




VIRA + FRIENDS

# 2025 Annual Report

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Vira + Friends is a non-profit corporation under the  
auspices of the Ukrainian American Educational  
Center of Boston, a 501(c)(3).

A photograph of a piano keyboard and a wooden table, with a purple text box overlaid. The piano keyboard is in the upper left, and the wooden table is in the lower right. The text box is a solid purple rectangle with white text inside.

*Vira Slywotzky founded Vira + Friends in May 2018 with the intent of bringing people together to enjoy the live performance of music written for voice and piano. Since that time Vira + Friends has become a multiform concert series with the expanded missions of developing audiences for classical music and providing a platform for composers traditionally neglected by the Western canon.*

# A Note From Vira

Hello Friends!

Eight years ago, I started Vira + Friends to create opportunities for myself and my colleagues to explore and share music and story. In conversation with audience members at the conclusion of the first concert, I realized that their discovery of the works was as exciting and significant as that of the performers. Since that time, I have been committed to building a community of artists and appreciators to delve into and enjoy the music of an expansive range of creators.

In March of 2024, Vira + Friends incorporated as a nonprofit and in July of the same year achieved 501(c)(3) status through a fiscal sponsorship partnership with the Ukrainian American Educational Center of Boston.

I am immensely proud of what Vira + Friends has accomplished and delighted to review 2025 with you in the following pages. This was a year of great successes as well as valuable instructive experiences. A dramatic increase of activity and engagement led to a wealth of discussion among board members, supporters, production teams, designers, artists, performers, volunteers, advisors, sponsors, partners and audiences which has been essential in shaping plans for the future. The best is yet to come, with familiar faces returning, new listeners encountering this body of repertoire for the first time, and our community continuing to grow.



