

# URBAN HARPIST



Volume III, Issue 1

Winter 2012



Happy holidays to all our friends and supporters! Without you, we would not be here. We have had an amazing year. Our students have shown exceptional growth, and our organization has reached a point of financial stability that seemed impossible just four years ago. Our board is strong. We are all working together to give our students the best opportunities as musicians and as individuals.

After sending a group of seniors off to college last spring, we welcomed a new crop of students to the UYHE family in August. To reach students in middle school, our program has expanded to Drew Charter School in East Atlanta. Carolyn Lund, our wonderful instructor, teaches 11 students in the cafeteria. They are full of enthusiasm and raw talent. We can't wait to watch them develop as harpists.

Meanwhile, our high school students just keep getting better. We have 30 Carver students this year. Our 6-member honors ensemble recently performed at a senior center. They also performed at several private events around town.

Our program continues to grow thanks to support from donors. Last winter, I heard about a program called Power2Give, which raises money for special projects through short-term social-media campaigns. My friends may consider me old-school, but I am happy to try a new strategy if it means more funds for the UYHE. We raised \$5,000 in less than two months! We are now in the midst of a second Power2Give campaign, with the proceeds going toward at least one new harp our students could borrow for home practice. How great would that be? From the bottom of our hearts at the UYHE, thank you again for your support!

Sincerely,

*Roselyn Lewis*

Executive Director

## POWER2GIVE CAMPAIGN

Power2Give, sponsored by the Arts & Science Council (ASC), gives donors the opportunity to direct their dollars toward specific projects. The City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs brought Power2Give to Atlanta this year, and the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble was selected to participate.

Our challenge was to raise \$2,500 from donors through online contributions. The Office of Cultural Affairs would match every dollar, for a total of \$5,000. The catch was that we had just 90 days to raise the money. We called our project, "Adopt a Harpist," and donors responded enthusiastically. The project went live on August 6, and we crossed the finish line on Sept. 24.

Thank you to the following donors for their contributions: Lynne Abbey-Lee, Robert and Sylvia Bozeman, David Crookston, Mary Francis Early, MaryAnne Gaunt, Patti Ghezzi, Nancy Hamilton, Barbara Jelks, Roselyn Lewis, David Marshall, Dzauya Nkuchwayo, Joe Parham, Sabrina Simmons, Marva Simpson, William E. Stanley, Jr., Cynthia Terry, Michelynn Woodard, Elois Wyche Saucer, and Michael Young.

We are now funding our second project through Project2Give. Visit <http://power2give.org>.



BRINGING PASSION AND CREATIVITY TOGETHER.



### 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:

We have 11 middle school students at Drew Charter School. Here are some of their impressions:

“I always heard the harp on TV when people had dreams. I always liked the way it sounded and couldn’t wait to try it.”

**Kiya O’Neal, 13**



“I am the first person in my family to play the harp. Every day I go home and I talk about how much I like it.”

**Jayla Thrash, 12**



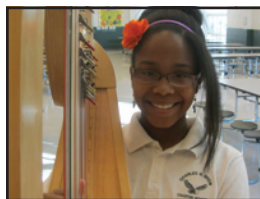
“Not many people play the harp. It gives me bragging rights.”

**Taylor Bell, 12**



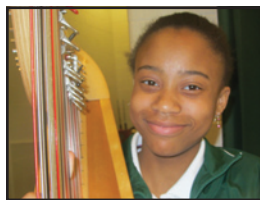
“I’ve played the piano, cello and violin, and I like the harp best. You can get paid to play it. You’ll always have a job. I might minor in harp in college.”

**Nia Anderson, 12**



“It’s a hard instrument to play, and it’s easier if you know how to read music.”

**Oliscey Taylor, 12**



The students in the advanced class at Carver also shared their observations:

“It’s a different type of instrument. I’m sure you have to pay a lot to take harp classes, and we get to take them for free. I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity. If I have children, I will get them involved in the harp.”

**Asia Burke, 17**

“When I got to this class, I thought I was not going to like it. I could not read music. But Ms. Lund motivated me, and now I really enjoy it.”

**Tasheba Myrick, 17**

“I have been playing since 2006. I started in sixth grade when my chorus teacher, Ms. Lewis, selected a few students to go to harp camp. I decided to give it a shot,

and I became really interested in the harp. I like the complexity. It takes a lot more skill to play this instrument than other instruments.” **Michael Pruden, 18**

## IN THE NEWS

We have had several opportunities to share our story with the world.



Camac Harp Company, based in France, featured Carolyn and her work with our students on its blog. The company also donated \$2,000.

In October, photojournalist Erik Lesser photographed students at Drew Charter School and Carver School of the Arts. His images captured the hard work of the students and Carolyn as well as the mutual respect between the students and their teacher. The photos were made available for publication through the European Pressphoto Agency.



