

Intermezzo

Virtual Member Meeting:
February 9th at 6pm

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2025 and The Year Ahead

Welcome to the New Year everyone. I want to first thank you all for your continued support. The team here at your Union is honored to serve for another three-year term and proud of the work that we will continue to do in advocating for all of you and our profession.

In the last year we achieved historic gains in many of our theatre contracts with the input of hard-working committees and the Theatre Musicians Association. We continued to build on our longstanding partnerships with the Chicago Federation of Labor, where it was my honor to be appointed to the Finance Committee, and the Illinois AFL-CIO, where Secretary-Treasurer Suarez Flint serves in her continuing role as a Vice-President on the Executive Board. These alliances are essential, as being part of the broader coalition of 500,000 unionized workers in Cook County and one million in the entire state of Illinois provides us with a support network that few in the country can boast. The leaders of these organizations carry on a long tradition of strong labor advocacy in our state, and prove over and over again their commitment to those who work for a living.

Along with these alliances, we also continued to work with our lobbyists at Mercury Public Strategy to build strong relationships with city and state elected leaders. These relationships are essential as the Union continues its effort to grow jobs in Chicago, utilize the Music and Musicians Tax Credits and Jobs Act that we successfully passed in 2024, and support our partners at Third Coast Music in their efforts to build the most advanced scoring stage anywhere in the world. Chicago has a look that producers from all over the world love, but we also have a sound. Local musicians should provide the soundtrack to productions that film in our city. When this new recording infrastructure is in place, I am confident that the jobs will follow.

Look for our political progress throughout the coming year.

In 2026 we have a number of big negotiations to complete, including our beloved Chicago Symphony and Grant Park orchestras. Of note additionally will be the first contract renewal for the Rockford Symphony Orchestra, which organized and bargained its first agreement in my first year as President. Congratulations to them on their ongoing success. The historic Chicago Sinfonietta contract will also be negotiated as well as many others.



Dean Rolando and I just returned from the first round of negotiations for the Sound Recording Labor Agreement, at which the AFM is addressing the threat that AI poses to our industry. This national agreement, along with the Integrated Media Agreement, which governs orchestral recordings for those who are signatories, will be negotiated in 2026.

In June of this year, I and the CFM delegation will attend the AFM Triennial Convention in Ottawa, Canada. We intend to bring our unique voice to the conversation there and continue to advocate for the specific needs of the members of Local 10-208. I believe it sends a strong message that the AFM has decided to host this convention in Canada. Our northern allies do incredible work that

should be celebrated. One union, two countries.

Our staff grew by one organizer this year as Megan Elk took on the role in addition to their duties as head of CFM Communications. Ahead will be continued efforts to organize storefront theatres, music teachers, hip hop artists and DJs, areas which have massive potential to grow union representation, increase retirement benefits, and protect the work for coming generations.

Another staffing change made in 2025 was to promote longtime staff member Jennifer Figliomeni to Office Manager, a position that will increase our efficiency in handling all of the additional tasks that we have taken on in the last three years.

I want to personally thank Vice-President John Floeter and Secretary-Treasurer Suarez Flint for their incredible expertise and professionalism. It is a rare thing indeed to have such a team of dedicated people in one place at the same time. Along with our excellent Board of Directors, we have already hit the ground running in 2026 and are eager to complete the tasks that remain outstanding and develop new programs that lead the way both in our local labor ecosystem and internationally.

Thank you all for your artistry, perseverance, and support. May you and your families be safe and be prosperous in 2026.■

Union Work Is Better

As we look ahead to the new year, the Board and officers of the Chicago Federation of Musicians are also beginning a new term. Reflecting on our recent work, we have made solid gains in several collective bargaining agreements, and we've seen a number of new contractors file single engagements for the first time—an encouraging sign of progress.

For the CFM, our membership has generally held steady following recovery from pandemic-era losses. We will continue to be vigilant in enforcing membership requirements, because membership should never be viewed as optional. Union membership provides value that far exceeds the cost of dues, and I am always happy to explain those tangible benefits to any member who asks.

Looking ahead, we may be facing a future that is less friendly to labor. At the same time, it is heartening to see renewed interest in organizing across many industries. This moment serves as a reminder that collective action remains both relevant and powerful.

Labor unions are responsible for establishing fair wages, reasonable work hours, benefits, and safe working conditions, while also fighting workplace discrimination. Through collective bargaining, unions give workers a unified voice in negotiations with employers. They played a central role in building the middle class, and even non-union workers continue to benefit from standards that unions fought to establish.

What concerns me most is that while performance opportunities remain plentiful, a significant amount of this work is not being filed under union contracts. As performers, when we are offered work, we often focus first on the paycheck. Some non-union engagements may appear comparable to union scale wages, but compensation is far more than the gross amount offered.

If the work is not properly payrolled, with required deductions for taxes and FICA, you will ultimately bear those costs yourself—often eliminating any perceived parity with union



scale. In addition, you lose out on the required pension contribution of 13.189% in our local. When you account for taxes, pension contributions, and contractual protections, accepting non-union work at so-called “scale” typically means forfeiting 30% or more of your total compensation.

Building a career with employers who do not participate in the American Federation of Musicians and Employers Pension Fund means you will not receive a pension. You will also lack the protections of a union contract and the guaranteed working conditions you deserve as a professional musician.

Organizing

Many of our members currently perform with non-union ensembles. I encourage you to reach out to me and share your experiences so we can explore how these groups might be organized—or at the very least, brought under union contracts. All such communications will be handled with strict confidentiality. Protecting your professional reputation with all potential employers is our top priority. We must work together, because our strength truly lies in our union.

The Power of “No”

At times, it may feel as though certain ensembles deserve a pass on union recognition. I urge you to ask yourself whether you consider yourself a working professional. You have invested time, talent, and resources into your craft with the goal of earning a living. When you are asked to work for less than the minimum, or are told that inadequate compensation is “fair,” you have the power to say no.

Collectively, we can say no to substandard wages and unacceptable working conditions. Exercising that power is essential to protecting our profession and securing the future of our work. ■

From the Secretary-Treasurer KAREN SUAREZ FLINT



Happy New Year! January is the time to organize and declutter our spaces and our lives. In the spirit of tidiness, I thought I would provide some links to useful information that you may need in 2026.

For those of you who have paid your **2026 membership dues** on time, thank you. For the rest of you, it's time to declutter that CFM invoice from your desk and **submit your payment today by scanning the QR code on the left.**



The CFM scholarship has been transferred to the United Musicians Foundation and all donations are now tax deductible. 2026 Scholarships will be open to all students majoring in music. The new application and eligibility guidelines will be announced this spring. If you wish to make a donation to the scholarship fund, **the website for our giving platform, Zeffy, can be reached by scanning this QR code.**



The new payment portal does provide the option for yearly recurring payments. If you requested the recurring payment last year, we have received your payment this year. Please do not manually submit another payment as we then have to process a refund to you.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please send an email request to me at ksuarezflint@cfm10208.org and request assistance from the CFM Musicians Relief Fund. Our membership is very supportive and continues to generously contribute to the fund to help members who may be facing challenges. All requests are kept confidential, so please reach out. We are here to help.

Having trouble signing into the CFM website? Please heed this important troubleshooting information: The new website is not connected to the old website. Your username and password from the previous website does not transfer to the new website. When you go to the login page, you must create an account. Only click "forgot your password" if you have previously logged in successfully to the new website.



Looking for a member's contact information? Our current member directory is now located on the website, at the bottom of the "Find a Member" page. You must be logged into the website, in order to access this information. **You can also access this list by scanning the QR code here.**

As a CFM member, you are part of the National Coalition of Labor (formerly Midwest Coalition of Labor), which means you are entitled to a long list of benefits such as free Allstate Roadside Assistance, flat rate tax preparation and legal services, access to a credit union and so much more!

For more information on these benefits, scan the QR code to the right.



And finally, the 2026 Illinois Primary Election will take place on Tuesday, March 17. If you are unable to vote in person, please plan now on how to access early voting or voting by mail. The list of IL AFL-CIO endorsements, which I was proud to participate in selecting, can be found by scanning the QR code below. Let's get out the vote!