Vira Slywotzky  
Founder, Vira + Friends



# 2025 In Numbers

**12 Programs**

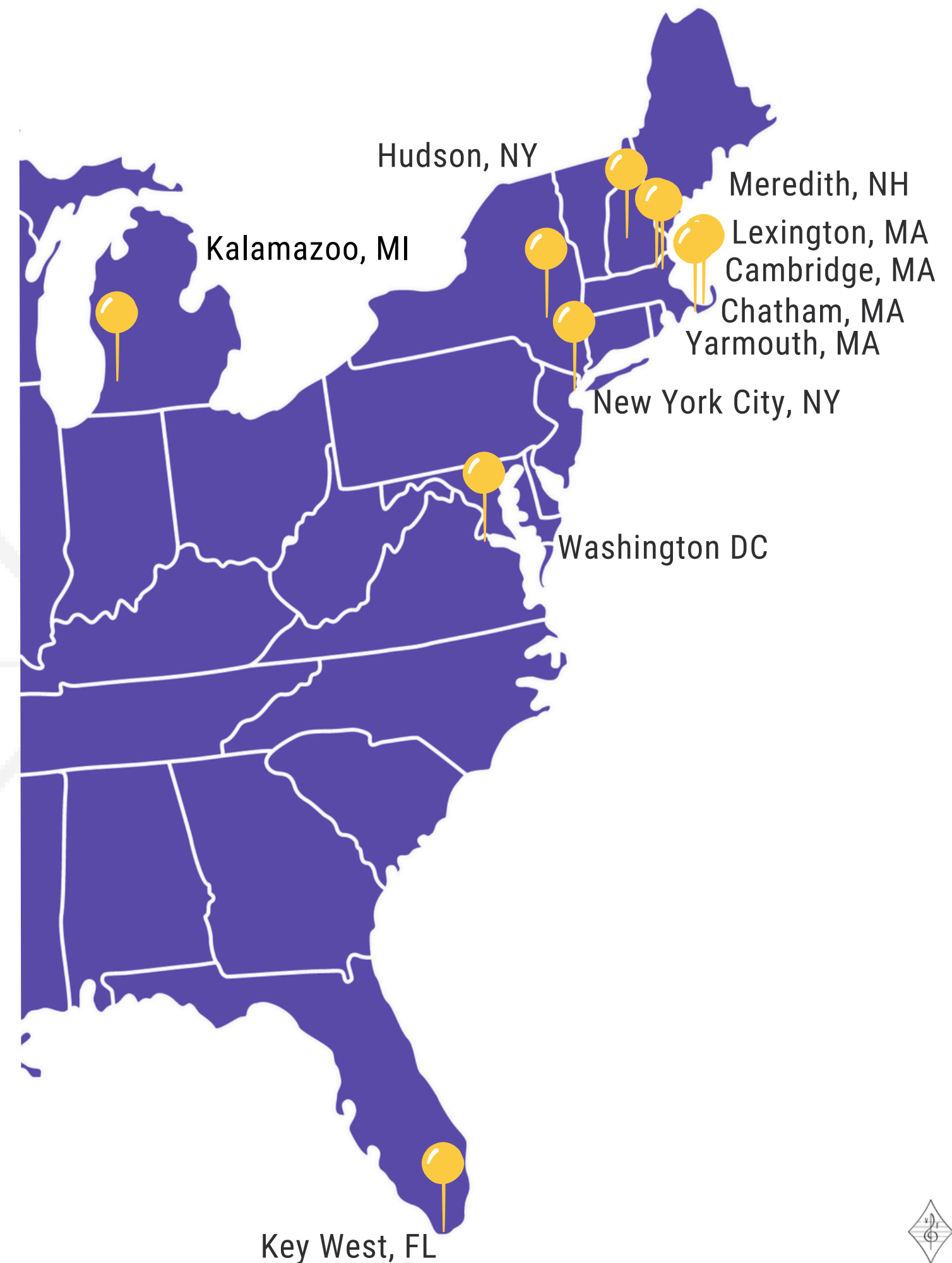
**8 Collaborations**

**6 States**

**4 Pianists**

**3 Vocalists**

**1 Cellist**



# 2025 Season Programming

The 2025 season brought together a diverse range of programs across cities and communities, reflecting *Vira + Friends*' commitment to intimate, collaborative performance. From new artistic initiatives to returning partnerships, each program fostered connection, discovery, and shared musical experience.

**VIRA+FRIENDS** presents  
*Sea Songs*  
a concert/cabaret

featuring  
contralto Vira Slywotzky pianist David Sytkowski

Tuesday, July 29th at 7:30pm  
Saint John's in the Village  
218 West 11th St. New York, NY 10014

Tickets \$20

Sponsored by ARTWINE Presented in partnership with BISON OYSTER PROJECT

Questions? Email [hello@viraandfriends.org](mailto:hello@viraandfriends.org)

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**VIRA+FRIENDS** presents  
*Opportunity Knocks*  
A CONCERT/CABARET  
— songs and stories of people finding their way —

FEATURING  
contralto Vira Slywotzky pianist David Sytkowski  
coloratura soprano Brooke Schooley

Saturday, September 27 at 2:30pm  
Saint John's in the Village  
218 West 11th St. New York, NY 10014

Tickets \$20

Sponsored by ARTWINE

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**VIRA+FRIENDS** presents  
*A Time for Fun!*  
a concert/cabaret

Join *David + Vira* and immerse yourself  
in the joy of classical and popular song

featuring  
contralto Vira Slywotzky pianist David Sytkowski

Thursday, June 5th at 7pm  
Margaret Jewett Hall  
First Church Cambridge  
11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

Tickets \$20

Proudly sponsored by ARTWINE

Questions? Email [hello@viraandfriends.org](mailto:hello@viraandfriends.org)

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**VIRA+FRIENDS** presents  
*If I...!*  
a concert/cabaret

An inspiring and international selection of classical and popular music

featuring  
contralto Vira Slywotzky pianist Ana Glig

Friday, May 2nd at 7:30pm  
Saint John's in the Village  
218 West 11th St. New York, NY 10014

Tickets \$20

Sponsored by ARTWINE

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**VIRA+FRIENDS** presents  
*SWEET MYSTERY*  
songs of Victor Herbert and  
women wordsmiths of the 1910s-1920s

Victor Herbert  
contralto Vira Slywotzky  
tenor Todd Wilander  
pianist David Sytkowski

featuring hits from  
*Naughty Marietta* · *Orange Blossoms* · *The Enchantress*  
and more...

