

USC Radio Group
Classical California KUSC and Classical California KDFC
Local Content & Services Report (FY2022)

1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station’s vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

It is a major priority of Classical California KUSC Los Angeles and KDFC San Francisco to stay essential to our diverse communities and to nourish a love of classical music for all. We are also aware that the ‘megaphone’ we possess can help lift up other arts organizations in our regions that may not have the resources to promote their activities widely. We believe strongly that providing a showcase for our arts partners large and small contributes to a vibrant arts ecosystem in all parts of our listening areas. In the quest to fulfill these goals, we’ve created community engagement initiatives involving these arts partners that stretch above and beyond the content we create for on-air broadcasts and digital platforms. But in both on-air and digital content, too, we redoubled our efforts in FY22 to diversify our playlists, staff and listening public. We made it a priority to present more music of long-neglected composers and performers of color, as well as women composers. We created new programs commemorating Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, and Juneteenth, among other holidays of importance to our diverse communities. We also expanded our website offerings with such ongoing features as Open Ears, stories about composers, musicians, and conductors underappreciated in their time.

2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you’re connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

Our key community engagement events during FY22 were the convening of arts leader roundtables in both Southern and Northern California and the planning of one-day children’s music festivals at family-friendly museums, which we call “Kids Discovery Days.” We promote our local arts organizations with a weekday series called “Play On,” which is accompanied by a more detailed blog component, “Play On, California.” It started during the early days of the pandemic, when concert organizations abruptly lost their ticket revenues. We also presented concert broadcasts by such groups as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Pacific Symphony of Orange County, California Symphony, and more, showcasing their artistic excellence to our global audience. At our December 2021 Los Angeles Community Arts Leader Roundtable, prominent leaders of some smaller community music organizations shared their own pandemic-related challenges and achievements, updates on their work in promoting diversity, equity, inclusivity and belonging at their workplaces, and their suggestions on how KUSC can better serve them. Participants included leaders of such respected community

groups as Street Symphony, Arts for LA, the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA) and the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (ICYOLA). At our June 2022 San Francisco arts leader roundtable, which took place shortly after KDFC moved its headquarters to the Civic Center arts district, we welcomed the leaders of many of the Bay area's major performing arts institutions, including the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and Philharmonia Baroque. Here, the emphasis was sharing current efforts and plans for the future to improve our organizational cultures in the realms of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging.

For the museum-based "Kids Discovery Days", we arrange with the museum to provide free or greatly reduced admission fees; the events are designed to attract families that might otherwise have limited exposure to the performing arts. At no charge, we bring in 7-12 other arts groups to showcase their own programming, take part in live concerts, and provide interactive activities for children. After months of planning, our partner in the planned April 2022 Kids Discovery Day, the LA County Museum of Natural History, postponed the event due to staffing challenges caused by the pandemic. During FY22, we also began comprehensive planning for two future events, Kids Discovery Days in the fall of 2022, our fifth such festival in San Jose and the second we've produced in Orange County.

3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

Though our stations have a long way to go in attracting a more diverse listening audience, we have been heartened by the response of listeners—through hundreds of testimonials on social media, direct emails and comments accompanying donations—to our more diverse programming and to our community events. A case in point is this post on the KUSC website from Will Gibson:

"I salute our L.A. all music classical radio station KUSC for going all-out yesterday on Martin Luther King Day to feature as much classical music by black composers and performers as they could. They made it such a great day. This is what makes KUSC the greatest classical music station in the world. Thanks again KUSC for making me, a black man, feel so proud of my racial heritage musically on MLK Jr. Day."

Every participant at both our December 2021 LA community arts roundtable and the San Francisco roundtable in June 2021 wrote to thank us for convening what several described as an unprecedented coming together of the region's arts groups. Many also expressed that the roundtable was already leading to deeper connections in the community and discussion of future partnerships. From KC Buller at "Arts for LA":

“The roundtable this afternoon was nothing short of inspiring! We are convinced there are ways we can partner to support KUSC, and the music/classical music community as a whole. We are so excited to meet again with the brilliant minds you gathered this morning, and cannot wait to hear more.”

4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2022, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2023. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

The aforementioned specials marking Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth and the overall programming strategy to vastly expand the programming of composers of color as well as women composers has been greeted with great enthusiasm by our listeners. In FY22 we also hired as evening host and our first resident artist one of the leading champions of this repertoire nationwide, pianist and educator Lara Downes. She brings her background as a person of color to all her initiatives, and we have greatly benefitted from her extensive knowledge of and experience with a wide range of diverse music. In FY23, plans are set to introduce our first bilingual alternate music streams, Nuestra Música. Both the English and Spanish versions will be hosted by Brisa Siegel. We are also developing plans for a “Classical Americana” stream further exploring long neglected repertoire, and a series of videos showcasing performers and composers of color.

In the areas of community engagement, we are scheduled in FY23 to launch a pilot initiative at the Watts Learning Center Charter Middle School, an interactive concert and assembly featuring evening host Lara Downes and the music of two long forgotten Black composers with ties to LA, Margaret Bonds and William Grant Still. Students at the school will participate in the interactive assembly. We also plan for Kids Discovery Days in San Jose, Santa Ana, and East Los Angeles

5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

Our mission is to nurture a love of classical music, inspiring people to make it an enduring part of their lives. We curate beautiful music, create compelling experiences and welcome all on the journey. We would like to create a positive impact on individuals and on communities. We engage with our communities through our on-air broadcasts, via digital platforms such as live and curated streams, website, apps, blogs, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter, live broadcasts, and through community events. Without the CPB funding, our station will not be able to accomplish our mission and enrich the lives of many in our communities.