

MAYERSON FOUNDATION ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM WORLD CLASS ARTS EDUCATION

First Quarter Report: 2014-15 Off to Good Start

It's too early to call this a "Best Of..." edition of the Artistic Excellence Program after only four years, but 2014-15 will mark the return of two superstars – **Emanuel Ax** and **Joshua Bell** – to the **School for Creative & Performing Arts (SCPA)**. The growing list of musicians, dancers, composers, artists and thespians that have participated in the Master Artists Series includes jazz icon **Chick Corea**, Broadway's **Bebe Neuwirth**, "hottest musician on the planet" **Lang Lang**, and royalty like **Sir James Galway** and **Dame Evelyn Glennie**. The mission of the Artistic Excellence Program - to support world-class arts education in the state-of-the-art facility that anchors Cincinnati's urban arts district – got a running start this year.

Actually, the week after the 2013-14 school year ended, SCPA's **Summer Dance Intensive** kicked in. Summer is an enormous opportunity to provide talented students with high intensity bridging instruction that helps pave the transition for rising sophomores, juniors and seniors. The Artistic Excellence Program supports the participation of **Cincinnati Ballet's Dawn Kelly** and **Sarah Hairston** to provide instruction during the six-week Summer Intensive. According to SCPA Dance Faculty, the summer program results in almost an entire year's worth of gain in students' dance skills.

Cincinnati Opera's Summer Training Program is another example of Mayerson support. This 7-week program offers SCPA Technical Theatre majors the opportunity to apprentice under Cincinnati Opera's incredibly talented scenic, lighting, costume, wig and stage management professionals.

SCPA's Artistic Director, Dr. Isidore Rudnick, put his composer's hat on over the summer and rehearsed the second season of his **Ensemble Eclectique**. The 27-piece student orchestra premiered five numbers written especially for them at Open House on September 18. Nearly every student in the orchestra had participated in an Excellence Program last year sharpening their skills for the concert which will be available on DVD later this year. Here's a look at one of the pieces (click below):



SCPA's Ensemble Eclectique - Waltz Melancolique

The first week of the new school year included a master class in dance by SCPA alum, **Cira Robinson**. Having warmed up over the summer in the Dance Intensive, SCPA's Advanced Dance Ensemble was able to hit the Marley floor on pointe emerging drenched in sweat after the workshop. Cira, whom you can read about below, is an amazing role model for SCPA students. Cincinnati born and bred, Cira now dances with a world famous company in London, England. Grace, dedication and hard work make Cira an inspiration to SCPA students. As a successful African-American woman dancer, she has unique relevance which is something that also applies to the upcoming visit by **Dance Theatre of Harlem** to SCPA on November 3 for a day-long workshop.

Cira Robinson – Senior Artist with Ballet Black, London



Cira was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she began dancing at the age of eight. After graduating from the **School for Creative & Performing Arts** in 2004, she moved to New York to dance full-time with the Dance Theater of Harlem. During her three years there, she performed at the White House for the President of the United States, as well as the Protégé Festival. In 2008, Cira travelled to the United Kingdom for the first time to join Ballet Black. In the summer that year, she danced with Ballet Identity in Los Angeles, before returning to Ballet Black in November. Since 2008, she has danced in Ballet Black commissions by Shobana Jeyasingh, Richard Alston, Henri Oguike and Liam Scarlett, to name a few. She created the role of one of the Furies in Will Tuckett's *Orpheus* (2011) and the lead role of Nola in Ballet Black's production of *Storyville*, choreographed for BB by Christopher Hampson in 2012. Cira also earned an honourable mention in Pointe Magazine's "Favourite Performances of 2009" for her performance in Antonia Franceschi's dance theatre piece, Pop8 and teaches regularly at the Ballet Black Junior School.

On September 25, pianist **Emanuel Ax** made his second visit to SCPA since first participating in the Master Artists Series in 2012. Then as now, Mr. Ax would not accept an artist's fee for the hours spent at SCPA. Many classical musicians recognize the important role they play in passing on their knowledge to the next generation. Few artists achieve the highest echelon of an Emanuel Ax; fewer still devote so much of their time to education as he. Following a strenuous morning rehearsal with the CSO, Mr. Ax walked the two blocks to SCPA where he enthusiastically engaged the students.



SCPA students gathered around Emanuel Ax as he entered the school.



Emanuel Ax and SCPA Senior, Charles Ramsey III, exchange digits. After hearing Charles perform in 2012, Mr. Ax invited Charles to "come see me" at Juilliard where Mr. Ax is head of the piano faculty. Charles is headed to the Berklee School of Music next year where he intends to pursue "his own thing".



Emanuel Ax, SCPA Artistic Director Dr. Isidore Rudnick, and 7th-Grader, Adanya Stephens, meet. Adanya performed for the master class with Christopher O'Riley (see below).

Click below for video of Emanuel Ax' master class with Patrick Lechner



Mayerson Master Artists Series: Emanuel Ax



Emanuel Ax graced us with a soulful performance of Brahms at the conclusion of the master class.

Pianist and media personality, **Christopher O'Riley**, visited SCPA on September 29 after his performance opening the Xavier Music Series. Mr. O'Riley is an accomplished concert pianist and recording artist whose classical transcriptions of popular work by Radiohead, Nirvana and R.E.M. has enabled him to broaden the audience for classical music while winning adherents from the pop charts. In the video below, Mr. O'Riley works with SCPA 7th grader Adanya Stephens.

Click the image:



Mayerson Master Artists Series: Christopher O'Riley

An ongoing partnership with the Constella Festival of the Arts brought the highly talented duo of **Igudesman & Joo** to SCPA for a master class on October 15. The comic duo departed from their usual presentation which is reminiscent of the great Victor Borge to lead the students on stage in a variety of concentration, visioning and even a bit of Irish dancing.

Later this year, Constella will share **Joshua Bell** and **Hillary Hahn** with the Master Artists Series at SCPA.



Igudesman & Joo presented an entertaining evening of instruction for a talented group of music students from SCPA, CCM and NKU.

Coming Up Next in the Artistic Excellence Program:

The renowned **Dance Theatre of Harlem** in master class at SCPA on Monday, Nov. 3

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