Friday, April 4th at 7:30pm  
Scorca Hall, Opera America  
330 7th Ave, New York, NY 10001

Tickets: \$25  
\$18 students and seniors

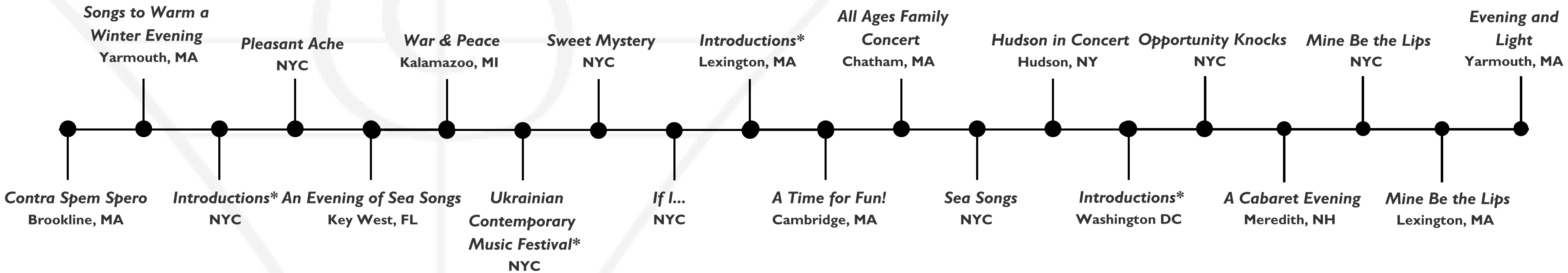
\*6:45 pre-show talk with Herbert scholar and producer Alyce Mott\*

Sponsored by the Victor Herbert Foundation


Questions? Email [hello@viraandfriends.org](mailto:hello@viraandfriends.org)

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# 2025 Season Programming



\*featuring Ukrainian Music Initiative

A group of nine diverse women of various ages are standing together in a room with a brick wall and a washroom door. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The women are dressed in a variety of styles, from casual to more formal. One woman in the center is using a cane. The overall atmosphere is warm and celebratory.

*It was more than a concert; it was an experience - a celebration of talent, connection, and the pure joy of live performance.*

-Audience Member

# Ukrainian Music Initiative

Formed in 2025, Ukrainian Music Initiative is a core pillar of Vira + Friends' artistic mission—an effort dedicated to elevating Ukrainian classical music and ensuring its rightful place in the Western canon.

The initiative brings together performers, scholars, and cultural advocates to share a repertoire that has historically been overlooked or suppressed. Through thoughtfully curated programs, the initiative introduces audiences to the depth, beauty, and historical significance of Ukrainian composers—many of whom remain underrepresented on concert stages today.

At its heart, Ukrainian Music Initiative is both artistic and cultural: it seeks not only to present music, but to contextualize it—connecting audiences to a broader narrative of resilience, identity, and cultural continuity. Performances are intentionally presented in accessible, intimate venues, creating space for discovery, dialogue, and meaningful exchange.

In 2025, performances in New York, Massachusetts, and Washington, DC expanded the initiative's reach, including a fully funded presentation and continued partnerships with cultural institutions. These programs demonstrated a growing appetite for Ukrainian music and affirmed its place as a vital and living tradition.



**Ukrainian Music Initiative is a collaboration of four independent artists - cellist Valeriya Sholokhova, pianists Pavlo Gintov and Margarita Rovenskaya, and contralto Vira Slywotzky - each of whom have a longstanding history of commitment to Ukrainian music.**

# International Women Composers Project

The International Women Composers Project reflects Vira + Friends' commitment to re-centering voices that have long been marginalized in classical music.

This project explores and presents works by women composers across centuries—bringing together music of the past with the voices of today. Programs are carefully curated to highlight both the historical contributions of women who were overlooked due to systemic barriers, and the innovative work of contemporary composers shaping the future of the field.

Through works that traverse geography, language, and time, the project invites audiences to experience music that challenges assumptions and broadens the narrative of classical performance. These programs celebrate artistry, amplify underrepresented voices, and foster a sense of shared cultural exploration.

