

Curtis Institute of Music Announces Recipients of Fourth Annual Daniel W. Dietrich II Young Alumni Fund

*Grants distributed to recent graduates range from \$1,000 to \$10,000
in support of their emerging careers*

PHILADELPHIA, PA—April 4, 2025—The **Curtis Institute of Music** is proud to announce its fourth annual **Daniel W. Dietrich II Young Alumni Fund** grantees. This impactful fund provides recent graduates of Curtis—those who completed their studies in the last ten years—with financial awards to remove barriers to their success as emerging performers and advance their personal artistic visions. The grants—each ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000—are part of Curtis’ ongoing efforts to strengthen support for alumni in the years that follow graduation and help young alumni who may be experiencing obstacles of any kind in the pursuit of their musical careers. The Daniel W. Dietrich II Young Alumni Fund program, first launched in 2021, was designed with an intentional focus on the “musician lifecycle” and easing the transition from student to professional life.

These awards support innovative projects, community and nonprofit organizations founded by alumni, the commissions of new works, and the production of new commercial films and audio recordings. The grants will also assist with general artistic or professional development, such as audition travel and support, marketing and promotional materials, addressing financial hardship, and instrument purchases. One awarded grantee will receive funding for a baroque harp, while another will develop and publish a Meta Scales method book, offering an advanced, conceptual approach to scale practice. Other endeavors include support for Philadelphia Performances for Autism and a music story hour at the historic Morgan Library and Museum in New York City. In contrast, another recipient’s work will support climate justice-centric commissions by non-profit arts organization Nodality Music. Project summaries are included in the biographies below.

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Project Support

This funding opportunity is designed to encourage and support new compositional works, recordings, educational programming, community-based endeavors, and more by Curtis alumni. This year's grantees are:

- Erika Gray (Viola '19)
- Joshua Halpern* (Cello '19)
- Arlen Hlusko (Cello '15, Artist Year '16)
- Shannon Lee (Violin '16, Artist Year '17)
- Ren Martin-Doike (Viola '15)
- Zachary Mowitz (Cello '19, Community Artist Fellow '23)
- Neil Rao (Timpani and Percussion '17)

Career Support

This unique funding opportunity is designed to provide Curtis alumni with the resources to further their professional and artistic development, purchase new musical instruments, cover travel expenses for auditions and competitions abroad, and continue their studies and coachings. This year's grantees are:

- Yue Bao (Conducting '19)
- Ethan Burck (Opera '22)
- Héloïse Carlean-Jones (Harp '18)
- Griffin Harrison (Timpani and Percussion '23)
- Calvin Mayman (Flute '22)
- Hanul Park (Bassoon '18, Community Artist Fellow '20)
- Lindsey Reynolds (Opera '20, Voice '22),
- Ashley Robillard (Voice '18, Opera '20)
- Thomas Roy-Rochette (Bassoon '22)
- Oliver Talukder (Oboe '24)
- Alexandr Vvedenskiy (Oboe '14)
- Nygel Witherspoon (Cello '24)

*Received funding for two projects.

All of the grantees were selected through a competitive review process, and proposals were evaluated closely by an anonymous panel of Curtis alumni. The distinguished panelists for the 2024–25 Young Alumni Fund grant cycle were Kristan Cybriwsky (Flute '90), Dr. Chris Clark (Trombone '95), Natalie Zhu (Piano '97), Mimi Stillman (Flute '99), and Raul Vergara Montoya (Timpani and Percussion '02).

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Funding totaling \$100,000 was distributed based on the overall strength of a proposal, the expressed impact the funding might have on the recipient's or project's success, and the perceived potential for the applicant to meet milestones. Grantees will also have access to professional guidance and support in achieving the proposal's goals.

"It is truly a privilege to support young alumni at Curtis. Their leadership and creativity are an inspiration to the Curtis community and a catalyst for innovation and growth in communities worldwide," says **Shea Scruggs** (Oboe '04), Curtis' chief enrollment officer and director of institutional research and musician experience.

