



TENDING THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN MUSIC







TOP: Brother William Rigsbee. Farmville, North Carolina, 2022. MIDDLE: Kelley Breiding and the Blue Ridge Opry at Freight Train Blues. Carrboro, North Carolina, 2023. BOTTOM: Fred Thomas, Aretta Woodruff, Albert White. Telluride, Colorado, 2022. Photos by Tim Duffy.

COVER:

Aretta Woodruff. Hillsborough, North Carolina, 2023. Tim Duffy.

OUR MISSION

Music Maker Foundation tends the roots of traditional American music by meeting the day-to-day needs of the artists who create it, ensuring their voices are heard, and giving all people access to our nation's hidden musical treasures.

OUR PROGRAMS

Documentation & Education

To ensure that American roots music is always accessible to current and future generations, we write books, release artist recordings, create exhibitions, and archive documentation for future generations.

Sustenance

To ensure that the day-to-day needs of the most vulnerable artists are met, we provide grants and social services to musicians who are in crisis or who live in chronic poverty.

Performance

To help our artists build their careers, their income and their skills through touring, we book shows for them and provide tour management and professional development.

OUR TEAM

Timothy Duffy, Executive Director Denise Duffy, Managing Director Gabi Mendick, Program Manager Tess Stogner, Communications Coordinator Brittany Anderson, MSW, Artist Services Coordinator

Kim Anderson, Finance Coordinator Taylor Kennedy, Program Associate

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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B.B. King (1925-2015) Levon Helm (1940-2012) Bill Krasilovsky (1926-2018)



THE PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION













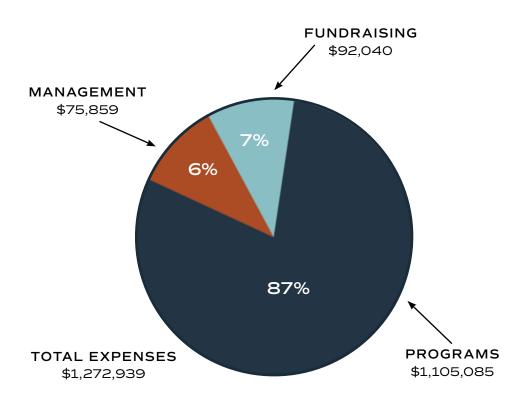






2021/22 FINANCIAL REPORT

*Audited financial statements available upon request







LEFT: Gabi Mendick records Terry Harmonica Bean at his home. Pontotoc, Mississippi, 2023. Tim Duffy. RIGHT: Tim Duffy and Willa Mae Buckner. Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 1997. Mark Austin. OPPO-SITE: Leonard Lowdown Brown. Telluride, Colorado, 2022. Tim Duffy.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED



1 MISSION



3 PROGRAMS



29 YEARS



32 COUNTRIES TOURED



55 EXHIBITIONS



520 PARTNER ARTISTS



2,886 SONGS RELEASED



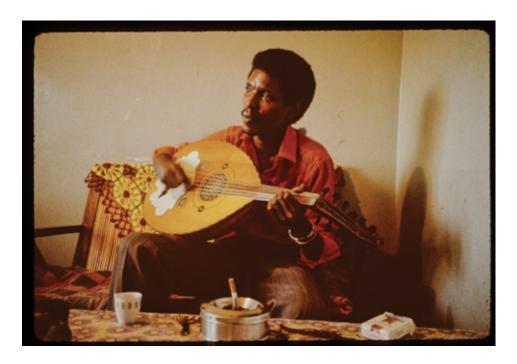
8,595
PERFORMANCES



15,976
MUSICIAN
GRANTS



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

On a warm night in Nairobi in 1982, I attended a film opening and heard the music of Abdullahi Jirma for the first time. Jirma, a Borana folk musician, provided the soundtrack for the film and I introduced myself to him afterwards. I was studying ethnomusicology at Friends World College in Kenya at the time, and arranged for him to travel with me to the college's nearby headquarters. One evening at that repurposed coffee plantation, I recorded this enchanting singer and oud player.

This June, I was contacted by Dalle Abraham. Dalle lives in Kenya, and reached out as he has spent half a century recording many modern Borana artists. He wrote to me, "Jirma is the towering giant in these regards, his pop-

ularity and importance keeps growing. I have heard the recording you made with him. Impressive and rare songs. The recordings you made are the best versions of those songs, the ones in circulation are very poor quality."

