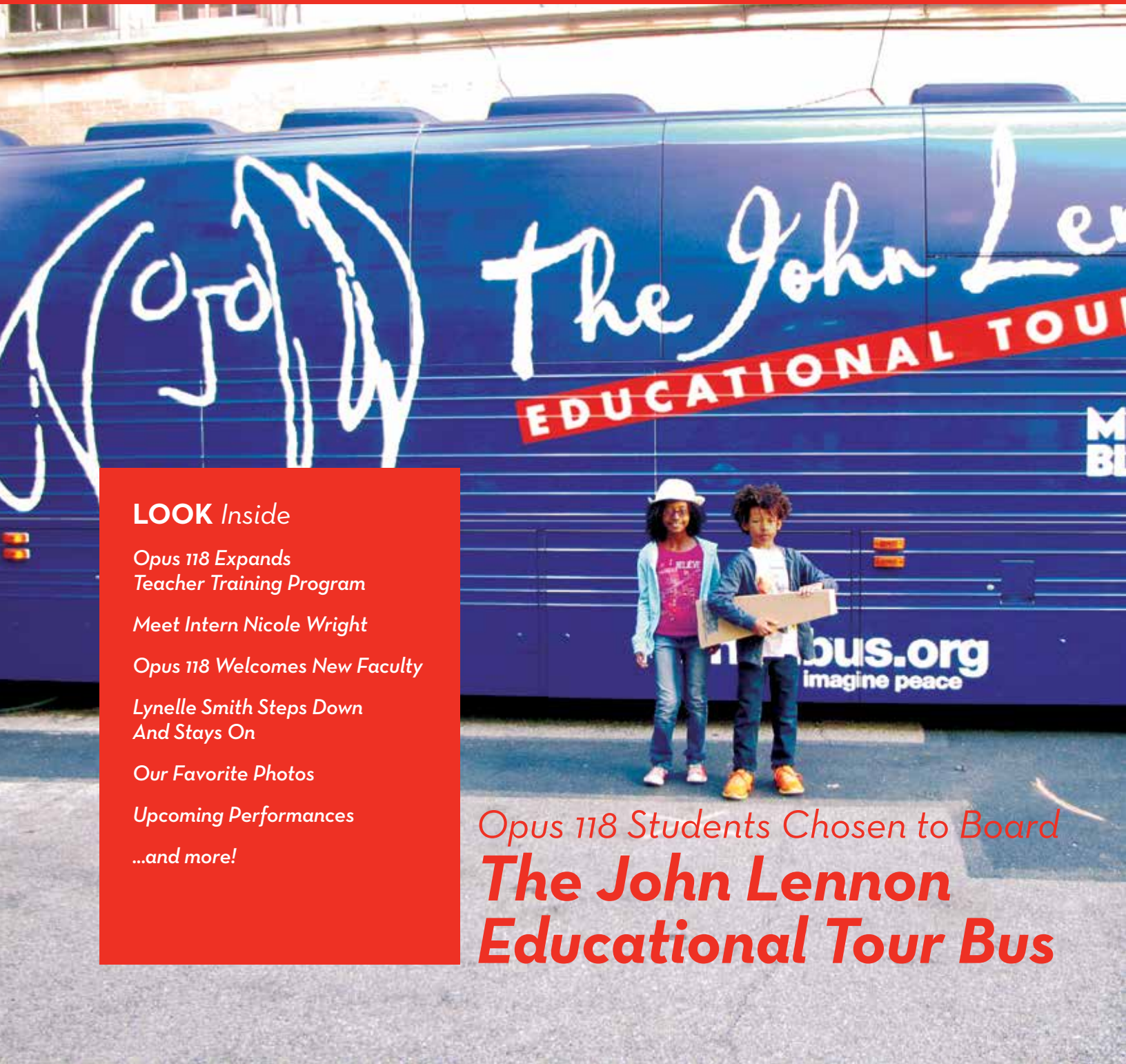


Fall 2014

Opus Notes

OPUS 118 HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC



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Opus 118 Expands Teacher Training Program



Roberta Guaspari and Amanda Negron lead a student rehearsal.

Since our partnership with Kaufman Music Center was formally established last year, Opus 118 has renewed the focus on teacher training as an important part of our mission.

This initiative was launched last year with our first intern on board for the fall semester, and we welcomed four more interns in the spring. We are delighted to have all but one returning this year, and look to add more interns as opportunities arise and funding is available.

