

# Valuing All **VOICES**

A Case for Support from the Community Music Center of Boston



A CAMPAIGN FOR



COMMUNITY  
MUSIC CENTER  
OF BOSTON



1964 - Recorder Class



The **Community Music Center of Boston** is leading the important conversations that are happening today in arts education.

Just as it has been for over **100 years**, CMCB is a pioneer in advancing equity through music education not just in Boston, but across our country.

## A Century of Impact

For more than a century, the Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB) has provided students with an unparalleled opportunity to explore musical artistry and instruction in a safe, culturally-inclusive, and affirming environment. We are pleased to be a cornerstone for local arts education and a leader in national conversations on equity and creative youth development.

CMCB was originally a prominent agency supporting Boston's immigrant communities in the early 20th century, and, over the last 112 years, we've become one of the nation's leading organizations to harness the power of music to impact social change.

We proudly carry the legacy of being one of the first music therapy programs in the country, having introduced this work into our curricula to support youth with disabilities in the 1950's. During the 1970's we worked to bring arts education back into public schools shortly after Boston's violent school integration crisis. And CMCB teachers and music therapists worked in clinics to provide comfort and support to patients throughout the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

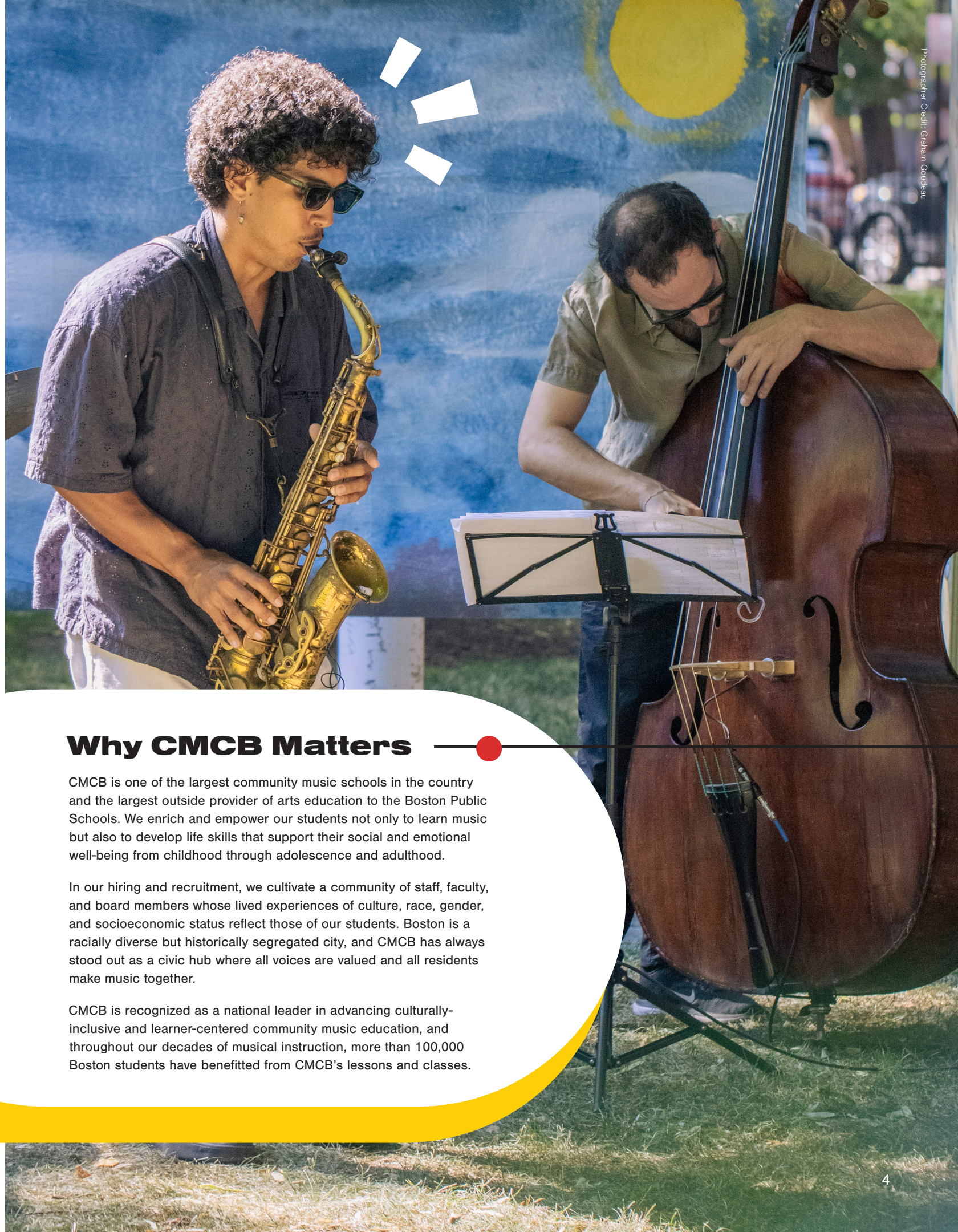
Thanks to this foundation, CMCB is uniquely positioned to create a model that impacts the national approach to music education and community engagement.



