



Dunedin Music Society

Connecting Local Communities With Live Music

Vision26

A guide for the DMS to realize its mission through vision, strategies and objectives

1497 Main St #189, Dunedin, FL 34698
questions@dunedinmusicsociety.org 727.800.3727

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This document approved by the DMS Board of Directors on 9/2/2022
This document approved by the DMS Executive Committee on 8/30/2022

Executive Summary

The Dunedin Music Society, Inc. (DMS) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization in Florida, USA that was founded in December 2016.

Our **mission** is summarized in the tagline:

Connect local communities with live music

- The DMS is based in Pinellas County, Florida, yet our reach is wherever someone wants to engage in making, performing, listening to, or participating in live music.
- We enrich lives by encouraging participation in live music as a routine part of life.
- We facilitate Tampa Bay being a major destination hub for live music.

At the time of publication, the DMS had moved beyond its startup phase and was growing a solid foundation before being interrupted by an era of government-forced isolation and a public fear of gathering. After scaling back activities to virtual events, we now operate a handful of in-person musical groups and produce one major annual musical event.

Strategies and **objectives** have been determined to move the organization towards a new vision. They align with our mission and assume people behave according to our expanded **values** that shape our desired **culture**.

This guide does not include **goals**, which are the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, exciting and risky actions that are generated within the expectations of our mission, vision, strategies and objectives, as circumstances require.

Our new **vision** is:

*In 2026, the Dunedin Music Society serves Pinellas County as a destination to experience live music, using our **own performance and rehearsal facility** that is **fully staffed and fully funded**, offers world-class musicians for hire, and provides a home for community orchestras, choirs and bands that give people from around the world a sense of togetherness and belonging.*

The next page combines our mission, vision, strategy and objectives in a quick-glance pyramid.

The pages that follow explore what each element is and how it was derived.

Vision26 Pyramid

MISSION

Connecting local communities with live music

VISION

In 2026, the Dunedin Music Society serves Pinellas County as a destination to experience live music, using our own performance and rehearsal facility that is fully staffed and fully funded, offers world-class musicians for hire, and provides a home for community orchestras, choirs and bands that give people from around the world a sense of togetherness and belonging.

STRATEGIES

- **Focus:** Be a community worth belonging to.
- **Expertise:** Maintain excellent communication, financial planning and culture, and develop our personnel.
- **Structure:** Implement a transition plan towards our ideal business structure according to DMS bylaws, that supports our excellent event management and develops our organizational management.
- **Approach:** Engage in self-sustaining activities that produce income, including ensemble & musician hire, property management, and advertising revenue through sponsorship; and use grants for credibility and experimentation rather than operations.

OBJECTIVES

People	Products	Programs	Property
Full org chart	Weekly concerts	Performer agency	Office & storage
Benefits	Our products should be "family friendly"	Podcast	Large rehearsal hall
Appointment timeline	Lessons	Bands, Choir, Orchestra, Chamber Ensembles	Performance hall (400 seats)
Secure sufficient funding to be fully staffed	Weekend workshops	Groups for under 18s	Rooms for lessons
Deep & ongoing training	Residential retreats	Themed festivals	Cafe & shop for supplies and merchandise

Introduction

In the period since its inception at the end of 2016, the Dunedin Music Society (DMS) has set its sights on becoming a vehicle to see the Tampa Bay region be a major destination hub for live music, and has established an operation that empowers participation in live music-making by performers and audiences of all ages and abilities, without limitation of social identity.

The DMS defines “live music” as a language of emotions mostly generated by natural means free from amplification, which is experienced at a single moment in time.

The operating organization is currently staffed with a committed group of volunteers, and the DMS boasts a steady membership.

Programs and ensembles within the DMS umbrella are growing and increasing.

So far, building a foundation on the cornerstones of the organization has been the primary focus of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. This became a literal life-saving grace during a period of forced isolation in 2020, but by navigating through uncertain times with a “Recover, Rebuild and Reconnect” approach, the organization can now shift its focus to framing its mission according to our Constitution and Bylaws.

This document describes the strategies that the DMS will use to realize its mission and new short-term vision. It lays out the principles, plans and tools that will focus and guide our decisions and activities as we approach our 10th Anniversary in December 2026.

Our Community

The DMS views itself as serving local communities without geographical boundaries.

An event of live music generates a temporary community itself that shares the immediate experience. While originating in Dunedin, Florida, and still considering that our home, we are currently active in communities throughout Pinellas County and consider the broader Tampa Bay area as our center of activity. However, our reach and impact are anywhere in the world we can connect a community with live music.

In the Tampa Bay region, there is reasonable availability of large-scale professional performance of popular music, musical theater, opera, choral and orchestral music. There is also significant availability of amplified large-scale popular music event venues as well as in local restaurants and other establishments.

While there are several community bands, four orchestras, and a handful of remaining choral groups that provide opportunities for local performers to make music and for local audiences to hear live music, the impact of these are limited to a relatively small and shared populace.

Opportunities to participate in or listen to community orchestral groups, classical ensembles (such as chamber music), new compositions, and alternative presentations as part of a regular life routine are less available.