The training effort will be centered at River East Elementary School, where Opus 118 co-founder Roberta Guaspari has been teaching the In-School violin program for 34 years. Roberta will have second-year intern Amanda Negron by her side for all her River East classes. Amanda herself started playing the violin at age four with Roberta at River East in the Opus 118 program and continued her studies at Kaufman Music Center's

Special Music School and the Opus 118 After-School Program before graduating from the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music, Art and Performing Arts.

The other returning interns are Hajnal Pivnick, who is now the

teacher at PS 129, and Nicole Wright and Jessica McJunkins, who are both interning with teacher Chihiro Fukuda at Central Park East II, PS 171, and PS 30.

Says Roberta, "I am thrilled to see the Teacher Training Program start to take off again and to have so many interns working with our teachers this fall. Teaching is a whole other talent, and not all musicians are cut out for it. We select interns who have a true passion for teaching, who really want teaching to be a part of their future."

Teaching violin to a class of a dozen or more first grade beginners is an art in its own right. The challenges are many, including managing the social dynamics, learning how to interact with the kids, and dealing with a wide range of musical abilities, learning styles and physical capabilities.

Over the years, Roberta and fellow teachers have developed an approach that is unique to Opus 118. "We

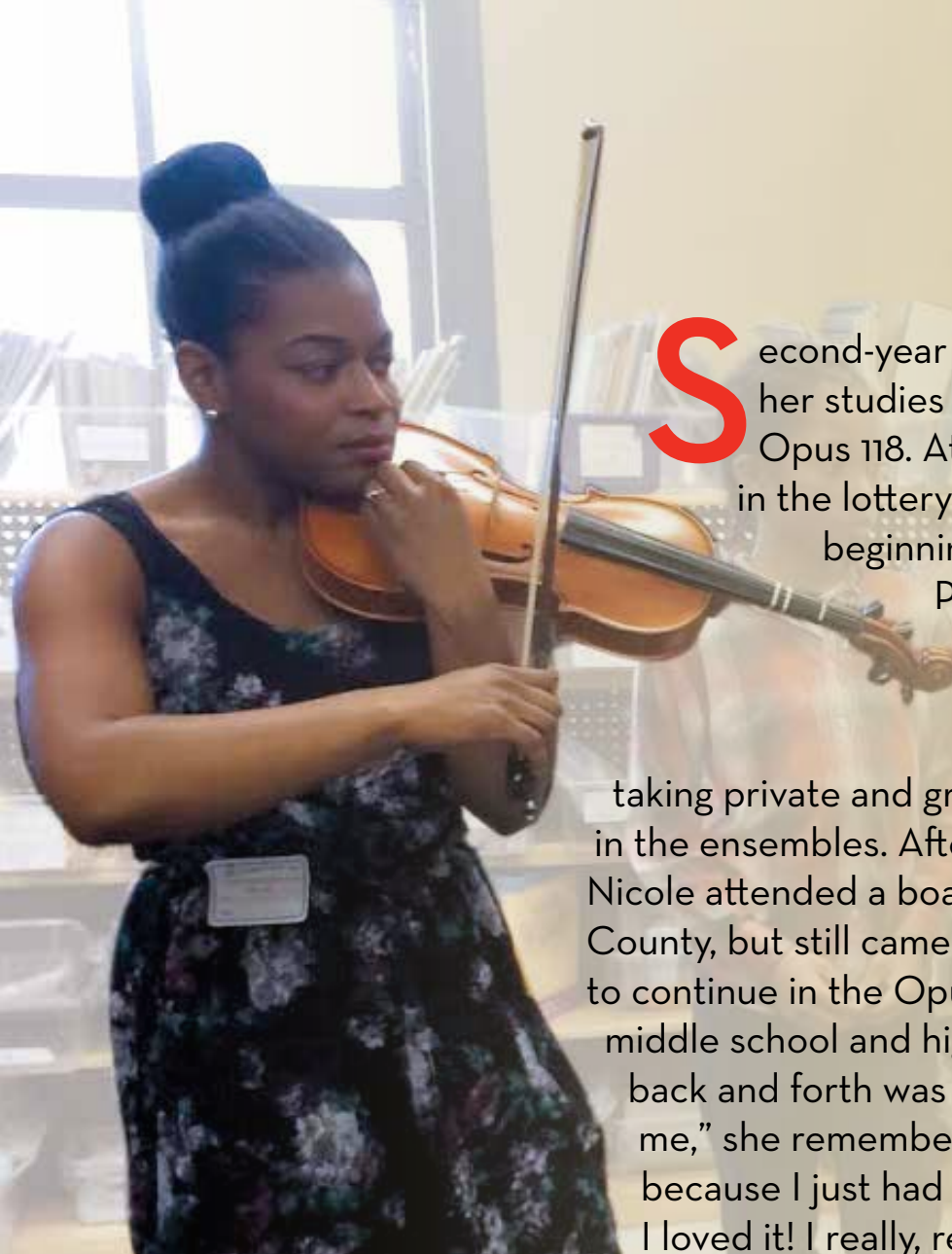
are always learning what works and what doesn't work, and our approach is constantly evolving," Roberta says. "I have learned so much from teachers like Lynelle Smith, and all the teachers - everyone brings something important to the program. We've also learned a lot from the kids, and from just doing it for so many years."

