



NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2017



PRIZM innovates with PRIZM Chamber Orchestra.
First of its kind ensemble mirrors the cultural landscape of Memphis.



Through its in-school programming, annual camp and international chamber music festival, PRIZM Ensemble has put a constant emphasis on building a diverse classical music community since its founding more than a decade ago. This fall, PRIZM put Memphis on the map with the debut of the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra, an ensemble whose membership mirrors the demographic diversity of the city.

“At PRIZM, we don’t shy away from uncomfortable conversations. If anything, we lean into this discomfort because we know that there is a beautiful thing on the other side.”

GET TO KNOW PRIZM

PRIZM hosted its first *Get to Know PRIZM* Saturday, Oct. 22nd at The Beethoven Club. At this event, people received information on our in school programs, music camp and international chamber music festival, and other community events and collaborations.



CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT

The PRIZM Ensemble played to a sold out audience at David Lusk Gallery on Oct. 9th. Far left: Special guest Derek Reeves, principal violist of the Fort Wayne Symphony.

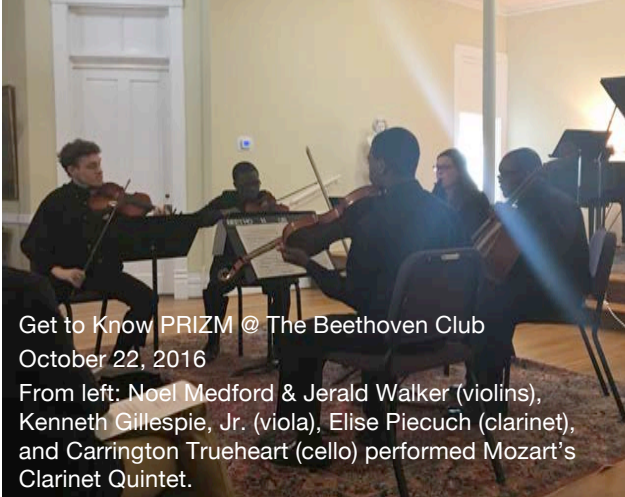
PRIZM Chamber Orchestra made its debut Nov. 4-5 as part of Opera Memphis’ production of Mozart’s masterpiece *The Marriage of Figaro* at Germantown Performing Arts Center. It’s fitting: PRIZM founder Lecolion Washington, throughout his career committed to equity and inclusion in the arts, drew inspiration for this collaboration from the diversity of Opera Memphis’ 2015 production of *The Magic Flute*. He launched a series of discussions with OM about how to create art of the highest quality while supporting PRIZM’s founding imperative to build a diverse musical community. “As a person of color who has had a wonderful career as a classical musician, it was very moving to hear and watch the Magic Flute cast,” Washington says. “I enjoyed the diversity so much that I took my family to see that performance. The casting made us feel more than just welcome. We felt included.” The launch of PRIZM Chamber Orchestra is a historic moment for the ensemble and for the city. Though there is a growing conversation around diversity in classical music, PRIZM is excited to be among that small group who demonstrate what can happen when an organization is wholly dedicated to this ideal and holds themselves accountable for their success in achieving it.



Orchestra members Kyra Sims and Amanda Collins.

Read more about the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra on page 6-7

ALUMNI



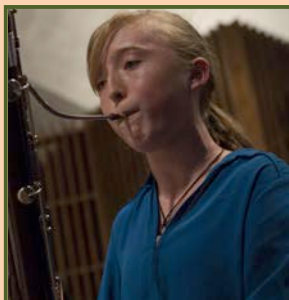
Get to Know PRIZM @ The Beethoven Club
October 22, 2016

From left: Noel Medford & Jerald Walker (violins), Kenneth Gillespie, Jr. (viola), Elise Piecuch (clarinet), and Carrington Trueheart (cello) performed Mozart's Clarinet Quintet.



During the PRIZM Music Camp & International Chamber Music Festival 2016 **Anna Hudson (9th grade, Collierville High)**, **Spencer McKnight (9th grade, Collierville High)**, **Lindsey Baker (9th grade, Lausanne)**, **Vilanna Wang (9th grade, Lausanne)**, and **Sophie Floyd (8th grade, White Station Middle)** was put in a group together to play one movement from one of Cambini's woodwind quintets and to perform together with Festival faculty on a double woodwind quintet by Raff. This group was so motivated by their performance and the friendships they formed that they have met nearly every other week through the fall to continue interacting and learning new music. These musicians have learned that you don't have to be a world famous musician to have a passion to play music with your friends.

