



# 2023 Annual report

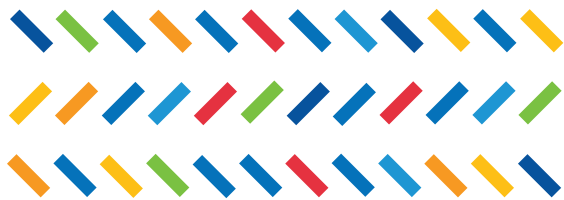


Erik Higgins  
Artistic Director



# The Middle Of Everywhere in 2023

As we come to the end of yet another year, we are glad to share with you some of the many milestones and unforgettable moments of the 2023 Nebraska Crossroads Music Festival. This was a year marked by growth, new connections, and groundbreaking music that brought us all together. Here's a look back on 2023:



## EXPANSION TO OMAHA

This year, we expanded our horizons to Omaha, witnessing our biggest crowd yet! Approximately 3,000 people joined us at Gene Leahy Mall at the Riverfront to experience the eclectic performances of six incredible and wildly diverse groups. It was an evening unlike any other and marked a new phase of the festival's larger reach and impact.



## WORLD PREMIERE OF DAWNING

2023 marked the monumental world premiere of "Dawning," a co-commission that we're immensely proud of, written by our dear friends Kinan Azmeh and Layale Chaker. "Dawning" made its debut at Crossroads, followed by a performance by Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra in October. The excitement peaked on October 27 when Executive Director Olga Smola and Artistic Director Erik Higgins attended the East Coast premiere in New York with the New York Philharmonic, the third of the three co-commissioners. "Dawning" is not just music; it's a milestone in our journey and a testament to the difference we are making on a national scale.





## COLLABORATION BORN AT CROSSROADS TOURS EUROPE



Those of you who attended the festival's finale concert on Aug. 6 will clearly remember Valeri Tolstov's brilliant arrangement of Vivaldi's "La Folia" that included baroque ensemble, hip-hop, Indian Raga, and Armenian folk rock. That very arrangement with its global musical language will tour throughout Europe beginning at Finland's Kuhmo festival and continuing throughout venues in Denmark, Norway, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Armenia in 2024 and 2025. It's another example of a creative spark, born at our festival in Nebraska, that is going truly global.

## WELCOMING NEW LOCAL VOICES

We are proud to have introduced some new faces to the Crossroads family this year, showcasing the diverse talents of the local community. From the Rwandan fusion band Live Lyve, to the traditional Cuban grooves of Humberto Gonzales and Mixed Harmony, and the vibrant energy of Kusi Taki, to what could only be described as a party with Andy Williams and the Nebraska All Stars—each performance had an incredible story to tell. We are proud to have them join our family!