"We are deeply grateful to the alumni on the evaluation panel for their meticulous and dedicated work in reviewing proposals and selecting the grantees. Their time and expertise are invaluable to Curtis, and the Young Alumni Fund would not have been possible without their support."

Mr. Scruggs continues, "I would also like to extend my profound gratitude to the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation for their transformative investment, which enables future generations of Curtis graduates to take bold risks, overcome challenges, and advance more quickly toward their artistic goals."

As Curtis concludes its 2024–25 centennial celebration, the school is prioritizing the needs of the musician lifecycle: the shifting artistic and economic experiences of artists as they prepare to enter Curtis and go on to build their careers following graduation. Committed to continuing to foster meaningful relationships with its musicians even after they graduate, the school's key initiatives have also included Curtis on Tour, which provides experience, income, and visibility for young artists through professional touring engagements across the globe; Emergency Relief for Curtis Alumni (ERCA), which funded over \$500,000 in one-time direct transfers to alumni severely impacted by the cancellation of performances in the pandemic; and expert-led webinars to strengthen social media and financial planning skills among alumni.

Information about the Young Alumni Fund and future opportunities is available at curtis.edu/YAF.

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ABOUT THE GRANTEES

Project Support

Washington, D.C.-based violist **Erika Gray** ('19) has been captivating audiences worldwide for two decades, praised for her rich sound and charismatic stage presence. She is a pre-pandemic graduate of Curtis Institute of Music, where she received her bachelor's degree in music performance. Ms. Gray is a sought-after chamber player and orchestral musician, appearing as a frequent substitute with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, and the National Symphony. She is a member of the Kassia Ensemble and was drawn to the group by their innovative programming, a blend of classical traditions with folk and rhythmic influences. Inspired by her summers at Angel Fire, she worked with Midori as a quartet participant in her International Community Engagement Program (ICEP), where they visited hospitals, schools, disability facilities, and detention centers in Japan and Cambodia to bring music beyond the concert hall. She performs on a 2011 Gary Garavaglia viola from the William Harris Lee shop in Chicago. Ms. Gray's funding will support a recording of composer Kalitha Dorothy Fox's Viola Sonata, Op. 7.

Joshua Halpern (Cello '19) has appeared on stages around the world as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral principal cellist. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with artists including Jonathan Biss, Gary Hoffman, Kim Kashkashian, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Anthony McGill, and Itzhak Perlman, and appeared at music festivals including the Ravinia Steans Institute, Music@Menlo, the Perlman Chamber Music Workshop, La Jolla Summerfest, and Krzyzowa Music. In 2022, Mr. Halpern co-founded the Emil Trio with violinist Nathan Meltzer and pianist Yannick Rafalimanana. They have appeared together in concert in Europe and the United States. He has worked personally with composers such as Richard Danielpour, Kevin Puts, and Kaija Saariaho. In 2023, he appeared numerous times as guest principal cello with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, as well as guest with the Varian Fry Quartet. Mr. Halpern is the founder and artistic director of the Cultural Caravan, a Colorado-based organization operating at the intersection of small businesses, social-service nonprofits, municipal organizations, and artists. The Cultural Caravan has since presented over 85 artists with backgrounds ranging from Zimbabwean Afropop to Venezuelan jazz, Hindustani to Classical Music in coordination with over 60 local businesses and community organizations.

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Mr. Halpern completed his Artist Diploma at Curtis, where he studied with Carter Brey and Peter Wiley. As an undergraduate at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, he studied with Desmond Hoebig. From 2021 until 2023, he was a member of the Karajan Akademie of the Berliner Philharmoniker, in which he played as a member of the Berliner Philharmoniker and was mentored by Ludwig Quandt. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, and performs on a cello by Domenico Busan, c. 1750, previously owned by his teacher Desmond Hoebig. This cello is provided to Mr. Halpern on a generous long-term loan from a member of the Stretton Society. Mr. Halpern's funding will support his work with Cultural Caravan and Music Story Hour at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City.

