

Fall 2015

Opus Notes

OPUS 118 HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC



LOOK *Inside*

Opus 118 Changes Lives

After-School Program Expands to CPEII Middle School

Meet The Teacher: Hajnal Pivnick

A Letter From Hayley Collins

Artist Blood Orange to Donate Concert Proceeds to Opus 118

Our Favorite Photos

Opus 118 **Changes Lives**

This year, as we anticipate our 25th Annual End-of-Year Concert as Opus 118 Harlem School of Music, we have been reflecting on all of the lives that were changed by access to the quality music education Opus 118 provides in East Harlem. As arts programs around the country continue to be cut by budget constraints, Opus 118

continued on page 4

Opus 118 Expands After-School to Central Park East Middle School



Central Park East II now includes a middle school.

Opus 118's After-School Program continues to grow and we are so pleased to announce we've added yet another location to accommodate our students!

Central Park East II Elementary School, our after-school location since 2012, opened their new middle school in shared space at 1615 Madison Avenue. The school has graciously allowed us to continue to give select lessons at the elementary school while also using rooms at the middle school. The open,

spacious rooms also accommodate our need for instrument storage.

The Opus 118 Performance Ensembles now hold their after-school rehearsals in the new space, in addition to private lessons and group classes. Students

and parents alike have noted the peacefulness of the space in after-school hours and have found that their commutes are serviced by many of the same trains and buses they took to the elementary.

Central Park East II Middle School is located on Madison Avenue between East 108th and 109th Streets, just five short blocks from the original location. We look forward to the opportunity to serve more students with this new expansion!

Did You Know?

Opus 118 has welcomed three new interns for the 2015-16 school year!

We are happy to have Amelia In, Robyn Quinnett, and Emily Vold join our Teacher Training Program. They will spend time observing, assisting, and teaching at Central Park East II and River East Elementary, all the while honing their skills as violin instructors.

Meet The Teacher: Hajnal Pivnick

Violin teacher Hajnal Pivnick successfully completed Opus 118's Teacher Training Program at the end of the 2014-2015 school year and is now an instructor at our In-School Program at PS 171 and our After-School private lessons. We caught up with Hajnal to learn more about her life as both a teacher and a performer.

Opus 118: You started in the Opus 118 Teacher Training Program. What drew you to our program?

Hajnal: I think the Opus 118 Teacher Training program is so effective because of the level of detail and structure that is established from the very first violin class a student takes. The set-up is the most crucial part to being successful in playing the violin, along with work ethic and support from your family. I learned such a wealth of information from observing Roberta and Chihiro teaching, that I still use daily in my teaching.

Opus 118: You now teach in our In-School and After-School Programs. What is the best part about being a teacher?

Hajnal: The most rewarding part of teaching is introducing new skills and new music to my students. It is so exciting when my student learns something new. It's the teacher's responsibility to make a new skill attainable while still being a little bit challenging. A child can learn so much from the hard work, concentration, focused repetition, and, above all, a positive attitude that it takes to perfect a new skill. Watching this development unfold is one of the most exciting parts of being a teacher.

Opus 118: In addition to teaching, you perform in New York City and beyond as a sought-after performer of contemporary music. What inspires you about this repertoire? How do you balance teaching and performing?

Hajnal: There is a wonderful connection in contemporary music between the musician and the composer that we don't get to experience in older, more established repertoire. I can e-mail or call the composer




Violinist and Opus 118 Violin Instructor Hajnal Pivnick

and ask him/her what they were thinking when they wrote something. I have also had new pieces written for me, which is incredibly inspiring. You get to see what aspects of your playing and personality are reflected in a composer's view of you. In contemporary music, you have to have all of the skills for playing romantic or classical music (technique, musicality, virtuosity) but you are also constantly challenged with extended technique and oftentimes extremely complex rhythmic material.

I draw inspiration from my students to be harder on myself in practicing accuracy and concentration in my own playing. I can't expect my students to play in tune and with accuracy if I don't expect the same thing from myself. My students inspire me to practice and constantly improve!

