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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
FAI acknowledges that all of its activities and that of its North American member organizations take place on ancestral Indigenous lands. FAI’s office is located on the traditional land of the Kansa/Kaw, Osage, Kickapoo, and Očhéthi Šakōwin nations. FAI acknowledges that this year’s conference in New Orleans took place on the ancestral lands of the Atakapa-Ishak, Caddo, Chitimacha, Choctaw, Houma, Natchez, and Tunicas peoples, and the Petites nations. We also recognize the Alabama, Biloxi, Koasati, and Ofo peoples, and others who were pushed into Louisiana from their ancestral lands.

The purpose of making this land acknowledgment in post-colonial society is to show respect for Indigenous peoples, recognize their unique culture and enduring relationship to the land, and raise awareness about histories that are often suppressed or forgotten.

PHOTO CREDITS Photograph Key: Dave Hoefer - DHr; David Harris - DHs; Elli Lauren Photography - EL; Fawn Lies - FL; Jake Jacobson - J; Lisa Schaffer - LS; Morten Fog - MF; Marisa Kolka - MK; Scott Rohr - SR; Shadow Scape Records - SS; Todd Zimmer - TZ. From left to right, top to bottom:
Page 1: Forest Scenery (DHr). Pg 2: Lisa Schwartz (LS); Aengus Finnian(MF). Pg 3, 4: Gaelynn Lea (SS); Lifetime member Vern Crawford (SS); Carolina Rojas and Dharti Vij (SS); B2B Meetings (SR); Cajun Accordion (TZ); Ken Whityle Artist Mentorship (TZ); Demeanor (TZ); First-Timers Orientation (SR). Pg 7: Suchet Malhotra (TZ); Philadelphia Folk Festival (LS). Pg 8: APAC Gathering in 2020; Jorge Arévalo Mateut (TZ); Kaisha S. Johnson (SS); International Indigenous Music Summit (TZ). Pg 9: Mireille Bakhs, Raqya Alfaris, Rebecca Folsom (SR); Dr. Jamie McKiew (DHs); Raye Zaragoza (MK). Pg 10: Amy Hānaiali‘i (EL); Che Apalache (EL); Larkin Poe (EL); Amythyst Kiah (EL). Pg 11: Rhianneon Giddens Keynote (SR). Pg 12, 13: Dirk Powell (SS); Dwayne Dopsie (SR); Jamie Lynn Vessels (KR); Benny Amón’s New Orleans Pearls (SS); Gina Forsyth (JJ); Sean Ardoin (SR); Mavis Staples Keynote (JJ); Mavis Staples Keynote (SS). Pg 14: Doctor Nativo (SR); Lakou Mizik (SR); Eliza Gilkyson (TZ); OKAN (SS); NAKED (TZ); Suistamon Sähkö (SS). Pg 15: Leyla McCalla (SS); Grayhawk Perkins (SS); Rose Champagne (SS); Allison Russell (TZ); Michael Doucet (SS); Mali Obomsawin of Lula Wiles (SS); Ani DiFranco (KR); Ben Jaffe (TZ); Ephraim Bugumba (TZ). Pg 16: Screenshots from FAI Official Webinars (FL). Pg 18, 19: Louisiana Entertainment Reception (SR) B2B Meetings (SR); Oshima Brothers (SS); B2B Meetings (SR); Private Showcase Artist (SS). Back cover: Reid Wick and Alka Sharma (SR); Susan Werner (JJ); Cliff Murphy (SR).
LETTERS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

‘Twenty-twenty’ is a phrase that refers to visual clarity and not so coincidentally, the year that we are currently living in - one that is providing tremendous opportunity for us to truly see our world, perhaps for the first time. From the incredible success of our 32nd conference in New Orleans, replete with all of the joys associated with our annual gathering, to navigating our current situation with all of the emotional, financial, and health implications, FAI has kept the well-being of our community first and foremost.

In January we released a draft Cultural Equity context document to articulate this key priority for us, including the following statement: “to support a full creative life for all, Folk Alliance International commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, and equitable music industry and community.”

Despite the difficult decision to postpone our 33rd conference due to Covid-19, we remain committed to providing support and service for our entire community, while advancing the critical conversations. The upcoming year will be challenging, remind us who we are, and present us the opportunity to learn and grow. I believe the silver lining is our allegiance to support and lift up one another. I have never been more proud to be part of this organization.

With profound respect and love,

Lisa Schwartz (she/her)
President, Board of Directors

The past year was epic to say the least, and one to be both celebrated and reconciled.

