

The Community Music School of Webster University

Engagement and Service

MISSION

The mission of the Community Music School of Webster University is to mold and nourish creative talent by providing the finest educational programs in music as well as outstanding performance opportunities and performances. By advocating lifelong learning in the arts, the Community Music School helps to regenerate the community's musical legacy, fosters an appreciation for the arts, and sets the stage for each future generation to leave its mark on time.

The Community Music School is a private, not-for-profit school for the arts that does not discriminate in admission, education, employment, scholarship or financial aid policies on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, sex, age or handicap.

The Music School is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and is a certified member of the National Guild of Community Schools for the Arts.

The Music School receives assistance from the Arts and Education Fund of Greater St. Louis and the Regional Arts Commission.

HISTORY

In 1925, Edna Lieber, a St. Louis piano teacher, founded the Community Music School, with a faculty consisting of members from the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. With the guidance of Mrs. Alice Gerdine, the school's Board President in the 1930s, the Community Music School began to grow.

In 1974, the Community Music School merged with the St. Louis Institute of Music to form the Saint Louis Conservatory and Schools for the Arts (CASA). At the same time, the current headquarters in University City opened. Originally a temple for over 40 years, the building became the Music School's spacious new home.

The conservatory arm of the institution closed in 1989, but the non-degree programs continued to thrive. The school turned its focus to providing the finest music education for students of all ages and abilities. The Suzuki Strings program, and Young Years and Kindermusik classes were established. The Young People's Orchestra and String Training Orchestra expanded to a sequential orchestra and ensemble system.

In 1994, CASA merged with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and became the Saint Louis Symphony Community Music School. At this time, the Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club branch and the Leon R. Strauss Center – West County branch in Faust Park were opened. In 1996, the Music School opened another branch on the Webster University campus.

In September 2001, the Community Music School joined with Webster University. Webster has a world-class reputation for leadership in the arts, and it provides the in-depth music educational experience and resources needed by the Community Music School. With this alliance, the Community Music School continues to offer outstanding music education to students of all ages and abilities.

Over the years, the Community Music School has been honored to count such musicians among its faculty as members of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Webster University, and many other colleges and universities as well as some of the most respected performing artists in the region.

Students and alumni have successfully placed in such competitions as the American National Chopin Competition, Artist Presentation Society Competition, Fite Family Young Artists National Competition, Saint Louis Area Music Teachers Association Young Artist Competition, and the Sphinx Competition, and have gone on to perform and teach around the nation.

EXPERTISE

The Community Music School of Webster University is a member of the National Guild of Community Music Schools, which includes about 250 schools in cities across the country. We belong to a strong tradition of excellence in music education that has endured for many years. To be a member of the Guild, we must meet stringent criteria such as offering financial assistance and talent-based merit scholarships, and setting high standards for our faculty. In addition, our Community Music School is one of only 18 non-degree granting community music schools in the United States to have earned accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

The National Guild has certified the Community Music School of Webster University as exemplifying the highest standards of excellence and access in community arts education.

ABOUT the CMS

Nearly 2,000 students ranging in age from 6 months to over 80 years attend the Community Music School. Individual lessons and group classes are available for any age or skill level. One of the greatest and most enduring gifts parents can offer their children is exposure to the joys and creative expression of music. Many adults also are rediscovering their love of music and finding a new creative outlet. In fact, more adults are taking music lessons than ever before.

One benefit of taking music lessons at the Community Music School is the camaraderie students develop with one another and their teacher. Students are truly part of a musical community with many beats and rhythms. There are many opportunities to meet friends with similar interests, which strengthen the enjoyment of music. Students who participate in an ensemble or orchestra also learn important values of teamwork and cooperation – lifelong skills that apply to all aspects of life.

Faculty members at the Community Music School are more than accomplished musicians—they're also professional teachers trained to teach students of all ages. In addition, many teachers are sought-after performers and guest clinicians who teach others how to teach. Our faculty's combination of musical and teaching expertise means your child receives an exceptional quality of music education at any level—and adds value to your investment in your child's education.

For our most talented students, we also offer a distinctive opportunity to learn from Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra musicians and others who teach and perform on national and international levels. These world-class musicians value the potential of the school's highly talented students who offer the promise of becoming accomplished musicians of tomorrow.

Collaborations with the community to change/update/create new programs based on student/ community needs

The Community Music School (CMS) has collaborated with the community in many situations in order to improve services and create new programs.

The CMS worked with the Webster Groves School District to assist them in establishing a strings program for their students. We recruited the teachers and administered the payment of the teachers with funding from the School District. The district is now in its 5th year of that program and has hired a full time strings teacher in the middle school and is administering the program in-house.

The CMS and Clear Channel Entertainment, now Live Nation! partnered to present 3 programs that engaged students in the creative process of composing music. Live Nation funded the Music Alive! Summer Composition Intensive, Music Alive! Songwriting Intensive at the Community Music School. In addition, we offered the Songwriting Intensive at the Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club, Carr Lane Middle School and Metro High School in the St. Louis Public School District.

While in University City, the CMS partnered with COCA to provide summer camps for students needing care for the full day. The CMS offered camps in the morning that matched with COCA afternoon schedules so students could take the CMS camps and be escorted across the street to the COCA camp for the afternoon. This increased enrollment in both camps.

The CMS partnered with St. Andrews Resources for Seniors to provide music programs for their Music Connection program. In 2006, a strings program, choir and Jazz Ensemble visited 3 different facilities. In 2007, the Suzuki Ensemble performed at Friendly Village while the Jazz Lab Ensemble entertained residents from 3 facilities in the new CMS Concert Hall on the Webster University campus.

The CMS has provided Young Years music programs for Parents as Teachers programs in many St. Louis area school districts.

The Community Music School partnered with St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors twice in 2007 to provide music for residents of several low-income apartment communities. On March 10, the Suzuki Ensemble performed for an enthusiastic audience of residents at the Friendly Village Senior Apartments. After the concert, the students and residents shared cookies, punch, and conversation.

On May 1, the new Concert Hall became the intimate concert setting for an audience comprised of residents from several of the apartment communities. The Jazz Lab Ensemble brightened up the rainy May 1 afternoon for approximately 50 residents from several St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors apartment communities with an energetic jazz concert. St. Andrew's is a non-profit organization that brings retirement living options to thousands of seniors in the St. Louis area.

Student evaluations of programs

Each year, the CMS conducts performance reviews of one-third of its faculty. The process includes student evaluations of the instructor and the school. Over a course of three years, all faculty are reviewed and all the students have an opportunity for input.

External evaluations of programs

The Community Music School is one of only 12 non-degree granting community music schools in the United States to have earned accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). Reporting is required each year. New programs must be approved in order to be listed in the NASM catalog. The CMS is scheduled for renewal of its accreditation in 2008-2009 and must go through an extensive self-evaluation and on site visit.