Opportunities for continued education at all levels is currently limited to multiple independent music “schools” run and operated by individual personalities. Ensemble workshops are restricted to school-based programs for under 18s, college-based programs for credit, and almost non-existent for adults and seniors.

Some of the primary distractions for both local and out-of-state live music fans include family commitments giving priority to children’s experiences, regular working hours, cheap or free pop entertainment, sports such as golf and boating, church activity, a perception of prestige surrounding specific genres or ensembles, negative behavior, lethargy after a hard working life, the beach, and local music group territorial competition.

To offset such distractions, creating a sense of belonging should be a primary focus of the DMS, as well as uplifting the prestige of the organization through increased public and media relations, and making DMS activities sufficiently beneficial that young and old people alike actually *want* it to be a priority in their lives. This may include providing childcare or children’s activities during events for adults, and vice-versa.

Our History

In 2014, the City of Dunedin Parks and Recreation Department and Stephen P. Brown, the new director of the Dunedin Concert Band which had been established in 1981, agreed to explore the formation of a 501(c)(3) organization to assume ownership and management of the ensemble.

The intent of the City was to afford donors the opportunity to make tax-deductible contributions, establish rigorous fiscal accountability, and move management away from the City. They were happy for the organization to have a broader mission as long as their initiating objectives were achieved.

Maestro Brown recruited and led a volunteer task force that spent approximately eighteen months meticulously developing the cornerstone principles and associated documents for the new legal entity, which became incorporated as the Dunedin Music Society in December 2016. The unique name was favored to recognize the important role the City had in the formation of the organization and its continuing support, while not limiting the activities of the group to one ensemble, activity, or even area of operation.

In late 2017, full ownership of the Dunedin Concert Band was transferred from the City of Dunedin Parks & Recreation Department and Maestro Brown to the DMS. An agreement between the parties arranges for the DMS to use facilities and significant equipment owned by the City.

In 2018, the DMS started a second group, the Pinellas Community Players, intended for adults working on basic instrument skill development. In 2019, the Rhythm Kings Jazz Orchestra joined the DMS family. In 2021 the Pinellas Community Clarinet Choir was formed, and in 2022 a new wind, brass and percussion ensemble was formed for occasional workshops, retreats and tours, known as the Florida Symphonic Winds.

The DMS produces one large-scale annual event, the Pinellas Festival of Community Bands, at various locations throughout the county, and several well-attended open workshops for sight-reading concert band music during the Summer months.

Financially, the organization is running close to breakeven, though heavily dependent on operating grants and a small volunteer workforce, including executive leadership.

Review of “Strategy 2019”

According to the Strategy 2019 pyramid, the DMS made progress across all four areas:

In the domain of **Conservation**, one of the most impactful areas of growth has been prioritizing the strength, quality, and sustainability of existing programs, increasing the musicianship of existing ensembles and the listening skills of the audiences, programming challenging and interesting music (such as symphonic works for band with the DCB) and adding and publicizing participation of events more widely through posters, postcards, etc.

In the area of **Funding**, DMS has seen wonderful growth and change, largely impacted by the need to pivot and expand our resources driven by Covid-19 isolation measures. DMS has brought in funds from performances, pursued and was awarded state and local city grants, sought donation matches and business partnerships, initiated the Covid Catch-up Challenge, and raised the bar on audience contributions to their quality events. Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns, Maestro Stephen Brown's "superb leadership" efforts in the areas of funding acquisition were unmatched. Many members, performers, and participants came together to make sure the DMS stayed afloat during this time of uncertainty when other professional and community groups had to close their doors temporarily or even cease operations completely. Definitely something to celebrate!

In the realm of **Operations**, the DMS assigned and appointed new roles in order to help and grow the organization amid the current times. A professional development director was brought on initially to help with fundraising efforts during 2020. DMS expanded community awareness and presence with its annual events like the Pinellas Festival of Community Bands, added additional events in other areas of Tampa Bay such as the Rhythm Kings' performance in Treasure Island, rehearsed in different and unconventional venues during Covid (such as an abandoned firehouse), and worked with other bands and orchestras in the area as well. This has increased interest in the organization from members of other communities due to the collaborative nature of DMS activities and personnel. DMS has also increased the active participation of volunteers, both before, during, and after events. It has created some new and streamlined old library operations with a new leader and support team.

Finally, in the area of **Expansion**, the DMS has not only built up its existing programs such as the Dunedin Concert Band, the PFCB, the Pinellas Community Players, and the return of the Rhythm Kings Jazz Orchestra, but added new programs as well. Some of these brand new programs hosted by the DMS included the Clarinet Choir, repertoire workshops, Saturday morning talks at libraries and other local venues, the establishment of the ad-hoc wind ensemble Florida Symphonic Winds, and other special events.

Above all, the DMS can be exceedingly proud of all its efforts to expand what it began since 2016. During the last three years we have survived, and kept the music alive despite everything. That is a great feat and achievement in itself.