The Opus 118 approach focuses on paying in-depth attention to the foundations of excellent violin posture and making a beautiful sound with the bow - and always trying to do this in a non-competitive, nurturing environment. The organization has seen how this more disciplined, careful approach at the beginning pays off down the road in developing that wonderful "Opus" sound.

Opus 118 plans to prepare future faculty through the Teacher Training Program, enabling us to grow the number of schools and students we serve. Says Roberta, "Our Teacher Training Program essentially offers our interns the opportunity to take an on-the-job string pedagogy class. We hope that many of them will teach someday at Opus 118. But wherever they end up teaching, we hope the one thing they take from this experience is the understanding that, with the proper foundation, every child can make beautiful music."



Visiting from Sweden, string teachers observe Roberta Guaspari working with a student at River East Elementary School.



Meet Intern Nicole Wright

Second-year intern Nicole Wright began her studies on the violin right here at Opus 118. At age five she was selected in the lottery for Roberta Guaspari's beginning string class at Central Park II Elementary School. She was so eager to learn that she joined the Opus 118 After-School Program, taking private and group lessons and playing in the ensembles. After graduating from CPE II, Nicole attended a boarding school in Westchester County, but still came back to NYC once a week to continue in the Opus 118 programs through middle school and high school. "The traveling back and forth was not easy for my mother and me," she remembers. "But that didn't matter, because I just had to stay at Opus - I loved it! I really, really enjoyed performing."


Nicole was awarded a scholarship to Ithaca College, where she graduated with a double major in music performance and music education. She then earned her master's degree in viola performance at Mannes College of Music, and is currently a doctoral student at Rutgers University.

Last winter at school Nicole saw a notice on an online job board about openings for interns at Opus 118: "I couldn't believe it when I saw this posting. I went to Opus! They're the reason I started music to begin with!"

Nicole applied for the position and was soon working at CPE II and River East Elementary Schools with Roberta Guaspari, who had introduced her to the violin so many years before. "I really enjoyed it," Nicole said. "Working

with Roberta taught me how to teach the violin to young children." Nicole was able to apply some of the things she learned from her experience at Opus 118 to a teaching job she had over the summer at a music school on Long Island.

This year Nicole is looking forward to working with Opus 118 teacher Chihiro Fukuda at PS 30. "I am eager to learn from another great teacher. Each educator teaches a different way, and I think learning the different approaches will give me the experience I need to develop my own strategy."

Nicole is a true believer in the Opus 118 approach to the violin. She says, "If you don't understand the technical aspects of the violin when playing it, then it will be hard for you to bring your musical ideas to life." 

On The Front Cover: Opus 118 violinist Lena Habtu and cellist Emilio Smith pose in front of the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, which visited CPE II Elementary School for two days in September. Full story on page 4.

Opus 118 Students Board the John Lennon Bus

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CPE II Principal and Opus 118 Trustee Naomi Smith greets Yoko Ono Lennon during the event.

The John Lennon Educational Tour Bus arrived at Central Park East II Elementary School for two days in September to kick off its New York tour of public schools in each of the five boroughs. CPE II is one of Opus 118's longest running partner schools, and has generously housed our After-School Program and administrative staff for the past two years.