This project, which debuted in Paris in 2024, saw its American launch this past year. Performances of *Mine Be the Lips* continued the work, bringing together song and spoken word to illuminate themes of freedom, identity, and expression across generations.



# Community + Collaborations



This year, Vira + Friends was thrilled to partner with these wonderful organizations:

- Bear Witness
- Billion Oyster Project
- Chatham Cultural Council
- Congregation Kehillath Israel
- Cultural Center of Cape Cod
- Dror Israel
- First Church Cambridge
- First Parish Lexington
- First United Methodist Church Chatham
- Follen Church
- Hudson Festival Orchestra
- Kalamazoo Philharmonia & Kalamazoo Choral Arts
- Lexington Council for the Arts
- The Loft at Hermit Woods
- Opera America
- Razom for Ukraine
- Saint John's in the Village
- Shevchenko Scientific Society
- The Washington Group Cultural Fund
- Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival

# Audience + Outreach

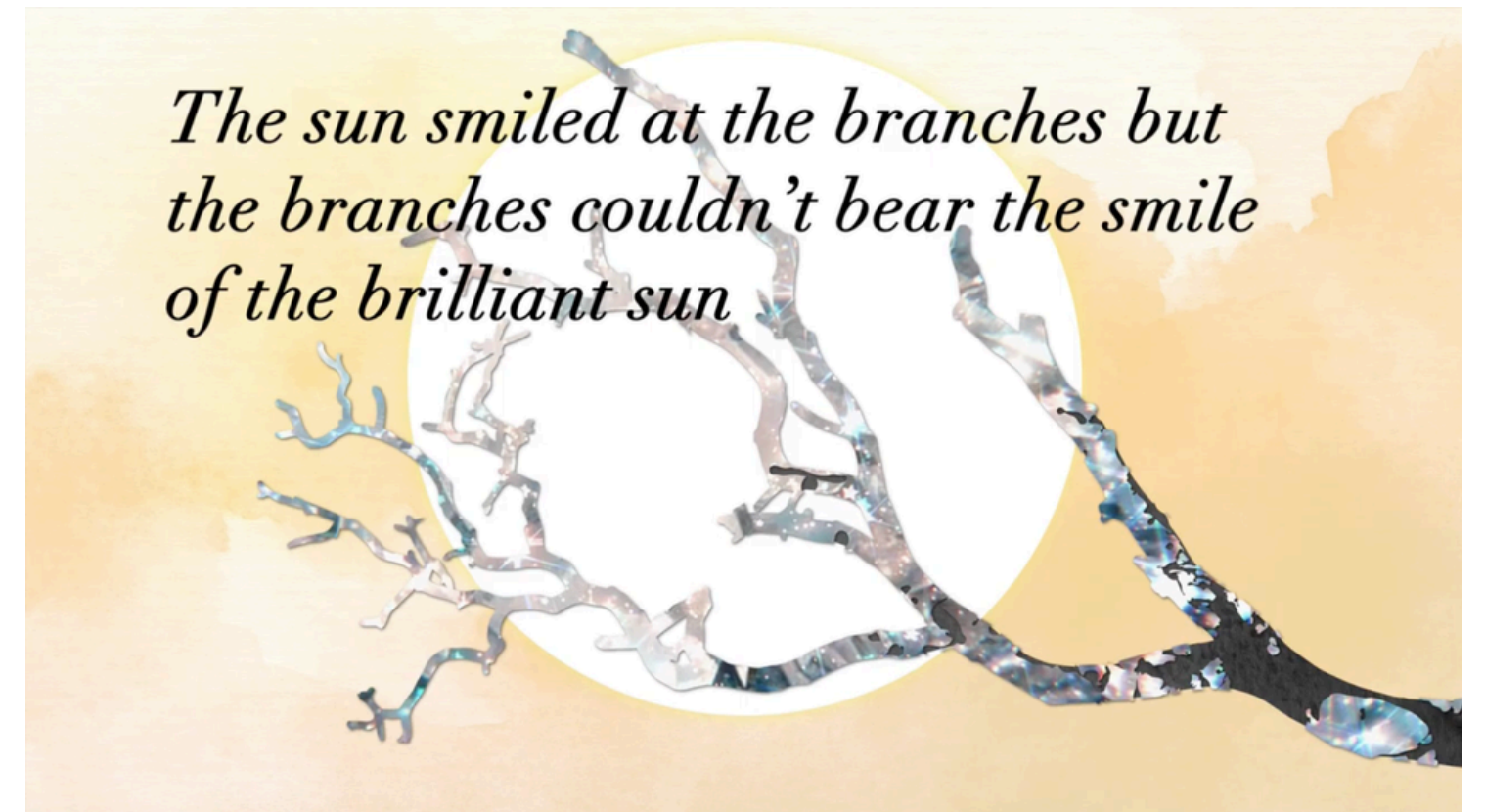
Through performances, partnerships, and digital engagement, Vira + Friends reached a diverse and growing audience in 2025. With high email open rates and consistent attendance, our outreach efforts continue to foster a vibrant and engaged community around our work.

