
Executive Director



Workshop Participants

We are grateful to our registered workshop participants for responding with such understanding and generosity to the news that the pandemic forced Centrum to postpone many of its workshops. And we thank you for participating in the series of Internet events that took their place in 2020—you joined 35,915 other artists who mastered an array of online formats (including our podcasts) and participated in Centrum workshops. For example:

After a wildly successful **Explorations**—held for a record 75 middle school students from throughout the state, two weeks before the pandemic quarantine took hold—Young Artist Project workshops for youth were cancelled, with the exception of **Water World**. Registered students received learning kits in advance and worked with art and science instructors online over two days; a mother of one student observed, "he had so much fun online he didn't want it to end."

Early in the pandemic, **Red Hot Strings** drew over 80 eager and grateful musicians from around the United States who learned and played in a series of six-hour online sessions over two days in May, 2020. Artistic Curator Matt Munisteri and the artist faculty he recruited for the workshop had already lost months' worth of gigs by then, and were happy to teach; Centrum paid each an honoraria,

and workshop participants supplemented this income by "tipping" via PayPal.

And **Coviddle Tunes** followed! Fans of **Fiddle Tunes** could not stand to go a year without this long-time gathering of fiddlers and musicians. They organized a free eight-day online event for over 500 registrants. The jam-packed array included: 37 master musicians teaching 32 classes, a Zoom Lounge, a daily Quarantine Happy Hour, two dances, Genre Jams, a violin vigil for Black fiddler Elijah McClain, a Hat Party, and multiple opportunities to "hang out" with master fiddlers. Seasoned participants practiced alongside new students: one wrote, "Being shy about my music skills, and unable to afford the airfare, I don't attend Fiddle Tunes. But this year I was able to play in private while learning alongside others, and I had a wonderful experience." Presentations explored Black contributions to American fiddle traditions: Jerron Paxton on his experiences as a Black man playing old-time and ragtime music; Joe Seamons examining Exploitation and Disrespect in American Dance Music; and Ben Hunter's *Black Music: Full Stop*.

The **Port Townsend Writers Conference** proceeded carefully with its online format, limiting the student-to-faculty ratio to allow 9 artist faculty to work in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry with 56 students over 5 days, and

As much as we relish the return of traditional offerings, it is unlikely we can gather safely before September 2021. Workshops regularly scheduled through that time will be offered online. At this writing, here's what you can expect ➡

three readings via Zoom for audiences of up to 500.

By September 12-13, Centrum's annual celebration of merry music making, the **Ukulele Festival**, had expanded to serve 366 players who took online classes from 15 ukulele masters. The notes were flyin' and the cheerful energy was, as always, palpable!

On two mornings in December, **Perspectives on Legacy**, organized by the Frye Art Museum and presented in partnership with Centrum, drew 138 online participants from around the country. Under the guidance of seven presenters, they reflected on the beliefs and causes that animate one's life and the many ways in which other artists and thinkers have left emotional, intellectual, and physical legacies that support their hopes for humanity.

Centrum has many reasons to be profoundly grateful to you workshop participants. One group deserves special mention: of the 997 of you who pre-registered for 2020 workshops, 63 of you donated all or part of your registration fee to Centrum in 2020, for an investment of \$10,900 in our ongoing operations. Thank you for this important and meaningful support.

ONLINE WORKSHOPS

For full details go to centrum.org.

Explorations

March 1-5

Water World

April 26-30

Choro

April 17, 24, and May 1

Red Hot Strings

May 14-16

Tales, Texts, & Theater

May 1-4 (tentative)

Voices from the Field

Arts Academy

June 21-25

Voice Works

cancelled

Fiddle Tunes

July 2-5

Port Townsend Writers Conference

July 19-24.

Jazz Port Townsend

July 26-30

Acoustic Blues Festival

August 3-8

DANCE This

cancelled

Communiversality

March 1: Joel Sartore, the Photo Ark Project

April 21: Sarah Vowell, best-selling author often heard on *This American Life* (and more to come)

Port Townsend Ukulele Festival online/in-person, Date TBA

Conference on Creative Aging

Date TBA



Audiences

We missed you in 2020! We look forward to the time when we'll enjoy the impact of your appreciative applause, your smart questions, and your smiling faces at intermission or post-concert. There's no doubt about it, nothing can take the place of seeing you in person.