1960's – Flora Gay welcomes students

2022 - Summer ARTS & MUSIC





## Why CMCB Matters

CMCB is one of the largest community music schools in the country and the largest outside provider of arts education to the Boston Public Schools. We enrich and empower our students not only to learn music but also to develop life skills that support their social and emotional well-being from childhood through adolescence and adulthood.

In our hiring and recruitment, we cultivate a community of staff, faculty, and board members whose lived experiences of culture, race, gender, and socioeconomic status reflect those of our students. Boston is a racially diverse but historically segregated city, and CMCB has always stood out as a civic hub where all voices are valued and all residents make music together.

CMCB is recognized as a national leader in advancing culturally-inclusive and learner-centered community music education, and throughout our decades of musical instruction, more than 100,000 Boston students have benefitted from CMCB's lessons and classes.

# A Vision for the Future

Our bold vision is one where everyone is treasured for being their best self and where young people can convene and participate in the arts in ways that are joyful, safe, and empowering. We are creating the necessary infrastructure for everyone to be valued and to value one another. The result is a community that is more excellent and more equitable because we acknowledge the many skills students can learn as well as the many beautiful gifts they already have to share.

**To achieve our vision, we asked, “How can we be pioneers in co-creating alongside our community? In cultivating something more beautiful than we could have imagined on our own?”**

We are raising \$15 million through a capital campaign that will allow us to initiate a ground-breaking effort to reimagine education in music and the arts and to develop a new, culturally-inclusive music curriculum based on **Valuing All Voices**.

- New and expanded **programs** that support Musical Artistry, Cultural Inclusion, and Social-Emotional Development
- Investments in **youth leadership** and **workforce development**
- Observation tools to **measure success** across these initiatives
- New teacher pay structures that compensate faculty and staff for **deeper engagement with community partners**
- A **redesign and renovation** of our physical space to be accessible, spacious, and state-of-the-art
- Expanded endowment to **secure our future**



Photographer Credit: Graham Goudeau

# Our Work In Action

## Community Engagement through Public Education

While many arts education nonprofits work with students who have established technical skills and resources for additional training, **the Community Music Center of Boston is uniquely positioned to support every student to participate in music joyfully and equitably.**

**Through our historic partnership with Boston Public Schools,** we have been able to elevate the importance of the arts, influencing schools to deepen their investment in arts education.

Additionally, to support students with disabilities, individualized education plans (IEPs), or trauma-informed behavioral challenges, CMCB often employs a co-teaching model that allows board-certified music therapists to participate in classrooms alongside general music education teachers so that students can engage in instruction together, regardless of abilities or social and emotional development.