Hailed for her "sublime cello prowess" (*Take Effect*), "absorbing originality" (*Gramophone*), and "mesmerizing beauty" (*NY Music Daily*), internationally acclaimed Canadian cellist **Arlen Hlusko** (Cello '15, ArtistYear '16) is a dynamic, versatile artist who has performed extensively as soloist and chamber musician across North and South Americas, Asia, and Europe. She is "capable of playing with great delicacy but also fearlessness; regardless of the character of the material, she executes it with authority and conviction [...] and open-hearted expression is present throughout" (*Textura*). Cellist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars sextet (extolled by the *New York Times* for "combining the power and punch of a rock band with the precision and clarity of a chamber ensemble"), Ms. Hlusko also regularly performs with several other ensembles, including Manhattan Chamber Players, the Knights, and Dolce Suono Ensemble, and is a member of the Harry Chapin Band and recent alumna of the Curtis Institute of Music and Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect.

Interested in a wide array of music, she has collaborated closely with artists from Jordi Savall to Midori to Meredith Monk to David Byrne and is a Grammy Award winner for her collaboration with the Crossing, as well as a laureate of several competitions. Ms. Hlusko has been featured on CBC's "30 Under 30" and is a Larsen Artist. She has debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Concert Orchestra, and the Calgary Philharmonic, among others, and has been invited to several pre-eminent chamber music festivals, including Spoleto USA, Tippet Rise, Bay Chamber Concerts, and Music from Angel Fire. Committed to using her music to connect with and serve her community, Ms. Hlusko founded her own interactive chamber music concert series, Philadelphia Performances for Autism, and is involved with numerous communities, including Carnegie Hall's "Musical Connections" at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. Ms. Hlusko's funding will support her work with Philadelphia Performances for Autism.

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Violinist **Shannon Lee** ('16, Artist Year '17) has been praised for her “remarkable fire, impeccable intonation, and big, vibrant tone” (*Gramophone*). Ms. Lee has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Tokyo Symphony, Shanghai Symphony, Antwerp Symphony, Belgian National Orchestra, and New York String Orchestra in Carnegie Hall. She has won prizes in several international events, including the Sendai, Queen Elisabeth, Naumburg, and Indianapolis competitions, and released solo and duo albums for Telarc, Fontec, and Azica Records. Born in Canada, Ms. Lee began playing violin at age four in Plano, Texas. She made her solo debut at the age of twelve with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and two years later performed in Europe with the Nuremberg Philharmonic. Her mentors and major influences have included Jan Mark Sloman, David Nadien, Jaime Laredo, Ida Kavafian, Arnold Steinhardt, and Vera Beths. In between studies at Curtis Institute of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music, and Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Ms. Lee welcomed opportunities to explore baroque violin and composition, and prior to that, she completed her bachelor’s degree in computer science from Columbia University. As a chamber musician, she has played at Creative Dialogue France, Krzyżowa-Music in Poland, Music@Menlo in California, Yale University’s Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and Heifetz International Music Institute, where she was artist-in-residence and teaching assistant to Jan Sloman. As an educator and director, Ms. Lee recently founded a unique summer program, Chamber Music Perspectives Workshop, which invites young string players in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to engage in both chamber music and music composition. Ms. Lee’s funding will support the endeavors of her summer music workshop for students, Chamber Music Perspectives.

Hailing from Honolulu, **Ren Martin-Doike** (Viola '15) is a versatile performer on a mission to share music with diverse audiences around the world. Ms. Martin-Doike has performed throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas as a soloist and member of a diverse range of ensembles including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Duo RenJi, and the Rietveld Jazz Quintet. Often heard on the radio, Ms. Martin-Doike has performed for broadcasts on National Public Radio (NPR), Radio France, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), as well as RTHK television in Hong Kong. More recently, she appeared in *Death in Montmartre*, an RTHK film production for which she also recorded original arrangements.

