TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Preparing Gifted African American and Latino Musicians for Careers in Classical Music

aso.org/TDP
The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra cares deeply about advancing the vitality and relevance of symphonic music. An important step on this journey is creating a stronger association between the musicians and the communities we serve. More than 20 years ago, a group of Atlanta community leaders recognized this challenge and set out to find a way to attract more talented young musicians of color into classical music careers. Led by Azira G. Hill, one of the longest-running, year-round musical education diversity programs was born, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Talent Development Program (TDP).

Since its inception, the TDP has served talented young musicians, and the entire field of classical music, by providing the highest level of musical training to African American and Latino students. Nearly 100 students have graduated from the program and gone on to attend top music schools, including The Juilliard School, Curtis Institute of Music, Manhattan School of Music and the Peabody Institute. This strong educational foundation has led many to careers in orchestras, teaching and performance.
As of 2014, only 1.8 percent of the orchestral musician community was African American, and only 2.5 percent was Latino. (2014, Forty Years of Fellowship, League of American Orchestras)

“Thanks to the vision and dedication of Azira G. Hill, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra has been a champion of Orchestra diversity for more than 20 years,” said Robert Spano, Music Director. “It’s truly inspiring to see our Talent Development Program graduates go on to exciting careers in the world of classical music.”

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra’s commitment is partly demonstrated through an annual investment of more than $250,000 in the Talent Development Program.
The Talent Development Program creates a space for serious orchestral students to delve into their training with the support of a major orchestral institution. Students who spend these formative years in the TDP go on to achieve success in the orchestral world in a myriad of ways.

MEKHI GLADDEN joined the Talent Development Program as a sophomore at North Springs High School. An oboe player with a love of music, but no formal training beyond his school band instruction, Mekhi was accepted into the program and began his remarkable journey. He began rigorous training led by his mentor, ASO oboist Emily Brebach, and became a member of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra. He was selected for Carnegie Hall’s 2017 National Youth Orchestra, where he performed at concerts in New York, as well as Mexico, Ecuador and Colombia, all led by the legendary Marin Alsop. Mekhi’s journey will continue at The Curtis Institute of Music in the fall of 2017.
Many TDP alumni are helping to diversify the orchestral music field.

**ANGELICA HAIRSTON**’s “Challenge the Stats” concerts provide opportunities for professional African American and Latino musicians at the beginning of their careers to showcase their art in premiere performances. The first concert took place in Boston, while Angelica was working on her master’s degree. She was recently awarded a grant that will allow her to hold a similar concert in Atlanta.

**STANFORD THOMPSON** founded the innovative educational and social initiative “Play on, Philly!” in August 2010 to give students ages 6 to 13 opportunities for personal development through the study of music. The program provides unprecedented access to symphonic music and the opportunity for children to discover their passion for the art.

**DREW FORDE** established a major social media presence as “That Viola Kid,” providing advice and insights to high school and college students on how to prepare for the top conservatories, as well as guidance on how to survive once accepted. By sharing his experiences, he empowers students to accomplish their dreams in the professional music field.

From prestigious awards to participation in distinguished orchestral groups, the accomplishments and affiliations of the TDP alumni are far-reaching.

NEW WORLD SYMPHONY
ASYO CONCERTMASTER
ASYO CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNER
TURTLE ISLAND STRING QUARTET
SONS OF SERENDIP
NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL’S PROJECT INCLUSION
PRESIDENT’S OWN MARINE BAND CONCERTO COMPETITION FINALIST
TED FELLOW
SPHINX COMPETITION FIRST PLACE WINNERS
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF BASSISTS FIRST PLACE WINNERS
ATLANTA WIND YOUTH SYMPHONY
URBAN YOUTH HARP ENSEMBLE
AMERICAN TROMBONE WORKSHOP NATIONAL SOLO COMPETITION FINALIST
AND SO MUCH MORE!
"I have seen firsthand what the program offers these students. It is rigorous and serious. What an excellent opportunity to have such support!"
– GLORIA JONES, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Associate Principal Bass

“Students all have talent; that’s a given. But for many of them, the Talent Development Program journey is a real challenge … it’s not only about developing talent, but nurturing talent.”
– ELISABETH REMY JOHNSON, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Principal Harp

“When a student walks into the Talent Development Program, they’re walking into a lifelong commitment to working to become a professional musician.”
– NATHAN ZGONC, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Second Trombone
PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Each year, 25 students receive intensive instruction, mentoring and performance opportunities as well as access to the resources of a major American orchestra. Benefits for TDP students include:

- Weekly private lessons with an ASO musician
- Summer program financial assistance
- Solo recital and chamber music performances
- Technical and performance juries
- Assistance with preparation for auditions
- Mentoring and one-on-one coaching
- Complimentary tickets to ASO classical concerts for students and their families

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Students in rising fifth grade to rising tenth grade who have at least one parent who is either African American or Latino
- Serious music students who have already reached a high level of proficiency on a standard orchestral instrument

For more information:

- Visit aso.org/TDP
- Call the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Education and Community Engagement Department, 404.733.4830
- Email ASOEducation@atlantasymphony.org

We invite you to support our efforts by making a gift. Please mention the Azira G. Hill Scholarship Fund when asked where you would like your donation applied. Thank you for your generous support.
EXPRESS YOURSELF

“My breakthrough moment came when my teacher taught me to play more expressively. He helped me realize that I am playing for myself and no one else. That realization allowed me to put all my emotion into my playing and it is a more honest form of expression.”

– ROLAND MASON,
TDP student, violin

“The Talent Development Program taught me how to play with emotion. I had this breakthrough when I was practicing a beautiful piece by Bottesini for spring recitals. With that piece, I finally learned how to connect with the music on an emotional level instead of just playing notes.”

– ANGELA LEEPER,
TDP student, bass

“I learned how to play assertively, demonstrate confidence through my posture and make efficient use of my breathing technique. My peers started noticing how well I was playing during rehearsals and I knew it was due to my instructor’s teaching and my increasing desire to keep practicing whenever I have the chance.”

– VINCENT TAPIA,
TDP student, trombone