Before the surge of Omicron sent us back into virtual programming through the month of January, we were overjoyed to finally have the opportunity for our students to perform for each other and for their friends and family during our Music Haven Studio Recitals and our week of winter concerts! In November 2021, studio recitals each night provided the opportunity for our students to perform solo pieces, and then in December, our week of winter concerts were a chance to perform group pieces. Due to COVID restrictions, they weren’t open to the public, and we weren’t able to have our traditional Studio Recital Pot Lucks, but we hope to soon have the opportunity return to large-scale public performances by our students (and of course to sharing a meal together!)

Congratulations to our 2022 Music Haven graduates! We’re proud of all you have accomplished as musicians and as people! You’re always welcome at Music Haven! Pictured above are Reign, Elena, Jocelyn, Giavonda, Aleanis, Caleb, Courage, and Emily, who have been at Music Haven for a combined 52 years!

Recitals & Winter Concert

Left: A few of our very important guests enjoying the show!
Right: Student violinist Kevin and his teacher, HSQ violinist Gregory Tompkins performing at the Winter Concert

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Para leer NOTEWORTHY en español, visite www.musichavenct.org/mh-newsletters
Welcome To Our New Board Members!

Ian Melchinger (Parent of Music Haven Graduate)
A New Haven native, Ian majored in English and Theater/Dance at Amherst College, and also film at the USC Cinema School in Los Angeles. He worked in the game design and multimedia fields before taking a position teaching English at Hopkins School, where he has also served as Chair of Senior Projects since 2006, designed musical performances with faculty and students, and built a video production program. Ian has been a dedicated and involved Music Haven parent since 2009 when his daughter, Isabel, began cello lessons while she was a student at John C. Daniels School, and although she graduated in 2021, Ian and his entire family remain connected to Music Haven in many ways.

Noel Mitchell (Music Haven Alumnus)
Noel Mitchell is a 2017 graduate of Music Haven and a senior at the University of Connecticut, majoring in Political Science. At UConn he has served as a research assistant for the strings department in the School of Fine Arts, working alongside faculty and interacting with students from 5th grade through college seniors. He also worked as an Orientation Leader for two years, helping with the transition of first-year, transfer, and international students to life at UConn. In addition, Noel volunteers as a Pack-Leader, providing support to his peers on issues such as sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Noel joined Music Haven in its second year, first mentored by and studying under Music Haven founder and original HSQ member Tina Hadari, and then HSQ violinist Gregory Tompkins. In his decade at Music Haven, he made relationships and friendships that remain to this day, and he is excited to join the board and give back to and help grow the organization that he grew up with.

Fatima Rojas (Parent of Current Music Haven Student)
Fatima Rojas came to New Haven from Mexico 18 years ago and her first job in the U.S. was cleaning at a high school, where she was paid only $4.10 an hour when the minimum wage was $7.10. She worked 15 hours a day but did not get paid overtime. She had to learn English quickly because she became involved in the immigrant rights movement in New Haven, leading to a job as a community organizer with Connecticut Center for a New Economy (CCNE), and later a union organizer with UNITE HERE Local 217. Fatima later worked as a Job Coach at New Haven Works before landing at her current job (one she hopes to keep until she retires) as a Health Promoter with UNITE HERE. Fatima's daughters, Jade and Ambar, enrolled in Music Haven in 2017 and 2018 and their experience at Music Haven has, in Fatima's words, "been transformative music-wise but have been nurtured with 'compañerismo' - fellowship, total trust not only for my daughters but for all the students, with love. Music Haven does justice for kids like mine that otherwise will not be able to play violin and cello!"

Donor Spotlight!
Dr. Marlene Baldizon has been a longtime donor of Music Haven since 2013. She has served as Principal of a New Haven public school and is currently a Child Psychologist. Dr. Baldizon thinks it is phenomenal students are provided with access to music, string instruments and opportunities for performances in the community. She continues to support Music Haven as a monthly donor because of “the challenges in education and belief in the power of the arts.” She loves seeing the spark in the eyes of the children when they play beautiful music, and considers herself a self-proclaimed “groupie” of the HSQ. Monthly donors help keep our program going. Please sign up on our website. We would love to hear your story of why you donate to Music Haven. Email Lygia@musichavenct.org if you would like to be featured in our Donor Spotlight.