Ms. Martin-Doike has enjoyed musical collaborations with Hilary Hahn and Joshua Bell, as well as members of the Johannes and Dover String Quartets, among others. Ms. Martin-Doike performs regularly with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Pittsburgh Symphony and has also served as principal viola of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, New York String Orchestra, and Hyogo Performing Arts Center Orchestra (Japan). As principal viola of the

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Curtis 20/21 [now Curtis New Music Ensemble] Chamber Orchestra, she toured with Jennifer Koh and Jaime Laredo as a part of their Two x Four Project, which resulted in a Grammy-nominated album on the Cedille label.

Passionate about educating future generations, Ms. Martin-Doike is dedicated to sharing her unique blend of musical tradition and innovation with students. She was a founding member of the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada's Audition Training Program, coaching young professional students from all corners of North America and the world on how to successfully prepare for and win orchestral auditions. As a private instructor and chamber music and orchestral coach, she has worked with students at the Temple University Boyer College of Music Prep program, De La Salle Francophone Arts High School (Canada), and Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau (Canada). A graduate of Curtis, she is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree at Drexel University in human-computer interaction and user experience while enjoying an active local and international performance career. Ms. Martin-Doike's funding will support the development and publishing of a meta scales method book.

A native of Princeton, N.J., cellist **Zachary Mowitz** ('19, Community Artist Fellow '23) made his solo debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra in July 2018. An artist who wears many hats, Mr. Mowitz co-founded ensemble132, Nodality Music, and Trio St. Bernard—the 2018 Gold Prize winner of the Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition. He has performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Indianapolis Symphony and has played as guest principal cello with the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra and Princeton Symphony Orchestra. In the summers of 2022 and 2023, he appeared at the Marlboro Music Festival and joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the fall of 2024. Having collaborated with artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Donald Weilerstein, Hsin-Yun Huang, Jonathan Biss, Ida Kavafian, and Peter Wiley, Mr. Mowitz has an intense passion for chamber music. He has appeared throughout the United States, visiting halls such as the Kimmel Center's Verizon Hall (now Marian Anderson Hall) and Perelman Theater, Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, Alice Tully Hall, Columbia University's Miller Theater, and Johns Hopkins' Shriver Hall. He is also a member of the Sakura Cello Quintet and Philadelphia's Gamut Bach Ensemble.

Mr. Mowitz attended Curtis Institute of Music, Royal College of Music, and Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, where he worked with Peter Wiley, Carter Brey, Richard Lester, and Gary Hoffman. Last season, he was an associate artist at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, and he co-taught a class on music and climate justice at Curtis. In his spare time, Mr. Mowitz enjoys exploring the endless world of podcasts and tossing a frisbee. Mr.

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Mowitz's funding will support his climate commissioning project with Nodality Music, a non-profit arts organization he co-founded with Nick DiBerardino (Composition '18), Curtis New Music Ensemble director, acclaimed composer, chair of composition studies, and provost and dean of the conservatory.

A musician, educator, and fitness enthusiast, **Neil Rao** (Timpani and Percussion '17) has helped build and sustain lifelong passions for music among students and audiences alike. As a music educator in the Louisville, Ky., area, Mr. Rao has taught musicians ranging from five-year-old drum and piano extraordinaires to retirees with a musical itch to scratch. He has had a varied professional career conducting and composing music for chamber ensembles, orchestras, and film, performing in recording sessions of new music, live orchestral performances of classics and pops, and pop-up video game music concerts with YouTubers.

In 2021, Mr. Rao suffered a major injury that left him unable to rotate his right wrist. After years of hard work, consultations, and therapies, Mr. Rao was able to return to professional performing in 2023 and take orchestral auditions in 2024. Now on a mission to help other musicians avoid the hardships and stress of injury, Neil has become an advocate for physical fitness and injury prevention. Mr. Rao's funding will support professional development with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

Career Support

Yue Bao (Conducting '19) is an internationally recognized conductor who has led major orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Munich Symphony Orchestra, Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Bao has worked with renowned soloists such as Hélène Grimaud, Vadim Gluzman, and Pablo Ferrández. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, she studied under Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Ms. Bao's funding will support the purchase of a piano.

