



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Swallow Hill Music is poised for an exciting new chapter in its storied 43-year history. Renowned for its nurturing environment that fosters musical talent and a strong sense of community, Swallow Hill Music is ready to extend its welcoming embrace even further. By forging authentic relationships and diversifying program offerings, audiences, and internal practices, we're dedicated to making music a force for positive change in the metro Denver area.

This vision is guided by a carefully crafted strategic plan, the culmination of a six-month collaborative effort involving our dedicated staff, Board of Directors, and valued community members. Embracing our unique contributions to the Denver music scene, we've charted a course that focuses on three pivotal priorities:

3 PRIORITIES

- **Cultural Equity**
- **Organizational Capacity**
- **Program and Partnership Development**



Our commitment to equity permeates every facet of our work, ensuring that music remains accessible to all and transcends barriers of race, income, ability, and geography.

To bring this vision to life, we understand the importance of financial sustainability and operational efficiency. Over the next three years, we'll fortify our foundation, investing in branding, staff capacity, and infrastructure. Additionally, program and partnership development will be at the forefront, offering diverse educational opportunities, supporting artists' growth, and fostering vital conversations within the cultural sector. As we navigate a world in transition, one thing remains constant: the power of music to unite communities. We're eager to lead this charge, connecting hearts through music in the years ahead.

Walt DeHaven, Board Chair

Aengus Finnan, President & CEO

OUR HISTORY



Founded in 1979, Swallow Hill Music is a Denver-based 501(c)(3) organization that strives to positively impact the quality of people's lives through music. As an SCFD-funded Tier II organization with a \$5 Million annual budget, Swallow Hill Music operates a music school and three performance venues at its Broadway & Yale location and produces outreach activities

and community events throughout the Denver metro region. Swallow Hill Music is a nationally revered hub for concerts, classes, and community, and is a recipient of both the Mayor's and the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. We are an inductee in the Colorado Music Hall of Fame and a recipient of Folk Alliance International's Business Lifetime Achievement award.



IDENTITY STATEMENT

An identity statement is an honest description of an organization at a moment in time. It incorporates critical defining elements related to mission, business model, and organizational strengths. Effective strategic choices are rooted in a firm understanding of “who we are” as an organization and the ability to leverage unique or differentiating strengths. Swallow Hill Music’s board affirmed the organization’s identity in June 2023.

To set its course over the next three years, Swallow Hill Music analyzed its organizational identity and its unique attributes within its operating environment. Given the range of other music education and performance organizations in metro Denver, Swallow Hill Music is mindful of what it does best while it adapts to changing conditions. The named strengths were developed with input from community members, staff, board, and external stakeholders.

MISSION	To build community through music performance, education, and outreach
VISION	To be recognized as a community leader for accessible discovery and appreciation of music
VALUES	Inclusion, creativity, and growth
WHAT WE DO	We provide music education and curate music experiences both within our walls and in community settings
WHERE WE WORK	Seven-county metro Denver areas and beyond
WHO WE SERVE	Music makers and music lovers; students of all ages; public schools and preschools
HOW WE PAY FOR IT	Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), concert ticket sales, music class tuition, grants, donor contributions, memberships, and retail sales

Differentiating Strengths

▪ FOLK LEGACY AND BEYOND

Swallow Hill Music’s reputation extends beyond folk and acoustic music, creating enduring community bonds. While the current demographic leans older and whiter, Swallow Hill Music aims to leverage the genre’s diverse legacy to welcome new cultures and partners. Established community members will act as ambassadors, bridging connections with new students and participants.

▪ TRUSTED AND WELCOMING CURATOR OF MUSIC EXPERIENCES

Swallow Hill Music is recognized as a national hub for established “listening room” artists, offering a non-commercial environment for musical discovery. This reputation provides an opportunity to broaden music offerings and attract a wider audience on a journey of musical exploration.

▪ CULTIVATE ARTISTS THROUGH COMMUNAL LEARNING

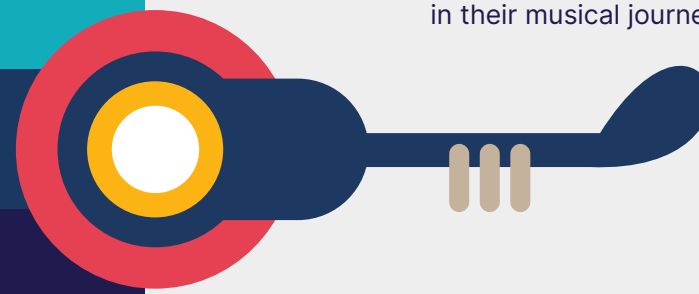
Unique group classes and jam sessions provide a supportive space for artists to develop their craft and enjoy performing. Over the next three years, Swallow Hill Music will enhance this strength by expanding performance and professional development opportunities. Students can progress from education to performance through collaborative classes and performance opportunities.

▪ BUILD COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

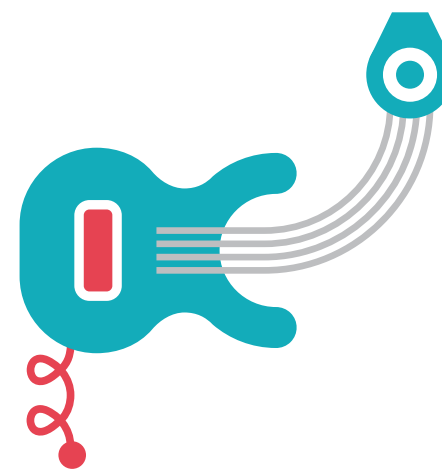
Swallow Hill Music’s Little Swallows program serves as a bridge to under-served communities, creating new connections. These early relationships serve as a foundation for future outreach programs, deepening and expanding community connections.