To me, this is a testament to Music Maker Foundation's purpose. Decades after my time in Nairobi, Jirma's work is receiving the recognition it merits. I was so fortunate to witness Jirma's talent and record this important carrier of the Borana culture. In the forty years since I began this documentation journey, I've been ceaselessly astounded by the people I encounter, the stories and talent they share, and the profound impact of their cultural contributions. Their influence cannot be simply measured by charts or graphs; it is intricately woven into the very fabric of our souls.

When Denise and I co-founded this organization in 1994, we operated on a shoestring budget and used rudimentary equipment to document musicians. Remarkably, these recordings transcend the medium. The unique and powerful songs we documented then still resonate deeply. These recordings led music lovers around the world to support the mission of the Music Maker Foundation to ensure these voices would never be lost or forgotten.

Music Maker has produced over 200 albums since those early days. Oftentimes, the photos, videos and recordings we capture are the only evidence of these artists' work. We know that a quality portfolio is essential to elevating these artists' careers, but beyond that, we consider it our responsibility as caretakers of our cultural heritage to preserve this work for future generations of Americans.

That is why we are embarking on this new stage of our journey. In all the years we have been partnering with artists, we have never been able to offer them a dedicated space for their work. Currently, our studio is a rented room below an HVAC business. We hurriedly snap photos and record when their crew is out on the job. We also record in artists' homes, as well as in partners' studios and rented spaces across the South.

Through our work with the gospel music dynasty that is the Vines/Daniels family, we are now connected to the community of Fountain, NC, and the rich culture of gospel music in the surrounding region. In 2019, we had the opportunity to purchase a building in Fountain at an affordable price on Fountain's main street, and have acquired two more

since. These three buildings are now being converted into Music Maker Studios.

The first building became an Artist Workshop that currently hosts Freeman Vines. The second building is our Photography Studio. It is now up and running, and we are beginning work to build our first proper, high-fidelity recording studio. This is thanks to the Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation and other generous donors whose investment in our studio renovations and ongoing programming support will make this project possible. We are close to our goal and they hope that their gifts will inspire you to join in and support creating this space where artists can record.

There are hundreds of artists that need to be recorded in Eastern Carolina. Moreover, there are Music Maker artists throughout the country that need a place to go, to get out of their everyday lives, to reflect and create.

It is our collective responsibility, and our privilege, to tend these roots. I hope you will join us, and delight in what we can grow together.

With gratitude,

Tim Duffy

Executive Director



"Everything has a character." Freeman Vines reclines in his armchair. Tendrils of smoke curl around his face as he puffs his cigar. "I sit with the wood, look at it, then, it tells me what it will be." He taps the ash off the end into his lap, where it falls among wood shavings.

Freeman studies attention. He considers the history of each slab of pine, maple, birch that he selects. Not as a recitation of observable facts, but as a practice in listening. He hands me one of his creations and asks, "What do you see?"

When I respond, "a guitar body," he shakes his head and says, "you're not really looking."

With some trepidation, I attempt to try on Freeman's perspective. I take in the wood; hold its heaviness, follow the dark knots as they gather together at its base. "A hurricane," I say.

"Now you're talking," Freeman says emphatically. "Everyone sees something different," he tells me, "if they try to look."

Freeman Vines is an artist, luthier and spiritual philosopher. I'm sitting with him in his studio in Fountain, North Carolina.

When Freeman met Music Maker Foundation co-founder and Executive Direc-

tor, Tim Duffy, in 2015, his workshop was his yard. A man of the earth, Vines prefers working in the open air. But it left his creations vulnerable to theft and damage from the elements. Tim can recall uprooting discarded guitar bodies buried in the ground.

Tim and Freeman found kindred spirits in one another. A trained folklorist and photographer, Tim also practices looking beyond the surface, to catch the light underneath. Music Maker and Vines collaborated to create Vines' internationally recognized exhibit, *Hanging Tree Guitars*, which received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. The accompanying book, published in 2020, was rated one of NPR's best books of the year.

Freeman lives and works in Fountain, an eastern-NC town surrounded by sweet potato and cotton fields. In 1903, it was incorporated as a stop along the Eastern Carolina Railway and retains its turn-of-the-century charm in its brick buildings on the main street. Drive too fast down highway 222—also known as East Wilson street—and you might miss it.