**Some of the services we provide within the school system include:**

- **Music Therapy** for students with individualized education plans (IEPs), behavioral and cognitive challenges
- **Group Music Instruction**
- Music **Production and Songwriting**
- Music **Fundamentals**
- **In-class Instruction on Instruments** not limited to but including:
  - Guitar
  - Drums
  - Ukulele
  - Violin
  - Wind instruments
  - Brass instruments
- **Advocacy for investment** in music education



Photographer Credit: Graham Goureau

# Community Engagement through Public Health

Although most of our work reaches young people ages 5-18, CMCB collaborates with leading local organizations to provide music therapy services to adults, families, and seniors. Participants include individuals with disabilities, mental health diagnoses, substance abuse disorders, socio-economic hardship, or other challenging life circumstances.

Through our work with Bay Cove Human Services, Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, Rogerson Communities, and others, we are able to meet people where they are, and provide one-to-one and group therapy support in assisted living facilities, adult day health centers, rehabilitation centers, and more, across nearly every neighborhood in Boston.

2015 - Music therapy at our Rogerson Communities site



# Partnering With CMCB

**We need supporters in this work to move CMCB into the next century.**

We know that music can be a life-altering tool for learning and community-building. Through this capital campaign, we can usher in a new era of equity, inclusivity and innovation for everyone within our communities and beyond. With your support, we can have an even more powerful impact on our students, our staff and faculty, and throughout the neighborhoods in which we're engaged.





# A Physical Transformation

We are elevating our physical infrastructure to create a more spacious, state-of-the-art facility that will embody our vision of a safe, welcoming, and empowering community for all. Through our Capital Campaign, we can:



## Increase accessibility

so that individuals with disabilities can enter and move freely throughout our space with dignity and independence.



## Strengthen our acoustic capacity and soundproofing

so that all of our students can thrive.

- Noisy, inferior learning environments affect all students, and inadequate soundproofing creates additional challenges for musical instruction and performances—limiting the impact of our venue as a community asset.



## Upgrade our technology

to provide more equitable options for learning.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to rethink how we engage our community, and the ability to better support students virtually is a critical first step in expanding the way we serve their needs.



## Promote a more inclusive and family-friendly space,

with common areas for families to convene, more child-height and colorful fixtures, and an expanded reception area to greet all guests as they arrive.

We have adopted a framework of “joy equity” from peers at Disability Dance Works:



**While everyone’s experience of a space is different, everyone deserves an equal chance to experience joy in it.**

# A Bold New Vision<sup>!</sup> for Teachers and Students

The field of arts education has long tried to better support students from diverse backgrounds to thrive through artistic participation. But too often, organizations have lacked the tools, expertise, or resources needed to be attuned to the specific needs of different communities. This has led to inequities and barriers to participation, especially for students of color, with disabilities, and from lower economic backgrounds. COVID has only exacerbated this crisis.

We are developing a model we believe will effectively address these challenges. Because of our leadership in national arts education networks, we know we grapple with many of the same challenges as others in the field. **We believe we are ahead of the curve in moving toward solutions.** Our new frameworks and curricula will serve as influential blueprints for arts education across the country. By gathering evidence alongside expert researchers in independent evaluations in 2023-24, we can share results about the success of our work and **continue helping lead conversations nationwide.**

*Lecolion Washington and Cellist Yo-Yo Ma,  
Nubian Square Concert*

Photographer Credit: Christopher Huang



# An Evolved Way of Working

A major component of **Valuing All Voices** includes the creation of new programs, the expansion of existing ways of working, and significant investments in our students and teachers.

Youth  
**Mentorship**

Youth  
**Empowerment**

Youth  
**Employment**

Teacher Pay  
**Structures**

Professional  
**Development**



Photographer Credit: Christopher Huang

Strings teacher Ann Miklich, violin class



## Youth Mentorship

CMCB is adopting a fundamentally learner-centered approach to instruction. As a key element of our educational framework, teachers work with students to center each learner's goals. Youth nurture the skills and talents they already possess, work to name their desired outcomes, and are empowered to achieve them. This process alone proves extraordinary for young people's aspirations.

Within our Community Music School, students are also given pathways for mentorship and leadership beyond just musical artistry. They can influence program design, plan social events and recruitment activities, and participate in governance and strategic plan implementation.

