



2018-19 Season

Overview

The Curtis Institute of Music educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. “Both a conservatory and a buzzword...known for taking the best music students in the world” (*Washington Post*), Curtis accepts four percent of applicants each year on average, making it one of the most selective schools in the United States. A tuition-free policy ensures that talent and artistic promise are the only considerations for admission.

With a small student body of about 175, Curtis ensures that each young musician receives an education of unparalleled quality, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians.

Curtis students offer more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music performances to the public each year. They hone music advocacy skills through programs that bring arts access and education to the community. And they reach global audiences through Curtis on Tour and weekly live-streamed recitals (Curtis.edu/YouTube).

This real-world training allows these extraordinary young musicians to join the front rank of performers, composers, conductors, and musical leaders. Each season leading opera houses and chamber music series around the world feature Curtis alumni, and they hold principal chairs in every major American orchestra. Curtis graduates are musical leaders, making a profound impact on music onstage and in their communities.

Admissions to the Curtis Institute of Music are based on artistic promise alone. Enrollment is limited to the number of musicians needed for a symphony orchestra, opera department, and select programs in piano, guitar, composition, conducting, and organ, plus a string quartet in residence.

With an average acceptance rate around four percent, Curtis is among the most selective schools in the United States, consistently ranked as among college-level institutions with the lowest acceptance rates by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Curtis provides full-tuition scholarships to all of its students and complete and diversified musical training, plus liberal arts courses. Students may pursue a Diploma or a Bachelor of Music degree. Vocal students may also pursue a Master of Music degree or a Professional Studies Certificate.

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Students at Curtis enjoy a wealth of opportunities to perform, listen, and learn. The school's high standard for entry ensures that students rehearse and perform alongside musical peers. The student body is international and multicultural, and there is no minimum or maximum age to audition. In its unique nurturing environment, the school's superb faculty encourages students at every step to grow as artists and as members of the Curtis community.

Faculty members at Curtis include a high proportion of eminent performing musicians who connect students to life as a successful professional musician today. Their unmatched musical lineage, in turn, links students to the classical masters. Curtis's 113-member faculty also includes highly credentialed instructors in musical studies, liberal arts, and career studies. Curtis frequently hosts world-renowned artists to work with its students in master classes, chamber music coachings, and residencies; in orchestra reading sessions; in the classroom; and in performances by the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and Curtis Opera Theatre.

Alumni of Curtis, having experienced extraordinary one-on-one training and valuable performance opportunities as students, go on to outstanding musical careers around the world. Curtis graduates have received Pulitzer Prizes, Guggenheim Fellowships, MacArthur Fellowships, and Avery Fisher Awards. They are in the front rank of soloists, composers, and conductors. They are members of the world's leading orchestras, including principals in every major American symphony orchestra. They have sung with the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, and the San Francisco Opera, among many others. Each season leading orchestras, opera houses, and chamber music series around the world feature Curtis alumni as guest artists.

Performances at Curtis grow from the school's "learn by doing" philosophy. Students enjoy constant opportunities to perform, with more than 200 public performances each year, including orchestra concerts, opera productions, and solo and chamber music recitals.

- The **Student Recital Series** continues its celebrated legacy as a platform for exceptional young musicians. Students perform solo and chamber works most Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings in Field Concert Hall, as well as on many weekends. World-renowned faculty and guest artists also join Curtis students for special residency recitals throughout the season. Curtis's YouTube channel, [Curtis.edu/YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/Curtis.edu/YouTube), features HD performance videos on demand and live-streamed recitals on Friday nights.
- Acclaimed for its "otherworldly ensemble and professional level of sophistication" (*New York Times*), the **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** offers a dynamic showcase of tomorrow's exceptional young talent. Each year the 100 extraordinary musicians of the orchestra work with internationally renowned conductors, including Osmo Vänskä, Vladimir Jurowski, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, Robert Spano, and Yannick Nézet Séguin, who also mentors the early-career conductors who hold Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellowships. This professional training has enabled Curtis alumni to assume prominent positions in America's leading orchestras, as well as esteemed orchestral, opera, and chamber ensembles around the world.