A mobile music studio, the Lennon Bus travels the world to give students hands-on opportunity to play music, write songs, engineer recording sessions and produce music videos. CPE II has long shared Opus 118's and the Lennon Bus's commitment to enabling young people to express themselves through music. Principal Naomi Smith was thrilled with the opportunity to host the Lennon Bus, and when it came time to select two students to work on the mobile studio, she turned to two of our own Opus 118 students, Emilio Smith and Lena Habtu. "The organizers were looking for two musical students," said Principal Smith. "Fourth-grader Emilio and fifth-grader Lena both started violin in first grade in the Opus In-School Program at CPE II. Both students went on to take private violin lessons in the Opus After-School

Program - now Emilio has switched over to cello and also plays a little ukulele on the side."

One of the many high points of the visit was the appearance of Yoko Ono Lennon, who is an enthusiastic sponsor of the Lennon Bus project and also a long-time supporter of Opus 118 through her foundation, Studio One. Yoko Ono spoke at an assembly to all the kids. "I love you and I'm so glad that I'm here today," she told the packed auditorium. "Many, many things are happening now in our society, but if you keep smiling, that's going to change the world." The kids in turn sang the chorus to "Instant Karma:"

*Well, we all shine on
Like the moon and the stars and the sun
Yeah, we all shine on
On and on and on, on and on...*

Later that day Emilio and Lena along with two students from PS/IS 171 Patrick Henry Preparatory Academy experienced the excitement of working on the bus, recording a cover of the John Lennon song. "It was the best day of my life!," said Emilio.

As the grand finale to this wonderful event, all students donned matching CPE II t-shirts and formed a giant human peace sign in the gym, which was photographed by the Lennon Bus engineers as a symbol for the importance of music education.

Opus 118 continues to look for a permanent place to call home. In the meantime, we thank CPE II Elementary School for so generously hosting our After-School Program again this year, and Boys & Girls Harbor for temporarily leasing us administrative office space right across the street.

If you have any ideas or hear of any opportunities, please be sure to contact Rebekah Harkins at (646) 842-2775 or rharkins@opus118.org.

Lynelle Smith: Always At The Heart of Opus 118

A master teacher with deep roots in the pedagogical tradition of Opus 118, Lynelle Smith is stepping down this year as String Department Chair to devote more time to her teaching and other work at Opus 118 and Kaufman Music Center. We'd like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for her continuing dedication to Opus 118 Harlem School of Music and her contributions to our programs.

Lynelle came to Opus 118 in 1997 with a degree in music from New England Conservatory of Music and a Performance Diploma from The Juilliard School under teachers Dorothy DeLay and Masao Kawasaki. At Opus 118 Lynelle teamed up with Roberta Guaspari and helped to develop Opus 118's signature teaching approach. Since then she has enriched our organization in so many ways, always as a teacher, but also in her positions over the past decade as Associate Artistic Director and then String Department Chair.

Opus 118 can credit Lynelle for many important features of our programs. Lynelle is especially enthusiastic about the Performance Evaluation Week held in the spring of each



year, giving students the chance to play prepared pieces in front of a panel of Opus 118 teachers: "This has become an important milestone for our after-school participants and a wonderful learning opportunity for both students and teachers."

"I'm so lucky to do something I really enjoy."

Opus 118's String Department Handbook and String Curriculum Guidelines were developed under Lynelle's guidance as valuable tools for students, parents, and teachers. She has also instituted pedagogy meetings for the string faculty to come together during the school year to share experiences and learn from

one another. Over the years, Lynelle and Roberta have worked together to host a number of "String Institutes" at Opus 118, providing training for teachers from other schools/programs in the methods that have proven so successful here - something that

both Lynelle and Roberta look forward to continuing in the future!

But as her colleagues and many students and parents will attest, Lynelle's greatest passion and contribution is as a teacher. "I love teaching," Lynelle says, "I'm so lucky to do something that I really enjoy. One of the things I learned from my teacher Dorothy DeLay that I want to pass on to my students is that 'the key to concentration is enjoyment.' In their practice students need to find something to enjoy about the process, and then the end results will be exciting!"

Lynelle will continue teaching in Opus 118's After-School Program, and the Special Music School and Lucy Moses School at our partner Kaufman Music Center. She has been involved in both institutions for many years. From this unique perspective, Lynelle sees a parallel in how Kaufman's Executive Director Lydia Kontos approaches building the Opus 118 organization and how Opus 118 approaches building violinists: "one step at a time, solid at every step of the way!"

Lynelle has dreams for Opus 118, and sees a future "where Opus has its own place to call home, with a beautiful performance space in our neighborhood, where teachers come to learn how to help students produce beautiful music."