"I started attending the festival four years ago, and every year I learn more about music, my city, and more about myself. Through the example of our quintet, I hope we can show others that you don't have to be a world famous musician to bring people together with music."
– Lindsey Baker



WHAT PRIZM MEANS TO ME

"PRIZM [Camp & Festival] is one of the best experiences in my life in music! I was able to learn something about both music and my own playing to benefit me in the most possible way! I even had a reading of my first symphony done at the camp! I wish to encourage as many people as possible to be apart of this wonderful camp!"

– Jerald Walker



Jerald Walker, a senior at Overton High School, is not only a violinist and an oboist, but is a prodigious composer and conductor of his recently formed chamber ensemble of 20 members. His compositions including two full symphonies, as well as several concertos, all of which have been publicly performed in concerts or recitals. He was selected to perform in the Honors Performance Series concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Valentine's Day 2016. Jerald is an avid participant in PRIZM's performance opportunities through the year, and most recently performed at Get to Know PRIZM in October 2016.

PRIZM NUMBERS

- 630 youth received exposure based and light engagement programming such as workshops and concerts
- 161 youth participated in heavy engagement programming
- 67 budding musicians participated in the PRIZM Music Camp & International Chamber Music Festival June 2016
- 18 of those were on scholarship
- 40 children in Binghamton were able to learn music on instruments provided by PRIZM

"I'm so glad to be a part of an organization that works with musicians of all ages and around the world here in the Memphis community. Since I've been a part of PRIZM, I've become a better leader, made a lot of friends, and improved my playing skills on viola."

– Kenneth Gillespie

Kenneth was named one of three students from Overton High School to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York.

While there, he had the opportunity to work with and learn from renowned conductors. He was part of a special performance for New York concert-going patrons, educators and family. Kenneth also was named the Assistant Principal for the viola section in the All-State High School Strings in West Tennessee, 2016. Kenneth plays with PRIZM as often as he can, most recently at the Get to Know PRIZM event in October 2016.



EDUCATION



Sabrina Hu

Has enjoyed an exciting international performing career in many prestigious venues. Recent recitals have been in Carnegie Hall in New York City, the National Concert Hall in Ireland, Beijing University, the Central Conservatory of Music in China, and recitals in Seoul, Korea. Along with being a teaching artist at De La Salle Elementary School, Sabrina is flute faculty at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN. In addition to performing and teaching, Sabrina has working in several orchestras, including the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Wexford Opera Orchestra, the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, the Iris Orchestra, and the Memphis Symphony.

Support PRIZM today!

Although we keep the tuition for the Festival and Summer Music Camp down to \$350 to maximize accessibility for more students, the real cost of attendance at the festival is approximately \$700 per student. That means we need to make up the difference through private and corporate donations. PRIZM has never turned away a student based on financial considerations. In addition, PRIZM's after school (OMusic) and in school (PRIZM in the Schools) programs are offered free of charge. Please help us maintain this track record by considering a donation today.

Donating to PRIZM is easy!

ONLINE www.prizmensemble.org

BY MAIL: PRIZM Ensemble

P.O. Box 171361

Memphis, TN 38187-1361

Or call us at 901-596-9105 to discuss larger gifts, matching gifts, and corporate sponsorships.

PRIZM Ensemble is a 501 (c) (3)

Organization and your donation is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

PITS @ DE LA SALLE ELEMENTARY

by Sabrina Hu, flutist

I have been involved with PRIZM as a Teaching Artist at De La Salle Elementary School this semester. Over the last few years, I have performed with the PRIZM Ensemble on several occasions and also been involved with PRIZM's other educational programs, such as coaching chamber music in the OMusic Project at Melrose High School. It has always been a great experience. Therefore, when I was contacted by PRIZM and asked if I was interested in starting beginner flute students in the third and fourth grade at De La Salle, I said YES! In June, I participated in

"It has been amazing to see my students progress weekly. They constantly tell me that they love learning how to play the flute and that they are so excited that I am here with them twice a week to teach them."

PRIZM's instrument Expo at De La Salle. Here all of the raising third and fourth grade students were able to try the instruments that would be offered at De La Salle: flute, trumpet, violin, and viola. Every student that attended got to try to hold and play a flute. Some students were able to produce a sound immediately, and for some it took a few attempts, but with encouragement and help, almost all of the students could get a sound out! When we received the student list at the beginning of the semester for the students that picked the flute, I was excited because I recognized so many names that I had met the on the day of the exposition.

Teaching at De La Salle hasn't only been starting young students on the flute - early music theory and history is also incorporated within the curriculum.