Access the full list of Illinois AFL-CIO endorsements by scanning this final QR code on the right.



Wishing everyone a great 2026! ■

Member Feature: Rachel Barton Pine



By: Megan Elk

Rachel Barton Pine’s union story begins not with a solo performance to thunderous applause, but with the paycheck of a section player.

At sixteen years old, Pine won a position in the Grant Park Festival Orchestra. Like every other musician in the ensemble, she joined the Chicago Federation of Musicians. That summer, she earned enough to help pay the rent for her family’s home. For a young, homeschooled virtuoso growing up on Chicago’s freelance scene, the job was not only artistically formative, it was life-altering.

“It was an incredible educational experience,” Pine recalls. “Artistically, musically, socially.” She played with the violin section, learning repertoire under world-class conductors, forging friendships with colleagues who welcomed her as the youngest member of the orchestra, and experiencing first-hand what it meant to be part of a collective workforce.

So formative, in fact, that Pine quite literally wrote it into her education. As part of her high-school American government

coursework, she attended bargaining committee meetings during a contract negotiation period and used those experiences as the basis for her civics credit. “I had been reading about the history of the AFL-CIO,” she says, “and I gave myself homeschool government credit for attending those union meetings.”

It is an origin story rooted in solidarity, practicality, and pride, values that have remained central to Pine’s life and work, even as she ascended to the highest levels of international recognition as a soloist.

Today, Rachel Barton Pine is one of the most sought after violinists of her generation, known for genre-spanning performances informed by deep historical research. As a soloist, she is not required to be covered under collective bargaining agreements, yet she maintains her membership in the Chicago Federation of Musicians out of conviction.

“I feel a certain patriotism about it,” Pine says simply. “I believe in the cause.”

That sense of solidarity, of staying at the table even when you no longer have to, is also the animating force behind Pine’s extensive charitable work. Through her foundation and affiliated projects, she has devoted decades to addressing the structural barriers that keep talented musicians from historically excluded communities from accessing classical music.

Her goal has never been merely to help a few individuals succeed, but to widen the door so that many more musicians may enter.



Pine knows firsthand that access to classical music requires far more than tuition assistance. Growing up in Chicago, she was fortunate to receive a scholarship for private lessons, but it didn't cover the gas needed to drive multiple times a week from the city to the suburbs. It didn't pay for concert clothes, accompanist fees, strings, bow repairs, sheet music, audition recordings, or instrument maintenance.

"A 100% scholarship doesn't pay for that stuff," she says. "And that's something we don't think about enough."

Her family lived with constant financial precarity. Her father was unemployed for much of her childhood and later left the family. Her mother raised Pine and her younger sisters largely on her own. The choice to pursue music professionally often felt, in Pine's words, "almost illogical" in the face of those obstacles.

What made the difference was community: extended family, church members, arts patrons, and later, union gigs on Chicago's vibrant freelance scene. Those gigs didn't just provide income; they provided dignity, stability, and a sense of belonging. Not every talented young musician has access to that ecosystem. And so, in 2001, Pine founded what would become a multifaceted effort to fill the gaps that scholarships leave behind.



Her foundation's financial assistance and instrument loan programs are designed to address the full reality of musical training. To date, they have supported more than 100 young artists, covering the unglamorous but essential costs that determine whether a student can continue.

"What happens to the kid who doesn't live in a city with an active freelance scene?" Pine asks. "Or who isn't quite advanced enough yet to be hired for those gigs?" Her work answers that question not with abstraction, but with material support.



Another cornerstone of Pine's charitable and educational work is her long-running Music by Black Composers project, a massive undertaking rooted in her own Chicago upbringing.

As a student, Pine was exposed to classical works by Black composers through institutions and ensembles unique to this city: the Center for Black Music Research, the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble, the Chicago Sinfonietta under Paul Freeman, and the work Michael Morgan was doing with the Civic Orchestra in the 1990s. That exposure was not common for her peers elsewhere, including for many Black students.

"I realized that most of my peers had no idea this repertoire existed," she says.

Her initial response was artistic curiosity. In 1997, she released a recording of violin concertos by Black composers of the 18th and 19th centuries, music of striking beauty that had been largely overlooked. But after the album's release, Pine began receiving requests from teachers, students, and institutions asking for more.

She soon recognized a disconnect: while scholars had been doing vital work in academia, that knowledge was not filtering down into everyday teaching studios.

With the guidance of an advisory board, Pine spent the next fifteen years collecting more than 900 works spanning four centuries and continents. The result has been a growing series of pedagogical volumes from beginner through intermediate for violin, with expansions into flute, piano, and beyond, alongside extensive free online resources.

These materials do more than diversify repertoire lists. They connect students to a broader historical narrative; one that includes Black orchestras of the 19th century, serious violinists like Booker T. Washington and Coretta Scott King,

(continued on next page)

and composers whose work belongs firmly within the classical tradition.

“It’s not about liking the music because it’s by a Black composer,” Pine emphasizes. “It’s about liking it because it’s great music.” For students, teachers, and families alike, that discovery fosters both artistic growth and a sense of rightful belonging.

Pine’s commitment to inclusion notably extends beyond race and economics to disability justice, an area shaped by lived experience. She identifies openly as a disabled musician and speaks candidly about how a medical complication in recent years fundamentally changed not only her disability status, but her relationship to the world. Becoming non-ambulatory has dramatically altered the way she experiences the world around her. The shift, she explains, was not about health alone, but about visibility and access.



“Suddenly I was in a completely different category,” she says. “There were all these barriers I had never really noticed before.”

Navigating spaces without ramps, venues without elevators, inaccessible seating layouts, and unclear information about entrances or restrooms prompted Pine to look more deeply at how the performing arts world includes, or excludes, disabled

participants. Her social media *Accessibility Spotlight* initiatives and advocacy work aim to normalize accommodation not as a burden, but as a collective enrichment.

“Accommodation is not something to be annoyed by,” Pine says. “All of our lives are enriched by the participation of all of us.”

Her perspective extends to audiences as well as performers; from wheelchair access in standing-room venues to accessible program notes and audio description for blind patrons. The work, she notes, is ongoing.

“There’s more out there that’s not yet up to par,” she says plainly. “We have more work to do.”

That same practical lens informs Pine’s involvement with Global Heartstrings, an initiative that addresses extreme material scarcity faced by young musicians in developing countries. Sometimes the material need facing young musicians is as basic as rosin.

“In the U.S., violin shops end up with piles of half-used cakes of rosin they can’t resell,” Pine explains. “But there are kids elsewhere who are sharing one cake among several students.”

Through Global Heartstrings, these would-be discards are redirected where they are desperately needed, along with scratched but playable instruments that no longer meet rental shop aesthetics. Recent shipments have supported programs such as Bloom Haiti, where even minimal supplies can transform a student’s ability to learn. It is a model that reduces waste, builds connection, and treats dignity as non-negotiable.

Underlying all of Pine’s work is a belief that music is not merely entertainment, but service.

“We don’t practice just to play alone in our rooms,” she says. “We get up on stage to play for others.”

As a teenager, Pine was invited by colleagues to perform in hospitals, community music schools, and even Cook County Jail, experiences that shaped her understanding of music’s civic role. Those values, modeled by Chicago musicians long before they were articulated as initiatives, continue to guide her.

In recent months alone, Pine has given masterclasses for Hyde Park Suzuki, South Side Suzuki Cooperative, Roosevelt University, and the Music Institute of Chicago; performed for residents at Lincoln Park Community Services, and participated in programs serving students across the city.

In one such performance at a homeless shelter, she was struck

Chicago ROCKS!



by the depth of audience engagement. A listener, hearing Bach's Double Concerto for the first time, spoke eloquently about the way the violins traded melodic material.

"That's what reminds us what our job really is," Pine reflects. "To feel the music and help others feel it."

For all her international engagements, Pine's commitment to her Chicago community remains unshakeable. She is a rare example of an internationally celebrated musician who was born here, and never really left. She champions the city's musical ecosystem with infectious enthusiasm: its free concerts, its youth orchestras, its community music schools, its stylistic diversity, and its culture of collaboration.