Opus 118: What advice do you have for aspiring music teachers?

Hajnal: Observe other teachers as often as you can, go to as many teacher training courses as you are able to, and always ask questions. Every student is different, and you can't use the same approach for every single one of them. Teaching is like improvising, and you have to think on your feet, making changes and adjustments according to your student's needs. 

Opus 118 Changes Lives

continued from page 1



Front cover and on this page (l-r): Morgan Palmer, Amanda Negron and Joshua Kelley-Kapaj have continued with the music they were introduced to as students of Opus 118.

strives to fill the void in an especially under-served area of New York City, providing teachers to area schools and private lessons to local children at highly subsidized rates.

Opus 118 Harlem School of Music was created in 1991 in response to founder Roberta Guaspari's violin programs being cut in East Harlem public schools. The response from students, volunteers, parents and members of the performing arts community was staggering as they joined together to successfully raise funds to maintain Roberta's instruction in three East Harlem schools, including River East, Central Park East and Central Park East II Elementary Schools. In 2002, Opus 118 expanded further to include the After-School Program, providing private lessons and ensembles to students at a subsidized or reduced rate. People across the globe know the story of Roberta and Opus 118, as it has been the topic of two Academy Award nominated films -- *Music of the Heart* starring Meryl Streep and the documentary *Small Wonders*.

But while many know our story, few know just how many children's lives have been positively impacted by our programs over the last 25 years. Our In-School program now serves five elementary schools in East Harlem. Last year, over 155 students from participating partner schools played

in our End-of-Year Concert and over 250 students participated in twice-weekly classes at their schools. Our After-School Program hosted more than 130 students in lessons, classes, and ensembles. More than 1000 people took in an Opus 118 recital or concert as audience members. It is estimated that in the years Roberta has been teaching, Opus 118 has touched the lives of over 6,500 people.



When it comes to music education, it is not merely the numbers that matter. Studies show that music training at a young age increases a student's capability to perform well in science and math. A new research study concluded that music education improves teens' abilities to listen and to comprehend language. We have also noted changes in a child's behavior while taking music instruction - focus, listening, self-expression and memorization are all skills that teachers have noted are stronger for those who study in Opus 118's program.

Opus 118 students of past and present are the best reminder of what our program can do.

Parent Leslie Eaton, mother of current student Morgan Palmer and former students Avery and Conrad,



said that Opus 118 "feeds her kids with a lifetime appreciation for music." She believes that the introduction to classical music, a genre to which inner-city kids are rarely exposed, allows her children more opportunities for thinking and imagining. Her children argue about "who gets to play the piano first," and she is proud that this is the "new normal" in her household. Morgan started instruction in 2005 and understood from the outset that he did not have to play the violin if he did not want to. However, he chose to keep going, even after leaving our In-School Program at CPE II. He now attends the renowned Frank Sinatra School of the Arts. Morgan is on a wonderful journey that has taken him places Leslie had not even imagined for him -- this summer, he was one of 32 high schoolers selected to perform with the Sphinx Program in Chicago, where he was voted "most improved," an honor his mother thinks comes from the strong foundation he received as a student of Opus 118.

First joining Opus 118 as a first-grader at CPE II, former student Joshua Kelley-Kapaj began private lessons in our After-School Program at the urging of Roberta and continued his private study through middle school. Now a junior at Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn, he is a student in the String Orchestra program. Affectionately called "the reluctant violinist" by his mother, Jesi Kelley, he had chosen the school for its great football team. At the end of freshman

year when he decided against football, he stayed on at Fort despite the long commute from his home in Harlem because he developed a deep bond to the school's music program. Joshua is also a member of the All-City High School Orchestra.