This has been a wonderful part of the program. Most of the students have never had any music training, therefore, learning the basic fundamentals of note and rhythm notation has helped with their quick progress. The music history that is introduced encompasses all styles and genres. We have listened to how the flute is performed in many different countries, and learned about different types of flutes from around the world.



First lesson - everyone can make a sound! Sabrina helps students blow into the flute head joint.



PRIZM Chamber Orchestra Musicians Mariana Green-Hill, Philip Payton (violins), Damon Coleman (cello), and Derek Reeves (viola) perform for the music students in the PITS @ De La Salle.

It is fantastic that PRIZM has been able to provide instruments for all the students, because most of them would not have been able to participate without that support. It has been amazing to see my students' progress weekly. They constantly tell me that they love learning how to play the flute and that they are so excited that I am here with them twice a week to teach them. In addition to learning how to play, the students also get the opportunity to meet and hear professional musicians perform at their school. Most recently we had a visit by members of the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra. I don't think I have ever seen my students stay so attentive for so long! The musicians played music by Mozart, and since we had covered Mozart in the music history classes this semester, our students felt empowered, and were able to ask very insightful and thoughtful questions. *I was so proud of them!*

SUPPORT (JULY 1, 2015 – NOVEMBER 29, 2016)

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In honor of Brandon Washington's Birthday:
Devin Nash
Randolph Punter
Genevieve Dusing
Brian Thopsey
Fariha Ali
Nephtaliem McCrary
Nikki Schuster

You can contribute to helping young people in this city experience classical music, strengthen their confidence, and help them build a future for themselves. Join us in keeping classical music alive and well.

GIVE TODAY www.prizmensemble.org/donate

SUPPORT

I've been teaching at Overton High School for the Creative and Performing Arts since 2007. Nine years ago, my phone rang and a man on the line introduced himself as Lecolion Washington, professor of bassoon at the University of Memphis.

He explained that he and others were having a



James Weil, Director of Orchestra, Overton High School

music camp, and they wanted to work with my kids to give them an idea of what would happen at that camp. Oh great, I thought, here's a wind player calling to work with my string kids. I was skeptical, but agreed. When he and his colleagues showed up, they talking about having a musical conversation. My students were not the most gregarious kids, so I assumed the plan would unravel. How wrong I was! I watched in amazement as these quiet kids started opening up like I had never seen before – and with perfect strangers. They passed melodies around a circle, in a “call and response” method and got the kids really fired up. I have used that plan many times since then, with great success. I know solid teaching when I see it!

The main point here is that I've watched PRIZM “transform” dozens of kids, and not just musically. They have a special compassion when working with young minds that changes the person. I've personally seen it happen in at least 25 or so of my own students over the years. The true worth is derived from a holistic type of change that encompasses musical skills, mind control, and emotional wellbeing. My orchestra has also been transformed into a highly skilled ensemble that isn't afraid of, but rather, welcomes challenges!

The expense required to manage such an endeavor must be substantial and I am thankful that the program continues. I believe that every dollar PRIZM spends in the process pays back the community a thousandfold dividend, considering the high level of musical and social consciousness they create. PRIZM makes all their students better citizens, no matter the starting point.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS DREAMED
ABOUT SEEING YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS?

YOU CAN.

At the 2017 PRIZM Music Camp
& International Chamber Music Festival

Serve as a 2017 sponsor.

We're looking for individuals and corporate entities to invest in our future as a 2017 sponsor. Help grow our program's reach! Details can be found online at: prizmensemble.org/festival-sponsorship

For more information, please contact:

Lecolion Washington at lecolion@prizmensemble.org or 901-361-6454

FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

Presenting Sponsor: \$15,000

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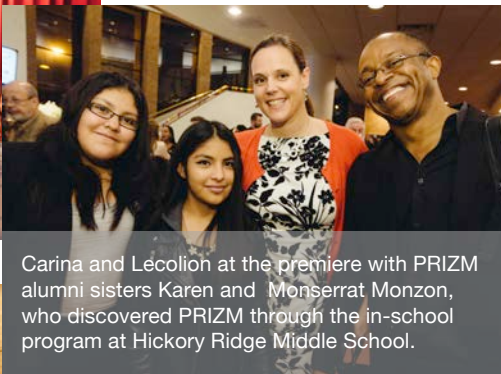
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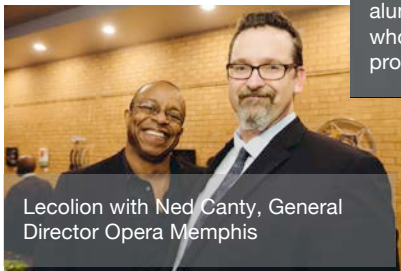
**Marriage of Figaro
November 4 & 5, 2016**



Music Director Benjamin Makino at the harpsichord



Carina and Lécotion at the premiere with PRIZM alumni sisters Karen and Monserrat Monzon, who discovered PRIZM through the in-school program at Hickory Ridge Middle School.