"We have an embarrassment of riches," she says. "So many cities would be lucky to have one good youth orchestra. We have several."

It is no coincidence that her foundation work mirrors the values she absorbed here in the city of Chicago: cooperation over competition, access over exclusivity, and collective responsibility over individual acclaim.

From that first union paycheck at sixteen to her continued membership today, Rachel Barton Pine's career traces a through-line of solidarity. Her charitable work does not seek to place her at the head of the table, but to make the table bigger and more accessible, ensuring that more people, from more places, can pull up a chair.

For the Chicago Musicians Union, her story is not only one of extraordinary artistry, but of enduring commitment to the idea that music, and the labor that makes it possible, belongs to everyone. ■

Visit rachelbartonpine.com to learn more.

Credit for all photos: Lisa Marie Mazucco



Left to Right: Chris Siebold, Gary Guzman, Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello, Dan Leali, Jo Ann Daugherty, and Paul Mutzabaugh after a performance of Morello's "Revolutions" at Goodman Theatre



Left to Right: Peter Cottontail, Caitlin Edwards, Kori Coleman, Chance the Rapper, Anya Brunfield, Tabira Whittington, and Wilfred Farquarson played on national TV for Chicago's first ever "New Year's Rockin' Eve" Broadcast!



Left to Right: Greg Sarchet, Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan, Ann Palen, and Collins Trier backstage during a concert performance of "Melon Collie and the Infinite Sadness" at Lyric Opera of Chicago

Happening in Haymarket

On Monday December 8th, officers and board members were sworn in for their new 3 year terms.

The FEPC Mentorship Program also kicked off, with mentors and mentees first meeting that evening. ■



Dean Rolando swears in President BJ Levy



The swearing in of officers and board members



The 25/26 FEPC Mentorship Cohort



Ray Oswald and Elleon Dobias



Jarod Prokop and Greg Flint



Bobby Everson and Joe Beribak



Joyce Westphal, Deb Mose, and Mark Streder



Scott Mason and Mark Burnell



A quartet of bassists! Top left to right: Rich Armandi, Alan Steiner, and John Floeter. Center: Tino Calvetti

On Monday, October 20th, we welcomed members who have belonged to the union for **35 years or more** to a special appreciation luncheon and reunion. ■



Attendees catching up with old friends



Paul Carrano, our current longest standing member at 80 years of membership with President Levy

Attending the Midwest Clinic



Debbie Katz Knowles and David Katz



Dean Rolando and Paula Desimone



Lisa Bressler



Mackenzie Carpenter



*Dean Rolando, John Blane, and
Joe Sonnefeldt*



Dean Rolando and Ray Ostwald



Rodney Clark and Dean Rolando



Mark Sorlie and Dean Rolando



Dean Rolando and Rob Parton



Pharez Whitted and Dean Rolando



Dean Rolando and John Bowes



Doug Lofstrom and Dean Rolando



Roger Whitworth and Dean Rolando



Rich Daniels, Kirk Garrison, and Dean Rolando

From December 17-19, Chicago Federation of Musicians attended **the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic at McCormick Place**, alongside our friends from the AFM.

As always, **Dean Rolando** was on the scene to chat with friends new and old, while snapping photos on the blue carpet!

Out and About



Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson stops for a photo with the band at the CFL Labor Day Luncheon at McCormick Place. Left to Right: Curt Bley, Rich Daniels, Mayor Johnson, Ernie Adams, and Jo Ann Daugherty



Members gathered at the CFM office ahead of the Chicago Federation of Labor's Labor Day Rally & March in Haymarket Square



U.S. Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski and CFM President BJ Levy at a luncheon at the Fortnightly Club



Governor JB Pritzker chats with Secretary-Treasurer Karen Suarez Flint and DuPage County Board Member Lynn LaPlante at the AFL-CIO Holiday Luncheon



Members gathered outside Symphony Center for the 'No Kings' march on October 18th



Members gathered in Grant Park on October 18th

Spreading Holiday Cheer



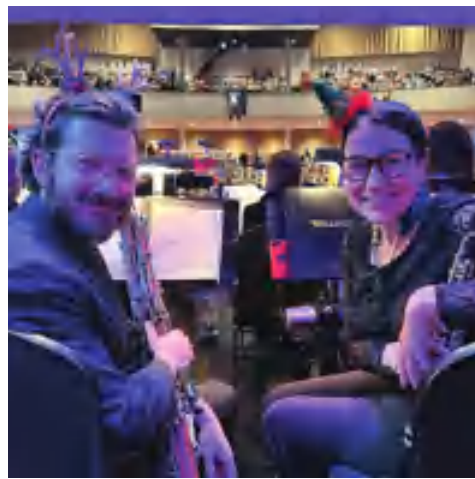
City Lights Orchestra at Holy Family, Right to Left: Paddy Homan, Rich Daniels, Cardinal Blase Cupich, Paul Marinaro, Suzanne Palmer, Scott Jurek, and Katherine Keberlein



CFM Senior Board Member Rich Daniels leads the City Lights Orchestra in a special Holiday Concert at Holy Family



Rich Daniels, CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar, and President BJ Levy enjoying the sounds of the season



Vincent DeSantis and Barbaro Drapcho donned their gay apparel for the Elgin Symphony's Holiday Concert



Left to Right: Peter Jirousek, Greg Flint, Mary Buscarnics-Jones, and Steve Replogle are ready to pull Santa's sleigh at the Elgin Symphony's Holiday Concert



CFM Officers and staff celebrated the season by volunteering at Nourshing Hope's Humboldt Park food distribution center, El Mercado.



Vice President John Floeter and Rich Daniels helping to get food to those in need



Tower Brass playing their annual Christmas Concert at 4th Presbyterian Church



Allison Rye

Allison Rye is a Chicago-based freelance oboist, but has musical roots extending from the South to the Midwest and Italy.

Allison's musical foundations began in Atlanta, Georgia, where she studied with Rebecca Testerman. She then moved to Greenville, South Carolina to continue her oboe studies at Furman University with Petrea Warneck, and was given the opportunity to study at the Accademia dell' Arte in Arezzo, Italy during her time as an undergraduate student.

Allison obtained her Master of Music Degree at Northwestern University in 2017, where she studied with Michael Henoeh, and was recognized, through receiving the Ray Still Award and grant, for excellence in the study and teaching of oboe.

Allison recently joined the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra in St. Joseph Michigan as the orchestra's Principal Oboist. She has also performed with Civic Orchestra of Chicago, South Carolina Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and completed a fellowship with Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, CA, where she studied with Eugene Izotov, for the 2020 and 2021 seasons.

Allison draws inspiration from her close colleagues and teachers while teaching and mentoring her own students; she is dedicated to furthering the musical legacy of her past and present teachers by helping positively shape the musical narratives of her students at The People's Music School of Chicago, where she has been on faculty since 2018, and in her private studio. ■



Michael Gurevich

Dutch violinist and violist **Michael Gurevich** enjoys a varied performing career. Dedicated to chamber music, he has performed worldwide, including at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Sydney Opera House and the Edinburgh, Verbier, Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence and Aldeburgh Festivals. As a member of the London Haydn Quartet, he appears on their complete survey of Haydn's quartets on Hyperion records. He has also performed and recorded with the Nash Ensemble, notably in their Wigmore Hall series, and premiered a number of works with them, including Peter Maxwell-Davies' cello quintet. For ten years, Michael was a member of the Rhodes Piano Trio, prize winners at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and former YCAT Artists, with whom he recorded an album of Schumann piano trios.

Michael frequently leads and directs a wide variety of ensembles. He has led numerous productions with Arcangelo, including performances of Handel's *Theodora* at the *BBC Proms*, Vienna Konzerthaus, and the Barbican and recorded with them on Hyperion and Alpha, including Handel's *Brockes Passion* and *Theodora* as well as C. Ph. E. Bach and the complete Boccherini cello concertos with Nicolas Altstaedt. He is principal 2nd violin of the English Chamber Orchestra, which he has also directed and performed with as soloist. Other ensembles with which Michael has

performed as guest concertmaster include the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Dunedin Consort and Concerto Copenhagen. He has performed and recorded as guest principal viola and soloist with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta.

