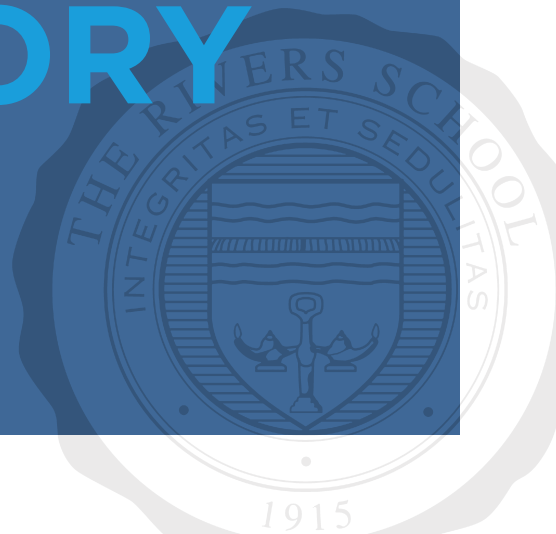




THE RIVERS SCHOOL EXCELLENCE WITH HUMANITY

FALL 2020

CONSERVATORY PROGRAM





THE CONSERVATORY PROGRAM AT RIVERS

INSPIRING MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

THE RIVERS SCHOOL CONSERVATORY PROGRAM is a unique and dynamic college preparatory course of study for students with a serious interest in and aptitude for music. The program provides student musicians with the faculty, classes, and performances needed to cultivate their musical artistry while at the same time pursuing a rigorous and challenging academic experience—all on one campus.

The Conservatory Program is available to classical and jazz instrumentalists and vocalists in the Upper School and runs in tandem with The Rivers School's music curriculum. Conservatory Program students enroll in a stimulating and demanding academic program that includes 23 honors and 17 AP classes, as well as a rich array of electives and interdisciplinary studies courses. During the regular school day they join other Rivers student musicians in chamber orchestra, chamber ensembles, Big Band, jazz combos, Women's chorus, and Men's chorus.

At the end of the regular school day, Conservatory Program students take classes in music theory, ear training, performance, improvisation, solfege, and independent studies as well as rehearse with Conservatory Program jazz, chamber, or vocal ensembles. In addition, throughout the year there are numerous resources and opportunities open to Conservatory Program students, including master classes, concerto and piano competitions, district and all-state festivals, and the Conservatory's Annual Seminar on Contemporary Music for the Young.

As freshmen or sophomores, Conservatory Program students have the option of taking the winter or spring trimester off from the program and, instead, participating on an athletic team or in another after-school program. Juniors and seniors in the Conservatory Program can choose to take either the fall, winter, or spring trimester to pursue a sport or other school activity such as the fall drama production or the winter musical.



“Studying music through the co-curricular Conservatory Program has allowed me to seamlessly incorporate my music studies into my high school experience.”

SINGER, PIANIST, AND CONSERVATORY MEMBER APSI BALAMURUGAN '20

has composed several large and complex pieces that have been performed entirely by her fellow musicians and singers at Rivers. “Having access to a talented base of artists in the men’s and women’s choruses, a full orchestra, and jazz band has allowed me to explore different types of music as a composer,” she says. “I write music to share my experiences and beliefs, and being in a community that is supportive and invested in these projects has been deeply rewarding.”

Balamurugan also participated in the Annual Seminar on Contemporary Music for the Young from 2013-2019, and in 2019 composed a piece on the subject of the worldwide refugee crisis for the seminar titled “Displaced.” The original composition was featured in WCVB Channel 5’s “A Plus” segment. The piece, which featured original music for the chamber orchestra, the big band, and the chorus, told the plight of refugees based upon Balamurugan’s parents’ experience immigrating to the US from Sri Lanka. “The subject is a very personal one for me. I wanted to pay homage to the refugee crisis by blending musical styles—classical, choral, and jazz—because the refugee crisis is a mixing of cultures,” the young composer said.

Balamurugan has earned three consecutive Composition Department Awards in 2017, 2018, and 2019, Young Artist Diploma Levels I, II, III, and IV in composition, Young Artist Diploma Levels I, II, and III in piano, and the Frances Brockman Lanier Award in 2020. At Rivers, Balamurugan also served as a Red Key tour guide and as co-president of the math department’s Teaching Assistant program. “I have benefited from a strong academic curriculum as well as a comprehensive program in music composition, theory, and instrumental piano,” Balamurugan says. “Studying music through the co-curricular Conservatory Program has allowed me to seamlessly incorporate my music studies into my high school experience.”