Ethan Burck (Opera '22), tenor, recently finished his graduate studies at the Yale School of Music, earning a Master of Musical Arts. Mr. Burck holds a Master of Music degree from Curtis and a Bachelor of Music degree from Baldwin Wallace Conservatory. This previous season, Mr. Burck joined the cast of the American premiere of *The Listeners*, Missy Mazzoli's newest opera, as a cover for two roles in the show. At Yale, Mr. Burck performed the roles of Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), the Male Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Gherardo (*Gianni Schicchi*), Brother 1 (*Die Sieben Todsünden*), and Coryphée 1 (*Le Comte Ory*). Mr. Burck also gave performances of W.A. Mozart's Requiem

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(Wichita Symphony), Handel's *Messiah* (Syracuse Symphoria, Waterbury Symphony), and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Yale Symphony Orchestra) as the tenor soloist. Mr. Burck was a 2021 Santa Fe Opera apprentice artist and, in 2025, joined the Des Moines Metro Opera as an apprentice artist and member of the Opera Iowa Troupe. Mr. Burck made his Opera Philadelphia debut in their 2022 presentation of *Oedipus Rex* by Igor Stravinsky. Mr. Burck was given three hours' notice before the dress rehearsal to prepare for the role of the Shepherd. He performed the concert the next day.

Mr. Burck bookended his time at Curtis with performances as Albert Herring (*Albert Herring*) and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Curtis took inventive steps to provide students with a safe performance environment, leading to unique projects. He was featured as Tito in Curtis's *MERCY*, an adaptation of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. The 90-minute film was produced in March 2021 by the award-winning Neighborhood Film Company at Rittenhouse Filmworks and Rittenhouse Soundworks, with Curtis students, alumni, and faculty creating the reorchestrated score. Mr. Burck also performed in Curtis' *Opera OnDemand*, an at-home staging of opera scenes, and several virtual recitals during this time. While school was in session, Mr. Burck performed in early music concerts and chamber music works and gave art song performances as well. Mr. Burck's funding will support his preparation for future auditions with opera companies.

Praised for her "clarity and mastery of sound" (*Reading Eagle*), **Héloïse Carlean-Jones** (Harp '18) is a French harpist of South African heritage who performs as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player. Ms. Carlean-Jones has won prizes in competitions in France, the U.S., Belgium, and Serbia. She has been featured in solo and chamber music recitals at the Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Festival, Ohrid International Festival, and Dutch Harp Festival. As an orchestral player, she has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, SWR Symphonieorchester, and Bamberger Symphoniker. Since 2020, Ms. Carlean-Jones has been associate principal harp at the Orchestre de la Garde Républicaine in Paris. She recently won the audition for the solo harp position at the Frankfurter Opern und Museumsorchester, which she started in March 2025.

During her studies, Ms. Carlean-Jones also pursued opportunities on the baroque harp—at Curtis, she inaugurated the Diploma in historical performance practice, studying with Leon Schelhase and Matt Glandorf. At Yale, she played under Grant Herreid in the Yale Baroque Opera Project and Yale Collegium Musicum, performing music from the 12th to the 18th century. She further studied the Italian baroque harp (arpa doppia) with Maria

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Cleary at the Baroquiales de Sospel. Ms. Carlean-Jones' funding will support the purchase of a baroque harp.