Public Service Announcements about the UYHE ran twice a day for three weeks in November on WCLK 91.9, the Clark Atlanta jazz station. This fantastic opportunity was

made possible by board member Joe Parham.

The UYHE’s participation in Power2Give was featured on City Talk on Channel 26, the City of Atlanta’s television station. Film crews captured Carolyn and several students, including Donevon Howard, rehearsing and speaking about the value of our program.



## A Note from the Artistic Director



Our artistic director and teacher, Carolyn Lund, returned to the UYHE in August after traveling to St. Petersburg, Russia, where she participated in the Erdely International Harp Competition. She was the only contestant from the U.S., and she made it to the semi-final round. "I was able to speak with the judges and get some great feedback," she says. "The whole thing was really positive, and I am so glad I had the opportunity to go!" She jumped back into her teacher role, dividing her time between two schools and teaching kids ranging from seventh to twelfth grades.

**Q:** What are your thoughts on the program this year?

**A:** I am very pleased with where the program is right now. I am happy to have so many students who are taking the harp class by choice, not because they were randomly given my class as an elective. So many kids came to class saying, "I've always wanted to take the harp! I'm so glad I got in this class this year!"

**Q:** How is the honor's ensemble doing given that four students from last year graduated?

**A:** The new honors ensemble members have definitely stepped up to the plate. Donevon Howard and Maya Jones returned, and this year we have added Hati Pines, A.J. Seymour, Jahmori Simmons and Aayonna Ward. These students have especially impressed me this year with their sight-reading ability, and we have been able to cover a lot of music in a short amount of time.

**Q:** How many absolute beginners do you have, and what is your approach with them?

**A:** I have 20 absolute beginners, nearly half the group. I lucked out this year in that most of the beginners already had some band or other music experience. Because the harp is so technically demanding, it is incredibly helpful to have a background in reading music. But I am happy to teach anyone at any level.

**Q:** Is there a student we should pay extra close attention to this year?

**A:** Kimberly Walker has been playing the harp for three years now, and she was recently accepted into the Atlanta Symphony Talent Development Program.

**Q:** How is your approach different with middle school students, who may have different emotional needs than high school students?

**A:** I find myself working in a more thorough way with the middle school students. We concentrate on a measure here or a line there, and we go over and over it until it is perfect. With the older kids, they just want to play and learn everything really fast! Also, the students from Drew as a whole are quite impressive. They come to class and seemingly practice non-stop. They have wonderful, eager attitudes and really seem to love it. I hope that all 11 of these students will stick with it for a long time.

## UYHE Board Member Profile: Bill Stanley

Several years ago, Roselyn Lewis asked Bill Stanley, a friend she knew through Friendship Baptist Church, if he would transport a harp in his station wagon to a performance.

He was happy to help. And from there, he was hooked. "Not only was the music beautiful, it was amazing for me to see inner-city youth playing harps," says Bill, who played several instruments as a student and is a member of Roselyn's Adult Handbell Choir. "The more I was exposed to the kids, the more they reminded me of myself when I was growing up."

He enjoyed chatting with students while driving them to performances in his station wagon.

Roselyn took Bill to lunch and invited him to join the board. At his first board meeting in April 2010, he was elected chair. He has held that position ever since, leading the organization through a period of remarkable prosperity, despite difficult economic times.

His professional background prepared him well for the leadership role. He had a long, successful career in management, including 30 years with The Clorox Company. He held the highest leadership positions in Phi Beta Sigma and the American Logistics Association.

Bill helps our students at every opportunity. He reached out to a Phi Beta Sigma contact to help a student struggling with the college admissions process. That student is now excelling at Georgia State and continuing his harp studies. When a student needed a tuxedo for a performance, Bill took him for a fitting and bought him the tux.

He reminds board members of the organization's mission at each meeting, keeps everyone on task and makes sure the UYHE has a rock solid foundation. He has three goals for the future: to have two years operating expenses in the bank, to add one new harp to the program each year, and to be able to give a harp to a student who chooses to major in music in college. Under Bill's leadership, these bold goals are achievable.

Bill connects with students on a personal level, appreciates the value of music in a student's life and knows how to keep us all focused and moving forward. He is so much more than a friend with a station wagon! "I have children and grandchildren of my own, so I understand the importance of exposing our youth to a broad range of experiences," he says. "Playing music provides an amazing experience. Watching and listening to the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble play together fills me with pride."

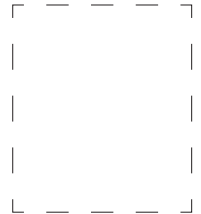


# INVESTING IN A CHILD'S FUTURE



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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