## Youth Empowerment

CMCB is also working to counteract misconceptions that individuals cannot have good livelihoods as artists and musicians. We help youth equip themselves with the skills that aspiring artists need but are rarely supported to learn.

Based on a pilot career mentorship program funded by the Sphinx and led by CEO Lecolion Washington in 2021, CMCB will even further expand opportunities for young artists on the brink of their careers. By supporting our students' post-secondary aspiration, we will address significant cultural and economic disparities in the performing arts, both on stage and in the front office.



## Youth Employment

As we invite young people to play a more central role in shaping student experience, they quickly become integrated into the professional work of running educational programs. Like any professionals, we believe this work should be paid. We have welcomed students into paid roles in programs, operations, finance, and fundraising.

Students have acquired new skills in administration, technology, finance, program design, and teaching, while being paid a living wage of \$18/hour as youth employees. We are monitoring our success through regular written reflections, based on tools from the Bloomberg Arts Initiative's Work-Based Learning Plan.

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Professional  
Development

Living our values means investing in our teaching artists while building a pipeline for a new generation. Offering more than \$100,000 annually in professional development opportunities, CMCB is focused on supporting educators who understand the importance of our mission and can support our community with the vigor and passion needed to make a difference. Our professional development programs include our Community Conversations series, lectures and panel discussions attended by teachers from Boston and beyond, and our long-standing partnership with the Berklee College of Music to provide supervision to newly-minted Music Therapists in a practicum as part of their board certification, and more.



Teacher Pay  
Structures

In addition to being paid full wages to attend professional development events, teachers have new compensation structures that provide greater incentives for recruitment, engagement, and community-based work. These are important criteria for the success of our programs that require work, attention, and accountability, and therefore must be compensated accordingly.

# Our Values in Practice

**\$300,000+**

per year awarded in scholarship funds to families in need

**3,100+**

hours of paid youth employment in 2021–2022, supporting leadership, economic empowerment, and post-secondary aspiration

**150+**

nonprofit and community partners over the past decades, including leading agencies like Goodwill, the Dimock Center, the Home for Little Wanderers, or Boston Medical, and more than 50 of BPS' 115 schools

**2,000**

students saw sustained access to arts opportunities during COVID thanks to CMCB teachers' commitment and perseverance

**2,500**

group classes and

**10,000**

individual lessons per year provided by CMCB at our headquarters and through our community partnerships

**300**

Board and Corporation volunteers since the 1950's—including famed artistic leaders like Arthur Fiedler or Roland Hayes—who donate their time and talent



# Student **Voices**



Being treated less as a student and more as a part of the organization makes me feel like **I have a place here.**

Zorely, youth leader, age 17

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A lot of places don't take time to hear student input like CMCB does. And not only 'how can we ask for student input?', but also how to be empowered to give effective input. That benefits not only CMCB, but also students—**empowering us to share our insights other places.**

Recent alum

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Working at CMCB, **I feel empowered in many different ways**—I feel helpful, I'm constantly learning and growing, and I'm developing new skills, as well as putting names to skills I didn't realize I had.

Joi, composer, former intern hired into full-time role

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A lot of times, students have to make choices between what they can afford and what's high quality, and at CMCB they don't have to do that.

Ana, oboe, age 19

# How you can help

As CMCB enters a new century of arts instruction, we are summoned once again to rise to our community's calls for action. We believe in a vision of arts instruction that values all voices, and we know that bringing people together through the power of music requires intention and care.

**To bring this vision to life, CMCB seeks your partnership in supporting our capital campaign. Thanks to donors like you, we can invest in:**



Youth economic empowerment programs and direct wages to young artists 15-24 throughout Boston



A major renovation and design plan to make an accessible, spacious, state-of-the-art facility



Professional development and compensation for faculty to refine their skills in community engagement and youth development



Redesign of curricula, repertoire, and evaluation rubrics to be culturally inclusive & learner-centered



Independent evaluation and validation of our new education framework



Documentation of our successful strategies, in order to share blueprints for equity and inclusion that drive conversations at organizations nationwide

**Our next century begins now.  
Please join us and add your voice.**



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