After six years of program development and community outreach, we hit our stride and, under the thematic banner of People and Place, our conference drew its largest attendance in history. Key partnerships this year included work with the Association for Cultural Equity, Women of Color in the Arts, and the International Rescue Committee, while bridges continued to be built through our Folk ExChange in Australia and continued support of the International Indigenous Music Summit.

As of March, COVID-19 had an immediate and profound impact on FAI and our entire community and extended industry. Our immediate pivot to provide timely and relevant community support (as detailed on page 16) centered on our mission to “serve, strengthen, and engage the global folk music community”, and our standing commitment to cultural equity work.

The year ended on a somber note with staff layoffs, suspended programs, a postponed 33rd in-person conference, and our first deficit forecast in two decades drawing heavily on our reserve. Now more than ever, we ask you to remain engaged, to reflect on the broader year-round service role of FAI (not just the conference), and to support our long-term viability as you are able.

Sincerely,

Aengus Finnan (he/him)
Executive Director
Folk Alliance International (FAI) was founded in 1989 to connect folk music leaders aiming to sustain the community and genre. Today FAI is the leading international voice for folk music with a network of more than 3,000 members: a worldwide community of artists, agents, managers, labels, publicists, arts administrators, venues, festivals, and concert series presenters.

From its U.S. headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, FAI produces the world’s largest conference for the folk music industry, the International Folk Music Awards (IFMAs), the Louis Jay Meyers Music Camp, an Artist in Residence program, the Folk ExChange market development program, the Ethno USA gathering (on behalf of Jeunesse Musicale International), community outreach, a Finest Folk concert series, and the Kansas City Folk Festival (KCFF).

FAI values diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, strives to ensure gender parity in all its programming, celebrates multiple languages and cultures, and actively welcomes participation from marginalized, disenfranchised, and underrepresented communities.

FAI defines folk broadly as “the music of the people” (reflective of any community they are from), and programs a diverse array of subgenres including, but not limited to, Appalachian, Americana, Blues, Bluegrass, Celtic, Cajun, Global Roots, Hip-Hop, Old-Time, Singer-Songwriter, Spoken Word, Traditional, Zydeco, and various fusions.
MISSION
Folk Alliance International’s mission is to serve, strengthen, and engage the global folk music community through preservation, presentation, and promotion.

VISION
• Advocate for the folk music community
• Thoughtful, intentional growth
• Be a respected organization within the music industry
• Continue to produce high profile, meaningful events

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES
• Build a strong, relevant board
• Engage and retain membership
• Expand FAI’s reach and impact (brand and outreach)
• Build systems and mechanisms for growth and sustainability

OUR REGIONS
FAI has five US-based regional affiliate organizations that represent the full North American membership, and more recently a Nordic affiliate was also formed. Each has their own independent board of directors, and host annual conferences in their respective territory. The goal of each is to build stronger regional folk music networks, develop local markets, and support artists and industry alike throughout the year. FAI convenes regular meetings, provides administrative and leadership support as needed, bundles options to lower costs, and underwrites services where possible.
GROUP EXEMPTION PROGRAM

For over 20 years, FAI has enabled U.S.-based nonprofit organizations to access charitable designation through a Group Exemption program, which supports governance continuity and accountability. Currently there are 55 independent organizations who report to FAI annually by verifying their state certification, bylaws, financial information, annual general meeting minutes, and 990 tax submission. In turn, FAI verifies their activities to the IRS in order to provide tax exempt status for each.

folk.org/groupexemption
THIS YEAR’S WORK

REVEALING A NEW LOOK
FAI unveiled and implemented updated branding at the 2020 conference. The new logo and visual assets present the organization as contemporary, professional, and dynamic while rooted in tradition. Celebrating the current renaissance state of the genre, the new logo proudly and unequivocally features the word folk. The design’s stylized ‘ƒ’ incorporates the f-hole of an instrument to suggest a similar transmission of sound, while the signature tip and tail of the logo can be activated separately as playful ‘speech bubbles’ for highlighting key messages.

ETHNO USA
FAI announced a new partnership with Belgium-based Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI), the world’s largest youth-music non-profit organization with members in more than 60 countries. One of JMI’s signature programs is the Ethno gathering, a peer-to-peer learning approach for folk and traditional music. Founded in Sweden in 1990, Ethno engages young musicians aged 16-30 and is designed to facilitate and promote intercultural dialogue. Already presented in over twenty countries, Ethno USA will mark the first North American edition. ethno-usa.org

MEASURING FOLK
Following two years of work between FAI’s staff and Board Research Committee and a study conducted by acclaimed stakeholder research firm, Slover Linett, FAI released its inaugural Audience Research report and Executive Summary this year. The study included the participation of over 2,000 survey respondents, including FAI members and the extended music industry and community. The written report summarizes the findings and prepares for the next phase of research, pending funding. folk.org/measuringfolk
GLOBAL SUMMITS

CULTURAL EQUITY SUMMIT
FAI’s core summit related to the conference theme of The Story of People and Place. Hosted by Jorge Arévalo Mateus, Executive Director of The Association for Cultural Equity (ACE), and co-presented by Kaisha S. Johnson, Co-Founding Director of Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA), the summit dovetailed with conference-wide programming to examine the role of constructive allyship and collective engagement in the establishment of FAI’s Cultural Equity Council and development of a plan in 2020-2021.

