CHICAGO MUSICAL PATHWAYS INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL CLASS OF MUSICIANS AND 2019/20 PERFORMANCE DATES

SEVEN MUSIC EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT YOUNG MUSICIANS FROM TRADITIONALLY UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES IN THE GREATER CHICAGO AREA

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE
Merit School of Music, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras, Chicago High School for the Arts, Chicago Sinfonietta, Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, DePaul University School of Music and Ravinia Festival

CHICAGO, October 17, 2019 –

On Monday, September 16, 2019, the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI) welcomed its inaugural class of fellows. Fifty students, representing 36 zip codes from across the greater Chicago area, gathered in Chicago High School for the Arts auditorium to learn about the mission of CMPI – to identify and develop gifted and motivated orchestral students from underrepresented backgrounds for acceptance into top-tier conservatory, college or university classical music programs in preparation for careers as professional musicians.

The freshman class was chosen from 137 applicants after completing an intensive multi-month audition process. The students range from sixth graders to high school seniors and reflect the diversity of the city of Chicago (44% African American, 40% Latinx, 10% Southeast Asian, 6% South Asian). Learn more about all the fellows at www.chicagopathways.org/fellows.

The slate of performances for the inaugural class are highlighted by five shared solo recitals, hosted by partner organizations across the Chicago area. Admission is free and no tickets are required.

- Friday, October 25, 2019, 7:30pm in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center (220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL)
  - A list of performers and repertoire is available here.
- Thursday, December 12, 2019, 7:30pm in Curtiss Hall at the Fine Arts Building (410 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL)
- Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 7:30pm at the Music Institute of Chicago (1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston, IL)
- Tuesday, April 21, 2020, 7:00pm at Beverly Arts Center (2407 W. 111th St., Chicago, IL)
- Sunday, May 17, 2020, 6:00pm at Midwest Young Artists Conservatory (878 Lyster Rd., Highwood, IL)
CMPI offers a robust training curriculum designed to prepare young musicians to successfully audition into the best music schools in the country. Essential program components include:

- Weekly private lessons
- Monthly mentorship for the entire family from a professional musician mentor
- Written and verbal feedback from a panel of professional musicians in biannual juries
- Participation in masterclasses with musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra
- Participation in monthly seminars, workshops and family meetings designed to train families in what is necessary to support young musicians in the classical music industry
- Complimentary tickets to attend professional orchestra concerts
- Financial support for private lesson fees, instrument purchase, summer camp tuition and application fees, large ensemble tuition fees, college visits and trial lessons, ACT/SAT prep courses, instrument repair, and more.
- The initial year of membership and the junior year of high school are probationary years for participating students. As long as fellows meet the program requirements, they automatically are reenrolled in subsequent classes.

CMPI is the result of a $3.5 million grant over three-and-one-half years from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to a consortium of Chicago-area organizations dedicated to music and education.

“The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has identified the absence of diversity within the field of American classical music, and in American orchestras in particular, as a serious challenge to the vitality and sustainability of longstanding institutions of arts and culture,” stated Susan Feder, program officer, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. “Along with the Mellon-support consortia in Philadelphia and Boston, CMPI is helping to provide access and opportunity to talented, high-potential musicians from traditionally under-represented backgrounds. We applaud the diversity and talents of the inaugural cohort of CMPI fellows, and hope that the range of support CMPI is offering will lead to successful placement at leading colleges and conservatories and, eventually, professional ensembles.”

“We are delighted to welcome 12 CMPI fellows to Symphony Center for the Initiative’s first showcase recital on October 25,” said Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association President Jeff Alexander. “The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is proud to be a lead partner in this important initiative,” Alexander added.

“CMPI will be surrounding our inaugural fellows with high quality guidance and instruction, nurturing from musician mentors and the profound sense of community that comes from being with others that have the same goals and desires. Priorities for both the fellows and their families are to immerse them in this genre and teach them how to navigate in the classical music space. We look forward to supporting our students and their teachers on their journey towards top tier conservatory and college music school admission. We know that this initiative and others around the country will lead aspiring underrepresented musicians to careers as professionals and to American orchestras that reflect the rich diversity of the United States,” said Adrienne Thompson, Director of Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative.

“CMPI brings me tremendous opportunities. The overwhelming support from my mentors, teachers, and family allow me to grow and flourish as an artist, beyond what I thought was possible. I’m looking forward to sharing my music with many audiences while preparing for college auditions,” said Oliver Talukder, oboe, a senior at Maine East High School.
About Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI)
The long-term goal of the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI) is to help address the persistent lack of diversity in American orchestras – a condition that threatens the vitality and viability of classical, orchestral music. CMPI is aimed at building a more robust Chicago-area training pathway for talented student musicians from traditionally under-represented backgrounds, from 6th grade through 12th grade. The project focuses on instrumental students of classical music who have demonstrated both aptitude and interest in pursuing intensive study and a career specifically as a professional performing musician.

The initiative involves close collaboration and resource sharing among a diverse network of well-established non-profit Chicago youth and music-education focused organizations. Together, participating organizations are working to identify talented, motivated students early in their training. Students selected for CMPI will be carefully assessed and provided with comprehensive supports – musical and extra-musical (e.g., financial, instructional, academic, etc.) to remove many of the barriers to access that can discourage or derail the training of talented students from under-represented backgrounds before they are able to realize their full musical potential.

Learn more about CMPI at www.chicagopathways.org.

About the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Founded in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.