

# URBAN HARPIST



Volume IV, Issue 1

Winter 2015

Greetings!

Thank you for supporting our young harpists as they develop their musicianship. We are so pleased with their passion and their progress, and it is always a thrill when they get the opportunity to perform for their parents and the community.

We have had an amazing year. The Urban Youth Harp Ensemble has 70 students from Drew Charter School and an additional 16 in our after-school program, the most students we have ever had. This year, we had two students accepted to the ASO Talent Development Program. Kimberly Walker, a longtime UYHE musician, auditioned for and was accepted to the ASO Youth Orchestra.

We are exposing our students to more harpists outside our program. The Berklee School of Music Jazz Quartet performed for us recently, and Charles Overton, a member of the quartet, conducted a workshop on jazz harp for our students. Members of the group HarpFusion conducted master classes with our students and sent them some challenging arrangements to tackle. The UYHE will participate in the National Harp Society Conference this summer at Emory University.

With the growth of our program, we are facing a clear need for a second full-time instructor. This would enable each of our students to get the individual attention they need and deserve. This is a serious commitment in terms of funding. Our hard-working board of directors is working diligently to achieve this goal.

We see the incredible results that are possible when dedicated students have the opportunity to work with a talented teacher. Our graduates are doing phenomenal. Hati Pines is a sophomore at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Donevon Howard is studying at the University of Michigan. Jahmorri Simmons is studying with harpist Monica Hargrave at the University of Georgia. Melvin Carter graduated in May from Georgia State with a degree in music management. And Mason Morton, our very first student, is touring and recording with the quartet Sons of Serendip, after coming in fourth place on America's Got Talent.

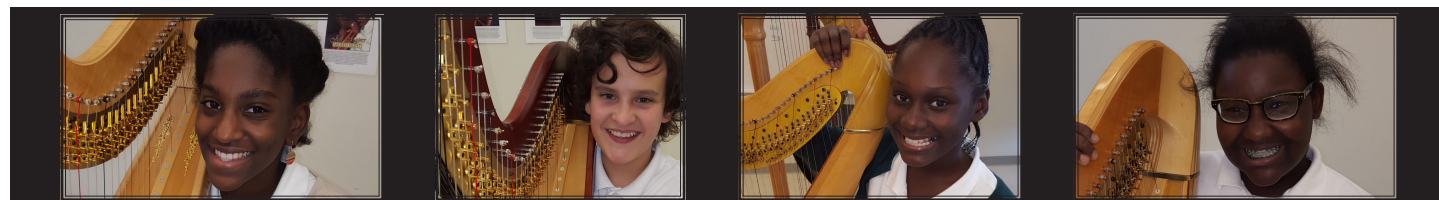
It continues to be my dream to introduce children to the harp and to nurture their talent in ways that will impact the gender and ethnicity of the harp world. I am so proud of how far we have come, and I continue to be inspired every day by our students' potential.

Thank you for your support!

Kind regards,

*Roselyn Lewis*

Executive Director



## Our Mission

The mission of the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble is to deliver quality musical instruction on the harp, develop music reading skills and musicianship to at-risk urban youth.

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## Student voices:

Watching the students perform is wonderful. Hearing why they like the program and how it impacts them as students is priceless. We spoke to several harp students, and are encouraged by their personal experiences.



I like playing the harp because it gives me a break from my schoolwork and studies, and I get to be creative while playing.  
*Sarai Dobbs*



I hope that the audience will realize how hard we've practiced. Anyone can learn how to play the harp, if you practice, focus, and are dedicated to it.  
*Kamea Alleyne*



Playing the harp makes me feel happy. We've learned how to collaborate as a group, which involves lots of practice, focus, and patience.  
*Shaniyah Dozier*



Playing the harp makes me feel calm, relaxed, and wonderful inside.  
*Jabari Freeman*



I play the harp because I enjoy it. I want to develop skills for the future and be able to play anything.  
*Maxwell Gould-Sheinin*

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## Harpist Spotlight

Kimberly Walker – performed at the 2015 ASO Talent Development Program

Mason Morton, harpist for Sons of Serendip, performed at the UYHE Spring Concert, is touring the nation with the quartet, and continues to speak to younger harp students.