Mission and Vision

The mission of the Dunedin Music Society is to:

Connect local communities with live music

This mission is driven by our underlying belief that live music is the sharing of a momentary and intense natural expression of emotion, enhanced by the uniqueness of all involved, that enriches lives, brings people together, and is essential for the heart (both physically and emotionally).

The mission of the DMS is manifested by its constitutional purpose:

- 1.3.1 The purpose of the Organization is to be an active participant in community **cultural enrichment activities**.
- 1.3.2 The Organization shall operate as a charitable nonprofit corporation under Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt section 501(c)(3), Arts, Culture, and Humanities entity code A6C **Music Groups, Bands, Ensembles**.

The Organization shall:

- 1.3.3 **Present live concerts** that provide cultural enrichment and entertainment opportunities **for audiences of all ages** in the City of Dunedin and surrounding communities; and
- 1.3.4 Offer musicians opportunities to participate in affiliated groups for their personal **enrichment, education, and performing** pleasure.

(bold typeface added)

Following the significant shake-up of society due to health and political media-driven division and fears since early 2020, the leadership of the DMS, including the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and invested advisors, focused its triennial “strategy session” on a short-term achievable future. This resulted in a new vision of the DMS for our tenth anniversary year:

In 2026, the Dunedin Music Society serves Pinellas County as a destination to experience live music, using our own performance and rehearsal facility that is fully staffed and fully funded, offers world-class musicians for hire, and provides a home for community orchestras, choirs and bands that give people from around the world a sense of togetherness and belonging.

The remainder of this document describes select strategies that explain how this vision will be realized, the family of objectives that determines what the DMS will actually do to realize this vision, and a timeline and standardized tools to enable focused flexibility while accomplishing this vision.

Desired Organizational Culture

The fundamental belief that drives the DMS is that sharing live music experiences enriches lives and society at large. This approach is supported by the following cultural values that form the foundation for our mission-focused behaviors and decisions.

Demeanor

We expect our staff, volunteers and performers to:

- Smile a lot;
- Be nice to each other, our members, our audiences, and anyone they ever speak to (you are always representing the DMS, even when not on DMS time);
- Always be honest, understanding, loyal, willing, and grateful, and to own up and ask questions;
- Always arrive early and be willing to set up and clear up;
- Help others achieve their goals in sharing live music with their communities.

Values

See expanded clarification below

- Bold integrity
- Quality before quantity
- Courage, especially when what we do is opposite to what is popular or trendy
- Kindness, Accountability, and Transparency
- Our Members, Performers, and Audiences
- Contributing to something greater

We value bold integrity

We believe practicing bold integrity leads to an organization that is trusted, respected, and viewed as a force for good.

If we are acting on this belief, we will be open and honest both within the organization and with all in the communities we touch.

It also means we will respect our legal requirements, contractual agreements, informal agreements, and the rights of those with whom we interact.

Our financial management will be rigorously responsible and transparent.

We will accept accountability for our mistakes and always strive to improve.

We value quality before quantity

We believe that focusing on quality leads to more meaningful experiences and delivery; quantity follows quality naturally.

This translates to drive for all our musical experiences, for both performers and audiences, to be the best they can be.

It also manifests itself in the drive to continually improve and learn. It is not intended to suggest that only perfection is acceptable or that there is anyone who cannot participate in live music.

This value applies to all our endeavors, whether for new musicians or those who are highly experienced.

It is a value that focuses on intent and effort.

Similarly, the size of the audience is not a driver, but the quality of the audience experience is.

We extend this focus on quality to the running of the organization also.

We believe that quality ensures organization sustainability more than the speed of growth.

We value Courage, especially when what we do is opposite to what is popular or trendy

We believe that doing the “scary” thing is necessary to be the best we can be and to make a real impact on others and our communities.

By “scary,” we are referring to doing things that are uncomfortable, different, or not what is expected.

This requires courage.

Courage as we define it means being willing to do something important or impactful while not letting potential consequences or fears prevent us from moving forward.

This value manifests itself in bold objectives, challenging ourselves and others, unique approaches, and change.

It also means failing, learning, and improving.

Constructive tension and challenge of the norm is the recipe for progress and change.

We value Kindness, Accountability, and Transparency

HOW we go about doing things is more important than WHAT we actually do.

What we do can change at any time.

How we approach whatever we do will create instant and lasting impressions, directly affecting others' lives and our own reputation, and therefore our ability to survive and thrive.

Being kind to others removes a self-centered focus and considers how our services and activities help other people live better lives. Are we talking to others the same way we want to be spoken to? Are we treating our members the same way we want them to treat us? Kindness comes from a heart posture of gratitude, but also sincerity in treating one another with respect, compassion, and niceness.

It is kind to hold one another accountable. Do we do what we say we're going to do? Do we mean what we say? No matter if we volunteer or are financially compensated, taking ownership of the responsibilities we are given and allowing others to help us accomplish our goals leads to honesty and integrity in our actions. We have no fear in letting others see our work or our methods, and in sharing our behind-the-scenes successes and failures... all of which requires transparency.