“While at the Conservatory, I’ve played in large and small jazz ensembles, accompanied and sang in a chorus, improvised countless times onstage, and taken part in spontaneous jam sessions with friends.”

HENRY LEWIS '20 studied jazz piano for six years at The Rivers School Conservatory with his teachers Dan Loschen and Geraldine Bergonzi. He also played piano and drums in the Conservatory Program at Rivers for four years, contributing his talents to ensembles, performances, master classes, and even a tour to Venice and Vienna. He played a key role in the accomplishments of the Honors Big Band, which won first place at the Berklee High School Jazz Competition and Gold for two consecutive years at the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education (MAJE) Competition. His artistry was integral to the successes of the Select 1 Combo, which also won Gold for two consecutive years at the MAJE Competition. For his leadership at Rivers and RSC, Lewis earned the RSC Director’s Award in 2019, the RSC Jazz Award in 2019 and 2020, the Rivers Alumni Award in 2020, and the Rivers Instrumental Music Prize in 2020.

Lewis will continue his musical endeavors post-Rivers at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, where he plans to pursue a concentration in Jazz Studies. He attests that the Conservatory Program prepared him well for this next step: “While at the Conservatory, I’ve played in large and small jazz ensembles, accompanied and sang in a chorus, improvised countless times onstage, and taken part in spontaneous jam sessions with friends. All stage fright or self-consciousness I used to feel while playing has completely vanished . . . The Conservatory Program was exactly what I needed to build my confidence as a musician.”



NATALIE HALL '19 established herself as a strong choral and solo singer during her four years in the Conservatory Program. With the Conservatory Program Vocal Ensemble, she attended the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Solo & Ensemble Festival, earning three gold medals. Independently, she participated in the MMEA Eastern District Senior Festival and All-State Festival. Her additional performance experiences included concerts at Rivers events and local nursing homes, as well as three years of participation in musical theater productions at Rivers.

Hall attributes her musical accomplishments at college to her strong foundation in the Conservatory Program. As a student at Washington University in St. Louis, she sings in an all-female a cappella group called the Greanleaves. After just one semester in the ensemble, she earned the title of Music Director, applying the skills that she developed as a leader in the Conservatory Program Vocal Ensemble and the knowledge that she gained in her four years of music theory courses, including AP Music Theory. She has also adopted a new instrument, jazz piano, and has chosen to minor in Jazz Studies. She reflects fondly on the abilities that she acquired in the Conservatory Program, from sight reading to solo technique, which have prepared her for a future in music.

COLLEGE DESTINATIONS

LINDY BILLHARDT '19 who joined Rivers in the 6th grade, spent four years in the Conservatory Program, taking part in both jazz and classical performance classes and theory. She played upright bass for four years in the Rivers Chamber Orchestra and trombone for two years in the Rivers Honors Big Band. Additionally, she was a member of the Rivers Youth Orchestra program for five years and the Rivers Youth Symphony for three.



In 2018, Billhardt was accepted into the Boston University Tanglewood Institute's 2018 Young Artist Orchestra. Then, in 2019, she won first place in the RYO concerto competition with the first movement of the Koussevitzky Concerto. Other highlights of her RSC career include sitting principal chair in the Boston Youth Symphony 2018-2019 season and at the 2019 Massachusetts All-State Festival, attending the 2019 All-Eastern Orchestra in Pittsburgh, playing the full Koussevitzky Concerto at Jordan Hall in May 2019 with the Rivers Youth Symphony, and winning the Frances Brockman Lanier Award.

Billhardt is now enrolled at Boston University and studying with third chair Boston Symphony bassist Ben Levy. As she continues her musical journey, she says her favorite memories from the Conservatory Program are playing with the Rivers Youth Symphony at Cartoon Fest in Boston's Symphony Hall and RSC fundraisers, as well as soloing with the Rivers Youth Symphony at Regis College and Jordan Hall.