▪ FOSTERING CONNECTION

Swallow Hill Music builds a consistent “come as you are” community by connecting and supporting students, teachers, staff, patrons, and volunteers in their musical journeys.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



#1: CULTURAL EQUITY

Swallow Hill Music will use music to engage, incorporate, and showcase the diversity of the metro Denver community. This priority will be infused throughout all levels of the organization and, most specifically, the staff and board will focus on the following goals to ensure this priority receives appropriate resources.

Cultural Equity Goals

- Articulate a cultural equity statement
- Establish a DEIA lens (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access) as standard planning/review process
- Diversify our board
- Diversify our staff and volunteers
- Diversify our vendors and partners
- Expand range and variety of folk music offered (classes/concerts)
- Create a Cultural Equity Council to inform our DEIA work

#2: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Swallow Hill Music recognizes that a solid infrastructure is required to achieve all its strategic priorities. The following goals will provide the basis for a strong business model and organizational structure and will support strategic priorities around cultural equity and program/partnership development.

Organizational Capacity Goals

- Build Swallow Hill Music's nonprofit brand through expanded marketing/promotion
- Grow partnerships to leverage resources and expand access
- Strengthen our business model by diversifying revenue streams, increasing sponsorship opportunities, and improving efficiencies
- Investing in talent throughout the life cycle of each staff role
- Develop cross-department collaborative pathways
- Assess and invest in our use of technology throughout the organization
- Repair, renovate and refresh building to deliver a safe, accessible, and professional experience for all while assessing long-term facility feasibility

#3: PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The heart of Swallow Hill Music is the wide range of classes, concerts, outreach programs, and offerings it creates. With over 140,000 musical connections in 2022 alone, Swallow Hill Music has a deep capacity for developing programs that meet the ever-evolving needs and desires of the community. Over the next three years, Swallow Hill Music will further refine its programs and partnerships to elevate the quality and diversity of music offerings, continue to grow its newest programs (Little Swallows and music therapy), and expand its role as a resource for artists and the cultural sector at large.

Program and Partnership Development Goals

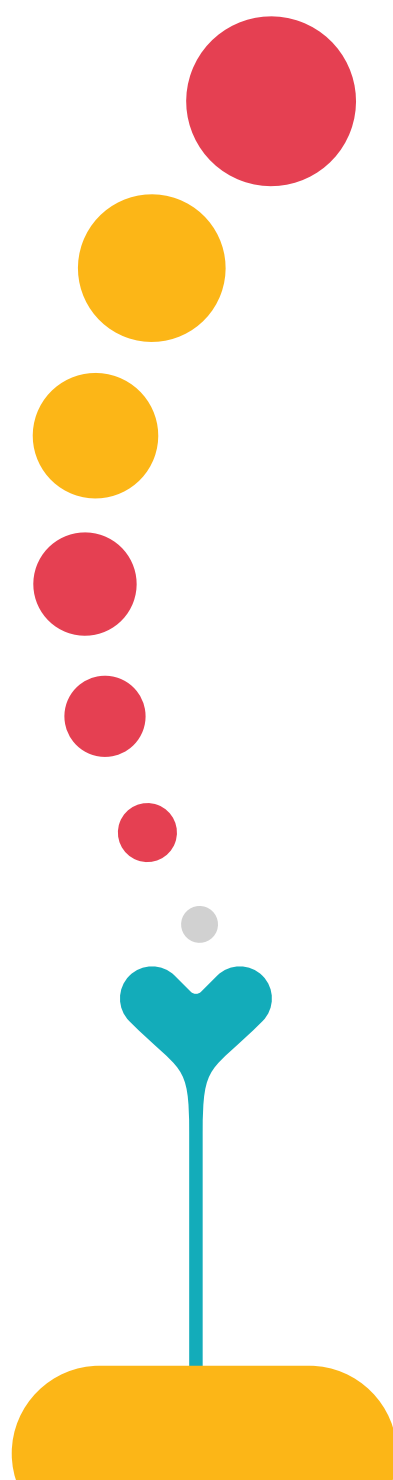
- Create a robust program offering that supports students at all points of their musical learning journey
- Build community partnerships that expand our programs, broaden Swallow Hill Music's reach, and serve the diversity of the Denver Metro Region
- Convene cultural sector conversations
- Provide artist professional development resources
- Ensure current and new programs meet strategic priorities



The Path Forward

Swallow Hill Music is embarking on the next chapter of its development as a leader in the accessible discovery and appreciation of music. Over the next three years, Swallow Hill Music will focus on building cultural equity, organizational capacity, and programs and partnerships. These three strategic priorities were identified in an eight-month process that leveraged the knowledge and passion of our community of musicians as well as our students, staff, board, concert-goers, and external stakeholders.

This plan is the result of frank and in-depth discussions about the future of Swallow Hill Music and how to build on its legacy to expand impact to more people and communities in the seven-county metro Denver area. The resulting alignment of staff and board around goals that will underpin Swallow Hill Music's success will be outlined in a resource and operational plan to be developed in the next phase of work for implementation through 2026.





SWALLOW HILL
MUSIC

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SWALLOW HILL MUSIC IS A REGISTERED 501(C)(3) #84-0781725
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