Passionate about teaching, Michael taught at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester for nearly a decade following teaching fellowships at the RNCM and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He continues to teach in chamber music and violin masterclasses worldwide and has done so at the Juilliard School, Indiana University, Yale University, Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Sydney Conservatorium, Australian National Academy of Music, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore and at Domaine Forget in Canada.

Michael studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he greatly benefited from the guidance of the late Dr Christopher Rowland, Gaby Lester, Jan Repko, Maciej Rakowski, Ivry Gitlis and Pauline Nobes. He attended masterclasses at the Britten-Pears School, IMS Prussia Cove, Aix-en-Provence and Verbier Academies with Andras Keller, Ferenc Rados, Leonidas Kavakos, Menahem Pressler, Gabor Takacs-Nagy, Mitsuko Uchida and members of the Florestan and Gould Trios and Endellion Quartet. ■



Kyle Paul

Known for a style that blends a kaleidoscope of musical traditions, Chicago artist **Kyle Paul** would describe himself as a curious listener, one who prioritizes hearing music with openness, spontaneity, and experimentation.

Though having studied guitar the longest, he has come to see himself as a more multifaceted conduit who serves musical endeavours holistically—he has produced, engineered, arranged, and performed various instruments and vocals on critically-lauded projects. His arrangements have been featured in *Rolling Stone*, the *New York Times*, and on *All Songs Considered*.

Informed by concepts of modern composers and theorists, the intricacies of Afro-diasporic and Hindustani music, and forays

into the electronic and avant-garde, Kyle has created a musical language and style that is uniquely his own whose live performances should never be overlooked.

Over the years, he has been called to work with Hannah Frances, Diane Coffee, Shouderbird, Mansa, Mick Jenkins, Artie Do Good, and Sarod Master Amjad Ali Khan.

When residing in Chicago he is leading and writing for his own projects, working as a session musician and producer in prominent studios, playing as a sideman with the city's most in-demand improvising and left-of-center musicians, and performing at numerous Chicago area gospel churches. ■



Colleen Matheu Johnson

Colleen Matheu Johnson is a flutist and principal piccoloist of the Houston Ballet Orchestra. Prior to Ms. Johnson's appointment with the Houston Ballet, she performed with the Kalamazoo Symphony in Michigan as principal piccolo for three consecutive years. She was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Arkansas Symphony, and has had the opportunity to perform with many fine ensembles including the Chicago Symphony, the Houston Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Houston Grand Opera.

Ms. Johnson completed her graduate flute and piccolo performance studies with Walfrid Kujala in June of 2003 at Northwestern University. She received her bachelor of music degree in flute performance from The Oberlin Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Michel Debost and Kathleen Chastain.

Ms. Johnson has received scholarships from Oberlin College, Northwestern University, among other institutions. She has won prizes in the Musicians Club of Women Annual Music Scholarship Competition, the National Flute Association's Young Artist Piccolo Competition, the Society of American Musicians Competition, the Texas Music Festival's Young Artist Concerto Competition, and received the Park Ridge Civic Orchestra's scholarship as well as the Chicago Federation of Musicians scholarship. In 2005, Ms. Johnson was one of three Americans selected who performed as a semi-finalist in the Jean Pierre Rampal Flute Competition in Paris, France.

Ms. Johnson performed as principal piccoloist with the Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, Wisconsin in August of 2010 and as a guest flutist in 2012. She has also concertized in the US and abroad, performing solo, cham-

ber, and orchestral recitals at the Aspen Music Festival, Spoleto USA Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, the Texas Music Festival, the Henry Mancini Institute, Domaine Forget Summer Institute, among others. She has appeared on Chicago's *WFMT 98.7FM* as a soloist on the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series as well as Houston's *KUHF 88.7FM*, "The Front Row" with her chamber ensemble, The Oberon Ensemble. She has performed on the Musician's Club of Women Recital Series at Preston Bradley Hall at Chicago's Cultural Center. She has also performed Bohuslav Martinu's, *Madrigal Sonata* at the National Flute Association's Convention in Chicago.

Ms. Johnson has been a masterclass clinician at the Texas Music Festival and Stephen F. Austin State University. She is professor emeritus of flute and music appreciation at Lone Star College Montgomery. Ms. Johnson currently maintains a private flute studio in Lake Forest, Illinois where she teaches students of all levels. Several of her students are prize winners in local competitions and members of The Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. She is the founder and has served as the artistic coordinator of the Houston Flute Club Young Artist Competition and currently directs The Houston Youth Chamber Orchestra (www.hycomusic.org).

In her free time, Ms. Johnson enjoys spending time with her husband, violinist of the Houston Symphony, Kurt Johnson, as well as their daughter, Allegra, and son Luke. She also enjoys spending time with her friends, traveling, reading, exercising, and baking. ■



Darren Carter

Violist **Darren Carter** is a member of the Chicago Sinfonietta and Civic Orchestra of Chicago, as well as assistant principal of the Colorado Music Festival. He has also performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, New World Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, and Aspen Music Festival as an orchestral leadership fellow.

Originally from Dallas, Texas, Darren earned his bachelor's degree in music at Baylor University and his master's at DePaul University, where he currently pursues a Performer's Certificate and studies with Ann Marie Brink. In his spare time, Darren enjoys listening to music, playing games, and hiking Colorado's famous 14ers. ■



Hana Kim

Violinist **Hana Kim** is a member of the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra and also performs with Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Pacific Symphony.

At Juilliard, Kim earned both her Bachelor of Music and her Master of Music under the guidance of Ron Copes, Earl Carlyss and Robert Mann -former and current members of the Juilliard String Quartet. She moved to Los Angeles to work with Robert Lipsett who invited her to be a part of the inaugural graduating class of the Colburn Conservatory.

Upon completing her studies at the Colburn Conservatory, Kim won Assistant Principal 2nd Violin position in Charleston Symphony in South Carolina. Kim has played at many festivals including Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, Tanglewood Music Festival, Spoleto Festival in Italy, and has performed with many prominent musicians and conductors.

Kim's honest, dynamic, and luscious playing has earned her the privilege to work and perform alongside some of today's brightest musical stars like Placido Domingo, Joshua Bell, Yo-Yo Ma, Sarah Chang, Lang Lang, Natalie Cole and Earth, Wind and Fire.

Kim is also one of the founding members of Confido Music Society. www.confidomusicsociety.org ■



Dane Philipsen

Dane Philipsen (oboe & English horn) recently returned to the Chicago area after several years in Michigan spent working as the Instructor of Oboe and Chair of Woodwinds at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Brought back to Chicago for his spouse's career, Dane is happy to have joined the Rockford Symphony Orchestra as principal oboist at the beginning of 2025, and he looks forward to collaborating and freelancing around the area again.

For more information, please visit: danephilipsen.com. ■



Joe Beribak

Joe Beribak is a composer, percussionist, and teacher eager to find his place in the musical community of Chicagoland. Joe currently directs the percussion ensembles at Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestras, having previously taught at McHenry County College, Hoffman Estates HS, Elgin HS, and South Elgin HS. Joe's recordings can be heard on every major streaming platform and Youtube.

Joe studied percussion performance at DePaul University - (BM 2009) and The Colburn Conservatory - (Los Angeles, Artist's Diploma 2013). His work in Los Angeles was as a member of Smoke & Mirrors Percussion Ensemble. Though the group split apart as its members graduated and moved, their albums can be heard on every major streaming platform. When the Covid-19 pandemic paused live performances, Joe dived deeply into honing his compositional skills. In pursuit of this new musical direction, he completed a Master's degree in mu-

sic composition at Northern IL University in May 2025, where he received the 2024 Jan Bach Prize in Music Composition, taught group composition lessons, and tutored undergraduate music theory students as a graduate assistant.

Synthesizing the many lessons learned through his experiences in percussion ensemble, chamber music, orchestra, jazz combo, drum circles, drumline, private teaching, music library work, and even singing Gregorian chant; Joe brings an eclectic blend of experiences into his compositions. From this unique perspective, Joe strives to open new social, spiritual, and somatic pathways within the performers and audience members experiencing his pieces, that they may flourish as individuals within a loving community.

