

Notes

FALL 2026

 Settlement
Music School

Finding Their Voice

"In orchestra, I feel like I'm a piece in a very big puzzle," says 13-year-old oboist Max. "In a chamber group I feel like I'm my own person and can stand out more."

This fall, more young musicians like Max will have the opportunity to discover that feeling through a new partnership between Settlement Music School and the **Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Music Institute (PYOMI)**.

Successfully piloted this spring, the new chamber music program officially launched in September, combining PYOMI's renowned ensemble training and Settlement's nationally recognized expertise in chamber music. Students in select PYOMI ensembles work in small groups with one player per part, developing the skills that make chamber music so rewarding: listening closely, taking ownership, and collaborating.

With chamber music sessions held before or after their existing rehearsals at PYOMI's Rittenhouse Square location, students experience both the energy of a large ensemble and the intimacy of a chamber group without adding another day to their already busy schedules.

The program grows out of Settlement's **Joseph & Marie Field Chamber Music Program**, and it reflects a shared belief that young musicians benefit from opportunities to find their own voice while learning to make something together.

"This is an exciting moment for both our institutions and for the many young musicians who are looking to deepen their artistry through chamber music," says **Settlement CEO Helen Eaton**. "Together, we are not only expanding programming, we are cultivating collaboration, creativity, and a lifelong appreciation for ensemble performance."

To learn more about this exciting new collaboration, visit settlementmusic.org/chamber-music-at-pyomi

Making Music, Building Community

They came from different generations, with different musical backgrounds and different stories. What they shared was a desire to play chamber music — and three days at our Willow Grove Branch gave them a chance to discover what else they had in common.

This summer, adult musicians ranging from their 20s to their 90s gathered for our **Adult Chamber Players Weekend**. Participants formed ensembles and worked with Settlement chamber music faculty while exploring improvisation, movement, and performance.

But some of the most meaningful moments happened between rehearsals.



"This partnership opens the door for more students to experience a new level of artistic training. By expanding access to high-quality chamber music education, we are removing barriers while building a more connected musical community for young artists."

—PYOMI President
Louis Scaglione



Musicians of all ages gathered for our Adult Chamber Players Weekend

Over shared meals and unstructured time, musicians who might never have crossed paths found common ground, and discovered that a love of music can bridge generations.

"I found new lifelong friends to continue creating music with," one person shared. A first-time participant said, "This is such a wonderful program to have so close to home. I'm so glad I found it!"

To get involved in our Adult Chamber Players program, which takes place year-round at multiple branches, email beth.dzwil@settlementmusic.org or visit settlementmusic.org/adult-chamber-players

A New Home for a Vital Program

Many remarkable programs lost their homes when the University of the Arts closed its doors in 2024, and Philadelphia's cultural community has worked together to keep them going.

This summer, Settlement was proud to become the new home for a long-running **Orff training** program, which had called UArts its home since 2007, until the University's closure left it in limbo.

"We were over the moon," Course Director **Michelle Przybylowski** says of the program's new home. "To have it housed at such an amazing facility, we were just blown away."

Over the course of two weeks, educators explored singing, movement, music theory, composition, notation, and creative exploration. More importantly, they built a "toolbox" of strategies they can adapt to their own classrooms.

This approach is especially meaningful in an urban classroom, where understanding students' cultures, experiences, and individual needs is essential to meaningful music-making. Orff gives teachers ways to meet students where they are and invite them to experiment, create, collaborate, and discover they have something of their own to contribute. Instead of simply

Orff brings together singing, speech, movement, improvisation, and instrumental play



SAVE THE DATE

Settlement Music School's
119th Anniversary Gala
Friday, April 16, 2027
The Bellevue Hotel

Honoring **Greg & Susan Moore** and
Moore Brothers Wine Company

*All proceeds support the more
than \$3 million in financial aid that
makes lessons possible for over
60% of our students.*

For info on sponsorships, tickets,
and ads, call **215-320-2691** or visit
settlementmusic.org/gala

learning to reproduce a song or play the right notes, students can discover their own rhythms, ideas, and voices — and experience the joy of making something together.

Orff pedagogy is also at the heart of the arts-integrated curriculum of our own **Kaleidoscope Pre-K program**, making this training especially connected to our own work with young children.

The educators who trained this summer will take these new tools back to their schools, reaching hundreds of young musicians. By providing a new home for Orff training, Settlement is helping teachers create classrooms where more children can find their voices.

Happy Anniversary!

It is with deep gratitude that we recognize the faculty and staff who are celebrating major milestones with us this year, each of whom has shaped our community in lasting and meaningful ways.