Griffin Harrison (Timpani and Percussion '23), from Rochester, N.Y., is currently pursuing his master's degree at Temple University where he studies percussion with Christopher Deviney and is a recipient of the Alan Abel Memorial Scholarship. He graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in 2023, where he studied with Don Liuzzi, Eric Millstein, Ji Su Jung, and Robert van Sice. As a soloist, Mr. Harrison appeared with the Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra as the winner of the brass and percussion concerto competition and was featured on the WRTI-FM series *Live from the Performance Studio*, both in 2019. Other awards include the Edwin B. Garrigues Scholarship from the Boyer College of Music and Dance, the Aldridge-Tinker Scholarship for Instrumentalists, and the Helen and George Greer Instrumental Award from Rochester Philharmonic League Young Artists Auditions.

Mr. Harrison has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, New World Symphony, Symphony in C, and the Philadelphia Orchestra Percussion Group, among others. He has attended the National Repertory Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival and School, Festival Napa Valley Blackburn Music Academy, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and the New York State Summer School of the Arts School of Orchestral Studies and has been a member of Symphony in C, the Festival Orchestra Napa, NYSSMA Conference All-State Symphonic Band, the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.

Mr. Harrison holds a diploma with honors from the Eastman Community Music School, where he studied with Ruth Cahn. His previous teachers also included Angela Zator-Nelson and Phillip O'Banion, and he began studying percussion and timpani at age fourteen. As a young student, Mr. Harrison was a Pathways Scholar at the Eastman Community Music School, a scholarship program for inner-city students who demonstrate financial need. In his spare time, he enjoys fitness, basketball, thrift shopping, and audio production. Mr. Harrison's funding will support his preparation for future percussion auditions.

Calvin Mayman (Flute '22), a flutist from Ann Arbor, Michigan, recently completed his master's degree at Rice University, studying with Marianne Gedigian and Leone Buyse. Before that, he studied with Jeffrey Khaner at the Curtis Institute of Music. Mr. Mayman performs frequently as a freelance orchestral musician and has appeared with orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Toledo Symphony Orchestra, and Windsor Symphony Orchestra. During the summers, he has attended

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festivals such as Music Academy of the West, Hidden Valley Festival of Winds, and the Aspen Music Festival as an ACA fellow. While in school, Mr. Mayman won first prize in the Flute Society of Greater Philadelphia's Young Artist Competition and second prize in the Rice University concerto competition, playing Joaquin Rodrigo's *Concierto Pastoral*. Additionally, as a soloist, Mr. Mayman has performed with the Aspen Chamber Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony. Most recently, Mr. Mayman was invited to compete in the 11th Kobe International Flute Competition, which will take place in Japan in August 2025. Mr. Mayman's funding will support the purchase of a new piccolo.

As an artist, performer, and educator, bassoonist **Hanul Park** (Bassoon '18, Community Artist Fellow '20) seeks to share music as a universal language—an instrument of encouragement and empowerment that connects diverse communities around the globe. She believes that shared artistic experiences can dismantle barriers between individuals and communities, creating a space for dialogue and understanding. Ms. Park performs with ensembles of all sizes worldwide, showcasing a repertoire that ranges from classical favorites to avant-garde world premieres. She has appeared as both a soloist and chamber musician in countries including Korea, the United States, Canada, and across Europe. Ms. Park regularly collaborates with ensembles such as the Princeton Symphony, Ocean City Pops (New Jersey), Opera Delaware, and San Antonio Opera.

By engaging with diverse voices and narratives through her performances, Ms. Park fosters connections and encourages listeners to explore perspectives beyond their own. This commitment to understanding and empathy extends to her work in education and advocacy. She served as a chamber music and bassoon instructor at Swarthmore College and is a teaching artist for Project 440, a nonprofit organization that empowers high school students through music by teaching college readiness, social entrepreneurship, and community service. As a 2019–20 Community Artist Fellow at Curtis, Ms. Park managed music programs and facilitated interactive performances for diverse groups, including local schools, homeless shelters, incarcerated individuals, and Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers in collaboration with the Penn Memory Center.