Lécotion with Ned Canty, General Director Opera Memphis

With a 31-member orchestra with musicians from all over the country, the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra & Opera Memphis' collaboration on the production of Mozart's Marriage of Figaro was a smashing success. The show sold out two days in a row, and no less than four newspaper articles prior to the shows cast light on the project. 18 of the musicians came to Memphis on October 30, and stayed at the Hilton Hotel for the week. The remaining 13 were from Memphis and surrounding areas. With daily rehearsals and several community engagements on the schedule, the musicians stayed busy – but somehow there was always time for visits to Memphis' World Famous Gus's Fried Chicken and Gibson's Donuts. The PRIZM Chamber Orchestra's 31 members represent 16 cities and 11 states. While some of the musicians are based in Memphis, many flew in for the production and to make history with this innovative new group. With these inaugural performances complete – and a rousing success with two sold-out houses the next step for PRIZM Ensemble's leadership is to work to incorporate the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra into the 2017 PRIZM Music Camp and International Chamber Music Festival. The Ensemble will seek financial support over the coming months to ensure that the members of the orchestra can come back to Memphis to work even more closely with Memphis youth while performing for Memphis audiences.

"As a violinist who grew up in a creative environment with very few musicians of color, I can't overstate the need for children who enjoy the Arts, and have potential to become musicians themselves, to see faces onstage that reflect what they see in the mirror everyday." – Tami Hughes, PRIZM Chamber Orchestra member



Top from left: Sean O'Hara & Kimberly Patterson, Heather Trussell & Douglas Cardwell, Kyra Sims & Amanda Collins. Bottom from left: Shawn Edmonds & David Spencer, Mariana Green-Hill & Marcin Arendt, Titus Underwood. Photo credit: Louis Ziggy Tucker

PRIZM CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

RECEPTION and AUCTION



Darren Isom, Kiesha Davis, Rychetta Watkins



Chala Yancy, Frederique Gnaman, Dana Kelley, Titus Underwood

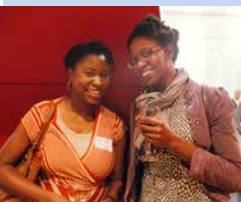


Carina with Vijay Kalaga



Joey Beckford with Sarah Squire

Nancy Walker, Mary Kirkland, Derek Menchan, and Pat Walker.



Drs. Artina McCain & Maya Stone



Drs. Dwight & Brooke Dishmon w. daughter Bianca

A Meet-the-Musicians & Benefit Auction for the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra was held on November 3rd at Clark Opera Center. Guests were treated to lots of delicious food provided by Anita Woods Catering, and delectable wine from Pyramid Wine & Spirits. PRIZM alumni and Chamber Orchestra musicians provided entertainment, and Sissy's log cabin generously provided items for our Auction. Thank you to all who made this evening so special.



TN State Rep. Raumesh Akbari, our auctioneer for the evening, with PRIZM personnel manager Delara Hashemi.



Rev. Elaine Blanchard and Lecolion

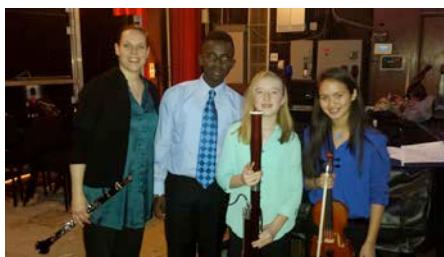
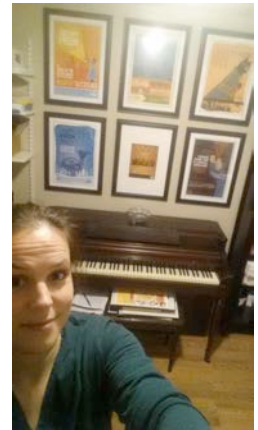
All good things....



executive director....

