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Apple Hill Declares Balanced Budget in 2025

Center Sees Increased Summer Enrollment, Steady Donor Support

New Artistic Initiatives Fund Launched For Resident Ensemble

Playing for Peace initiative continues as Apple Hill String Quartet travels to Cuba, Cyprus

NELSON, NH (December 9, 2025) – At its Annual Meeting today, the internationally acclaimed, New Hampshire-based Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music celebrated the accomplishments of the past year; announced a fully balanced budget and cash surplus for fiscal 2025; approved a \$1.24 million budget for 2026; and heralded the launch of a new internal fund dedicated to the artistic endeavors of the Center's resident ensemble, the Apple Hill String Quartet (AHSQ).

Apple Hill's Executive Director, Sam Bergman, told supporters and trustees at the meeting that overall enrollment in the Center's famed intergenerational Summer Chamber Music Workshop program increased in 2025, and the organization was able to support an unprecedented need for financial aid from workshop applicants. Apple Hill distributed approximately \$330,000 in scholarship funds for its five summer workshop sessions, with hundreds of students aged 13-87 coming from New Hampshire, greater New England, and all across the U.S. and around the globe, despite new difficulties in obtaining visas for some international students. "This was a year in which economic and political uncertainty could well have decimated both our summer enrollment and our donor support," said Bergman. "But instead, we found that Apple Hill's commitment to building community through music and our philosophy of encouragement and support for every student were more valued than ever."

Despite the many fiscal challenges facing non-profit arts organizations in the Granite State, Apple Hill will finish 2025 with a balanced budget, a healthy reserve fund, and a newly created Artistic Initiatives Fund (AIF) that will allow the Apple Hill String Quartet to plan tours and recordings, commission new musical works, and conceive innovative collaborations and other projects several years in advance, without concern that funding for those projects might not materialize. The AIF has been fully funded over the past year by some of Apple Hill's generous private donors as well as funds from a bequest received in 2024, and is expected to cover the Quartet's artistic project costs for eight to ten years before needing replenishment.

The AHSQ will undertake two major international tours in the 2025-26 season as part of Apple Hill's 35-year-old *Playing for Peace* initiative, which cultivates diversity and understanding among people of disparate or conflicting cultures through the practice of communal music-making. The ensemble will travel to the divided Mediterranean island nation of Cyprus in February for two weeks of classes, performances, and recording projects with both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot musicians, many

of whom have attended Apple Hill summer workshop sessions. And later this month, the AHSQ will make its first sojourn to Havana, Cuba, with a dozen Apple Hill students and nearly as many patron travelers in tow – the students will join with Cuban musicians to study music by composers like Johannes Brahms, William Grant Still, and Jorge Amado Molina, while immersing themselves in Havana’s legendary musical and cultural scene and building bridges between our two nations. Speaking for the AHSQ, cellist Jacob MacKay said, “In addition to our year-round local concert series, the Apple Hill String Quartet has a longstanding commitment to performing around the world. This winter, we are thrilled to travel to Havana, Cuba, expanding the reach of our *Playing for Peace* program and deepening our engagement with Cuban musicians, some of whom have already made Apple Hill their home in the summer.”

In addition to their touring schedule, the AHSQ is performing more than a dozen concerts around New Hampshire and greater New England during the 2025-26 season. The ensemble made appearances this fall at Orchard Chapel in Hampton Falls, NH; Keene State College; United Church in Westmoreland, NH; Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum in Warner, NH; Barbes in Brooklyn, NY; and The Drake in Amherst, MA, as well as performances at the Keene Senior Center, Manchester Community Music School, Boston String Academy, and Aloha Yoga in Keene. The first half of 2026 will see the AHSQ perform at Nova Arts and the storied Colonial Theater in Keene; Community MusicWorks in Providence, RI; St. Bartholomew’s Church in New York City; and Bass Hall in Peterborough, NH, along with stops at Rivermead and Covenant Living retirement communities in Cheshire County.

Apple Hill made significant upgrades to its in-house collection of grand pianos in 2025. Two beautiful Mason & Hamlin concert grands were donated to the Center by generous supporters: one will become Apple Hill’s primary concert piano, sharing space in the Louise Shonk Kelly Concert Barn with the Center’s newly rebuilt 1897 Steinway grand; and the other will be in regular use in Apple Hill’s Hoffman Community Auditorium. In addition, several other new and refurbished grand pianos were acquired in 2025 for the Center’s rehearsal spaces, to be used by pianists participating in the Summer Chamber Music Workshop. In all, Apple Hill owns and maintains 13 grand pianos, two upright pianos, and two harpsichords, as well as assorted string instruments for student use.

Apple Hill’s 2026 budget of \$1.24 million funds the Apple Hill String Quartet’s year-round endeavors, as well as faculty, staff, and foodservice costs for the organization’s Summer Chamber Music Workshop program; guest performers from around the world for the popular Tuesday Night Summer Concert Series; the cost of upkeep on the Center’s 100-acre campus in Nelson; musical instrument procurement and maintenance; and overhead costs associated with staffing, fundraising, and campus infrastructure.

Apple Hill’s Board of Trustees is led by President Taryn Fisher of Keene, NH; Vice President Peter Roos of Walpole, NH; Treasurer Janice Weekes of Jaffrey, NH; and Secretary Daniel Goodman of Lexington, MA.

About Apple Hill

Launched in 1971, Apple Hill was originally the vision of a group of professional musicians and friends who purchased 100 acres of rural land in Nelson, New Hampshire, in order to start a summer camp for young musicians. To enhance the educational experience, they formed a resident touring and performing ensemble, the Apple Hill Chamber Players (now the Apple Hill String Quartet) in 1973. The centerpiece summer program soon expanded to include students of nearly all ages and musical experience levels. Apple Hill's workshop sessions serve as many as 300 students every year.

On a tour to the Middle East in 1989, Apple Hill inaugurated the *Playing for Peace* initiative, a program that uses the skills of chamber music performance to create broader connections and understanding across cultures. Over the span of 36 years, the program has grown to include communities around the U.S. and the world which are divided by racial or ethnic discord, or which suffer from accessibility gaps perpetuated by systemic inequity and discrimination.

These three values form the basis of everything we do:

- Everyone is accepted.
- Everyone has an expressive voice.
- Everyone deserves to be encouraged and supported equally.