New Staff Member: Alana Ladson
Alana Ladson is the Communications Manager and College & Career Pathways Manager for Music Haven. Alana graduated from Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, CT and then from St. John’s University with a Bachelor’s in Psychology. She was an AmeriCorps service member with City Year in Brooklyn, NY, teaching 3rd-5th grade students core subjects and running extracurricular activities. She was also the Program Coordinator at EVOLUTIONS Afterschool Program at Yale Peabody Museum as well as Project Director at Artspace for their CHANNEL VOICES programming. A New Haven native, Alana brings years of education, youth engagement, admin, and outreach experience from her past and current work. Additionally, Alana is an artist and graphic designer. Her business, Alana Ladson Art, focuses on creating positive and powerful images of BIPOC individuals. She has worked and collaborated with local clients such as the New Haven Arts Council and Elm City LIT Fest. Alana has a deep passion for the arts, social justice, and education which she hopes to bring to her work at Music Haven.
The HSQ is committed to playing works by composers of color, women, and living composers, and this season our musicians are sharing their thoughts on each of the works they’ve selected. On May 14, the HSQ will perform Carlos Simon’s An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave. Here HSQ violist Annalisa Boerner shares her reflections on this piece.

This piece is both beautiful and important. In the words of the composer: “This piece is an artistic reflection dedicated to those who have been murdered wrongfully by an oppressive power; namely Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner and Michael Brown.” The recurring ominous motif represents the cry of those struck down unjustly in this country. While the predominant essence of the piece is sorrowful and contemplative, there are moments of extreme hope represented by bright consonant harmonies.

Our “Musical Notes” project allowed Music Haven students to connect with the elderly in our community, even during the pandemic. The idea came from our students, who expressed interest in finding a way to play for the elderly in a safe manner. A 14-year old, 5th-year violinist, spoke about missing Music Haven’s annual trips to play for elderly communities and not being able to see his own grandparents during the pandemic. With support from the Mayor’s Neighborhood Cultural Vitality Grant, we were able to share our “Musical Notes” virtually, and also through the mail. Our students not only recorded musical performances to share with our very appreciative audiences (which they played in common rooms, for individual residents on tablets or tv screens, or even in the dining room at meal time), but also wrote notes and drew pictures, which we sent through the mail in special musical note envelopes. We were all able to connect through music, and spread joy during this difficult time of isolation. We were also excited to receive photos and videos in return, giving us the opportunity to see how much joy our project brought to the people who received our videos, letters, and pictures. One of our favorites was a video of a gentleman dancing to the music while a student’s video played in the background. We hope to return to play in person again soon! (Pictured below: Our friends from Mary Wade enjoying the music notes they received from our students)

This year, one of our Music Haven families, the Stewarts, led a book drive to build a library of racially conscious, culturally relevant books for our students to read and enjoy. The Stewarts raised funds to enable us to purchase not only a wonderful collection of books from People Get Ready Bookstore in New Haven, but also bookshelves to hold them, and through this family-led project, we have expanded our library and our students’ reading horizons. We are so grateful to Samantha Stewart and the whole Stewart family, as well as to the many people who contributed to the book fund.

Composer Spotlight: Carlos Simon

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HSQ Chamber Series 2022

The Haven String Quartet serves as Music Haven’s permanent quartet-in-residence & teaching faculty.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 19, 2022
"HSQ and Friends"
Children’s Notebooks
Mieczysław Weinberg
String Quintet in G Major, Op. 111
Johannes Brahms

May 14, 2022
"Harmonic Reflections"
An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave
Carlos Simon
String Quartet in G Minor
Claude Debussy

ANNOUNCING:

June 7, 2022
"HSQ Pops Concert"
Coming soon!
Check musichavenct.org/events for details.

Above: Members of the Haven String Quartet (standing) rehearse for their December Chamber Series Concert, which also featured five of their students performing a new work commissioned for the HSQ and Music Haven students. The HSQ is Music Haven’s resident ensemble and each member teaches and mentors a studio of young Music Haven musicians, ages 6-18.