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS MUSIC SUMMIT
FAI was honored to hold space once again for the 2nd annual International Indigenous Music Summit. The summit’s purpose was to celebrate the historic and ongoing contribution of Indigenous music to art and culture worldwide. Hosted by community leaders ShoShona Kish and Amanda Rheaume, the summit provided the opportunity for artists, knowledge keepers, community builders, and invited allies, to nurture connections, share resources, and build networks to promote Indigenous music across the global music community.

GLOBAL SUMMITS

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NATIONAL ADVOCACY
After six years of developing an independent advocacy voice, establishing new cultural-sector partnerships, and participating in ad hoc groups, FAI has aligned with two national advocacy cohorts:

The Performing Arts Alliance (PAA) is a D.C.-based coalition of national service organizations. The PAA advocates for America’s professional nonprofit arts sector before Congress and key policymakers. Core issues include arts funding, timely visa processing for foreign artists, international cultural exchange, and charitable giving incentives. theperformingartsalliance.org

The Alliance of Performing Arts Conferences (APAC) consists of representatives from the nation’s regional performing arts conferences and meets to discuss trends in the field and identify common areas of improvement. Since March 2020 APAC members has been working together to provide resources and advocacy related to the COVID-19 crisis. apap365.org/Resources/Field-Partners
FOLK EXCHANGE AUSTRALIA

The third edition of the Folk ExChange (FAI’s boutique micro-conference, held previously in Ireland and Sweden) headed Down Under to the coastal city of Geelong, Australia, just west of Melbourne. From March 2 to 4, over 100 of Australia’s top folk music artists, industry, and festival presenters were in attendance, joined by 50 international delegates from New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, the UK, and the U.S. The event focused on professional development, discussing the state of the field, export-ready artist showcases, and included the presentation of FAI’s Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Jamie McKew.

folkexchange.org

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

FAI’s 2020 AIR project partnered Denver-based folk artist Rebecca Folsom with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an organization that responds to some of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. Working with IRC translator, Mireille Bakhos, Folsom was commissioned to coach high school student and poet, Raqaya Alfaris, in a songwriting workshop exploring and articulating her experience and perspective as a refugee. The end result was the creation of a song called Power of Love, which they performed during the conference. A video of the song and process is available at folk.org/AIR2020

FINEST FOLK

FAI continued to promote emerging folk artists through a free Finest Folk First Fridays concert series in its Kansas City office. Additionally, FAI once again presented curated Finest Folk showcases at AMERICANAFEST® in Nashville, Tennessee, and at the International Bluegrass Music Association’s conference in Raleigh, North Carolina.
A GRAMMY® WEEK NOMINEES’ CELEBRATION

On January 25, FAI (along with The Blues Foundation and International Bluegrass Music Association) co-presented the third annual GRAMMY® Week celebration of the American Roots category nominees.

Jon Hornyak, Senior Executive Director of the Recording Academy Memphis Chapter, gave opening remarks followed by feature performances by Amy Hānaiali‘i, Amythyst Kiah, Che Apalache, Christone “Kingfish” Ingram, Gregory Alan Isakov, Larkin Poe, Frank Solivan, Michael Cleveland, and Robert Randolph. Presenters during the afternoon event included Missy Raines, Robert Randolph, and Stephen Curtis Chapman. Also in attendance were GRAMMY® winning Blues legend Bobby Rush and members of the Po’ Ramblin’ Boys.

BEST FOLK ALBUM
“Patty Griffin” by Patty Griffin

BEST AMERICAN ROOTS PERFORMANCE
“Saint Honesty” by Sara Bareilles

BEST AMERICAN ROOTS SONG
“Call My Name” by Sarah Jarosz, Aoife O’Donovan, and Sara Watkins (I’m With Her)

BEST AMERICANA ALBUM
“Oklahoma” by Keb’ Mo’

BEST BLUEGRASS ALBUM
“Tall Fiddler” by Michael Cleveland

BEST TRADITIONAL BLUES ALBUM
“Tall, Dark & Handsome” by Delbert McClinton & Self-Made Man + Dana

BEST CONTEMPORARY BLUES ALBUM
“This Land” by Gary Clark Jr.