For more information, please visit:

joeberibak.com ■



Russell Rolen

Russell Rolen is an acclaimed cellist and chamber musician whose work has been praised by *The New York Times* for "supreme technical command" and an "ability to cast a magic spell." As a co-founder of the internationally renowned Spektral Quartet, he earned three GRAMMY® nominations, commissioned more than 85 new works, and brought visionary artistry to music stages across the U.S., including The Kennedy Center, *NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts*, and Big Ears Festival.

Spektral Quartet was celebrated for its genre-defying programs and partnerships with major presenters such as Cal Performances, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Library of Congress. Their collaborative spirit extended beyond classical music, with projects including Latin jazz with Miguel Zenón, Haitian music with Nathalie Joachim, and avant-pop with Julia Holter.

As an educator, Russell has taught at Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and Ripon College, and led residencies at institutions including the University of

Iowa, Stanford University, and New World Symphony. He has also given masterclasses at top music schools across the country.

Russell holds music degrees from the Peabody Conservatory, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Northwestern University. His principal cello teachers include Stephen Kates, Uri Vardi, and Hans Jørgen Jensen, with chamber music studies under members of the Juilliard, Cleveland, Guarneri, and Tokyo Quartets.

Following Spektral Quartet's final season, he served as Associate Director of Programs at Rebuild Foundation, where in two years he produced more than 80 public arts events and led a major archival project preserving the 5,000-piece vinyl collection of legendary DJ Frankie Knuckles.

He currently serves on the artist faculty of Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, and is on the faculty and staff of Midwest Young Artists Conservatory. He lives in Evanston, IL with his wife, Sara, their two sons, Clark and Julian, and their very good dog, Clover. ■



Levi Hammer

Known for his remarkable range and versatility, **Levi Hammer** performs regularly as both conductor and pianist. He has conducted orchestras across the U.S. and Europe, and his repertoire encompasses more than 70 operas. Additionally, he has prepared acclaimed operatic productions for major conductors including Lorin Maazel, Simon Rattle, Zubin Mehta, and Gustavo Dudamel. Besides the standard repertoire, Hammer is accomplished in both Baroque and contemporary music. As a pianist, he appears as concerto soloist, chamber musician, and art song collaborator, and he has frequently performed Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and Aaron Copland's complete music for piano. ■



Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad

Ukrainian-American pianist, prompter, and vocal coach **Dr. Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad** is currently on music staff at San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. In previous seasons, Kseniia has worked at opera companies and festivals such as Houston Grand Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Cincinnati Opera, the Ravinia Festival Steans Institute, and the Schmidt Vocal Institute. At San Francisco Opera Kseniia has worked on seven seasons of mainstage productions as a pianist and prompter, and collaborated with such conductors as Nicola Luisotti, James Gaffigan, Eun Sun Kim, Bertrand de Billy, Henrik Nánási, and others.

Kseniia is a graduate of the Merola Opera Program and the Adler Fellowship at San Francisco Opera where she was mentored by John Churchwell and Carrie-Ann Matheson. She graduated with her master's degree in Collaborative Piano from the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati where she also completed her DMA in Piano Performance studying with Awadagin Pratt and Lydia Brown. ■



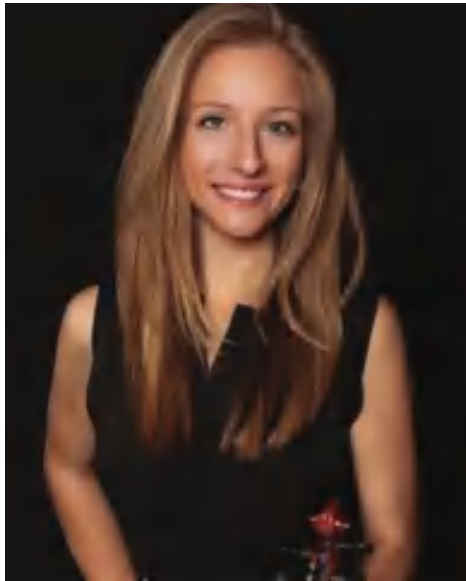
Bradford Beard

Bradford Beard is a guitarist, songwriter, and music producer who was born in Memphis, went to college in Boston, and now resides in Chicago. With a background playing clarinet in band and orchestra, combined with the technical skills learned from studying guitar at the Berklee College of Music, he has found a calling in pit work, with his first AFM call being *Mamma Mia!* at North Shore Music Theatre.

While at Berklee, he took the Recording for Musicians minor, which has led to a constant passion for writing and recording. He is also an accomplished classical guitarist, having studied under maestro Eliot Fisk at the New England Conservatory, earning a Master's in Guitar Performance in the process. ■



Phyllis Calderon



Emily Fischer



Matthew Weinberg

Mrs. Phyllis Calderon is a versatile Suzuki-trained violinist, pianist, and educator, and the founder of A Touch of Classical Plus—Calderon Music Studio (ATCP), a private music studio and cross-disciplinary arts provider. A passionate advocate for music education, she has taught and directed youth string programs at Mt. Greenwood Elementary, St. Thomas the Apostle, Barbara A. Sizemore Academy, Wirt-Emerson Visual and Performing Arts High School, Providence St. Mel High School, and several community organizations, including the Chicago Youth Symphony and the Chicago West Community Music Center.

Emily Fischer is a Chicago-based violinist and educator devoted to creating meaningful musical experiences on and off the stage. She performs regularly with the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra and appears as an actress/violinist with Music Theater Works, where she recently took center stage as The Fiddler in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the George Van Dusen Theatre. Equally at home in classical, rock, pop, and jazz styles, Emily has performed at Art & Soul on the Fox Fest, the House of Blues, and opened for Cheap Trick as part of the band Yes Factory. She has also shared the stage with Robin Zander and Robin Taylor Zander.

Emily began studying violin at age three through the Suzuki Method—a philosophy that not only shaped her technique but also instilled a lifelong belief in music as a lan-

Matthew Weinberg is a violinist from Austin, Texas. He plays with the Illinois Philharmonic and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. He is also an alumnus of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Matthew studied with Almita Vamos at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts, where he earned a BM in Violin Performance. He has attended festivals including Encore Chamber Music, Bowdoin International Music Festival, and the National Repertory Orchestra. Matthew is proud to teach at the Chicago Metamorphosis Orchestra Project. Matthew's other interests include string instrument bow restoration and working on his bicycles. ■

As a performer, Mrs. Calderon has played with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Classical Symphony Orchestra, and the Whiting Festival Orchestra. She has also performed extensively as a freelance violinist. She currently serves as a worship violinist and keyboard player at the Vineyard Church of Hyde Park. A recording and publishing artist, she is preparing to release her debut EP, *Remember*, and the works of Chicago composer Howard Savage. Mrs. Calderon is also an author, speaker, and lifelong learner with degrees from Liberty University and the American Conservatory of Music ■

guage of connection, beauty, and joy. She earned her master's degree in Violin Performance with a concentration in pedagogy from the University of Louisville, where she served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant under Dr. Geoffrey Herd and received Suzuki certifications in books 1–10.

As an educator, Emily has taught advanced violin classes at the Suzuki School of Elgin, served as Executive Assistant at Knoxville Suzuki Academy, and worked as a private Suzuki violin and group instructor at Zanders Elementary School in Louisville, KY. She is currently on faculty at New Music School in Chicago, where she teaches private lessons and group classes, helping young musicians discover their unique voices through music while passing on the same wonder and love that has guided her own journey. ■

The Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra Sparks New Path for Young Musicians

By: Megan Elk

When saxophonists, arrangers, and longtime collaborators Jim Gailloreto and John Kornegay opened a pair of battered mid-century music suitcases from a retired teacher's apartment, they had no sense of the impact this moment would have on their own careers, let alone on an entire new generation of Chicago musicians.

Inside those cases sat the handwritten "lifework," as Gailloreto calls it, of Tom Hilliard, the visionary founder of the Metropolitan Jazz Octet (MJO), and a beloved professor at DePaul University. The music, more than 150 arrangements penned between 1950 and 1985, had been untouched for decades. Some charts had never been performed. Some had waited half a century for fresh breath.