Fountain has a population of 385, and the most recent figures show the un-

employment rate at 20.5%. The average household income is \$24,125. It is situated within Pitt County, which is registered as a Tier 1 county—the highest level of economic distress.

Finding Fertile Ground: North Carolina's Hidden Musical Oasis

Slow down, take a closer look around and you'll see this overlooked region is home to an enormous community of African American sacred soul musicians that is nothing short of a revelation. Tim describes it as "discovering the Pacific Ocean is under your feet."

Soon after Freeman met Tim, Freeman introduced Tim to his sister, Alice Vines. Alice lives in the neighboring city of Greenville, and has been singing and performing for over half a century. She and her sisters comprise the gospel group, The Glorifying Vines Sisters. She is also the Senior Pastor at Believe In Jesus Ministries, a church with over 100 years of history. Alice is a matriarch in a large family, and a pillar of her community.

Through Alice, Music Maker has found a tremendous community of talented gospel groups from the surrounding area. We recorded eleven of these groups (including Faith & Harmony, the Dedicated Men of Zion, The Glorifying Vines Sisters and Johnny Ray Daniels) in partnership with a nationally recognized label, Bible & Tire Recording Co. With their support, we also co-produced a multimedia project in Freeman's current studio, *The Sacred Soul of North Carolina*, which documents the stories of these people and this musical tradition and aired on PBS NC.

While we recorded many groups during the *Sacred Soul* project, there remains a host of musicians from the region that have yet to record their own solo records: Big Walt, The Johnsonaires, Bishop Albert Harrison, The Spiritualaires, Blind Butch, Melody Harper, Jerry Harrison, Gospelettes, and Shirley McNeil, to name a few. These are working people who are passionate about bringing their traditions forward, despite the limited time and re-

sources they have to support their musical careers.

We seek to create a space where artists have access to the high quality recording, photography and videography production they need to have their voices heard. This project will benefit not only the gospel groups in the area, but Music Maker artists from all over, providing them with a quiet destination dedicated solely to their craft.

"It's good for the town to get this exposure from the arts. There's a whole lot of artists around here that have never been seen, nobody knows who they are. Now people can see them, understand what they do. For me, the exposure is exciting, but I'm just on an adventure to find my sound. For other folks, that exposure means a whole lot."

—Freeman Vines

Forging the Path Ahead: Building a Creative Haven in Fountain

On E. Wilson Street, three adjoining buildings that were previously vacant are now under Music Maker's care. The first is the Artist-in-Residence Workshop. This serves as Freeman's workshop; the artist now has a clean, secure space to continue creating. It also provides him the space to meet with press and to host visitors (including the New York Times this past spring).

In the 29 years since our founding, Music Maker has not had an operational audio recording studio to support our programming. We need a proper, local facility to give these artists' music the time and production quality it deserves. Next to Freeman's studio stands what will become our state-of-the-art recording studio, with the help of the Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation and supporters like you.







TOP: Alice Vines. Fountain, North Carolina, 2022. MIDDLE: Bishop Albert Harrison. Fountain, North Carolina, 2022. BOTTOM: Melody Harper. Fountain, North Carolina, 2023. Photos by Tim Duffy.

Our blueprint is to construct a worldclass studio that can host a variety of vocal ensembles. We'll record new albums for a wide range of acts; from solo musicians to electric blues bands and gospel ensembles.

For band recordings, Tim will be joined by our expert partners Bruce Watson (Fat Possum, Big Legal Mess, Bible & Tire) and other industry professionals to engineer the sessions, creating high-quality, multitrack recordings. Music Maker will release these recordings to the public on streaming platforms and will produce and distribute CDs. Each group or artist will be granted CDs free of charge to use for promotion and sale at events. All of our recordings have a permanent home at the Southern Folklife Collection of Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, where these stories and songs are preserved for posterity.

We believe that the combination of these assets will allow us to produce high-quality bodies of work to build artists' careers, enabling them to book performances and grow their brand awareness online.

We have a short list of at least 100 musical groups that we dream of collaborating with at these studios. We know that this effort is essential to their ability to become a part of our nation's cultural record, which is a cornerstone of our mission at Music Maker.