However, Centrum offered the following online alternatives to connect and engage with you, our audience:

The Chamber Music Listening Club was adapted from the traditional book club model to offer a new way to enjoy chamber music. The first meeting of the club featured the renowned Miró Quartet. The musicians engaged 83 audience members in an analysis of a recent recording, answered questions, and played excerpts in a 60-minute Zoom meeting hosted by Artistic Director Lucinda Carver.

Designed to appeal to learners of all ages, **Communiversality**—Centrum's new arts and lectures series—inspired thought-provoking conversations on a wide range of topics affecting our world. Each 90-minute event featured selected experts in dialog with journalists and reporters from Crosscut and KCTS public media, hosted by Robert Birman. In this inaugural year, the program pivoted to an on-line format and ended its first full year with six online conversations for 2,310 ticketholders and subsequent podcast listeners.

With **Artists in Place: Virtual Creativity in Community**, Centrum created a hub for podcasts, videos, meet-ups, and articles highlighting the histories and contemporary process of artists sheltering, working, and responding in place. We thank the 34,219 of you who have had a listen, and invite you to stay tuned for more of the following podcasts in 2021:

Crackin' the Vault features musical nuggets from the last five decades of Centrum programming in 33 (to-date) themed one-hour shows for local radio station KPTZ, featuring more than 55 National Heritage Fellows and Peter McCracken as host.

On A.I.R. offered 12 hour-long conversations with creative folks discussing the intersections of process, place, and the personal, with a focus on ways creative practice can affect change through art, hosted by Michelle Hagewood.

Conversations with Jazz Leaders About Their Musical Journeys had Artistic Director John Clayton hosting five informal 90-minute sessions with some of the Jazz Port Townsend music faculty. They traded humorous and vivid stories about the experiences, colleagues, mentors, and musical heroes that have shaped them.

The Centrum podcast series also includes past readings and lectures from the historic Port Townsend Writers Conference.



In ways we could never have predicted, the AIR program gained traction in 2020. Two successful first months of residencies were followed by the work of cancelling and rescheduling 112 resident artists and 33 weeks of activity to meet the State Stay-at-Home order. When it was safe for people to return to campus, Centrum's Operations group managed a scrupulous and strenuous deep cleaning of the cabin units and studio spaces.

Residency Manager Michelle Hagewood used this fallow time to convene groups of local and regional artists via Zoom to discuss creative practice during this difficult time, create and launch the On A.I.R. podcast, continue publication of the AIR newsletter, and find ways to connect artists and collaborators from the contemporary arts community through Foundwork.

By July, Centrum was prepared to welcome residents to the campus again. These artists observed all pandemic protocols; those in residence the week of September 20 demonstrated high levels of resilience as West Coast fires engendered very poor air quality requiring fans and Gerry-rigged air filters. It was a challenging yet exhilarating year of art and creation that resulted in 150 residencies over 1,200 days of creativity in community, and 12 podcasts.

Artists in Residence



The 7th Annual Emerging Artists Residency brought six impressive young artists to the campus for the month of October. They produced an exceptional body of work, which can be seen in this still photo gallery: <https://gallery.atelierpictures.com/centrum/>.

Madrona MindBody Institute and Centrum, two of the many nonprofits that lease space at Fort Worden, have established a formal collaborative working relationship to expand their current programming efforts, develop new collaborative initiatives, and share program resources. Together, the two organizations host classes, immersive workshops, trainings, retreats and special events across a broad spectrum of creative and moving arts including dance, yoga, mindful movement, music, writing and creative aging.

The expanded relationship began in October, with Madrona hosting two Centrum Emerging Artists in residence for the full month in two of its creative spaces at Building #310 on the Fort Worden campus. Since then, Centrum and Madrona have continued to plan significant ways to share the iconic Madrona building for programming, classes, events and administrative space.