15 YEARS

Latrisha Brown Kaleidoscope Head Teacher

Candace Green Kaleidoscope Program

Assistant Director

Felicia McCray Kaleidoscope Cook

Amelia Schmertz Chief Advancement Officer

20 YEARS

Dave Brotnitsky Maintenance & Security

Aileen Bunch Creative Arts Therapist

Elijah Corbin Maintenance & Security

Dana Jackson Kaleidoscope Head Teacher

Kathleen Scheide Piano Faculty

Anthony Skinner Maintenance & Security

25 YEARS

Ardian Cani Violin Faculty

Christine Danoff Cello Faculty

Diane Goldsmith Piano Faculty

Alexandra Ovrutsky Piano Faculty

Susan Rheingans Voice Faculty

30 YEARS

Kaye Fernandez Dance Faculty

Joseph Mancuso Woodwinds Faculty

Irene Pokrovsky Piano Faculty

35 YEARS

Lynne Budnick-Lennon Violin Faculty

Thomas Meany Flute Faculty

50 YEARS

James Kales Guitar Faculty

Glenn Stanford Woodwinds Faculty

55 YEARS

David Shunskis Piano Faculty



6128 Germantown Avenue as it appeared in 1959 during the Branch's Grand Opening

The Quiet Guilt of Everyday Parenting, *an excerpt*

by Michelle Anthony, M.A., Ph.D.



Settlement's **KWEST Early Learning program** launched this summer with the goal of making it possible for any parent or educator to integrate music, creative movement, and visual art activities into daily learning. Here's an example of some of the challenges the program is looking to address, written by **Michelle Anthony**, a nationally-recognized child development researcher and educator.

It usually happened around 5:30.

The groceries were half on the counter, half still in the bags. Dinner hadn't started yet. That was when the pressure would build and the guilt would creep in. The feeling that I should be interacting with my children. That if I handed them a screen so I could get through the evening, I was somehow neglecting them. I remember the frantic feeling of needing to get things done with a baby in my arms.

One afternoon, instead of saying, "Hold on, I'll play with you in a minute," I pulled a small basket off the shelf. Inside were a few scarves. I slid it across the floor and said, "Choose one."

That was it.

Kylie sorted through, looking for the one that was most like fairy wings. Maya picked a red scarf. Bryce chose another. They waved them. They tied them around their arms while I finished unloading groceries. No directions, no expected outcome. Just movement.

That was when it clicked for me: learning had been happening in the middle of real life all along. Not from adding more to the day, but from noticing what children are already capable of when given space, materials, and trust.

KWEST is built on this idea — one developed through years of work with young children and families — of

creating open-ended arts-integrated experiences children can enter independently while life continues around them.

To read the full article and to learn more about KWEST, visit kwestlearning.org

Following the success of the new **Helen Eaton Piano Lab** at our South Philly branch, we are excited to bring group piano programming to our Willow Grove community, **starting in 2027!**

Many thanks to State Senator **Maria Collett** and State Representative **Nancy Guent** for advocating for the grant making this new piano lab possible.

Visit **settlementmusic.org/group-piano-classes** for updates on Willow Grove programming, or to enroll now in a group class at our South Philly branch.



From the Archives: A Building with Many Stories

by Eric Anderson, Branch Director Emeritus

Shortly after its founding in 1908, Settlement began experimenting with satellite locations, including one at the Germantown Settlement House on East High Street. Eventually, the location needed its own permanent home. Efforts to find one were spearheaded by celebrated harpist **Edna Phillips** who, in 1930 at the age of 22, became the first woman hired by The Philadelphia Orchestra. A longtime advocate for music education and community work, Phillips helped identify a promising lead: **6128 Germantown Avenue**.

Built in 1854 for a wealthy merchant named Charles Magarge, who owned a paper mill on Wissahickon Creek, the historic mansion had already lived several lives. After Magarge suffered "financial embarrassment," it became the home of the **Franklin School for Boys** in 1885. In 1893, it was taken over by the **Young Republicans Club** — the original entryway still bears the initials "YRC" in its mosaic floor tiles. In 1917, the building became the **African-American YWCA**, with tennis courts behind it. (A historical marker on Germantown Avenue commemorates **Ora Washington**, an early student at the Y and one of the first Black women to play professional tennis.)

Led by then-Director **Sol Schoenbach**, Settlement purchased the building in 1959, and it was dedicated as the Germantown Branch on November 23 of that year. Edna Phillips would remain involved and serve on the branch's Board of Directors. In 1987, Settlement added a new wing containing a concert hall on the site of the YWCA's tennis courts. In 2025, the building was rededicated as the **Peter A. Benoliel Germantown Branch** in honor of the beloved Philadelphia icon and former Germantown Branch Board President.

Today, the building is a living record of Germantown's history, with traces of its many pasts still visible alongside the music, students, and community that fill its halls.

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Become a monthly giver and join our growing ranks of *Settlement Sustainers!*

"Nonprofits like Settlement depend on individual donors for a significant portion of their funding, and monthly giving enables them to have a dependable funding stream. As a regular donor, monthly giving helps me, too, as I don't need to satisfy my pledge in one lump sum. This allows me to space out my commitment over the course of a year in a secure and easy way."

—Amy Hughart, Settlement Sustainer

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