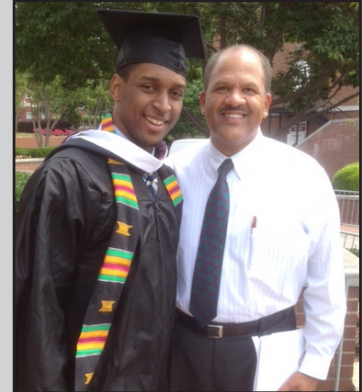
Our Drew students participated in a harp master class, facilitated by Berklee School of Music Jazz Quartet.



## Board Member Spotlight: Harry Wright, Jr.

Harry joined the board of the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble about seven years ago, when Executive Director Roselyn Lewis “cornered” him at Friendship Baptist Church, where they are both members. He immediately became part of the village responsible for making sure the ensemble provides high-quality harp instruction to all students.

Like many UYHE board members, Harry has a musical background. His mother, a Clark College graduate, was a music teacher, specializing in voice and piano. He played the cornet in junior high and high school and was in marching, concert and stage bands. His father was a minister. Harry, an ordained United Methodist clergyman, is Associate Dean of the College for Student Development/International Student Services at Morehouse College.



While Harry is excited that the UYHE is contributing talented harpists to the national scene, he is focused on the needs of local families. Over the years, ensemble students have needed access to housing, clothing for school and concerts and funding for camp opportunities. He would like to see the UYHE build a stronger network to showcase musicians, add more teachers to serve more students, increase the number of harps, add vans to transport students and instruments to engagements and provide services to students’ parents and grandparents.

“For me, board service is about bridge-building between haves and have-nots in the community, seeing all parties come to the table with what they have in support of a common cause: children and families,” he says. “Everyone is enriched and uplifted.”

## Notes from Artistic Director Carolyn Lund:

Q: Now that the program is settled in its new space at Drew Charter School, how are things going?

A: Great! It is a bit of a challenge to give each student individual attention, as there are 86 of them and just one of me, but fortunately my advanced harp students help the younger ones. Their excitement and motivation is contagious, and everyone is excelling.

Q: You have a range of students at so many different levels. How do you keep them engaged?

A: I put the students in teams of three or four and the team is responsible for making sure everyone learns the music. Usually a leader on the team emerges, and the leader teaches the music to the others. Working together and helping each other is the only way to learn challenging music at the pace we do.

Q: What is your goal for your young students this year?

A: My goal is to give them a foundation of learning to read music and instilling a love of playing in a harp ensemble. If they are able to read music from the beginning, that frees up my time down the road to focus on artistry.

Q: Kids today have a lot of distractions. How do you keep them focused on the harp?

A: There are a lot of things competing for my students’ time, and I realize that playing the harp may not be the number one priority for all of them. That’s okay. If harp is your first love, great, I want to work with you and see how far playing the harp can take you. If it’s not, that’s okay too. Come play for fun! I want my students to realize that excelling at one or two activities will pay off when competing for college scholarships and beyond.

Q: What are you planning for the Winter Concert?

A: We have a great selection of classical and holiday tunes. We will also have some guest artists collaborating with us, a flute player and a vocalist, and that will add nice variety.



# SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS



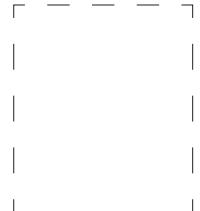
The Urban Harp Ensemble’s success is possible through the generous and ongoing support from our community. Last winter, UHYE launched the Annual Sustainability Campaign, to raise funds that provide students with quality instruction on the harp, at no cost to the students. Funds ensure that harps are well maintained and students have the supplies to further hone their skills.

We cannot list all of the ways your support, through financial donations and by attending performances, impacts students! A previous harp student, Armoni, says “when I play the harp, I feel like I’m on cloud nine. Playing the harp is a success I never want to give up. I didn’t know that playing the harp could be so smooth, calming, and relaxing.”

Armoni’s words articulate the intangible outcomes of our unique program. We are not only fostering future musicians or music teachers. UYHE is fostering students who have confidence in their skills and a desire to succeed. Our students, your students, are investing in positive outlets which build character.

By making a financial donation to the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, you confirm your belief our student’s ability to succeed. More importantly, you equip our harp students with the tools they need to enhance their artistic skills, gain confidence on stage and in the classroom, and extend their dreams beyond their current community.

UYHE has continued to flourish thanks to the support of individuals like you. We invite you to make a donation to the Annual Sustainability Campaign with a donation of \$100, \$250, \$500 or an amount best for you. Please join me in making an investment in our students today.



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