"It was like an archaeological jazz unearthing," Gailloreto recalls. "You're going through a time capsule. Everything handwritten, with all these markings and shortcuts. It was fascinating."

Both Gailloreto and Kornegay studied under Hilliard at DePaul, though five years apart. Part saxophonist, part composer, part poet, part visual tinkerer, Hilliard was an unclassifiable artist whose teaching style made a lasting impression.

"He was very hip," Gailloreto says. "He was one of those people who didn't just teach music, he taught art. Perspective. Curiosity."



Jazz Artist Resource Board Members, Left to Right: John Kornegay, John McCortney, and Jim Gailloreto

After college, Gailloreto remained close with his former mentor. The two met up every so often at Hilliard's apartment, talking music, listening to records, and sometimes sorting through old instruments. One day, Hilliard opened his closet and gestured toward his heavy music cases.



Left to Right: Stephen Parisi, Jimmy Farace, Millie Ahearn, Garret Munz, Rufus Parenti, Henry Carpenter, Aval Zaucha, Paul Barrilles

"He said, 'I want you to take these,'" Gailloreto remembers. "I told him I couldn't take his library, his treasure. And he said, 'Jim, if you don't take it, it's going to wind up in a landfill.'"

Gailloreto accepted the gift, but the emotional weight of it lingered. The charts sat in his basement for almost a decade before he and Kornegay finally gathered musicians to play through them. They recognized immediately what they had: a historically significant, musically rich, wildly eclectic body of work including standards, originals, avant-garde experiments, and Hilliard's orchestrations of music by Bix Beiderbecke.

They also recognized that this work needed a life beyond the library.

By 2014, the pair formalized their efforts by creating Jazz Artists Resource, a nonprofit organization through which they began recording albums, commissioning new arrangements, and performing across the city. Since then, the group has released a Billie Holiday tribute album, *It's Too Hot for Words*, featuring Dee Alexander; as well as a reimagining of the works of David Bowie, *The Bowie Project*, with Paul Marinaro.

But their most ambitious project yet, aptly titled *Jazz Unearthed* is a full album of previously unheard Hilliard charts. Some were intact, others existed only as sketched fragments. Gailloreto and Kornegay, both accomplished arrangers, completed the unfinished works with care, always mindful of Hilliard's voice.

"Some we recorded as-is," Kornegay explains. "Others were brilliant but incomplete, so we fleshed them out. We approached them like collaborators across time."

The album is currently in post-production and slated for release in spring. "It really is Tom's legacy finally entering the world," Gailloreto says. "It's overdue."

As the ensemble grew, Gailloreto and Kornegay began to recognize that the revitalized MJO could serve a mission Hilliard himself would have embraced: the development of young creators. When pandemic-era shutdowns left their nonprofit with unallocated funds, they seized the opportunity to launch something new, the MJO Emerging Jazz Arranger Scholarship in partnership with DePaul University.

Their goals were simple: encourage emerging arrangers, preserve the octet format they love, and give young artists their first truly professional recording experience, complete with paid rehearsals and the mentorship of experienced producers.

DePaul composition professor Tom Matta and saxophone professor Scott Burns helped recruit applicants from the graduating classes of 2025. Four strong submissions came in, and instead of choosing one winner, the MJO team chose two: John Wambach and Trevor Dean Stewart.



Contest winners John Wambach and Trevor Dean Stewart

But Gailloreto and Kornegay didn't stop there. Rather than hiring the regular MJO personnel, they built an entire recording ensemble out of recent DePaul graduates. Both composers attended the rehearsals and sessions, receiving detailed feedback on scoring clarity, form decisions, voicings, and studio workflow. The resulting music was excellent, but the deeper impact was the professionalization of the experience.

"These musicians were in their mid-20s, and they were extraordinary," Kornegay says. "Professional, engaged, talented, and grateful. They got to see that their time and ideas have value. That rehearsals are paid. That creativity is not separate from professionalism."

Gailloreto underscores the importance of that exposure highlighting the idea that "You want young people to know early [that] not only is your product worth money, your time is worth money."

For Gailloreto, a longtime CFM board member, the scholarship experience sparked another realization, that this could become a structured path into union membership, one that finally closes the gap many young freelance musicians fall through.

"We want to catch these people as they exit school," he says. "We want them to land in the Union's hands."

Both scholarship winners and the full session band have already been introduced to CFM leadership. They attended rehearsals at the Union Hall, met board members, and saw firsthand how a signatory recording session operates. Some are already moving toward membership.

The goal is not simply recruitment for its own sake, but education and empowerment, especially regarding things young musicians often overlook: pension contributions, liability insurance, contract protections, and sustainable wage standards.

"For a 25-year-old, retirement seems like someone else's problem," Kornegay admits. "But the earlier you start, the more it matters."

Gailloreto remembers being the same age with the same blind spots. "I joined the union because the professionals I admired were doing it," he says. "I didn't understand the pension. I didn't understand the protections. But I trusted the older players."

Now he wants to offer that same foundation to today's young musicians, minus the decades of trial and error.

"This scholarship is one way to bring them in," he explains. "But it's also about shaping their expectations of the field. If their first major experience is being paid appropriately, working in a union environment, seeing how professionals function, then we're raising the floor, preventing the race to the bottom."

For Gailloreto and Kornegay, the work involved in reviving the library, arranging hundreds of pages, mentoring students, organizing recordings, and running a nonprofit is immense. None of it is lucrative, but all of it is time-consuming.

Gailloreto acknowledges this with a quiet honesty that echoes Hilliard's ethos: "We do this for the love of the art. If you're doing it just for the money, forget it." That, he believes, is precisely why it matters.

Preserving a Chicago jazz legacy, supporting young artists, and strengthening the Union are not separate goals. They are threads of the same project: ensuring that the next generation of musicians inherits not just music, but a community.

"We've benefited from successful careers," Kornegay says. "Tom did that for us. Now we have an opportunity to guide the next generation of college graduates." ■



Scan the QR code below to register and be sure to select Chicago Federation of Musicians as your team.



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AUGUST CASH RECEIPTS		SEPTEMBER CASH RECEIPTS		OCTOBER CASH RECEIPTS	
CFM JOINING FEES:	\$800.00	CFM JOINING FEES:	\$1,800.00	CFM JOINING FEES:	\$1,200.00
AFM JOINING FEES	195.00	AFM JOINING FEES	325.00	AFM JOINING FEES	390.00
MEMBERSHIP DUES	5,512.00	MEMBERSHIP DUES	5,424.00	MEMBERSHIP DUES	7,785.00
WORK DUES	132,975.54	WORK DUES	58,459.56	WORK DUES	100,837.38
CFM-EW EXP RECOVERY	5,179.00	HALL RENTAL	250.00	CSO STRIKE FUND	6,225.00
MUSICIANS RELIEF FUND	15.00	CFM-EW EXP RECOVERY	5,179.00	CFM-EW EXP RECOVERY	5,179.00
TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS:		SCHOLARSHIP FUND	25.00	SCHOLARSHIP FUND	275.00
	\$ 144,676.54	MUSICIANS RELIEF FUND	15.00	MUSICIANS RELIEF FUND	15.00
		TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS:		TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS:	
			\$ 71,477.56		\$ 121,906.38
Respectfully Submitted, Karen Suarez Flint Secretary-Treasurer		Respectfully Submitted, Karen Suarez Flint Secretary-Treasurer		Respectfully Submitted, Karen Suarez Flint Secretary-Treasurer	
NOVEMBER CASH RECEIPTS		DECEMBER CASH RECEIPTS			
CFM JOINING FEES:	\$1,600.00	CFM JOINING FEES:	\$1,225.00		
AFM JOINING FEES	390.00	MEMBERSHIP DUES	107,779.00		
MEMBERSHIP DUES	4,480.00	WORK DUES	122,346.21		
WORK DUES	52,916.42	CFM-EW EXP RECOVERY	5,179.00		
IL UNCLAIMED FUNDS	1,363.10	MUSICIANS RELIEF FUND	672.00		
CFM-EW EXP RECOVERY	5,179.00	CREDIT CARD REWARDS	3,302.99		
MUSICIANS RELIEF FUND	15.00	TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS:			
TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS:			\$ 240,504.20		
	\$ 68,927.26				
Respectfully Submitted, Karen Suarez Flint Secretary-Treasurer		Respectfully Submitted, Karen Suarez Flint Secretary-Treasurer			

Lynn LaPlante: A Musician for the People, and Illinois' 42nd District



By: Megan Elk

When violinist and violist Lynn LaPlante steps onto the campaign trail in Illinois' 42nd District, she brings with her more than a record of public service. She also brings the lived experience of an artist and union member who understands firsthand the power of collective action. An active member of our local, Lynn is running for Illinois State Representative in the 42nd district with a vision rooted in labor values, community, and the arts.