Co-presenting programs with partner organizations played a key role in broadening our reach, allowing us to connect with new audiences while strengthening ties within existing communities. These collaborations not only increased visibility, but also fostered shared investment in bringing meaningful, high-quality performances to diverse audiences.



MORHANA / МОРГАНА

Illustrations by Calvin Laliberte



In Winter / ЗИМОЮ

 **1,109 Newsletter Subscribers**

 **361 Instagram Followers**

These collaborations have also supported small creative projects beyond the stage. In 2025, the team produced two illustrated “music videos,” pairing visuals with lyrics to extend the life of the performances in a simple and accessible way.

# Artists



Pavlov Gintov *pianist*



Ana Glig *pianist*



Hannah Friesen *designer, photographer*



Michael Hammond *designer*



Calvin Laliberte *designer, illustrator*



Alyce Mott *speaker*



Margarita Rovenskaya *pianist*



Brooke Schooley *soprano*



Valeriya Sholokhova *cellist*



Vira Slytwotzky *contralto*



David Sytkowski *pianist*



Todd Wilander *tenor*

# 2025 Financial Overview\*

## Expenses \$58,120



Wages - \$46,921



Venues - \$3,337



Marketing - \$2,433



Travel/Lodging - \$1,562



Admin - \$3,867

## Income \$52,597



Individual Donations - \$35,475



Ticket Revenue - \$9,269



Grants - \$6,500



Institutional Funding - \$1,050



In-Kind Donations - \$303

*76% of Vira + Friends expenses went directly to artists*

\*The presented values are based on internal management and have not been audited or reviewed by an external accountant.



**LEXINGTON**  
ARTS COUNCIL



**ARTWINE**  
Ukraine's Unbreakable Bubbly

## Board of Directors

Vira Slywotzky, President + Founder  
Alexander Gamota, Treasurer  
Akpanoluo Etteh, Secretary

Victor Herbert  
Foundation



## 2025 Donors

Jonathan Alpert  
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Roberto Fuenmayor  
Alexander Gamota  
Christina Gamota  
John Husted  
Ihor Kowal  
Phillip + Nancy Kukura  
Piret Mowlem  
Jacqueline Olds

The Pooles  
Richard de Reyna  
Lawrence Rocca  
Lyudmila Sholokhova  
Adrian + Christine Slywotzky  
Chrystia Slywotzky  
Alicia Szendiuch  
Peter Woloschuk  
Yurij Wowczuk



## Be in touch!

Web: [www.viraandfriends.org](http://www.viraandfriends.org) ♦ Email: [hello@viraandfriends.org](mailto:hello@viraandfriends.org)

Instagram: [@vira.and.friends](https://www.instagram.com/vira.and.friends) ♦ YouTube: [@viraandfriends8417](https://www.youtube.com/@viraandfriends8417)

## Support the work of Vira + Friends!

Paypal: [paypal.me/ViraandFriends](https://www.paypal.me/ViraandFriends)

Zelle: [hello@viraandfriends.org](mailto:hello@viraandfriends.org)

Check: made out to UAECB with Vira + Friends in  
the memo mailed to

UAECB c/o V. Petriv  
41 West Street  
Malden, MA 02148-5332

Double your impact with your company's matching gift program.  
Donations and gifts are deductible to the full extent of the allowable IRS regulations.