VOCALIST, PIANIST, & TROMBONIST JOSEPH NEDDER '18

joined the Middle School Conservatory Program in 2012. His commitment to the Conservatory Program continued from that point on, marked by participation in the Upper School Conservatory Program, Rivers Honors Big Band, Rivers Select 1 Combo, and the Conservatory Program Vocal Ensemble. During his eight years of study at The Rivers School Conservatory and seven years as a Rivers student, Nedder earned numerous distinctions, including the Frances Brockman Lanier Award in 2018, the David Killam Instrumental Music Prize in 2018, and The Rivers School Conservatory Jazz Award in 2018. He received additional praise from prestigious musical institutions, including the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education, which recognized him for Outstanding Musicianship in 2014 through

2018, and the Berklee High School Jazz Festival, which awarded him the Individual Judge's Choice Award in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Nedder, who also starred in several musical theater productions while at Rivers, continues to excel musically and is pursuing a dual degree in jazz studies and political science from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music and the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. In his free time, Nedder writes, produces, and records original music, manages and arranges for the all-male a cappella group Freshman Fifteen at Northwestern, and performs with the Northwestern Jazz Orchestra and Small Jazz Ensemble.

- Barnard College
- Becker College
- Berklee College of Music
- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- Brown University
- Colby College
- Columbia University
- Elon University
- Emerson College
- Gettysburg College
- Harvard University
- Indiana University-Bloomington
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- New England Conservatory of Music
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- Oberlin College
- Princeton University
- Stanford University
- Tufts University
- The Royal Academy of Music in London
- University of Chicago
- University of Massachusetts/Amherst
- University of Toronto
- University of Vermont
- Vanderbilt University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Worcester Polytechnic University
- Yale University

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What kind of musicians apply to The Conservatory Program?

Students entering grades 9, 10 or 11, who play any classical or jazz instrument or are vocalists.

How big is the program?

There are approximately 35 students enrolled in the Conservatory Program.

What are the ensembles I can play in?

Classical instrumentalists play in the Chamber Orchestra during the school day and are assigned to chamber ensembles ranging from two to six students each in the Conservatory Program after school. Jazz students are assigned to jazz combos (four to six students) and/or the Honors Big Band (18 students) during the school day and to Conservatory Program combos after school. Vocalists sing with the Men's or Women's Choruses during the school day and form a vocal chamber ensemble in the after-school program.

How are Conservatory students integrated with the rest of the student body?

The Rivers School has extensive opportunities for students to socialize with students who have varying interests and talents. These include clubs, class orientation trips, advisory groups, and social outings.

What is the time commitment required in The Conservatory Program?

Conservatory Program students spend about 4 to 5 hours per week in after-school classes and rehearsals (in addition to 3 ¼ hours per week in orchestra, jazz band or chorus during the academic day). Conservatory Program students also typically have between three and six performances during a school year — some on campus and some off campus. Practice time needed for Conservatory Program commitments varies from student to student.

What are the benefits of being in The Conservatory Program at Rivers?

- Multiple classes and competitions every year
- Dynamic combination of outstanding academic and music programs
- A community that values both academic and musical excellence
- Small academic class sizes (average of 12) and teacher to student ratio (1:6)
- Orchestra, chorus, and jazz ensembles that are scheduled during the academic day
- Time for lessons and practicing during the school day and/or after school
- Conservatory Program administration oversight and management of student workload
- Additional performances in vocal and chamber ensembles or jazz combos

Who is The Rivers School Conservatory Program for?

- Students who want to further develop a passion for jazz, classical, or vocal music
- Students who want to work in depth with outstanding and distinguished classical and jazz faculty
- Those who wish to join an elite and select group of academically and musically motivated students

How do I apply?

Students must apply to both The Rivers School and The Conservatory Program (two separate applications). Visit www.rivers.org for more information on both applications and Conservatory Program audition requirements.

What kind of academic profile do I need?

The Conservatory Program seeks students with excellent academic records from their current school, strong SSAT scores, and teacher recommendations referencing intellectual passion and strong character.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Ronald Lowry
A. Ramón Rivera
Jin-Kyung Joen
Mike Connors
Kelly Barr
Clayton DeWalt
Tony D'Aveni

Geraldine Bergonzi
Sean Farias
Bruce Coppock
Marta Zurad
Lucia May
Steve Sussman
Junko Watanabe

Dan Shaud
Lois Shapiro
Vytautas J. Baksys
Marc Ryser
Liana Zaretsky
Ana Sorina Popa
Ann Bobo

Bill Jones
Christopher Memoli
Patrick Mottaz
Erin Lindsey
Ian Lindsey
Eve Budnick
Steven Laven

Klaudia Szlachta
Lindsey Robb
Philippe Crettien
Sarah Tenney
Timur Rubinshteyn
Ethel Farny
Dan Loschen