BEST REGIONAL ROOTS ALBUM
“Good Time” by Ranky Tanky

FAI would also like to congratulate past Spirit of Folk award recipient, Anäis Mitchell, and the Broadway cast of “Hadestown” for winning the GRAMMY® for Best Musical Theatre Album.
The 2020 conference was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, with the generous support of the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development and the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area. For the sixth straight year, attendance figures eclipsed previous numbers with 3,332 delegates onsite from 42 countries.

With 179 Official Showcases, 2,703 Private Showcases, and 1,200 professional meetings, the conference provided a strong hub for folk music artists and industry. This year’s theme The Story of People and Place explored issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and addressed topics of immigration, intersection, and influence.

KEYNOTES

This year’s conference featured two keynote presentations.

Legendary performer and civil rights activist Mavis Staples provided a mainstage keynote interview hosted by NPR’s Melissa Block. Sharing anecdotes that spanned her 70-year career in folk, blues, soul, and gospel music, Staples addressed cultural equity issues through the lens of activism in song, commenting that “Freedom Highway is even more powerful and necessary today than when it was written.”

Watch the full interview on our YouTube channel.

GRAMMY award-winning songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Rhiannon Giddens gave this year’s second keynote address, delivered in word and song. A clarion call to action in the face of a “world on fire,” Giddens’ presentation urged the folk community to embrace a consciousness shift “born of compassion, of empathy, and of love above all else.” She also showcased in support of her nephew, Demeanor.

Watch the full keynote on our YouTube Channel.
AFFINITY GROUPS

This year’s conference featured a series of affinity group meetings held in the Health and Wellness room. These sessions provided safe spaces for people to connect with others who share aspects of their identity. Some of the group sessions included Parents, Women, Allies, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).

2,703 PRIVATE SHOWCASES
179 OFFICIAL SHOWCASES
85 EXHIBIT HALL BOOTHs
60 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PANELS
960 NETWORKING AND MENTORSHIP SESSIONS
140 WITH INDUSTRY REPS
240 SPEED MEETINGS
46 WITH ARTIST MENTORS

Pictured above, Louisiana artists, from left to right: Dirk Powell, Dwayne Dopsie, Jamie Lynn Vessels, Freddy Lonzo of Benny Amón’s New Orleans Pearls, Gina Forsyth, Sean Ardoin.
CONFERENCE DATA

3,332 TOTAL ATTENDEES
Artists: 1,454
Industry: 879
Associates: 487
Media: 121
Presenters: 391

GENDER PARITY

OFFICIAL SHOWCASES
55% Women 45% Men

PANELISTS
52% 48%

EMCEES
51% 49%

KEYNOTES
100% Women

AWARDS SHOW
51% 49%

Of our conference attendees, 41.8% were female-identifying, 49.8% were male-identifying, 0.5% were nonbinary, and 8% did not respond.

FIRST-TIMERS BREAKOUT

49% Artists
25% Industry
13% Associates
9% Presenters
4% Media

PRESENTERS BREAKOUT

3 Theaters
15 Camps
103 Venues
111 House Concerts
156 Concert Series
201 Festivals

41 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED
Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jersey, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Pakistan, Russia, Scotland, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, United States of America, Wales, and the territories of the Channel Islands and Puerto Rico.

Doctor Nativo Guatemala
Lakou Mizik Haiti
Eliza Gilkyson United States

OKAN Cuba/Canada
NAKED Serbia
Suistamon Sähkö Finland
The 2020 International Folk Music Awards (IFMAs) were hosted by celebrated musician Leyla McCalla and began with a welcome address and land acknowledgment by local Indigenous (Houma) Elder Grayhawk Perkins.

Awards presented included Lifetime Achievement (BeauSoleil, Mahalia Jackson, Preservation Hall), Spirit of Folk (Jan Ramsey, Laura Hassler, Ellen Bello, Åke Lundström, Ephraim Bugumba, and Ben Sandmel), Clearwater (Pickathon), and the People’s Voice (Ani DiFranco) as well as Folk DJ Hall of Fame inductions (Holger Petersen, Mary Katherine Aldin, and Nick Spitzer). View a full recording at folk.org/IFMAs2020

In addition to the above awards announced earlier in the year, the member-voted Best of 2019 awards were announced and presented to the following:

**SONG OF THE YEAR**
“Black Myself”, written by Amythyst Kiah and performed by Our Native Daughters.

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
We Get By, by Mavis Staples.