Ms. Park earned her Artist Diploma from Curtis, studying with Daniel Matsukawa as the Edwin B. Garrigues Annual Fellow. She holds master of music and bachelor of music degrees from the Yale School of Music and the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, where her principal teachers were Frank Morelli and Phillip Kolker, respectively. In a world often divided, Ms. Park's work serves as a reminder that through

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collaboration and creativity, we can bridge gaps and cultivate a more inclusive and harmonious society. Ms. Park's funding will support the purchase of a bassoon bocal.

American soprano **Lindsey Reynolds** (Voice '22, Opera '20) is quickly gaining recognition for her captivating performances across both traditional and contemporary opera. This season, she made her debut with Opera Philadelphia as Ashley Devon in the U.S. premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *The Listeners*, showcasing her ability to bring complex characters to life. She is set to appear with New Orleans Opera as Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* and will perform in the world premiere of *She Who Dared* with Chicago Opera Theater, highlighting her commitment to new works. She also debuted with the Cleveland Youth Orchestra (as part of the Cleveland Orchestra) as the soprano soloist in Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*.

Ms. Reynolds recently completed her tenure as a Ryan Opera Center Ensemble member at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where her performances included Barena in *Jenůfa*, as well as covering Sadie in Terrance Blanchard's *Champion*. During the 2022–23 season, she appeared in productions of *Le Comte Ory*, *Don Carlos*, and the world premiere of *Proximity*. An active recitalist, Ms. Reynolds gave celebrated performances this past summer at the Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts in England and in Nice, France, where she participated in a concert commemorating the WWII Liberation of Nice. Additionally, she appeared as the soprano soloist in Francis Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* at the Grant Park Music Festival.

Recognized for her versatility, Ms. Reynolds's notable roles include Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Giulietta (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), and Monica (*The Medium*). Her artistry has been honored with distinctions such as a Luminarts Fellowship, the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation, and an emerging artist award from Opera Index. She holds both bachelor's and Master of Music degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music. Ms. Reynold's funding will support travel costs and vocal coaching in preparation for voice auditions in Europe.

Heralded by *Bachtrack* as a "tour-de-force," **Ashley Robillard** (Voice '18, Opera '20) is a dynamic artist celebrated for her compelling performances and versatility across opera, concert, chamber music, and cabaret. She has performed at prestigious venues such as the War Memorial Opera House, Jordan Hall, Verizon Hall, and the National Portrait Gallery, collaborating with esteemed organizations including Opera Philadelphia, Washington Concert Opera, Opera Lafayette, Opera San Jose, Opera Grand Rapids, Early Music Now, and the Amarillo Symphony. Her repertoire spans a breathtaking range—from

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the Seikilos Epitaph to the traditional operatic canon to contemporary premieres—earning her a reputation as a passionate interpreter and captivating storyteller. An alumna of the Merola Opera Program, Wolf Trap Opera, and Opera Philadelphia’s Emerging Artist Program, Ms. Robillard is equally at home in traditional opera houses and on smaller, more experimental stages.

Ms. Robillard’s talents also shine in smaller, smokier cabaret stages, where she has worked with the Bearded Ladies, Martha Graham Cracker, and Stephanie Blythe’s drag persona, Blythely Oratonio. Known for her playful yet powerful stage presence, she brings her own flair to an eclectic repertoire, from Gershwin to Kurt Weill to Green Day.

This season, she returns to work with Opera Philadelphia as Jeanette in *L’amant anonyme*, Dolce Suono Ensemble as the soprano soloist in Fang Man’s grand chamber piece *Earth*, and both curates and performs in the final edition of the East Passyunk Opera Project’s *Love Notes* cabaret series: *Love Notes 4 Philly*. Additionally, she will debut with the Main Line Symphony Orchestra performing excerpts from Giacomo Puccini’s great operas *Gianni Schicchi* and *La bohème*, join Lyrica Chamber Music in a performance of works for soprano, cello, and piano, and collaborate with illustrious banjo player and composer Tony Trischka in a song cycle of Emily Dickinson text composed by the icon of bluegrass himself.