The third building is home to our Photography and Videography Studio. Tim Duffy's tintype photographs of musicians have been displayed in museums and galleries across the country. In the increasingly digital landscape of music marketing, photographs are invaluable for musicians to book performances, self-promote, and to establish an online presence. Professional videographers will utilize the space to create music videos that will serve as promotional materials for upcoming album releases and to film interviews to document artists' stories.



Fountain is the ideal location to house these studios. It is both centrally located and incredibly affordable. A 50-minute drive from Raleigh and just 20 miles east of I-95, Fountain is easy to reach for our out-of-state musicians. We're also fortunate to have the full support of Fountain's mayor, Kathy Parker, Alex Albright, the owner of R.A. Fountain–Fountain's local music venue, and Julia Smith, Director of Fountain Wellness Center, in this work. Parker, Albright, Smith and the Vines see a future where Fountain can thrive as a haven for artists with a rich and evolving cultural heritage.

We envision a refuge where artists from the region and beyond can come together to collaborate. As an antidote to historically extractive and culturally appropriative music business practices in America, our goal is to provide sustainable, holistic and accessible artistic programming.

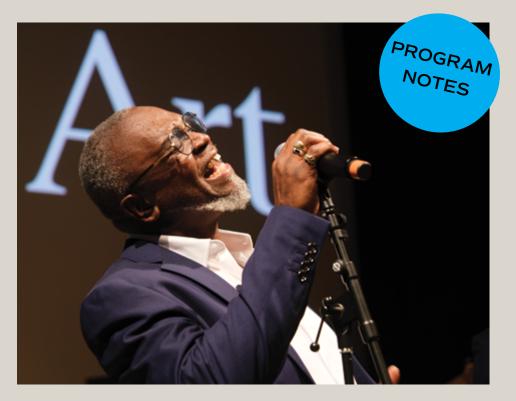
As Alice Vines puts it, "This is a good step for Fountain. Old things pass away and we've got new ones got to come. This is a new thing that they're doing in Fountain. It's going to prosper. Hang on in there and let's just make it work. It's all of us together, we can make it work."

By fostering a nurturing environment that values the artists' voices, experiences, and cultural heritage, we aim to empower and uplift musicians, ensuring that their artistry remains at the forefront. Together, let's forge a new path that honors the true essence of music-making and redefines the landscape of the industry.

When Tim and Denise Duffy co-founded Music Maker Foundation in 1994, they imagined what they couldn't yet see around them: a thriving community where the music makers, the people who give us the songs that carry us through life, are celebrated for their invaluable contributions to our cultural tapestry. Music Maker has spent almost three decades building this future alongside artists, supporters, and donors. Join us in this next chapter of our journey and together, we can ensure we can sing these melodies for generations to come.



Fountain, North Carolina, 2023. Tim Duffy.



We presented the **Freight Train Blues** concert series in Carrboro, North Carolina for its ninth season. The series expanded to eight weeks and featured every strain of roots music from electric blues to acapella gospel to salsa to a country variety show.

Music Maker returned to the **Telluride Blues & Brews Festival** in Colorado with more performances than ever. We brought sacred soul group the **Dedicated Men of Zion** and an all-star blues revue band featuring **Lil' Jimmy Reed, Terry Harmonica Bean, Lakota John Locklear, Gail Ceasar, Albert White, Fred Thomas**, and **Ardie Dean**.

We went on a road trip to Pontotoc, Mississippi to record and photograph **Terry** "Harmonica" Bean. Stay tuned for the hill county bluesman's album recorded in Terry's living room that we will release next year.





LEFT: Freight Train Blues Concert Series. Carrboro, North Carolina, 2023. RIGHT: Fred Thomas with Cee Lo Green's band. Telluride, Colorado, 2022. TOP: Anthony Daniels of the Dedicated Men of Zion. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2023. Photos by Tim Duffy.

Artist and luthier **Freeman Vines** was featured in the *New York Times* series, *Art of Craft*. We celebrated the well-deserved recognition for the creator of the book and exhibition *Hanging Tree Guitars*.

We orchestrated the "Soul and Blues: Music Maker Foundation Showcase," at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Four Music Maker acts (Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen, Dedicated Men of Zion, Gail Ceasar, and Jeffrey Scott) performed at the institution in conjunction with their exhibition *Called to Create: Black Artists of the American South*.