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- Under the artistic direction of Mikael Eliassen, the **Curtis Opera Theatre** has become known for imaginative productions, bold concepts, and absorbing theatre. Promising young singers work alongside established professional directors and designers, resulting in fresh interpretations of standard repertoire and contemporary works. All of Curtis's 25 voice and opera students are cast repeatedly each season, receiving a rare level of performance experience on stage and appearing frequently with Opera Philadelphia, Curtis on Tour, and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. As a result Curtis graduates have sung with top opera companies across the United States and Europe, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.
- **Curtis on Tour** is the Nina von Maltzahn global touring initiative of the Curtis Institute of Music. Grounded in the school's "learn by doing" philosophy, it offers students real-world, professional touring experience alongside celebrated alumni and faculty. In addition to performing, musicians offer master classes, interactive programs, and community engagement activities while on tour. Curtis on Tour also facilitates solo performances of Curtis students and alumni with professional orchestras and recital series. Since the program was established in 2008, students, faculty, and alumni have performed more than 300 concerts in over 90 cities in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.
- The past and future meet through **Curtis Presents**, which features a diverse collection of artists—alumni, faculty, students, and friends—whose musical foundations are rooted in the Curtis community. This series of intimate and innovative recitals offers a unique experience that transcends generations and genres, with exceptional artistry and one-of-a-kind programs.
- **Curtis Family Concerts** are designed as a fun introduction to classical music for children ages five to twelve. Through performance and audience interaction, Curtis students illustrate the basic elements of music and share their experiences as musicians.
- Flexible in size and scope, the **Curtis 20/21 Ensemble** performs a wide range of music from the 20th and 21st centuries, including works by Curtis students and alumni. The ensemble has appeared at major U.S. venues such as the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Miller Theatre, as well as international venues, including the Intimacy of Creativity festival in Hong Kong. The ensemble has presented concert portraits of iconic composers in residence Unsuk Chin, John Corigliano, George Crumb, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Chen Yi, among many others. Of the ensemble's Joan Tower portrait program, the *New York Times* wrote, "Ms. Tower could hardly have hoped for more passionate performances." The Curtis 20/21 Ensemble is led by artistic director David Ludwig.
- **Special concerts and collaborations** take place throughout the year, including recitals at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Longwood Gardens.

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Community engagement has been part of the Curtis student experience since 2000. In 2014 the school launched a new sequential artist-citizen curriculum to equip students with the essential skills they will need as musicians in the 21st century. At each stage of this sequence, Curtis students work with their peers and community partners in Philadelphia to provide rich artistic experiences through performance. As students develop new skills, they also aim to be a positive force in the communities they serve. Social entrepreneurship and community artist programs at Curtis provide arts access and education in targeted neighborhoods to those who need and benefit from music the most. Curtis students reach an average of 1,500 members of the community each year through these programs.

Facilities at Curtis are housed in several stately mansions on Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square that pair nineteenth-century charm with twenty-first-century amenities. In 2011 the school opened Lenfest Hall, which greatly expanded the school's spaces for teaching, rehearsal, and practice and provided student residences and a dining hall.

Financial Support for Curtis was initially provided by a \$12.5 million gift from founder Mary Louise Curtis Bok, which launched Curtis's unusual tuition-free policy in 1928 and provided financial support for much of the school's history. In the 1980s, Curtis instituted annual fund-raising to help pay a portion of the annual operating expenses. Curtis has successfully completed several endowment campaigns in subsequent years.

Curtis receives annual operating support from the Mary Louise Curtis Bok Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation founded by the Curtis board in 1932 to administer Mrs. Bok's endowment. A joint committee oversees the investments of the Bok Foundation and Curtis endowments.

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