# SNEAK PEAK AT 2024

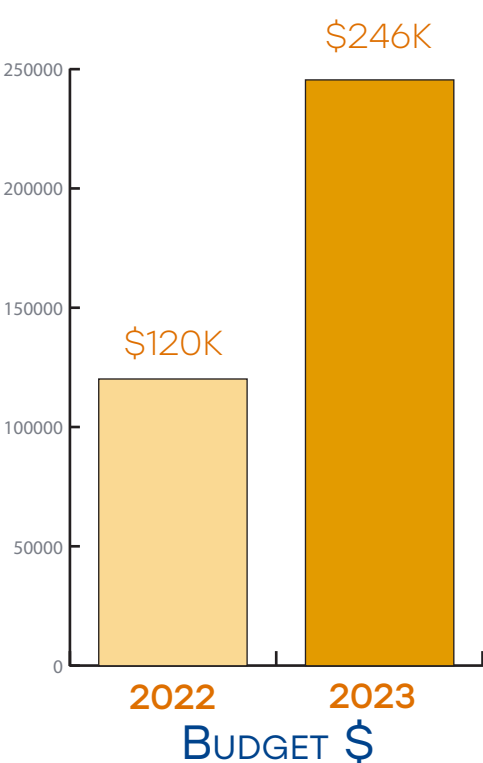
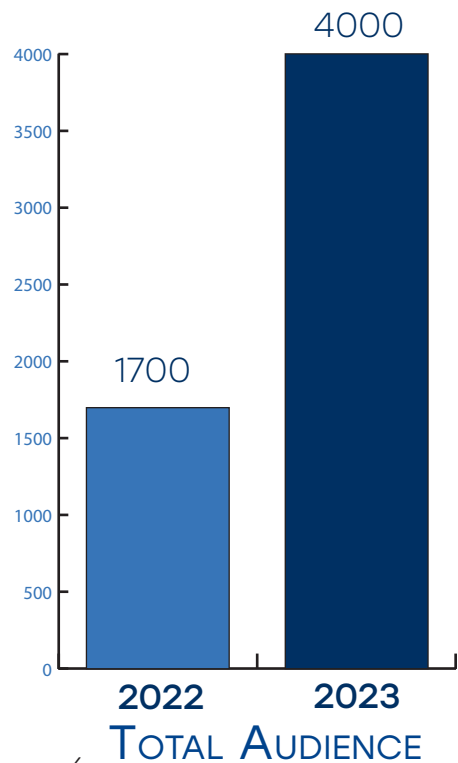


As we look forward, block your calendars from August 3-11, 2024! We kick off with a special performance dedicated to the Yezidi community, on Aug. 3rd and close out the festival on August 11th. The festival will feature the Dream Warriors—a collective of indigenous hip-hop artists and poets, a return of the Authentic Light Orchestra, and much more, promising a blend of tradition and innovation. And in a move to make the festival accessible to all, we're excited to announce that all events in both cities will have free admission!



## FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MILESTONES

We've more than doubled our budget and audience reach in 2023, a testament to your support and the impact of high-quality, culturally-driven, artistic expression. With a fully-funded budget of \$246,000 and around 4,000 attendees in 2023, we're setting the stage for even more ambitious projects and community engagements.



TOTAL NUMBER OF  
EVENTS:  
17

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
PERFORMERS:  
55

CULTURAL GROUPS  
HIGHLIGHTED:  
9



# Education & Outreach

## BABY CONCERT

Another educational program is the festival's annual baby concert for young children and their families. This year, children were guided through the story of "Still This Love Goes On" based on a song by Buffy St. Marie. The story was accompanied by five musicians and incorporated balloons, play-silks and cottonball "snow".



## ARTIST ROUNDTABLE

Nebraska Public Media's Genevieve Randall interviewed four of the festival's artists and moderated questions from the audience.



## SEAT BESIDE YOU VIDEO EXHIBITION

Videographers Brian Seifferlein and David Koehn shared their work on creating the video documentary series "The Seat Beside You" that follows many of the immigrant families with kids in the Lincoln Public Schools system. .





# Concert Highlights

FRIDAY AUG. 4TH, GENE LEAHY MALL



–Kusi Taki (above) performing the opening set; Authentic Light Orchestra (right)



–Maeve Gilchrist and Séamus Egan (below); the audience at Gene Leahy Mall (below right)







– Erik Higgins, Rajib Karmakar, Sandeep Das, & Marie Sønderskov (left) perform the final set.

“ I attended almost all the shows, so hard to sum it all up, but here are some words: creative, synergistic, collaborative, inspiring, edgy, spontaneous, invigorating, relaxing... awesome!!

-Denée Janda, Denver CO



–The Omaha Skyline (above)

SATURDAY AUG. 5TH

–toechter (left) and Japhet Ingeri performing with Live Lyve (right)





-Humberto Gonzales & Mixed  
Harmony (right)



SUNDAY AUG. 6TH



-(clockwise from above) Sandeep  
Das and Rajib Karmakar;  
Meditation concert; Finale  
concert; Andy Williams & The  
Nebraska All-Stars