At Curtis, Ms. Robillard’s operatic roles included Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Jessie (*Mahagonny, ein Songspiel*), plus numerous recitals and orchestral concerts. Recognized with awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation and Opera Index, she continues to push artistic boundaries while enchanting audiences with her vibrant performances and boundless curiosity. Ms. Robillard’s funding will support further coaching sessions and travel for opera auditions.

A native of Québec City, bassoonist **Thomas Roy-Rochette** (Bassoon ’22) joined the Windsor Symphony as their new principal bassoon at the beginning of their 2024–25 season and is also the second bassoon of the National Ballet of Canada Orchestra. Mr. Roy-Rochette has performed as guest principal bassoon of Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de la Côte-Nord and Orchestre de l’Agora.

In the spring of 2023, Mr. Roy-Rochette completed his studies at the Conservatoire de Musique de Québec with Mélanie Forget. He previously received a Bachelor of Music degree from Curtis, where he studied with Daniel Matsukawa. Prior to that, he studied for

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six years with Richard Gagnon at the Conservatoire de musique de Québec. Mr. Roy-Rochette's funding will support the purchase of a new bassoon.

Oliver Talukder (Oboe '24), a Philadelphia-based oboist of Mexican and Bengali heritage, was born and raised in the vibrant suburbs of Chicago. Mr. Talukder currently serves as the second oboist in the Opera Philadelphia Orchestra. A recent Curtis graduate, he completed his final year of studies under the guidance of Katherine Needleman and Philippe Tondre. During his time at Curtis, he served as student council president and was named the 2024 Presser Scholar, an award recognizing his leadership, academics, and artistry. Mr. Talukder's talent has been underscored by accolades such as first prize in the 2022 Midwest Double Reed Society Competition and outstanding instrumentalist in the 2024 Sphinx Orchestral Partners Audition Competition. Mr. Talukder takes pride in championing the music of living composers and remains steadfast in his mission to enrich lives, bridge cultures, and inspire generations to come through the language of music. Mr. Talukder's funding will support the purchase of an English horn.

Alexandr Vvedenskiy (Oboe '14) became principal oboist for the Louisville Orchestra in 2015. He holds degrees from Curtis and Manhattan School of Music and has won top honors in competitions such as the Vienna-Classical International Competition; the International Radio Competition for Young Musicians Concertino Prague, and the Philadelphia Orchestra Greenfield Competition.

As a soloist and chamber musician, he has performed in numerous concert halls in Europe, Asia, and the United States. Highlights of his solo career include performances with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra. In addition, Mr. Vvedenskiy has made multiple appearances as guest principal oboe with the New York Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Vvedenskiy's funding will support the purchase of an oboe.

Nygel Witherspoon (Cello '24) began studying the cello with his first teacher, David Holmes when he was three years old. He enjoys playing chamber music and was coached for four years by Bruce Coppock of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Witherspoon has played in lessons and masterclasses for Anthony Ross, Benjamin Zander, and Amit Peled, among others. In 2016, he won the MNSOTA String Competition and was featured as a soloist with the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. He had his debut concert with the Minnesota Orchestra in 2017, playing the first movement of the Dvořák Concerto alongside conductor Roderick Cox. Mr. Witherspoon played with them again in 2018, performing Fauré's Elegie at the Courage and Triumph concert. In 2019, he won the junior

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division of the Sphinx Competition and was a semi-finalist in the Friends of the Minnesota Orchestra Young Artist Competition. The same year, Mr. Witherspoon began studying with Peter Wiley at Curtis, where he also took lessons from Yumi Kendall, Nicholas Canellakis, Gary Hoffman, and Christine Lee. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Curtis in 2024 and now has embarked on his professional journey, taking orchestral auditions around the country. Mr. Witherspoon's funding will support the purchase of a cello.

About the Curtis Institute of Music

At Curtis, the world's great young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty. Animated by a learn-by-doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers. Curtis students experience a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within an historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia. In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis' extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 100-year legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future. Learn more at curtis.edu.

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