**ARTIST OF THE YEAR**
The Small Glories
ADAPTING TO THE TIMES

Like all organizations, FAI was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. As of April, FAI cancelled all in-person events for the remainder of the year and announced the unprecedented action to replace the in-person 2021 conference with a virtual edition. In immediate response to the financial strain on the community, all memberships were extended at no cost.

In place of promotional attendance at national and regional events, FAI pivoted to serve as an information and resource hub for the community, providing timely webinars, a Connecting Folk Online series, and Committing to Conversation anti-racism discussions. Additionally, FAI ramped up its advocacy efforts with industry and national cohorts.

With revenue evaporating daily, FAI commenced emergency fundraising, secured CARES Act support, and received a Paycheck Protection Plan loan to ensure it could maintain staff positions until the end of the fiscal year. Despite all efforts, a third of FAI's employees were laid off by the fiscal year end, and most conference contracts were suspended.

For the first time in over two decades, FAI's Board approved a deficit budget for the next fiscal year and anticipates drawing almost half a million dollars from its carefully managed reserve to cover losses, ensure the survival of the organization, and maintain its ability to serve over the next two years.

The photos on this page are speakers featured in our ongoing CommUNITY Online and Ask An Expert webinar series. Join the discussion at folk.org/webinars and you can watch recordings of previous webinars on our YouTube channel.
FINANCIAL DATA

FAI’s operating budget for FY20 was the highest in our organization’s history. Despite seeing a significant drop in our budgeted revenue the last three months due to COVID-19 (see chart below), FAI was able to end the year with funds to add to our reserve. This was made possible by the success of the conference and cutting expenses wherever possible. FAI’s cash flow came to a halt in April once the 2021 in-person conference was cancelled. FAI also made the decision to extend all memberships at no cost to members through early 2021, resulting in a loss of $40,000 in budgeted FY20 revenue.

Although not reflected in the total income, FAI received $114,100 in a forgivable Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan through the federal CARES Act in April 2020. This emergency funding enabled FAI to maintain its full staff until layoffs at the end of June.
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Our deepest thanks to the following donors who have supported the overall mission of Folk Alliance International as a 501c3 organization during Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020).

LEGACY
DONATIONS OVER $10,000
Anonymous

BENEFACTOR
DONATIONS UP TO $10,000
Pete B. Browne and Julie Walker Browne
Donald Cohen and Madeline Janis
Liz Levitt - The Levitt Foundation
J.B. Reynolds Foundation
Dan and Kathy Tappan - The Tappan Family Fund

PATRONS
DONATIONS UP TO $2,500
Anonymous - in Honor of Aengus Finnan
CCS Family Fund - Topeka Community Foundation
Paul Demmitt
Elliott Genther - The Benevity Community Impact Fund

LEADERS
DONATIONS UP TO $1,000
Taylor Caffery
Aengus Finnan –
First Friday Donations
Dad's Hat Pennsylvania Rye Whiskey
Steven and Jean Spikes

PARTNERS
DONATIONS UP TO $500
Another Planet
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Julian Zugazagoitia

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  in Honor of Lynn Cingari
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MURIEL McBRIEN KAUFFMAN FOUNDATION

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
arts.gov
MEMBERSHIP
THE FUTURE OF FOLK
In FAI’s fourth decade as a non-profit (Tax ID 56-1698333) and as the international voice for the folk music genre, it is expanding its reach, role, and service to its global membership.

To continue to deliver and develop year-round programs and services, FAI’s development plan focuses on diversifying its cash-flow to include the increased financial support of donors. Budget-friendly monthly giving, corporate matching, tax season donations, legacy estate giving, and retirement rollover gifts are all options for support of FAI. A tax-deductible donation of any amount has an immediate impact and supports FAI’s mission and charitable work. All donors are recognized online at folk.org/donors.

Another way to show support is to become a member of FAI. Members stay connected to a global network of music creators, leaders, and entrepreneurs through our member database. In addition, members enjoy exclusive benefits and discounts and are entitled to vote to determine our board of directors and honorees of the International Folk Music Awards.

WAYS TO SUPPORT
DONATE ONLINE at folk.org/donate
DONATE BY CHECK
Folk Alliance International
601 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez, Suite 100
Kansas City, MO 64108 USA

FOR MORE DONOR INFORMATION CONTACT
Alex Mallett, Director of Development
development@folk.org
816-221-3655 ext. 106

GREEN FOLK
FAI is committed to recycling, waste-diversion practices, and reducing its environmental impact at its office, conference, and all FAI produced events.

The print copy of this document is made from recycled paper and is printed with soy ink.