Music Maker exhibitions *Blue Muse* and *Hanging Tree Guitars* traveled to museums and cultural centers across the country including Piedmont Arts in Martinsville, Virginia, the Phillips Museum at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the Imperial Centre in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

Albert White graced the cover of *Living Blues Magazine*. The 80 year old bluesman and Music Maker artist's remarkable career was featured in an eight page spread.

We took a bite out of **King Biscuit**, presenting the **Music Maker Blues Revue** at the Helena, Arkansas blues festival. Throughout the weekend, Music Maker partner artists collaborated and jammed with friends new and old including flute players and a whole cast of harpists.

The documentary "Sacred Soul of North Carolina" and the 2021 Freight Train Blues Series were broadcast on PBS NC.







TOP LEFT: Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen. Hillsborough, North Carolina, 2015. BOTTOM LEFT: Terry "Harmonica Bean." Pontotoc, Mississippi, 2023. RIGHT: Skull and Snake by Freeman Vines, Fountain, North Carolina, 2023. Photos by Tim Duffy.







TOP: Willie Farmer at King Biscuit Blues Festival. Helena, Arkansas, 2022. Tess Stogner. BOTTOM LEFT: Shelton Powe. Hillsborough, North Carolina, 2022. Tim Duffy. BOTTOM RIGHT: Mother Lena Mae Perry and Phil Cook. Governor's Mansion, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2019. Tim Duffy. OPPOSITE: Gail Ceasar and her biggest fans. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2023. Tim Duffy.



Bluesman **Willie Farmer** is working on opening a juke joint in his home town of Duck Hill, Mississippi. Music Maker sent Willie a grant to purchase gear and building materials. The venue will be a huge asset in the community for musicians and audience members alike.

When **Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen's** car broke down on her way to a big Fox News interview, Music Maker stepped in to pay for the repairs. You can watch the spectacular interview with Shannon Bream online now!

With both financial grants and advice from Artist Services Coordinator Britany Anderson, Music Maker supported **Shelton Powe** as he took medical leave from his job and navigated the healthcare system..

Following a devastating home fire last year, **Gail Ceasar** moved in with her sister. Gail recently relocated to her new home. Music Maker gifted Gail a washer and dryer so that she could return to a fully furnished, clean, and comfortable space, and replaced the instruments she lost in the fire.

At 84 years old, **Mother Lena Mae Perry** of **the Branchettes** is a force to be reckoned with and a gospel legend. Mother Perry's home was in need of accessibility upgrades and Music Maker installed ramps and railings so that Mother Perry can move around her home safely.

As artists faced rising inflation, Music Maker increased our granting program to support musicians in crisis. Grants totaling more than \$250,000 allowed our partners artists to keep fridges full and home fires burning.

We are deeply saddened by the losses of **Thomas Hayes** and **Big James Barrett**.







THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Since our inception, we have cultivated partnerships with artists based on the fundamental belief that when artists thrive, their art forms flourish. By alleviating the burdens that artists face in their everyday lives, such as food insecurity and housing instability, we empower them to fully dedicate themselves to their music. Our support is guided by the social determinants of health framework, recognizing that the conditions in which people are born, live, work, and age profoundly impact their well-being, often more than genetic factors.

At Music Maker, we serve as vital support systems for many artists, addressing their needs across various determinants of health. Whether it's providing transportation assistance, helping with medical expenses for chronic health conditions, or ensuring basic necessities like groceries and utility bills are covered, we are actively present in our artists' lives, offering

both emotional and financial support. Brittany Anderson, MSW, our Artist Services Coordinator, aptly describes our role in artists' lives and the wideranging assistance we provide:

"Something that I do, especially for new artists coming in and for older artists, we have an intake survey. That intake survey covers all six areas of those determinants of health to help us identify what areas of need does the artist have, and what's going to have the greatest impact. This is for us to be able to assist them to make sure that they have that higher quality of life that we're aiming for, for our artists."

By establishing genuine connections and fostering regular communication, Anderson and our team build authentic relationships with the artists, rooted in mutual trust and respect. This approach lies at the heart of everything we accomplish at Music Maker.

Through our commitment to artists' well-being and artistic growth, we are fostering a community where artists can thrive and their cultural legacies can be preserved. Join us in supporting these remarkable musicians as we work towards a future where their talents and contributions are celebrated and cherished. Together, we can ensure that the power of music continues to enrich our lives and connect us on a profound level.