Growing up in Arlington Heights as the youngest of eight children, Lynn was immersed early in music and service. Her household, often filled with visiting exchange students and musicians, fostered a global perspective and a belief in shared responsibility. With a father who was a teacher and a mother who played piano in church, Lynn learned early that art and civic life are inseparable, lessons that would guide both her musical career and her public service.

Lynn's commitment to her community is reflected in her work as a three-time elected DuPage County Board member, where she has chaired the Community Development Committee and helped advance policies addressing housing insecurity, environmental sustainability, and economic equity. She played a key role in securing permanent funding for homeless services and championed cultural initiatives, including an arts festival that brought artists and residents together across disciplines. She has also supported efforts to envision a regional performing arts center as an economic and cultural anchor for DuPage County.



Right to left: IL AFL-CIO President Tim Drea, Lynn LaPlante, Karen Suarez Flint, and IL AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Pat Devaney

For Lynn, the arts are not an afterthought of policy, they are central to it. In a 2024 Chicago Sun-Times op-ed, she argued that the labor movement and the arts are natural allies, both grounded in collective expression, shared struggle, and the dignity of work. Art, she wrote, is not ornamental; it is essential. Artists help communities understand who they are and where they are going, especially in moments of political and social upheaval.

That belief is deeply personal. As a working union musician, Lynn understands the precarity many artists face; inconsistent income, lack of benefits, and the constant need to advocate for fair treatment. Reflecting shared values around collective bargaining, worker protections, and the role of culture in a healthy democracy, CFM has been proud to endorse and support Lynn's run.

That support extends beyond just the local level. Chicago Federation of Musicians Secretary-Treasurer Karen Suarez Flint, a member of the Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board, played a key role in stewarding Lynn LaPlante's endorsement from the state federation. Suarez Flint has emphasized the significance of backing a candidate who not

only supports working people, but *is* a working artist himself, someone who brings a union perspective directly into the halls of government.

At the heart of Lynn's platform is a commitment to pragmatic, people-centered governance. She supports fiscally responsible policies that invest in healthcare access, infrastructure, education, and the creative economy. She believes science and data, not ideology, should guide public policy, particularly on issues like climate change and public health. Equally important, she has demonstrated an ability to build coalitions across differences, recognizing that meaningful progress requires collaboration.

For musicians and cultural workers, Lynn's candidacy offers something rare: a representative who truly understands their lives. She knows the realities of rehearsal rooms and performance halls, contract negotiations and committee meetings. She understands that when labor and the arts stand together, they form a powerful force for economic vitality, civic engagement, and social justice.

At a time when public discourse often feels fractured, Lynn LaPlante offers a unifying vision, one that recognizes creativity and labor as essential threads in the fabric of strong communities. Her campaign for the 42nd District is about more than winning an election; it's about ensuring that working people, artists, and union members have a seat at the table in Springfield.

For members of the Chicago Musicians Union, Lynn LaPlante is not just a candidate, she is one of our own. ■

To learn more, or get involved in Lynn's campaign visit: www.lynnlaplante.org

In Memoriam

Fox Fehling (1949-2025)

Fox Roberta Louise Fehling was as unique as her name. Born in Iowa City, IA, to Fred and Evelyn Fehling, she was a very active and energetic child.



When she was introduced to the violin as a fourth grader in the Iowa City schools, she fell in love with the instrument and all its possibilities. For the next 67 years, she played with a fervor that could not be diminished. This led her to studies at the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School. Her principle teachers were Allen Ohmes, Raphael Bronstein, and Dorothy DeLay.

In her early career, Fox was a member of a variety of performing groups, including the Springfield (MA) Symphony, the Florida Symphony, Grant Park Orchestra, Lyric Opera Orchestra, and the orchestras of the Aspen Festival and the Spoleto Festival. In 1979, she was appointed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra by Sir George Solti, where she served in the violin section until her retirement in 2022.

Fox loved playing many different genres of music, from Bach to bluegrass. She was a founding member of the CSOkies, a bluegrass/western swing band composed of like-minded CSO members. For many years, she was concertmaster and frequent soloist with the Loyola Chamber Orchestra. She also enjoyed performing chamber music, notably for the Chicago Symphony outreach programs.

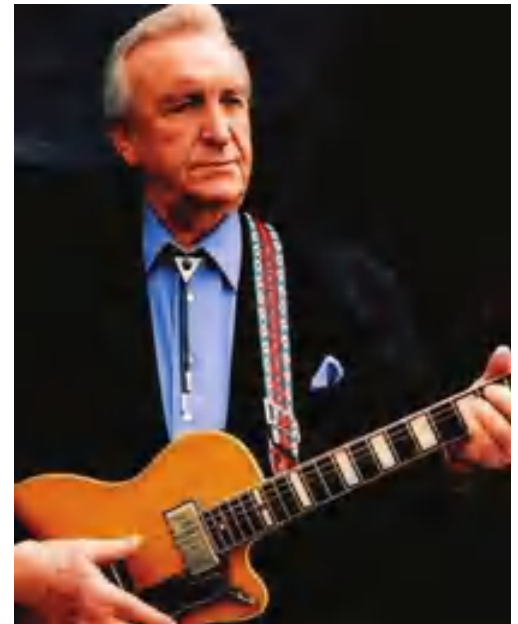
Animals, both wild and domesticated, held a special place in Fox's heart. Countless cats, a dog, two foxes, and rabbits were tenderly cared for by her (not all at the same time).

Fox's family will remember many hilarious hours spent with her, and she especially doted on her nieces and nephew. She loved cooking elaborate meals and hosting holidays at her beautiful home. She was also famous for her epic cookie-baking, which she shared with all her CSO colleagues. She even delivered a delicious batch of cookies to a contract-negotiating session!

Fox is survived by her sister, Vicki Mayne, nieces Elizabeth Mayne (Nicholas de la Garza) and Diana Mayne (Max Hart), nephew Joseph Mayne, great-nieces Caroline and Abigail Mayne, and great-nephews Jack Mayne and Colin Hart. ■

Hayden E. Thompson (1938-2025)

Hayden E. Thompson, age 87, of Wheeling, passed away Wednesday December 31, 2025. He was born March 5, 1938, in Boonville, Mississippi to Baxter and Thelma nee Smith Thompson.



Hayden's life was shaped by his deep love for music, especially rockabilly, which led him to record at the legendary Sun Studio, the same place where Elvis Presley once recorded. Music wasn't just a hobby for him; it was the center of his world and the force that guided his experiences. Since 1985, he traveled to Europe around 55 times, sharing his passion and soaking in musical influences along the way. His talent and dedication even brought him to the stage of the Grand Ole Opry on several occasions, a milestone few musicians reach. Above all, music was Hayden's true love, the constant thread running through everything he did.

Loving husband of Georgia nee Ohlwein. Dedicated father of Keith (Marcy) Thompson. Doting grandfather of Natalie (Noel) Cordero and Madelyn Thompson. ■

Charles V. Martin (1941-2025)

Chuck, a gentleman, a music man, and a loving person of integrity, passed away on November 3, 2025, in Wisconsin Rapids, WI. He was born July 9, 1941, in Chicago, IL.



Chuck graduated from DePaul University in Chicago and spent his life sharing his love of music with others. He played in many dance bands while in college, was a band instructor and music teacher for 25 years, and a member of the Wisconsin Rapids City Band for 18 years in retirement. He will be missed by his wife of 57 years, Jan, two sisters, Denise and Diane, one brother, Bill, and many in-laws and extended family. Rest in peace, Chuck. ■

Paul L. Chouinard (1945-2025)

Paul L. Chouinard, age 80, died at his home in Wilmette, Illinois on December 14, 2025 after a lengthy illness. He was a long-time jazz viola player in and around Chicago. and a proud union member.