"At Opus 118 we change lives - that's what we do," says Lynelle. "We give our students a language to express themselves emotionally and to move and inspire other people - these are fantastic gifts."

Thank you, Lynelle, for all your contributions to Opus 118 over the years - for helping us, as you say, "to change the world one note at a time."

Opus 118 relies on the generosity of people like you to help keep music education affordable in East Harlem. We hope you will consider taking a moment to fill out the enclosed envelope to make a donation to our work. If you prefer to make your donation online, please visit www.opus118.org and click "Donate."

Opus 118 Welcomes Faculty for 2014 - 2015 School Year

This fall, Opus 118 welcomes both returning and new faculty members. “The success and stability of Opus 118 over the past three years is garnering a lot of interest from talented musicians and experienced teachers,” says Rebekah Harkins, Director of Programs and Development. “It’s so exciting for all of us to see and has such a positive impact on our students!”

This year began with a new teacher joining the Opus 118 In-School Faculty: violist Jacalyn Stanger. We are delighted to have Jacalyn return to the Opus 118 family after training with Roberta Guaspari at River East Elementary School in 1999. Jacalyn had previously taught in several area Suzuki programs, including Third Street Music School, Harlem School of the Arts and Brooklyn College



Jacalyn Stanger works with an Opus 118 student.

Preparatory Division. Inspired by Roberta, Jacalyn continued teaching in the NYC public school system, focusing on group violin classes at PS 9, Anderson School, Manhattan School For Children and PS 226 in Brooklyn. As a performer, Jacalyn is a founding member of the Long Island Philharmonic and has played in the Spoleto Festival, Tucson, Stamford and Queens Symphonies.

At Opus 118, Jacalyn is teaching at Central Park East I Elementary School as part of the In-School Violin Program, with longtime Opus 118 teacher and program alumna Charlene Bishop serving as a mentor for the first few months of the year. Jacalyn also teaches private lessons in Opus 118’s After-School Program.

Jacalyn is welcomed by the rest of the Opus 118 faculty: Roberta Guaspari, Lynelle Smith, Chihiro Fukuda, Charlene Bishop, Hajnal Pivnick, Amanda Negron, Jessica McJunkins, and Nicole Wright (violin); Wayne Smith (cello); Alexey Koltakov (piano); and Steve Jabas (guitar). We are also planning for a new influx of Opus 118 interns and look forward to sharing more about their work throughout the year.



On Saturday, April 12th, students from Opus 118’s ensembles performed as part of the international string exhibition, Mondomusica New York. This event featured luthiers from around the world, and Opus 118 was presented with 20 violins and a cello following the students’ performance. (Photo left) Massimo Bianchedi (CEO, CremonaFiere), Roberta Guaspari, Helen Hayes and Joseph Regh (Past Presidents, Violin Society of America)



Recent Photos & Upcoming Performances

Experience our programs first-hand! Below is a list of student performances scheduled for this year. More will be added throughout the year, and dates are subject to change; visit www.opus118.org or call (646) 842-2775 for the most up-to-date information. All recitals are held at the Central Park East II auditorium beginning at 7PM, unless otherwise stated.



Our Favorite Photos (clockwise from top): Opus 118 students perform at the 2014 annual End-of-Year Concert; advanced Opus 118 students perform at End-of-Year Concert; Chihiro Fukuda leads Introduction to Violin Class; Opus 118 Performance Ensemble rehearsal; a proud cellist displays her certificate during Performance Evaluation Week; Charlene Bishop leads students in End-of-Year Concert; In-School Program students perform at End-of-Year Concert.



Opus 118 Recital Hours

Monday, November 17

Wednesday, November 19

Tuesday, December 9

Wednesday, December 10

Wednesday, February 11

Thursday, February 12

Monday, March 30

Wednesday, April 1

Tuesday, April 28

Friday, May 1 (featuring students who complete 80 or more days of the 100-Day Practice Challenge)

Friday, May 22 (Honors Recital)

End-of-Year Concert

The American Academy of Arts and Letters
Thursday, June 11th



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Artistic Director of Performance
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Chihiro Fukuda, *violin*
Steve Jabas, *guitar*
Alexey Koltakov, *piano*
Jessica McJunkins, *violin*
Amanda Negron, *violin*
Hajnal Pivnick, *violin*
Lynelle Smith, *violin*
Wayne Smith, *cello*
Jacalyn Stanger, *violin*
Nicole Wright, *violin*

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We are grateful to each of our corporate, foundation, and individual supporters.



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