

URBAN HARPIST



Volume II, Issue 3

Spring 2012

Dear Supporter,

Springtime exploded in Atlanta this year. Flowers bloomed early and with a vibrancy that took my breath away. The sight reminded me of our students, especially our seniors, as they get ready to graduate and move on to the next phase of their lives. By the time our spring concert rolls around, many of our seniors are in full bloom, able to display their range of talent and skills after years of practice and dedication. Their music is joyful, and their futures are bright. This year we are sending 11 seniors out into the world. Some will study music, and others have career plans that don't directly involve music. Whichever path they choose, we know their participation in the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble will serve them well.

Learning to play a musical instrument improves academic performance and builds confidence. We are amazed at the maturity we see in our students as they perform in public and take pride in their musicianship. That confidence will help them as they make their way to college. For any parent, seeing a child make it to higher education is a milestone. But in the African-American community, having a child reach college holds special meaning. These young people have achieved what so many of their family members were unable to, often because they were denied the opportunity.

The UYHE is about opportunity. It opens doors and allows students to flourish. As we say goodbye to one group of special students, we marvel at the promise of our new students. This year, we have a class of middle-school musicians at Drew Charter School. They are enthusiastic, motivated and talented. Where they will be by the time they are seniors, I can't even imagine.

We are eternally grateful to our supporters for allowing the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble to grow and thrive and give students the opportunity to pursue their dreams, whatever they may be.

Warm Regards,

Roselyn Lewis

Executive Director



A special round of applause to the seniors in the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble:

Lanajia Artis

Rajuhn Hamilton

Brandon MacDonald

Gerald Waller

Montanez Baugh

Tiffany Griffin

Jose Parris

Sade Stenbridge

Lenisa Farmer

Zori Jones

Tylyn Stewart



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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OUR STUDENTS: *Meet some of our graduating seniors*



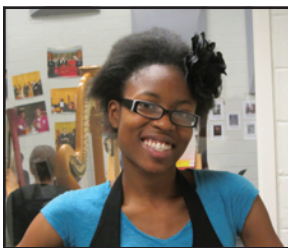
Lanajia Artis | College: Oglethorpe, Georgia State, or Emory | Career goals: To become a plastic surgeon and travel the world helping children in need. "I'm going to be in school for 15 years!"

Carolyn says: *Lanajia has only been playing the harp for two years, but she is incredibly attentive to detail and has developed an incredibly high level of technique and poise. Lanajia is always eager to learn new things and takes every piece of advice to heart. Lanajia also has a beautiful stage presence. She is proactive, dedicated and driven toward all her goals in life.*

Lanajia says: *I want to leave a legacy on the world. I want to travel the U.S. and abroad changing lives. The harp has given me grace and relaxation. When I come to harp class, I feel relaxed. It's a feeling within the soul. Playing the harp relaxes the soul.*

Montanez Baugh | College: Bard University | Career goals: Major in biology while continuing harp studies and playing in the orchestra.

Carolyn says: *Montanez is without a doubt the most enthusiastic member of the harp ensemble. He has been playing for seven years and is one of the most accomplished harpists in the history of the program. Montanez's gifts are all encompassing -- he is at times conductor, music arranger, public speaker, harp transportation expert, and comedian! Montanez is a recipient of the prestigious Posse Scholarship, which enables him to attend Bard University in New York on a full scholarship. He will continue taking harp lessons and playing with the orchestra at Bard, in addition to majoring in biology. Montanez is a very special part of the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, and we are so grateful for his service as an ambassador of the program.*



Tylyn Stewart | College: Columbus State | Career goals: To study music and possibly anthropology and then travel out of state to earn a master's degree. "I'm the philosophical type. I see myself traveling, learning and trying extreme sports such as skydiving."

Carolyn says: *Tylyn is one of the most naturally gifted harpists I have taught. She is one of the best note-readers in the entire ensemble, but she plays equally well by ear. She is also a gifted singer, and she is one of the few students who can sing and play at the same time. True coordination! Tylyn is extremely encouraging to her other classmates, and is often seen teaching others.*

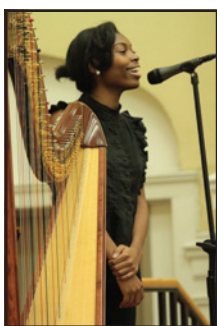
Tylyn says: *I wasn't planning on studying the harp, but when I was doing my schedule I had a choice between ROTC and harp and chose harp. My parents are both musicians, and I have a raw talent, a gift. I have played the recorder, trumpet, violin and drums. Harp was a natural fit. What I have learned in harp I can transfer to other things, such as singing and piano. With the harp, the only thing you don't use is your pinky. I have loved the showmanship, having so many opportunities to perform. I am as excited for the final performance as I am for prom. Through harp, I have gotten an advantage, something that sets me apart from everyone else.*

Gerald Waller | College: Leaning toward Columbus State | Career goals: To study music and math, earn a master's degree, and return to the UYHE as an instructor.

Carolyn says: *Gerald was voted the most talented student in the 12th grade, and it is easy to see why. He is involved in everything artistic, including poetry, drama, glee club, band and harp. He has been playing the harp for six years and is one of the most dedicated students I have ever taught. He is frequently seen collaborating with vocalists and always seems to have about 10 songs he's in the midst of learning. Gerald is hard-working, dedicated and, most importantly, he does it all with a huge smile.*

Gerald says: *The harp has meant everything to me. It helps you inside school. My math skills were weak, and I was struggling. When I started playing the harp, they soared to the sky. Playing the harp has helped with my memory.*

The thought of going away to college is overwhelming. I am the second person in my family to get to go. I've developed friendships and family members throughout this school and will have to try not to cry all through graduation.