LIMITED EDITION FREEMAN VINES T-SHIRT

Artist, luthier, and author of "Hanging Tree Guitars," Freeman Vines' "Wauka Muyga" painting is now available on a black unisex t-shirt. Purchase your fine art tee on the Music Maker shop at www.musicmaker.org.

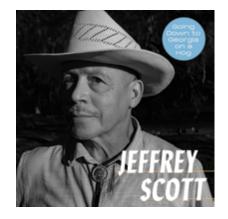


"To meet Freeman Vines is to meet America itself.... He has been broken and healed, and traversed the American spiritual realm from Christianity to voodoo to the occult in the pursuit of knowledge and answers. Raised in the Jim Crow South to a family of faith and long memory, Vines has experienced firsthand the interrelated systems of free labor on which his country operates, from the postbellum plantation economy of sharecropping to forced labor of chain gangs. He is a citizen, and a man removed from citizenship."

2023 ALBUM RELEASES



Gail Ceasar, Guitar Woman Blues



Jeffrey Scott, Going Down to Georgia on a Hog



Clarence "Bluesman" Davis, Shake It for Me



Leonard "Lowdown" Brown, Blues Is Calling Me



Aretta Woodruff, A Tribute to Denise LaSalle



Faith & Harmony, I Heard the Voice

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

This year at Music Maker, we have made the momentous decision to present Lifetime Achievement Awards to over 60 partner artists. These remarkable artists have left an indelible mark on the world of music, shaping genres, influencing generations, and enriching the cultural fabric of our society. We firmly believe that their lifetime contributions deserve to be celebrated and cherished, as a testament to their unwavering dedication and artistic excellence.

By honoring these individuals, we aim to not only recognize their immeasurable impact but also to inspire future generations of musicians and music enthusiasts. It is our privilege to shine a spotlight on their extraordinary accomplishments. Through these Lifetime Achievement Awards, we hope to convey our deep appreciation for their immeasurable talent and profound influence on American roots music. To see a full list of recipients please visit https://musicmaker.org/stories/lifetime-achievement-awards/.









CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Pat Wilder. 2023. Shelton Powe. Tim Duffy. Mother Lena Mae Perry. Raleigh, NC, 2023. Lena C. Perry. Thomas Rhyant, 2023. Colleen Rhyant.



GET INVOLVED AND GIVE BACK

Music Maker Foundation depends on thousands of supporters. Together, we work to meet the dayto-day needs of the artists who create traditional American music, we ensure their voices are heard, we give all people access to our nation's hidden musical treasures.

Please contribute or shop our store today:

visit www.musicmaker.org



Elder Anderson, Johnson, Mississippi. Photo by Axel Küstner.

Join the Listener's Circle!

Be the first to get all of our featured releases—including new recordings and never before heard tracks by your favorite Music Maker artists.

For a donation of \$30 a month or \$300 a year you'll receive six CDs filled with the best music we've found in our travels! Also available by digital download.

October 2023 selection:
Faith & Harmony, I Heard the Voice

December 2023 selection: Legendary Singing Stars, Live in Telluride

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

You can help us to tend the roots of American music for generations to come when you make a planned gift to Music Maker. As a tax-exempt organization, Music Maker is an ideal beneficiary for any heavily taxed assets, while you leave less-taxed assets to your loved ones.

YOUR WILL

Include language in your will or trust designating the "Music Maker Foundation (EIN 13-3782018)" as beneficiary of your assets. Contact us so we can coordinate with you to ensure your gift is used in accordance with your wishes when received.

RETIREMENT PLAN ASSETS

Complete a beneficiary designation form provided by your retirement plan custodian. Designate the "Music Maker Foundation (EIN 13-3782018)" as beneficiary. Submit the form to your retirement plan custodian.

IRA CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals age 70% years old or older can transfer up to \$100,000 per year to Music Maker Foundation from an IRA to satisfy the required minimum distribution for the year.



Denise Duffy, Ardie
Dean, Charles "Sugar
Harp" Burroughs, Fred
Thomas, Albert White,
Aretta Woodruff, Hermon
Hitson, Gabi Mendick,
Tim Duffy. Hillsborough,
North Carolina, 2023.
Mark Austin.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

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