At all times we share our work and make it accessible to those authorizing us to take ownership of responsibilities. We hide nothing because we have nothing to hide. We do not hoard or deny access to our resources. We are ready and willing to share with whomever is authorized to see our data and our communications, which may include our members, government officials, executive leadership, and select advisors. No one in the DMS works alone, and we all train others to follow in our footsteps. For that to be effective and the organization to grow, we must be willing to share our work openly, honestly, and sincerely, and to be trustworthy.

We value our Members, Performers, and Audiences

We believe the emotional dexterity that music brings to individuals' lives results from the combined energy of supporters, volunteers, musicians, and listeners.

The DMS is about people and their quality of life.

Everyone can participate and contribute to live music, and we welcome anyone willing to serve the larger community regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age or other social identities.

- Our Members contribute time, energy and money to enable opportunities for our communities to participate in live music;
- Our Performers choose to share their musical skills and talents that make our world a better place to live;
- Our Audiences encourage our Performers and Volunteers to give their best efforts,

as well as introduce their friends, neighbors, colleagues, and families to live music.

We also strive to expose those who do not actively seek participation in live music, so that they too can be amazed by its power.

We value contributing to something greater

We believe that contributing to something greater than ourselves, even something enormously greater, is why we exist and is a great motivation for all.

Living this value leads to realizing our mission in such a way that it enhances the lives of society, our communities, and ourselves, and that it empowers a bold vision for the future.

Strategies

How might the DMS realize its vision within the parameters of the desired organizational culture?

First, we must consider how the DMS defines what a “strategy” actually is.

Definitions of “strategy” include:

- A clear roadmap, consisting of a set of guiding **principles or rules**
- **How** resources should be allocated to accomplish the mission
- Determining **how** we will win in the period ahead
- A **way of doing** something or dealing with something
- A **system** of finding, formulating, and developing a doctrine that will ensure long-term success if followed faithfully
- A **policy** designed to achieve a major or overall aim

Harvard Business School suggests strategy includes:

- Assessing the competitive landscape, including cracks in others’ business models
- Identifying sources of sustainable cost and differentiation advantage
- Evaluating financial footprints and the different paths to profitability
- Connecting operational drivers
- Preparing for disruption and organizational realignment

...and is “a matter of working out your company's best position relative not just to pricing pressures from rivals but to all the forces in your competitive environment.”

Columbia University suggests strategy includes three elements:

- Understanding your company’s competitive environment
- Identifying challenges and where to focus efforts
- Defining key organizational priorities and current gaps

As a result, the DMS has chosen four strategic areas that will enable us to achieve our vision of being fully staffed, fully funded, and operating from our own facility. These strategies are based on further building our core strengths and developing one weakness.

Strategic Areas

- We shall **focus** our efforts.
- We shall capitalize on our **expertise** and sharpen our weakest attribute.
- We shall tailor our business model and organizational **structure** to serve current needs.
- We shall embrace an **approach** that empowers clarity in decision-making.

Strategic Area 1: Focus

Of prime importance is our focus.

If we have learned anything from the past few years it should be this: lots of ideas and options are not a problem in an organization like the DMS, yet making knee-jerk investments in time, energy and resources for projects that sound great but do not sit well within our vision can cause tension among leaders and participants.

We should not allow ourselves to be distracted by “shiny, new” programs and events, but make decisions and set goals based on our clearly-defined mission, vision and objectives.

- Respond, instead of react.
- Prepare, instead of panic.
- Drive, instead of dive.

Focusing our time, energy and resources will generate clarity, thereby giving those around us a clear understanding of who we are, what we do, and why they should be a part of it.

In other words, focus creates a community that people want to belong to.

According to our vision, our focus must be to become

- Fully funded,
- Fully staffed, and
- Operate from our own space.

Therefore, we determined our “focus” strategy is to:

Be a community worth belonging to.

In order to attract and keep income, sponsors and staff, and pay to maintain a physical space, we need performers, audiences, and volunteers who want to **commit** to DMS activities. This is accomplished by creating an environment in which a sense of belonging is an essential element. The human “need to belong” is one of the most well-researched characteristics of existence (Lavigne, Vallerand, Crevier-Braud, 2011), and the DMS is poised to provide that need for a great many individuals.

Especially for those who do not have a church family or a social circle outside of the workplace, the DMS can, and should, be a haven for both music lovers as well as individuals looking for companionship, no matter their background or government demographic and social classifications. Even those who have a church family may not be able to utilize or advance their musical mastery and interests within that

environment.

Once the DMS is fully funded, fully staffed, and operates from its own space, we could then shift our focus to (in order of priority):

- Weekly performances
- Weekend workshops
- More ensembles
- Family inclusive events
- Expanding the Pinellas Festival of Community Bands, and
- Engaging guest speakers and performers

Strategic Area 2: Expertise

We recognize that organizations and people benefit far more when existing strengths are refined and built upon. The DMS has effective communication channels, efficient financial planning, and a robust culture.

However, ignoring the weakest elements of operations can lead to an unhealthy environment and stunted growth. The DMS is weakest in staffing our needs.