Three former Opus 118 students—Charlene Bishop, Amanda Negron, and Nicole Wright—continued their

training with Opus 118 after high school and have all returned as members of the faculty, passing on their knowledge to the next generation of Opus 118 violinists. All three had different journeys that led them back to Opus 118, and all provide valuable experiences. Charlene has been a teacher with Opus 118 for more than ten years. Amanda and Nicole went through Opus 118's

Teacher Training Program, taking intern positions in the classrooms of Roberta and String Department Coordinator, Chihiro Fukuda. Nicole is now the teacher at our In-School Program at PS 30 and Amanda is in the classroom at CPE I. Amanda noted that for kids in East Harlem, the program "keeps you out of trouble because you have to put time, effort and work into it."

A Letter From Hayley Collins



Dear Opus 118 Families and Friends, I am so very excited to have been chosen as the new Manager of Programs and Development at Opus 118 Harlem School of Music. I got to know our fantastic students, faculty, and staff in the last year as the Program Associate, working directly with families on scheduling and enrollment. I now look forward to my next steps, giving my all to the advancement of this program that has grown so near-and-dear to my heart.

I was born and raised in Traverse City, Michigan, a small town along Lake Michigan, consistently rated one of the most beautiful places in America. I have had a lifelong relationship with music, beginning piano lessons when I was six and becoming involved in choirs at eight. Luckily, music programs in my area public schools are still intact and many of my best memories come from my own participation in music instruction. However, it did not escape me that many kids did not have the same opportunities I had and my mother likes to remind me from time-to-time that I would come home ranting as a teen about how I hoped to protect music programs one day.

My college years were spent in Princeton, New Jersey and I received my Bachelor of Arts in Music from Westminster Choir College with a concentration in voice and a minor in political science. My performance experiences were mainly in opera and I still am very passionate about singing to this day, though I now participate more as a spectator than a performer. Right out of college, I worked as an administrative assistant at Westminster Conservatory, the community outreach arm of my university, before heading up here to New York where I currently reside.

In my time here with Opus 118, I have been blown away by the dedication of both the faculty and students to their craft. To the students of East Harlem, their music study is often their release and their greatest time to grow. I have watched in awe and inspiration as families choose music over other activities, appreciating its value to their everyday lives. It is my goal to continue Opus 118's expansion so that we can meet more families where they are, whether it be forming more In-School partnerships or identifying new After-School students, while still providing the exceptional training people have come to expect from us. I feel as though this opportunity is the fulfillment of my own childhood dream - to give all kids access to music - and I intend to make the most of it. Communication, in my opinion, is the key to success for a business such as this, so please feel free to reach out to me by phone or email and introduce yourself and I will happily return the favor. I look forward to seeing what the future has in store!

Raising Funds for Opus 118: Blood Orange and Friends



Photo by Michael Halsband

On Saturday, December 12th, musician and composer Blood Orange will be presenting “Blood Orange and Friends” at Harlem’s world famous Apollo Theater. All proceeds from this special concert will benefit Opus 118 Harlem School of Music.

Blood Orange, also known as Devonte Hynes, announced his first U.S. concert of the year and will be joined onstage by many of his famous friends, who

will be announced leading up to the event. The concert will feature music from Hynes’ first two albums as well as brand new material.

Opus 118 is thrilled to be working with Hynes in this wonderful collaboration. Hynes identified us as the organization he would like to benefit from the proceeds of his concert because of his own history with music education.

“Playing music saved my life,” he said. “If it wasn’t for the chance to play cello or piano when I was a kid growing up in Essex, I shudder to think where I’d be right now. At this point in my life, all that matters to me is giving back to communities and making people happy, so I have decided to put on a fun night of

performances at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem that is hopefully affordable to all, with all proceeds going to the Opus 118 Harlem School of Music.”

This concert will be suitable for families and tickets will be at a discount of typical rates for the theatre. We hope that Opus 118 families and friends will have the chance to come over to the Apollo Theatre for a fun night of music and entertainment, all while supporting our cause.

For more information on how to purchase tickets, please visit Blood Orange’s website, [www. bloodorange.nyc](http://www.bloodorange.nyc), or check out www.opus118.org for links.

We rely 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 in support of our work. If you prefer to make your donation online, visit the new Opus118.org and click “Donate.”

