



MERIT
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Bridges: Partners in Music





I get this feeling when I play — I like the way it sounds, it's peaceful to me.

—Danielle

About Merit

MERIT SCHOOL OF MUSIC is a nationally-respected music school located in Chicago's Near West Side. For 38 years, it's been home to a diverse community of talented young musicians and a springboard for personal transformations. Known for providing access to high-quality music education, Merit serves over 4,000 students on site and off.

Merit offers a continuum of programs, including early childhood classes, instrumental music and voice instruction and private lessons. Training takes place at Merit's Joy Faith Knapp Music Center and within local schools through the unique *Bridges: Partners in Music* program. Offered at 30 sites across Chicagoland, *Bridges* allows students to gain instruction with Merit's experienced, professional educators—all within the convenience of their own school setting.

More advanced student musicians can audition for the highest-level program, Merit's Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-free Conservatory. Conservatory students are among the elite young musicians in the city and represent an economically and ethnically diverse cross section of the Chicago area. Students are only accepted by audition and receive college preparatory level training tuition free. Nearly 100% of the conservatory's graduating seniors are accepted into college, and most continue their music studies at top colleges, universities and music conservatories.

Merit is devoted to giving students—especially those living in economically disadvantaged communities—the opportunity to grow through music. It provides financial support through program subsidies, need-based tuition relief, low-cost instrument rental, and music supplies so that motivated students can participate in every program regardless of economic circumstance. More than half of Merit's budget is allocated to financial aid and scholarships, with 75% of its students receiving assistance. The school is committed to musical excellence, giving youth the tools to grow, develop personal talents and discover success; no matter what path they take in life.

To learn more about Merit's music education programs, visit meritmusic.org or call 312.786.9428.

Mission

MERIT'S MISSION: Merit School of Music transforms the lives of Chicago-area youth by providing the highest quality music education – with a focus on underserved communities – inspiring young people to achieve their full musical and personal potential.

Merit School of Music is one of my favorite places on Earth. I've seen its work through visiting there, but also through many of their graduates. What it does is to not let talent escape, because it has the broadest net. At its most lofty level, to its most basic response to the needs of a community, it is such an incredible organization.

— Yo-Yo Ma

MERIT NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Bridges: Partners in Music

In 1984, Merit responded to requests from Chicago Public Schools to create an in-school music education program, resulting in the formation of *Bridges: Partners in Music*. Today, the *Bridges* program serves more than 2,000 students each year, bringing the highest caliber music instruction to dozens of public and private schools, and community centers throughout Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Merit teaching artists work within these sites to offer group instruction in strings, band, choir, piano, guitar, early childhood, and general music.

Merit employs a faculty of passionate and highly-skilled music educators committed to helping young people succeed in reaching their full musical and personal potential. Faculty members hold advanced degrees, many from major conservatories and music schools from around the world.

In many cases, *Bridges: Partners in Music* serves as the first step for students in Merit's comprehensive continuum of instruction. Motivated students are encouraged to continue their studies at Merit's Joy Faith Knapp Music Center by enrolling in private lessons, the Instrumental Music Program or by successfully auditioning into the Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-free Conservatory. Merit School of Music opens these doors for students by providing over \$2.5 million in support each year, often through generous need-based scholarships. Become a part of the Merit School of Music community through the *Bridges: Partners in Music* program where your students can develop their unique musical talents.

Merit School of Music is a member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education.
Merit School of Music is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools.

Course Offerings

BAND
Grades 4 - 12
2 - 5 days per week | 45-60 minutes

Introduce young musicians to their choice of brass, woodwind, or percussion instruments. One class can accommodate 25-60 students depending on age and level of instruction. For more comprehensive programming, schools can also offer sectional classes which focus on a specific instrument family.

CHOIR
Grades 1 - 12
1 - 5 days per week | 45-60 minutes

Teach students to use their voice as an instrument. One class can accommodate 20-50 students depending on age and level of instruction. Choir classes must have a working piano or keyboard and ideally, an accompanist for each rehearsal.

GENERAL MUSIC
Grades K - 5
1 day per week | 40-60 minutes

Give students a musical foundation and head start in learning an instrument. One class can accommodate up to 30 students, however an adult assistant for classroom

management is encouraged. Global percussion can be offered as an add-on program for grades 3-5.

STRINGS
Grades K - 12
2 - 3 days per week | 45-60 minutes

Introduce young musicians to their choice of string instruments. Each class must be dedicated to one stringed instrument: violin, viola, cello, or bass. One string class can accommodate 6-10 students, and classrooms must include a music stand for each student. Schools can also add orchestra programming for students completing at least one year of strings. One orchestra class can accommodate 25-60 students depending on age and level of instruction. Orchestra space must include one music stand for every two students and provide room for the conductor/teacher, ideally with a podium.