The second strategy the DMS will utilize to realize its vision is to:

**Maintain excellent communication, financial planning and culture,
and develop our personnel.**

A recent organizational health assessment recognized the following strengths and weakness:

Execution: Communication (scored 9.25/12)

Better than: Communication systems run smoothly, and team members usually have the information they need when they need it. However, there are occasional lapses in communication.

But not as good as: Communications are streamlined and intentional. Information flow is automated through regular channels. Team members spend minimal time in meetings, which usually produce specific, actionable outcomes.

Areas to focus on include:

- Streamlining emails.
- Planning the use of telephone calls.
- Updating members monthly instead of quarterly.
- Regular articles and photos posted on our website and social media pages.
- An easy-to-access and regularly updated list of volunteer opportunities.
- Regularly updated promotional materials for the organization, not just some programs and events.

- Regular financial summaries shared with members.
- Easy-to-access and updated meeting and project management details.
- Meetings to focus on making decisions, not reporting.

Plan: Financial Planning (scored 7.75/12)

Almost as good as: Our reporting system compares budget to actual spending and enables us to predict one month's cash flow. We have a modest cash reserve.

But better than: Our reporting structure gives clarity into past spending. But we lack the time to apply that learning to the future. Spending is out of alignment with strategy.

Areas to focus on include:

- More consistent cash flow predictions.
- Building our cash reserve to cover 3 months of regular expenses.
- Finding a method to automate budgeting and reporting.

Grow: Culture (scored 7.75/12)

Almost as good as: Our work culture is healthy, and we build it with annual events like holiday parties. We encourage team members to work well with each other and to resolve conflicts in a healthy manner.

But better than: Our culture is mostly okay. There are a few troubling elements, but we lack energy to address them. Team members are neither hostile nor especially engaged.

Areas to focus on include:

- Training leaders to be trustworthy and develop conflict resolution skills.
- Celebrating, teaching and frequently sharing our core values.
- Confronting breaches of confidence and values as soon as identified.
- Ensuring that messages constantly reinforce our mission.
- Prioritizing social engagement as much as musical, to create a community people want to belong to.

Grow: Staffing (scored 3.25/12)

Better than: Several key positions are unfilled. No formal appointment process exists, so each leader appoints team members based on their own criteria. Appointments produce unpredictable results.

But not as good as: Most key positions have been filled, but we are not fully satisfied with the quality of our team. Basic appointment procedures are in place, but we struggle to train new team members. Team results are still somewhat unpredictable.

Areas to focus on include:

- Develop leadership appointment and onboarding processes.
- Recruit key personnel, including a volunteer coordinator.
- Plan for succession of key roles.
- Secure funding to realize our ideal organizational structure.

Overall, our current organizational health is rated 60%.

Average health score is 72.1/120, with individual scores ranging from 64 to 81.

Strategic Area 3: Structure

The DMS is very good at organizing events, but without dedicated administrative leadership, struggles to organize its business environment well. Although this has been addressed in the past and there have been three attempts to appoint an administrator (Executive Director), a lack of funding has prevented actual appointments being made.

Overall, the organizational structure outlined in the DMS Bylaws is sound and a good model to provide oversight for a busy organization.

However, we are not yet at that point, with a handful of the same people fulfilling multiple roles. Vision26 must therefore include a transition plan that grows not just our programs, activities and income, but also the team leaders and personnel to undertake the tasks needed to realize our vision.

Therefore, our strategy for “structure” is to:

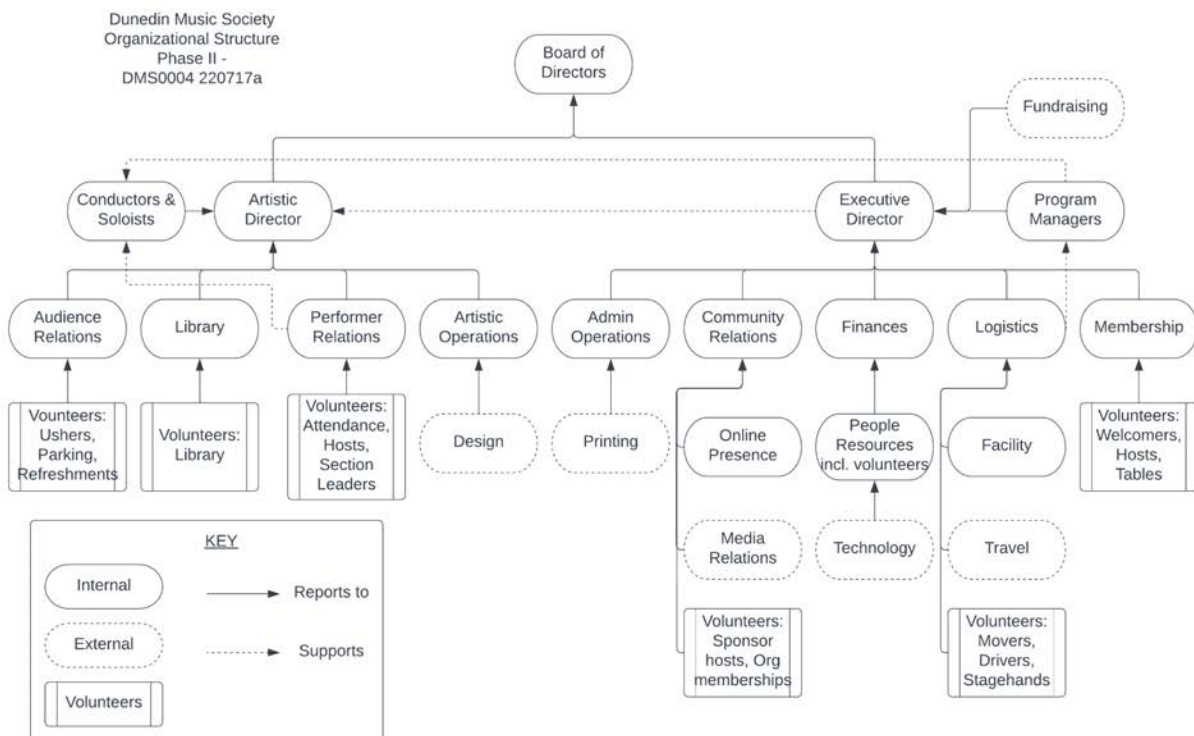
Implement a transition plan towards our ideal business structure according to DMS bylaws, that supports our excellent event management and develops our organizational management.