He is survived by his wife Tamra and his sons Joe and John. ■

Elizabeth Jane Gosma (1970-2025)

Elizabeth Jane Gosma, 55, of Evanston, passed away on Thursday, August 28, 2025.

Liz was born in Davenport, Iowa, on May 14, 1970, the daughter of John and

Heather Gosma. She married the love of her life, Charles Abplanalp, on February 16, 1997, at an altitude of 11,000 feet while skiing in Taos, New Mexico. Liz graduated from Davenport Central High School in 1989. She went on to study at the University of Iowa, where she was awarded a Bachelor of Music degree with an emphasis in Music Education and Violin Performance, 1993.

Elizabeth was a violinist with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra for the past 35 years. She also served as the symphony's Education Coordinator from 1995-2001. She and her husband, Charles, own Great Midwestern Music, which provides music education instructional resources, and contracts professional musicians for special events and touring shows. Liz was also a private violin teacher for countless students in the Quad Cities, Evanston and Chicago's North Shore. She loved to perform, teach, cook, entertain, travel and spend time with family. Above all, Liz was a loving wife, daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, aunt, niece and friend.

Liz is survived by her husband, Charles, of Evanston; son Cameron Abplanalp, mother Heather, stepdaughter Lauren (Dan) Burseth, and stepson Jonathan (Katy) Abplanalp; sisters, Emily (Anthony) Stoops, and Sarah (Matt) Helfrich; sister-in-law Susan McDougle; grandchildren, Kiera and Baker Burseth, and Evelyn Abplanalp, as well as an uncle, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her father and grandparents.

Donations in Liz's honor may be made to the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, 327 Brady Street, Davenport, IA 52801. ■



Announcements

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Klaus Mollenh, Zilli Music Director Designate

CSO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM – 2026/27 Season

Openings for Section Violin and Cello

The CSO Fellowship Program is open to outstanding early-career musicians from all backgrounds who are attending or have graduated from college, university or conservatory and who have overcome adversity (e.g., financial hardship, professional setback, cultural barriers, and/or discrimination) as they seek a career in classical music performance.

Preliminary taped Auditions will take place via Getacappd.com. Final Auditions will take place in Chicago. Travel and housing expenses for the Final Audition will be provided by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association.

**Application Deadline for TAPED Preliminary auditions will be March 23, 2026
LIVE Final auditions tentatively scheduled in Chicago on April 27, 2026**

Applicants should use the following web address for complete program and audition information: [cso.org/fellowship](https://www.cso.org/fellowship)

CSO Fellows will rehearse and perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 20 weeks during the 26/27 season. Fellows will be compensated approximately \$66,000 - \$76,200 per season, less statutory deductions, depending on the number of services played, as well as moving allowance, audition support, and coaching with Chicago Symphony Orchestra members.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

CALL FOR INFORMATION:

The Intermezzo is our communication between the Local and our members. In addition to the printed version, we also post each issue on the CFM website. Most of the magazine is available to the public. We are always looking for events, accomplishments, and things of interest to other members and the public. Share your announcements, reviews or anything you would like to see printed to: melk@cfm10208.org The Board of Directors reserves the right to determine whether material submitted shall be published. ■

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For further information, and to receive audition materials, please email:
archaud@lyricopera.org

To audition, please send your resume and a \$50.00 refundable deposit to*:

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Principal Bass

20 North Wacker Drive, Ste. 860

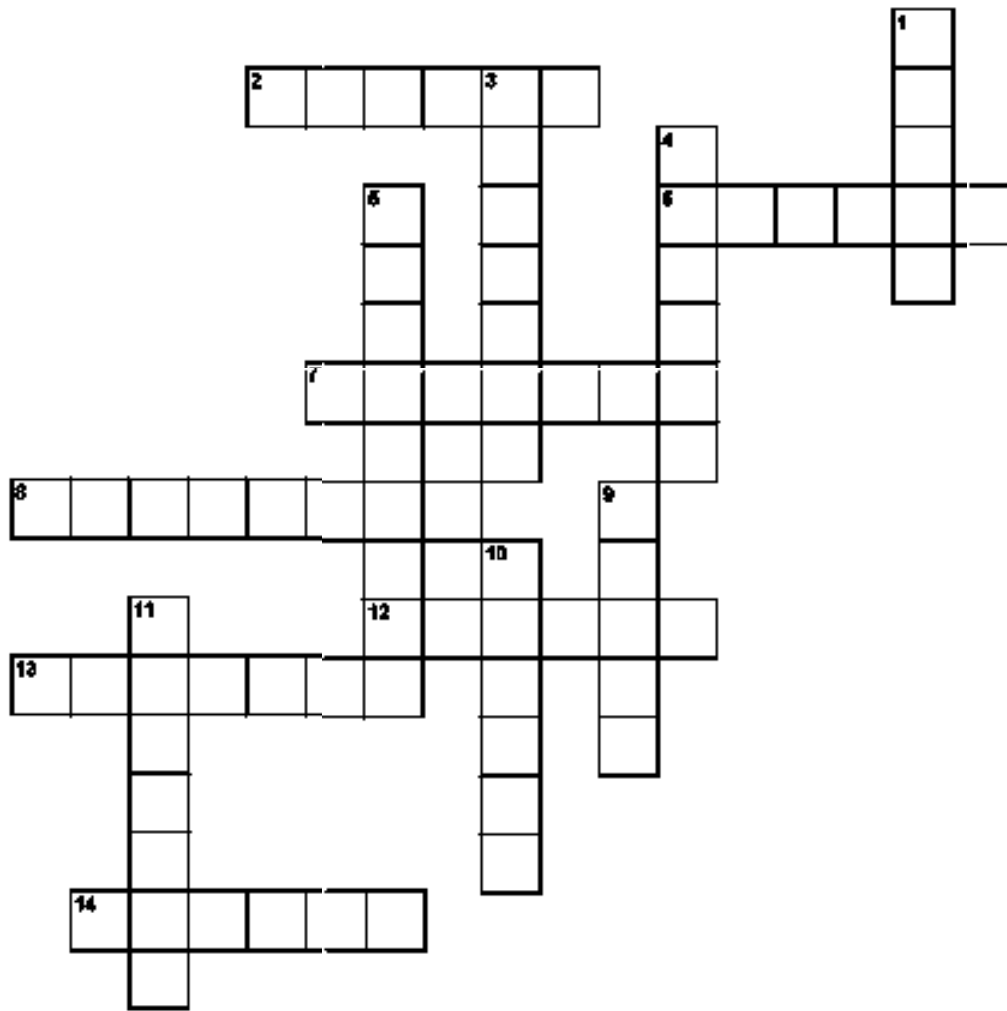
Chicago, IL 60606

*Please note that audition times will be granted upon receipt of \$50.00 deposit.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ONLY

Vacancies resulting from the selection of a current Lyric Opera Orchestra musician for any position may be filled at this time by any other applicant who advanced to the final round of auditions.

Intermezzo Crossword



Across

- [2] from the Italian for "stolen time"
 [6] A single melody split by multiple voices, taking turns
 [7] Bowed in a separated manner
 [8] Candidate for IL Representative in the 42nd District, Lynn
 [12] Instrument played by both Coretta Scott King and
 Booker T. Washington
 [13] The "Devil", musically speaking
 [14] Bebop pioneer with an avian nickname

Down

- [1] An ensemble of eight
 [3] Chord built by stacking thirds
 [4] Small hand percussion, or a puritanical religious sect
 [5] Cadence that resolves unexpectedly
 [9] Caribbean charitable organization supported by Rachel
 Barton Pine, "Bloom _____"
 [10] "Just relax, man. Hang back and keep it in the
 _____."
 [11] An unauthorized strike

[11] wildcat, [12] violin, [13] tritone, [14] Parker
 [1] octet, [2] rubato, [3] tertian, [4] shaker, [5] deceptive, [6] hocket, [7] detache, [8] LaPlante, [9] Haiti, [10] pocket,

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