This is an exciting time in our organization's life. For 10+ years we have been working tirelessly to make PRIZM into a solid organization with the infrastructure to sustain quality programming, financial support to afford world class musicians and teachers, and a vision and strategy to encompass a growing and evolving board, staff, and student community that reflects the city we live in. During this decade I have worked in every position inside this organization you can think of: co-founder, musician, teacher, administrator, treasurer, board member, artistic director,

On the wall in my home office I have six framed posters, the first six years of festivals that we did, starting in 2009. With \$500, 18 kids, lots of hope, willpower, day jobs, and coffee, we made it happen somehow. Now we are an organization with an active board of directors, paid staff, and reaching close to 700 children through concerts, workshops, and deeply impactful educational programming. Our hard work PRIZM has finally paid off, and it is time to let this bird try its wings. As of January 1 I am stepping down from the position of Director of Artistic and Educational Programming, to take on the growing duties of the chair of the board of Director's fundraising committee where I will use my strengths and talents to write grants, recruit sponsors, and work with individuals who want to support the continued work of PRIZM. I am handing over the baton of operations to Roderick Vester, who has served as our Program Coordinator since September 2016. Rod is a native Memphian, pianist, and Music Director at First Baptist Church on Broad. He has master's degrees in Psychology and Musicology, and he has many years experience in performance, music production, and arts administration. Rod is eager to continue the work to promote Diversity, Opportunity, and Access, and I have full confidence in his dedication to PRIZM. Change of leadership is a sign of strength of the organization, and signals a growth. PRIZM is growing, and we have full faith in the future of this organization.



During my years with PRIZM I have learned so much, and have had such a great time. I have met and worked with so many inspiring students, teachers, musicians, artists, collaborated with so many wonderful organizations, and gotten to know so many generous people who support the work that PRIZM does. I can't express how thankful I am for the experience, and how proud I am of what we have accomplished. With a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who made PRIZM what it is today, I wish for continued success.

Classical music is alive and well!!

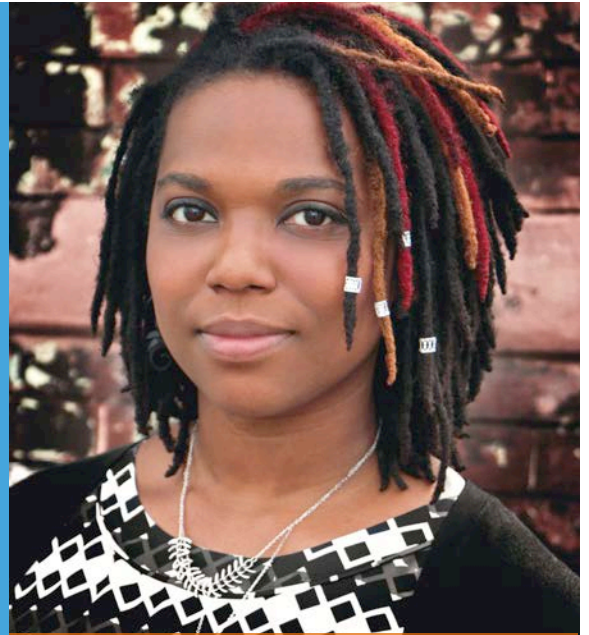
Carina Nyberg Washington

Carina Nyberg Washington
Co-Founder & Director 2005-2016



“Every voice deserves to be heard. Every young person deserves to experience what it means to make art. But if they don't see themselves reflected in that art, they may not realize that that door is open to them. This is why I create. This is why I play. Thank you, PRIZM, for giving me a chance to bring my art back to the city where I grew up.” – Kyra Sims

Kyra Sims, hornist, is a collaborative musician, comedian, composer, writer, and actress residing in Brooklyn. She has backed notable artists such as Frank Ocean, Devonté Hynes (Blood Orange), Zola Jesus, and Sasha Allen. Kyra made her composing debut in 2015 as the Composer/Sound Designer for the New York Neo-Futurists' Mainstage production *The Human Symphony*, which received positive reviews. She was nominated for a 2015 New York Innovative Theater Award for her work on this production. As an actress and comedian, Kyra has performed stand up at the Greenwich Village Comedy Club and the Chicago Women's Funny Festival, and has had her sketch comedy writing appear on the Upright Citizens Brigade stage. She is now a writer and actor in the New York Neo-Futurists, a theatre company that writes and performs its own works in the East Village every Friday and Saturday night.



Kyra is a PRIZM alumna (Winter 2010) which makes it even more special that she is a member of the inaugural PRIZM Chamber Orchestra that premiered November 4, 5, 2016 in collaboration with Opera Memphis.

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2017

PRIZM Ensemble

P.O. Box 171361
Memphis, TN 38187-1361
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