A phased development of both programs and staffing appears later in this document, and includes hiring paid staff in the following positions:

- | | | |
|------|----|---|
| 2022 | Q3 | Fundraiser |
| | Q4 | Part-time Executive & Artistic Directors (replacing General Director) |
| 2023 | Q1 | Online Presence |
| | Q2 | Logistics, Audience Relations, Volunteer Coordinator |
| | Q3 | Member Relations, Community Relations |
| | Q4 | Operations staff |
| 2024 | Q1 | Full-time Executive & Artistic Directors |

- Q2 Finance, Performer Relations
- Q3 Library
- Q4 Temporary property consultants
- 2025 Remaining staff

The organizational structure goal for our desired needs according to our bylaws (called “Phase II”), is visually represented below. This chart represents our “Fully Staffed” vision.



[Link to full size](#)

Strategic Area 4: Approach

Our approach to making decisions will include answering the following questions:

1. Does this idea produce income?
2. Will this idea pay for itself *and* contribute to the running costs of the DMS?
3. Is this a one-time trial event?

Failure to meet all three of these conditions immediately precludes the DMS from engaging in that activity. This includes non-performing staff positions and resources that indirectly contribute to one or more income-producing activities.

Using the term “free” is no longer a practice the DMS will engage in. There are no free

activities, as everything has some sort of cost to everyone involved. For example, audiences may be required to give their email address to the DMS, or spend time helping or attending events. “Zero cost” or “Complimentary” indicates there is no money exchanged, but the event is not “free.”

Another reason for dropping the term “free” is that humans have come to use monetary value as a determination of quality, thereby something that is “free” indicates it does not have any value or can’t be very good. There are obviously a great many exceptions, but the DMS no longer wants to devalue music further than has already occurred through rampant technological access. It is well-known and well-documented that live, in-person music carries with it a wholly different experience than hearing music via digital means. The live environment deserves monetary investment by both individuals and companies - someone, somewhere has to pay for the expertise and physical resources required to present and share live music. Even if an attendee does not pay, the event is still not “free.” In accordance with the Florida Council for Economic Education’s new focus on personal financial responsibility, even when assisting low-income families to participate in DMS, a nominal donation of \$1 will be recommended.

(To avoid confusion: the DMS should make every attempt to use the term “complimentary” whenever appropriate, and avoid using the term “free” as much as possible.)

Therefore, our strategy towards our “approach” is to:

Engage in self-sustaining activities that produce income, including ensemble & musician hire, property management, and advertising revenue through sponsorship, and use grants for credibility and experimentation rather than operations.

As a result, the primary activities that will give the DMS the strongest chance of realizing its vision include:

- Public performances (ticketed and/ or recommended donations)
- Education for performers (ticketed and/ or recommended donations)
- Hiring out ensembles and musicians to local communities for special events
- Property management
- Advertising (through sponsorship and naming rights)

Additional funding sources traditionally utilized by organizations such as the DMS include government and foundation grants. Due to the volatile nature of grants, as well as the specific immense reporting and administration time required to apply for and process grants through to final reporting, a focused shift towards grants funding is required.

Using grants to assist with or underwrite operating costs is no longer viable. Instead, grants will be used for the following purposes only:

- Credibility (such as State grants)
- Experiments (such as one-time events that may lead to a program)

- Collaborations (such as a one-time dance, music, or visual art creative endeavor)
- Under-18 Education (such as working with schools for specific events including music competition preparation, youth workshops, and camps)

Vision26 strategies summarized:

- **Focus:** Be a community worth belonging to.
- **Expertise:** Maintain excellent communication, financial planning and culture, and develop our personnel.
- **Structure:** Implement a transition plan towards our ideal business structure according to DMS bylaws, that supports our excellent event management and develops our organizational management.
- **Approach:** Engage in self-sustaining activities that produce income, including ensemble & musician hire, property management, and advertising revenue through sponsorship, and use grants for credibility and experimentation rather than operations.

