

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ritz Chamber Players Perform with Philly Youth Musicians at POP Strings Festival

February 8, 2020, Philadelphia, PA: The Ritz Chamber Players, the nation's first chamber music ensemble composed solely of accomplished musicians spanning the African diaspora, will work and perform with Play On Philly (POP) students and local youth string musicians in a day-long workshop and concert on Saturday, February 8, 2020. Intermediate and advanced string players in Philadelphia who would like to participate must register by Friday, January 31st. The workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will conclude with a free public concert at 4:15 p.m. at Curtis Institute of Music's Lenfest Hall.

Play On Philly Strings Festival is POP's second annual instrument-family festival, focused on intensive and collaborative study for young musicians with a rare opportunity to learn from and perform with a featured guest artist. Last year, POP launched a day-long workshop with the Winds Festival, featuring the world-renowned Imani Winds as the special guest. The success of the first year inspired the festival's return. **Play On Philly Strings Festival** students will engage with the Ritz Chamber Players in instrument specific groups on technique, then in large ensembles in preparation for a concert that will feature: Walter Cumming's *A Quiet Rain*; Corelli's *La Follia*, arranged by Stephen Chin; and J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, arranged by Merle J. Isaac. The festival serves as a prequel to the Ritz Chamber Players' February 9th performance presented by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society (PCMS).

"The String Festival highlights our commitment to provide intensive music education and helps open the door to children not currently enrolled in POP programming. Our long-time partnership and support from PCMS and the Curtis Institute makes this incredible opportunity to work with world class artists such as the Ritz Chamber Players accessible for young string musicians," says Stanford Thompson, Founder and Executive Director of Play On Philly, "many of the students we serve through POP are of color but they rarely see themselves reflected on-stage. Engaging with the musicians of the Ritz Chamber Players changes that narrative for our students and their success will empower our students and serve as positive role models for years to come."

"We are thrilled to begin our debut with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society with an enriching experience of community engagement. We look forward to deepening POP's work of providing intensive music education through our artistry and making a positive impact on the young musicians we will work with during our time together," says Ritz Chamber Players Executive and Artistic Director, Terrance Patterson.

Erik Petersons, Education and Outreach Director of Philadelphia Chamber Music Society says, "we are really excited to debut an ensemble that has such a rich history of artistic and community engagement. It's wonderful to work with artists that have a mission of creating and sustaining an environment that supports intellectual inquiry, cultural enhancement, and awareness of broader issues. Our long-standing partnership with Play On Philly will provide the opportunity for Philadelphia students to work and perform with the Ritz Chamber Players during a whole-day workshop prior to their concert on our series."

What: Play On Philly Strings Festival Workshop and Performance

When: February 8, 2020

Workshop begins @ 9:00 a.m.

Concert @ 4:15 p.m.

Where: Lenfest Hall, Curtis Institute of Music

1616 Locust Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

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About Play On Philly: Play On Philly (POP) provides high-quality music education to students, who would typically lack access, as a vehicle for life skills and academic achievement. We provide 2 hours of music instruction and ensemble practice every day after school. Students range from Kindergarten to 12th grade and are loaned an orchestral instrument at no cost. POP programming has proven results: our students score ten points higher on standardized tests and have improved behavior and study skills. We cultivate musical excellence, lifelong skills, and confidence. **Play On Philly Strings Festival** is one of more than 25 performances that POP students will present throughout the year. Learn more about POP at our new website: www.playonphilly.org.

About Ritz Chamber Players:

Since the Ritz Chamber Player's inception in 2002, the group has worked to redefine perceptions within both the traditional and minority communities regarding participation in classical music. Founded by clarinetist and Artistic Director Terrance Patterson, the Ritz Chamber Players combines exceptional artistry on stage with inspiring educational programs in schools and throughout the community. Through its concert series in Jacksonville and performances across the United States, the Ritz Chamber Players continues to build the participation of multicultural audiences that reflect our diverse society. Providing valuable community resources is vital to the Ritz Chamber Players. The group's education initiatives provide elementary and high school students with educational activities, master classes, and performances. Ritz Chamber Players in partnership with Play On Philly will continue to foster underserved students in low socioeconomic areas will be provided the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the arts, culture, and chamber music. For more information on the Ritz Chamber Players visit ritzchamberplayers.org/

About Philadelphia Chamber Music Society's Education Program: The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society's multi-faceted Education & Outreach Program inspires people of all ages by enhancing the concert experience, mentoring young players, building new audiences, collaborating with other nonprofits, and fostering community around the shared experience of chamber music. For more information on the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society visit www.pcmsconcerts.org/

About Curtis Institute of Music: In the 2019–20 school year, the Curtis Institute of Music celebrates 95 years of educating and training exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. With a small student body of about 175, Curtis provides each young musician with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by personalized attention from celebrated faculty and a "learn by doing" philosophy. To ensure that admissions are based solely on artistic promise, Curtis makes an investment in each admitted student so that no tuition is charged for their studies. Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings each year in Philadelphia and around the world. For more information on the Curtis Institute of Music visit www.curtis.edu/