SENIOR SONG: Our seniors fell in love with the song, *If You're Out There*, by John Legend. They decided to make it their senior song. Here are some of the lyrics:

*If you hear this message, wherever you stand; I'm calling every woman, calling every man; We're the generation,
We can't afford to wait; The future started yesterday and we're already late.
We've been looking for a song to sing, Searched for a melody, searched for someone to lead;
We've been looking for the world to change. If you feel the same then go on and say;
If you're out there, sing along with me; If you're out there, I'm dying to believe...
That you're out there, Stand up and say it loud; If you're out there, tomorrow's starting now, now, now.
If you're ready, we can shake the world; Believe again, it starts within.
We don't have to wait for destiny; We should be the change that we want to see.*

Program Update: *Carolyn's Corner*

Q. How does it feel sending students out in the world that you've taught for three years?

A. I love these seniors, and I am so excited for what lies ahead for them. And yet, I'm also sad to see this group of students go. It is definitely bittersweet.

Q. What do you hope they take with them from the harp program?

A. I hope they go to college with an extra boost of confidence. Tackling something as challenging as playing the harp and being part of such a unique program hopefully makes them feel special. I also think it opens their eyes and maybe even helps them understand that they can do something outside their comfort zone.

Q. In what ways does the UYHE prepare kids for college and beyond?

A. One of the most important ways is by giving them performance opportunities. I emphasize good presentation skills, public speaking and behavior in formal situations such as our concerts. I also think the program teaches skills such as determination, patience and, of course, creativity.

Q: How do you feel about your younger students? What do you want them to take away from this year?

A. I always hope they will continue in the harp program throughout high school, because each year builds on itself. Each student has different talents to offer; one student may have beautiful tone, while another may be excellent at rhythm. So each player is essential to making the entire ensemble strong.

Q: You always surprise us at concerts with popular numbers alongside classical pieces. What's in store this year?

A: This concert is a tribute to our seniors, so we chose songs that reflect their high school experience. We are working on songs by artists such as Adele, Katy Perry and Taio Cruz.



UYHE Awarded NEA Grant

The UYHE is humbled to again receive a highly selective National Endowment for the Arts grant. This year, we received \$34,000, up from \$30,000 last year. Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA supports artistic excellence, creativity and innovation. The funds will help ensure our program continues providing high-quality harp instruction to students. "Our program is not the largest one out there, and we teach children to play just one instrument, the harp," says Roselyn. "It is gratifying to know that a small program like ours is valued and that the work we do is appreciated in our nation's capital."

UYHE Artistic Director Continues Building Impressive Résumé

As devoted as Carolyn is to our students, she continues to build her career as a musician. Carolyn, who began playing the harp at age nine, won third prize in the 2011 American Harp Society National Competition. She is president of the American Harp Society Georgia Chapter.

Carolyn holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in harp performance from the University of Arizona. She won the Anne Adams national harp competition in 2008, and she was awarded a Teaching Assistant position at the University of Arizona. She was a member of HarpFusion, the most widely traveled harp ensemble in the world. She performed in Holland, Belgium, Austria, Liechtenstein and Brazil. She has given solo recitals in Japan, Brazil and throughout the United States. She performs regularly with symphony and chamber groups.

The UYHE is so proud of all Carolyn's accomplishments!

UYHE Board Member Profile: Nancy Hamilton

Nancy has been with the UYHE since its earliest days. As Board Treasurer, she keeps track of the money that comes in and goes out, money that keeps our program running with a high quality artistic director and enough harps for the students to play. But Nancy contributes so much more than impeccable accounting. She has been our rock in times of uncertainty, and a volunteer who believes so strongly in our program that she stays with us year after year. Her belief in our students never wavers.

Nancy and Roselyn knew each other in the late nineties, when Nancy was at APPLE Corps, a nonprofit that provided support for Atlanta Public Schools. "Roselyn called wanting money for an after-school program," Nancy recalls. When the UYHE started, APPLE Corps served as fiscal agent. In 2004, Nancy helped file the paperwork that made the harp ensemble a stand-alone nonprofit organization. "I told Roselyn I would stay on because I knew the financial reporting, and I knew the grant system," she says. "I like being part of something that directly benefits kids."

Nancy has helped the program through many transitions including relocation and the hiring of instructors. In the future, she would like to see the program add a mentoring program, a vehicle and additional support for students after graduation.

The UYHE continues to thrive because the right board members have stepped up at the right time. "You have to have people who believe in kids and are willing to extend themselves for kids," Nancy says. "It's just a cool thing to be involved with."

INVESTING IN A CHILD'S FUTURE



By making a financial donation to the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, you confirm your belief in our program and the students we serve. 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 environment. UYHE has continued to flourish thanks to support from patrons like you.

The Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization, which means your contributions are tax-deductible. We invite you to make a donation of \$50, \$100, or more, to make a significant impact. Make checks to Urban Youth Harp Ensemble.



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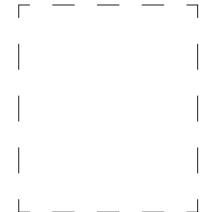
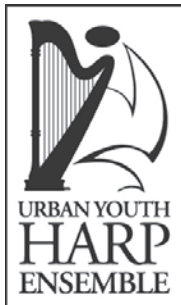
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We encourage you to share your UYHE experiences with 'Urban Harpist' author and Board of Directors member, Patti Ghezzi of Greater Good Communications. Send your comments to pattighezzi@comcast.net.