Volunteers & Faculty



Volunteers

Despite the dearth of face-to-face concerts and workshops, Centrum munched hard on the fruits of volunteer labor in 2020, much of it offered in the form of Gala committee work, in technical assistance for online events, and Fort Worden campus maintenance. There were 57 of you, contributing 2,696 hours of your unique expertise and skill sets.

Faculty

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt by professional artists the world over, and the members of Centrum's cadre of professional artists who teach are no exception to this harsh reality.

On a national level, losses are estimated at \$14.6 billion and climbing. Artists and arts organizations in Washington State have lost an aggregate \$35,685,506; 916 artists have been laid off, and 1,369 have been furloughed.

We began 2020 with plans to bring 250 of you to the Fort Worden campus to live and work with artists of all ages and at all stages of their development in our array of workshops. By the end of the year, conditions had allowed Centrum to hire 110 of you for a collective 3,921 working days. You mastered the art of engaging with and teaching workshop participants online, participated in podcasts, recorded messages of warmth and hope for our Gala audience, and committed to returning to Centrum in some capacity in 2021.

For centuries, artists have embodied the quality of resilience, the ingredients for which include purpose, connection, flexibility, and hope. In these unusual times, you have doubled down; for the example you set and the gifts you share with us, we offer you our heartfelt thanks.



Thanks to a \$182,000 matching grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, Centrum can acquire the technology upgrades to make online participation a permanent feature of its workshops and residencies. The grant represents 50% of Centrum's \$364,000 fundraising goal for this work.

Securing this important funding means we'll be able to broadcast activity in up to ten classrooms simultaneously with multiple camera angles in each educational setting; connect workshop participants with performers and teachers working remotely from their own region or place; and use large outdoor tents and air purifiers to augment Centrum's on-site summer teaching facilities while observing pandemic protocols. We expect to have the equipment on hand by the end of the summer with hopes of implementing the full immersive experiences for online participation in 2022.

Some of the 1:1 match for this grant has already been raised; the remainder will be secured from regional sources. If you have a special interest in supporting this project, please contact Karen Gose Clemens at 360.385.3102 ext. 132 or kclemens@centrum.org.



Ed Littlefield
Centrum Champion 2020

In a departure from traditional practice, the Board of Directors has named one of its own, Ed Littlefield, Jr. as Centrum Champion for 2020. Says President Leah Mitchell: "If your life has been touched by Centrum, it has been touched by Ed Littlefield, for without Ed there would be no Centrum. In the recessionary 1980s, Centrum was struggling to find its financial footing; in 2020, despite a worldwide pandemic, Centrum faced its financial present and future with confidence. In every year between these bookends, Ed has committed the leadership and support to ensure Centrum's viability. As Centrum approaches its 50th anniversary year, it is a privilege to recognize Ed for all his service."

A story told by Centrum's Founder, Joe Wheeler, best characterizes the open-hearted ways of our honoree:

I didn't know who Ed was until Frank Ferrel, who was our folk arts coordinator, came to me and said, "You know we've got this guy coming to Fiddle Tunes; he's kind of a "young" old boy, but he's a really interesting guy you should get to know." He drove around in this dirty, old brown car, and then I took a better look at it and discovered it was a dirty brown (but new) Mercedes. We started to get to know Ed a little bit and found out that he was a good country musician and folk music aficionado, and he got interested in all the different things we did.

He once said to me, "You know, I give money every year to different groups. I'll make a gift to Centrum. What do you need?" So I called Frank and Mark Hamby [today serving on the

Centrum Board of Directors as Treasurer] and said, "What should we ask for? Why don't we give him some options?" We decided we'd ask him for \$25,000 to do a project...Or, here's another \$25,000 project that he might like to fund. We made this presentation to him and told him about these two programs. He said "That's fine," and he funded both of them. That was the first really significant private sector grant to Centrum—\$50,000 from Ed Littlefield. I couldn't believe it. Mark and Frank and I were amazed because Centrum was small potatoes in the competition to raise big private money."