Next we will explore the objectives for realizing our vision, using these strategies. Specific SMARTER goals will be determined based on these objectives, but remain external to this guidebook due to their changing nature and accomplishment over time.

Objectives

An objective contains three elements: behavior, components, and criteria. They may or may not include measurable or timely expectations, but instead drive the development of assigned SMARTER goals.

We now know what achieving our mission will look like in 2026, along with the strategies that will be employed to get us there. Next, we need to determine the specific actions that will shift the DMS from its current state to its desired future (Phase II).

Responding to the question “If the DMS could do anything to accomplish its mission and vision, what would it be?” along with reasons why such activities are important and impacting, our strategy workshop generated multiple achievable activities. When collating and combining these ideas they seemed to naturally fall into four cross-pollinated functional sets of objectives:

- People
- Products
- Programs
- Property

People

Focusing on staff, performers, volunteers, and community

Objective	Motive
O1.1 Publish an organizational chart connecting all essential personnel, using Bylaws 2.1 and 2.3 as a primary source.	A complete roster of personnel is required in order to identify when the DMS is both fully staffed and fully funded.
O1.2 Assemble a generous compensation, benefits and onboarding package for hired and voluntary staff.	In order to attract personnel based on character first and then their effectiveness, rather than just on their outcomes, a comprehensive list of benefits is needed.
O1.3 Build a comprehensive timeline of staff appointments according to our desired organizational chart.	The transition from our current state to our desired state requires a progressive approach to appointing personnel.
O1.4 Appoint a fundraising chair or committee and engage a fundraising specialist to secure initial funding for staff in accordance with the timeline.	Although the DMS looks to engage in self-financing income-producing activities, it is recognized that initial operating costs will require funding from external sources.
O1.5 Ensure staff and volunteers stay focused and adept at multiple functions through intense and ongoing quarterly training.	All who connect with the DMS in any way must feel comfortable that their time, energy, wisdom and finances are invested well, through outstanding hospitality and user-friendly service and experience.

Products

Focusing on short-term income-producing events

Objective	Motive
O2.1 Host a live amateur or professional performance at least once a week.	To help turn North Pinellas into a live music destination, which makes the DMS more visible to leaders, performers and funders locally and far beyond.
O2.2 Produce family-friendly events including educational workshops, classes, and performances.	Involving the whole family makes live music more approachable, sustains long-term fans (think: McDonald's playgrounds) and fosters a sense of belonging from a young age through retirement across multiple generations.
O2.3 Provide safe and effective opportunities for children and adults to learn how to play or sing through regular music lessons.	A well-rounded community organization includes access for members to improve their skill sets, think bigger, and build a solid foundational understanding they want to share with others.
O2.4 Host local and out-of-state performers at weekend workshops for different genres (orchestra, band, choir, jazz, chamber) at least once a quarter.	Allow future members to experience the DMS in its home environment without a long-term commitment but still benefiting from building local relationships and effective musical growth and education.
O2.5 Host an annual retreat in a dedicated residential setting for at least one genre.	Give performers an opportunity to dive deeply into specific repertoire, performing techniques, and music theory, and build lifelong relationships endearing participants to the DMS.

Programs

Focusing on new long-term umbrella services

Objective	Motive
03.1 Offer performing ensembles to producers of live events including weddings, corporate meetings, and parties.	Earn income and become the premier go-to live music agency for local top talent, giving the DMS more visibility, growth, and recruitment opportunities.
03.2 Host a weekly podcast (and video) exploring musical topics interesting to members.	Increase international visibility and credibility in order to put DMS at the forefront of performers' and audiences' minds, thereby creating increased sponsorship/ advertising income and event participants.
03.3 Continue and improve opportunities for performers to participate in large and chamber ensembles on live acoustic instruments, and for audiences to experience live music and contribute to the cultural well-being of their chosen residential communities.	Impact more people by allowing them to participate in more live music, increase the DMS' reach, and grow opportunities for membership and support.
03.4 Launch ensembles and host workshops and classes for performers under 18 years old.	To build relationships with future generations and members of the DMS as well as grow an ongoing pool of talent.
03.5 Host short festivals based on specific themes such as cultural or geographical music, genres, composers, artists, or topics such as space, comics, etc.	Increase opportunities for families to explore ancestral cultures through live music and make connections with future diverse members that otherwise might not engage in DMS activities.

