Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe, but we are rapidly approaching our 20th anniversary season, which we will celebrate in 2016-17. I founded Winsor Music in 1996 as a chamber music series. In the past twenty years, we have commissioned thirty new works by contemporary composers and added several educational and outreach programs including a residency at the Mather School in Dorchester, a summer camp scholarship program for students of Project STEP, an intensive Bach Institute in collaboration with Emmanuel Music and Oberlin College, and our new mentoring program, where professional musicians rehearse and perform with high school students. As you can imagine, this is a lot of work! I have started to share my administrative duties with the amazing Katie Hoyer who will be serving as interim executive director for the next two years. Katie started with Winsor Music as an intern from Smith College in the summer of 2012 and has been working for us ever since. She has been doing an outstanding job and is actually managing to pull me, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century!

Tricia Kopko, Smith College ’15, was our summer intern. Tricia is smart, hardworking and has a lovely soprano voice; in July, she performed Mozart and Bach on our outreach series at the VNA in Somerville. We could not have asked for a better intern. Tricia graduated from Smith College in the spring and just accepted a job at Chamber Theatre Productions in Boston. Along with our Managing Director Stephen Kruse, Katie and Tricia concentrated on two major projects over the summer: a database upgrade and a Hatchfund campaign to raise money for our mentoring program.

Hatchfund is a nonprofit online fundraising platform, and our project was to raise $4,000 in order to hire another mentor and add one more group to our program. Since January, I have been working with three high school seniors in the first group, Violobos. We’ve given a number of concerts; our most recent performance took place on the Charles River aboard the H.M.S. Possibility with Captain Ben Zander at the helm.

Thanks to your generous support, we met our Hatchfund goal! The extraordinary Gabby Diaz is the new Winsor mentor, and our latest group consists of three students from the Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Over the academic year, Gabby and I will divide our time between these two groups. We have not yet solved the conundrum of how to name them, but for now, we are calling them Violobos I and II. We are very excited about the success of our campaign and believe that the growth of this mentoring program will be central to Winsor Music’s mission in the years to come.
Our November concert will feature La Fenice, a quintet of dear and longtime friends formed after the terrible events of September 11, 2001. Our name (Italian for phoenix) was inspired by the image of the mythical bird which rises reborn from the ashes and symbolizes beauty and the immortality of art. The program will include music of Haydn, Fauré and Schuller. It is part of a week-long series of events honoring Gunther Schuller, the Pulitzer prize-winning Boston composer, jazz historian, conductor, educator and president of New England Conservatory. Gunther died at the age of 89 on June 21st.

Winsor Music helped to send several students from Project STEP to summer music schools. They were Ridley Hoyte, violin, Sterling Hoyte, violin; Tamara Cambronerla, cello; Njoma Grevious, violin and viola; and Keilina Montero do Canto, cello. Keilina had this to say about her experience:

Thank you for helping me to attend Encore/Coda Camp. At Encore/Coda, not only do you get to spend the summer making music, but you also develop great relationships with people you meet. There are people from different places, whether it may be within the United States or out of the country. I met people from New York, Maine, California, Spain, Germany, and even Venezuela! The camp also provides a list of different classes, whether it may be music or something else fun. Classes go from Arts & Crafts, to Boating, and even to Music from the 60s! I had such a great time there!

Music camps are one of those hefty investments with a tremendous return. Without Peggy and Winsor Music we would not be able to make the full investment to ensure that every Project STEP student gets the transformative experience of music camp. Thank you so much to all who contribute to it.

— Mary Jaffee, Executive Director, Project STEP

Our first concert in October featured a new piece by John Heiss, a string quartet that he graciously adapted for oboe. (I have no shame when it comes to asking my friends to help me expand the oboe repertoire!) The rest of our season will feature commissioned works by Andreia Pinto Correia and Yi Yiing Chen, and we are awaiting three more from Anna Weesner, Lev Mamuya and Jim Primosch.

These days my head is spinning from Winsor Music’s various projects. We have a great deal of money to raise, and that is a bit terrifying! My most important priority is never to lose sight of our mission, and I am happy that we are looking toward the future and working hard to keep the organization strong. As always, I am extremely grateful for your loyal support. There is not room in our newsletter to thank everyone who needs to be thanked, so you will find more names in the margins. (If I’ve forgotten you, I’ll get you next time!) I look forward to seeing you on November 23rd.

Peggy Pearson