Ed is a musician (vocals, pedal steel guitar, Highland bagpipes, keyboards, mandolin, Dobro, lead guitar) and a product of the Northern California folk scene. He relocated to Washington State in the early 1970s and toured extensively with the well-known Seattle Western swing band Lance Romance before founding Sage Arts, one of the Northwest's premier recording studios, where he functions as president, producer, and engineer.

Serving on Centrum's Board of Directors since 1984, Ed provided critical support to the campaign that created McCurdy Pavilion; established the Peter McCracken Heritage Fund Endowment; contributed the funds for Centrum's first cash reserve; and in 2020, provided a dollar-for-dollar match for all gifts received from individual donors after July 1, 2020.

Here's to Ed Littlefield, Jr., recipient of the 2020 Centrum Champion Award.

Centrum faces the twin challenges of remaining connected and visible in this second year of the pandemic. Connected—with you, and all the members of our shared community; and visible, even as the time when we can do things face-to-face and in-person appears a ways down the road.

As we gear up for an exciting year of multi-generational programming, *with greater reach and potential than in any year in our history*, we invite you to join us by making a contribution to Centrum today. Your donation will help provide employment and residencies for up to 350 artists and inspire thousands of students of all ages to *keep at it*—keep striving, keep trying, and with *creativity in community*, keep the work going.

To donate, go to centrum.org or contact Karen Gose Clemens, Senior Director of Development, at kclemens@centrum.org or 360.385.3102 ext. 132.

Donors

Centrum revised its operating budget at the beginning of the pandemic, and ended 2020 with a reduction in revenues (composed primarily of contributions, ticket sales, and workshop registrations) of \$2.65 million from 2019 levels. With the aid of PPP funds from the Small Business Administration, Centrum was able to break even in 2020, but at an operational level less than half (42%) compared to the prior year. Centrum focused on online offerings in 2020 to sustain its connection with its core stakeholders, and it expects to maintain this online-only position until the fall of 2021.

On October 17, 2020, Centrum produced its first virtual Gala and Auction. An audience of 455 gathered around their computers, bid online in silent and live auctions, and raised their 'paddles' for Centrum's Fund for the Future. Video greetings from Lucinda Carver, Dudu Maia, Pharis Romero, and Jontavious Willis punctuated the two-hour event, and a conversation between Jazz Artistic Director John Clayton and renowned jazz pianist and singer Diana Krall (a Centrum alum) made it a night to remember. Together, you raised \$405,839, setting yet another record for Centrum's signature fundraiser.

Staff

After the shock of needing to place 40% of Centrum's administrative staff and production crew on standby in response to the pandemic, remaining essential/full-time staff (those deemed essential to developing alternative programming and keeping the organization going) developed a rhythm of sorts.

The beats in this rhythm include:

- weekly Zoom staff meetings
- regular program manager, department, and Fort Worden Partner meetings—all on Zoom
- interior repairs and maintenance to Centrum's artist cabins and artist studios
- hours and hours of administrative/inventory work
- planning for 2020 and 2021 programs
- lots of hands-on but physically-distanced work in and outside the office
- mastering/offering technical assistance to help audiences, donors, and workshop participants engage online with Centrum
- a surprisingly fun holiday party, held via Zoom and featuring a seriously competitive game of Centrvia

PPP funds from the Small Business Administration were supplemented by donations and grant funds to cover salaries and related expenses; Centrum has already secured a second round of PPP funding for 2021.

Board of Directors

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John Clayton, *Jazz*

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Pharis Romero, *Voice Works*

Joel Savoy, *Fiddle Tunes*

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Program Managers

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Michelle Hagewood, *Artist Residencies*

Mary Hilts, *Acoustic Blues*

George Marie, *Writers Conference*

Peter McCracken,
Voice Works, Fiddle Tunes, Ukulele

Gregg Miller, *Chamber Music, Choro, Jazz*

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Katya Kirsch, *Development Officer*

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Claire Africa, *Volunteer Coordinator*

Holly Barousse, *Operations Assistant*

Hali Miller, *Registrar*

Owen Rowe, *Box Office Manager*

Lisa Werner, *Director of Operations*

Finance

Ray Kennedy, *Director of Finance*

Susan Randolph, *Finance Assistant*



THANK YOU

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