Property

Focusing on DMS' own operational facilities

Objective	Motive
04.1 Establish a center of operations including office & storage space to accommodate large equipment and at least five personnel and meeting space for up to 15.	Gain access to DMS resources at times convenient for us, not other venues, and have a central, focused base of operations that the DMS and its members can call "home."
04.2 Operate a large rehearsal hall for DMS and community ensembles to meet in regularly, and for hosting workshops.	Remove restrictions and costs of available meeting spaces, streamline logistics, and allow for self-sufficiency and growth.
04.3 Manage a small flexible performance hall with 400-600 seats, including a box office.	Remove restrictions on performance space due to conflicting venue schedules, learn how to operate a facility prior to building a dedicated world class concert hall (see <i>Strategy 2019</i>), and make North Pinellas a destination for live music events.
04.4 Provide dedicated space for instrumental and vocal private music teachers to offer music lessons to all ages.	Earn income from property management of related services.
04.5 Open a cafe & shop for supplies and merchandise to provide a gathering space and convenient access to ongoing needs and supplies.	Promote the DMS through merchandising and refreshment branding, as well as providing a hang-out space for members to talk and make DMS a place of belonging.

Timeline

The chart below suggests an approximate timeline of realizing Vision26, including staff appointments, product & program launches, and property management. Also included is the first year's operating costs and/ or setup costs. This is not a budget, does not reflect predicted income, and may change at any time, but it gives a rough estimate of financial needs for Vision26 implementation.

Objectives	2022				2023				2024				2025																	
	Q3		Q4		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4											
	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
People	Fundraiser		Part-Time Directors		Online Presence		Logistics Audience Rel. Volunteer Coord.		Member Rel. Community Rel.		Operations Staff		Full-Time Directors		Finance Performer Rel.		Library		Temporary Property Consultants		Remaining Staff									
Products			Membership		Family Friendly Events		Lessons				Weekend Workshops		Weekly Concerts				Residential Rentals													
Programs			Podcast Choir Concerts				Music Classes				Fingered Pianos		Chamber Ensembles				Welcome Agenda													
Property	Music Rooms #1				Music Rooms #2				Music Rooms #3				Music Rooms #4		Music Rooms #5		Music Rooms #6		Music Rooms #7		Music Rooms #8		Music Rooms #9		Music Rooms #10		Music Rooms #11		Music Rooms #12	
					Office & Storage								Rehearsal Hall								Performance Hall, Cafe, Shop		OPEN							

[Link to full size](#)

Implementation

Next Steps

Now that we have a clear direction for the immediate future (4 years: 2023-2026 inclusive), we can take the following action:

Goals

Initial SMARTER goals can be developed by DMS Leadership, and specific tasks assigned to individuals.

Individual Contributions

Tasks that you, the reader of Vision26, can implement immediately without authorization:

1. Begin talking casually to local contacts about DMS vision and needs
2. Recommend updates to existing materials and website information
3. Read "Let's Raise Nonprofit Millions Together" by Karen Eber Davis
4. Recruit volunteers, performers and audiences to ALL events
5. Train others in DMS policies, procedures and expectations
6. Generate enthusiasm and commitment
7. Memorize and share the mission
8. Wear the brand
9. Cheerlead DMS leadership
10. Network with known contacts to identify potential supporters and volunteers
11. Look for performing opportunities and give contacts to program managers
12. Read the DMS website, constitution and bylaws
13. Look for grants and help apply for them
14. Prepare "my inspiring DMS story" for sharing in social settings

Sharing

Ways to share the DMS with others include:

1. A quick email or text to DMS members or leaders I know, giving encouragement
2. A quick email or text to my circles of influence sharing the DMS website or an event
3. Thank performers, volunteers and members for supporting live music
4. Invite a section, an ensemble, leadership, or everyone to a potluck BBQ
5. Focus on our accomplishments in Strategy 2019, our productivity, insight, great dialogue, get-stuff-done approach, and our bright future
6. Smile a lot more, making people ask why. "Why, the DMS, of course!"

Accountability

It is important to the DMS that this document be a useful tool for decision making guidance, and not stuck on a shelf to never be seen again.

With that in mind, it is recommended that:

1. The DMS Executive Leadership distributes a Vision26 update summary form to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors by the 15th of each month.
2. The DMS Executive Committee assists with implementation and mastermind group decision making.
3. The DMS Board of Directors considers and adjusts Vision26 Objectives annually.
4. Concise information from the update summary, such as goal progress and year-to-date income and expenses, is included in member newsletters.
5. A central repository is used to coordinate projects, such as Smartsheets, Asana, Google Sheets, or Trello.
6. All projects should be led by at least three individuals, so that no one person is relied upon to know and do everything at all times, and should something catastrophic happen (such as a move out of state), the project can continue.

Our Strategy Process

How this guide was developed:

“Vision26” is the outcome of an extended development process that began with our “Strategy 2019” working document.

Both the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors recognized that the organization had stabilized after its initial start-up, and a new focus was needed in order to reach the next plateau.

Informal discussions were held over several months culminating in a joint workshop that included the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee exploring and defining the future of the organization.

The organization’s purpose, vision, cultural values, strengths and weaknesses, and possible actions were discussed and distilled into the strategies in this document.

These strategies are intended to guide the Executive Committee as it operates the DMS over the next year or two.

A new strategy/ vision workshop that includes the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, Executive Leadership, and Program Managers should be planned for sometime between April and September 2026.

End.