Recent Photos & Upcoming Performances

Experience our programs first-hand! Below are student performances scheduled for this year. 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.



(1.)



(6.)



(2.)



(5.)



(3.)



(4.)

Opus 118 Recital Hours

Wednesday Nov 18

Wednesday Dec 9, 6pm
(Guitar Recital)

Friday Dec 18, 6pm
(30-Day Practice Challenge Celebration)

Tuesday Jan 26

Wednesday Feb 10

Monday Mar 14

Friday April 1, 6:30pm
(Piano Recital)

Friday May 6, 6pm
(70-Day Practice Challenge Celebration)

Wednesday June 1
(Honors Recital)

Chamber Ensemble Performance at Union Square
Saturday Dec 19, time TBA

Spring Concert with The Harlem Chamber Players
St. Mary’s Episcopal Church
Saturday March 12, 4pm

End-of-Year Concert
The American Academy of Arts and Letters
Thursday June 16, 6:30pm

Our Favorite Photos

(This page, clockwise from top)

(1.) Chihiro Fukuda leads the way during the 2015 End-of-Year Concert at the Academy of Arts and Letters; (2.) and (3.) Students perform at the 2015 End-of-Year Concert; (4.) Roberta and students take a bow; (5.) Former student Joshua Kail and teacher Nicole Wright; (6.) Students wait for Roberta’s instruction.

c/o Kaufman Music Center
129 West 67th Street
New York, NY 10023
Administrative Office: (646) 842-2775
www.opus118.org

Opus118

HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC



The 2015 - 2016 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Daniel Cooper, *President*
Joseph Ziluca, *Treasurer*
Nick Bentley, *Secretary*
Naomi Smith
Mary Sobel
Mark Torchia

Lydia Kontos,
Executive Director, Kaufman Music Center, Ex-Officio

The ADVISORY BOARD

Patti Austin
Emanuel Ax
Joshua Bell
John Blake, Jr.
Terence Blanchard
Regina Carter
Sarah Chang
John Dalley
Pamela Frank
Alban Gerhardt
Alan Gilbert
Richard Goode
David Grusin
Hilary Hahn
Kelly Hall-Tompkins

Quincy Jones
Joseph Kalichstein
Ida Kavafian
Christophe Landon
Jaime Laredo
Cho-Liang Lin
Yo-Yo Ma
Natalie MacMaster
Wynton Marsalis
Lincoln Mayorga
Robert McDuffie
Diane Monroe
Mark O'Connor
Itzhak Perlman
Toby Perlman
Anna Polonsky
Sharon Robinson
Judith Serkin
Leonard Slatkin
Marilyn Somville
Arnold Steinhardt
Meryl Streep
Steven Tenebom
Michael Tree
Nicholas Tzavaras
Maxim Vengerov
Peter Wiley
Pinchas Zukerman

The FACULTY

Roberta Guaspari, *violin*
Artistic Director of Performance
Chihiro Fukuda, *violin and viola*
String Department Coordinator
Charlene Bishop, *violin*
Mary Hammann, *violin and viola*
Mark Humburg, *cello*
Amelia In, *violin*
Steve Jabas, *guitar*
Jessica McJunkins, *violin*
Amanda Negrón, *violin*
Hajnal Pivnick, *violin*
Robyn Quinnett, *violin*
Nelly Rocha, *cello*
Lynelle Smith, *violin*
Jacalyn Stanger, *violin*
Emily Vold, *violin*
Nicole Wright, *violin*
Marta Zywiecka, *piano*

The STAFF

Hayley Collins, *Manager of Programs and Development*
Robin Glassman, *Bookkeeper*

OpusNotes

Jesi Kelley, *Design, Photography*
Integrity Graphics, *Printer*

Opus118

HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC

c/o Kaufman Music Center
129 West 67th Street
New York, NY 10023
Administrative Office:
(646) 842-2775
Email: mail@opus118.org
www.opus118.org

Opus 118 is an affiliate of
Kaufman Music Center
www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org

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