PIANO
Grades K - 5
1 - 2 days per week | 45-60 minutes

Give students the opportunity to learn piano and gain a strong foundation in music theory and performance. Group piano

classes serve between six to eight students each and require the use of weighted keyboards and headsets. This is a great way to introduce students to the instrument in an engaging, collaborative setting.

GUITAR
Grades 4 - 12
2 - 3 days per week | 45-60 minutes

Provide guitar instruction to students and provide a foundation in performance and related theory. Guitar students learn best in small groups. One class accommodates 6-10 students depending on age and level of instruction. All students must have a foot stand, and classrooms need chairs and music stands for each student.

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Grades Pre-K - 1
1 day per week | 45-60 minutes

Stimulate young minds with their first musical experience. One class can accommodate 15 students or as many as 30 students with an adult assistant. An open classroom space with carpet provides an ideal setting for dancing/movement, sitting on the floor and setting out instruments.

Making Music in These Neighborhoods



General Music Residencies

Merit is excited to offer general music residencies this year. In these residencies Merit teaching artists collaborate with students and classroom teachers to creatively enhance reading, language and critical thinking skills through music.

Merit offers the following units for third and fourth grade:

MUSIC AND STORYTELLING
3rd Grade | 8 weeks

An integrated curriculum utilizing a variety of learning experiences. Classroom teachers work with Merit teaching artists to select a story and topic to bring to life through music and performance. The curriculum is tailored around one of three stories:

- an Ashanti Tale (about cooperation, hardwork and laziness)
- a Nigerian folktale (an anti-bullying message)
- a West African Pourquoi Tale (about cause and effect relationships and taking responsibility)

RECORDERS RULE!
3rd and/or 4th Grade | 16 or 32 weeks

Students learn the foundations of music performance and music theory through the recorder. This curriculum consists of singing games, dancing and songs from American cultures and world music.

SONGWRITING
3rd and/or 4th Grade | 8 weeks

Students will learn effective strategies for problem solving and creating songs in a cooperative environment. Together students create album covers, write an artist biography and learn to create music. This residency might conclude with a final performance or presentation for other classrooms.

For More Information

www.meritmusic.org

Please contact Merit at
312.267.4466 or
bridges@meritmusic.org to
discuss any of these packages.

To complete an application visit
the School & Community Programs
section on Merit's website,
www.meritmusic.org.

Merit School of Music is an
approved vendor of Chicago
Public Schools.

CPS Vendor #33278



MeritFest

Every spring almost 1,200 2nd-12th grade students from 30 schools in Chicago and Northwest Indiana perform on the stage of Chicago's renowned Symphony Center for Merit School of Music's 2-day annual event, MeritFest.

1200
STUDENTS

45
BUSES

2
DAYS



Merit's Curriculum

Merit's scope and sequence of learning objectives is designed to enrich a student's education. Merit educators develop musical potential and they stimulate students' personal and educational growth. Specifically, students in the instrumental music program can achieve the following strengths and skills:

PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL GROWTH

- Strong work ethic
- Instrumental technique
- Discipline
- Musical knowledge
- Effective listening
- Musical skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Self-confidence

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Programs are available during, before or after school.
- Total instructional cost includes all music and supplies.
- Instrument rental or purchase packages are also available.

Continuum Of Programs

Merit School of Music offers a distinctive music education continuum for children at the Joy Faith Knapp Music Center in Chicago's West Loop and through its community music program, *Bridges: Partners in Music*. Students may join the continuum at any point, or begin their study at Merit and proceed to the highest level of achievement, the Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-free Conservatory—all within Merit's supportive community of music educators. Classes are scheduled after school, on Saturdays, and over the summer.



A member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago works with Chopin Elementary students during the 2015 Chicago Youth in Music Festival, presented by the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Merit Continuum



Early Childhood NEWBORN-7 YRS	Instrumental Music GRADES K-9	Private Lessons ALL AGES	Bridges: Partners in Music GRADES K-12	Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-free Conservatory GRADES 4-12
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Supports a child's first steps to a lifetime journey of musical appreciation.

- Group instruction in:
- band (brass, percussion, woodwinds)
 - guitar
 - piano
 - strings (bass, cello, viola, violin)
 - voice

Private instruction on all instruments for classical and jazz music, and for students of all ages and all levels of musical ability.

- Merit's in-school music program with instruction in:
- band
 - choir
 - early childhood
 - general music
 - guitar
 - percussion
 - piano
 - strings/orchestra

- Advanced instruction from Chicago's finest music educators through a weekly curriculum that includes:
- large ensembles
 - instrumental & vocal technique classes
 - music theory classes
 - a variety of elective classes
 - live performances
- entrance by audition only*



