



New initiatives will share neighborhood string quartet model nationwide

**Community MusicWorks awarded \$300,000
by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

January 2009

Community MusicWorks (CMW) of Providence, Rhode Island, has received a \$300,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The three-year grant will support CMW's efforts to share the organization's unique model with the classical music and arts education fields.

Through a series of strategic collaborations, Community MusicWorks will gather musicians and educators from across the country for discussion and exploration of the organization's unique approach, establishing itself as a leader in the emerging field of arts learning for social justice. Building on its three-year-old Fellowship Program, CMW will continue to respond to a growing desire among artists for meaningful career paths that unite artistry and service.

CMW's Executive-Artistic Director Sebastian Ruth is looking forward to the new possibilities that will emerge. "This is an opportunity to both strengthen what we do here in Providence and to share our innovative methods with other communities and institutions," Ruth explains. "As we've thought strategically about our work in the last five years, we've been concerned primarily with growing and strengthening our model of a community-based string quartet. Sharing this approach is the next step; we're extremely grateful to the Mellon Foundation for enabling us to build on our Fellowship Program, and we're excited to support a broad array of young professional musicians and students interested in joining this discussion and experiencing this type of work."

"Community MusicWorks has created a truly revolutionary approach to community-building and music education and performance" says Elizabeth Hollander, President of CMW's Board of Directors, "and this funding will allow talented musicians from around the country to experience this work first hand, and bring elements back to their home communities. As a new administration in



Washington invites new approaches to education, it's especially meaningful to our organization to be able to contribute to the national dialogue about the transformative potential of arts education."

Built around the permanent inner-city residency of a string quartet, Community MusicWorks is in its twelfth year of creating long-term learning and mentoring relationships between professional musicians and more than 100 children in the most underserved neighborhoods of Providence, Rhode Island. CMW's vision is to inspire urban youth to imagine new possibilities for their futures through music education and performance, thereby transforming their lives, the lives of their families, and their entire community.

The Providence String Quartet is the organization's permanent resident ensemble, and its members serve their neighborhood as teachers, mentors, and organizers of community-building events. The organization began a Fellowship Program in 2006 that offers talented young professional musicians a two-year immersion in the program to learn about and participate in the model; the new initiatives build on the success of the Fellowship Program.

One of the nation's largest private foundations, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's grant-making philosophy is to build, strengthen and sustain institutions and their core capacities. The Foundation is also interested in addressing issues of diversity, by providing opportunities for all students to experience and learn from the perspectives of diverse faculty members, and by supporting the careers of gifted minority scholars. The Foundation's grant to CMW will support the organization's ongoing seminar series, as well as two new projects – a facilitated visits initiative and a collaboration with Brown University's Cogut Center for the Humanities – that will extend the impact of CMW's work.

The monthly seminar series is a core component of CMW's Fellowship Program, and has provided a proven space for Providence area arts organizations to share ideas, discuss issues of common concern, and learn about best practices. According to Minna Choi, CMW's Fellowship Program Coordinator, "the Mellon Foundation grant will allow CMW to broaden the scope and breadth of our seminar series, allowing us to bring in high-profile presenters from around the country to address issues central to our work here in Providence."

The facilitated visits project responds to frequent requests from conservatory students, professional musicians, and educators interested in learning more



about CMW's approach. Currently, musicians can apply for the two-year Fellowship Program; the facilitated visits project will expand CMW's offerings by creating a series of four-day immersion programs (and accompanying written materials) through which participants will learn about CMW, and explore the connection between service and the arts. Participants will take part in community-building events, give performances, and participate in educational forums about the CMW model. The facilitated visits project will also create important connections for current and former CMW fellows.

The first facilitated visit involves a collaboration with the Detroit-based Sphinx Organization, a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the careers of minorities in classical music. The two organizations will also be working together on an ongoing basis to promote CMW's Fellowship Program to Sphinx participants and alumni. According to Sphinx's Artistic Director Afa Sadykhly, "Sphinx's primary goal is to increase the participation of people of color in classical music, while also providing access to music education for young people in underserved communities. Community MusicWorks is creating exciting professional opportunities for musicians to engage and give back to communities, which resonates well with our own mission."

The second new initiative involves a three-year partnership with the Cogut Center for the Humanities at Brown University. This collaboration – which began in December 2006 when the Cogut Center invited the Providence String Quartet to be part of the West East Divan Orchestra's residency at Brown – will include an annual visit by a senior scholar, performances by the Providence String Quartet at the Cogut Center, and a Cogut Center fellowship that will allow a Brown University student to work closely with Community MusicWorks for one or two semesters each year.

Community MusicWorks also plans to compile a written compendium that will disseminate the organization's practices to the general public.

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For more information, visit www.communitymusicworks.org. Please direct all inquiries to Heath Marlow, Director of Development, (401) 861-5650 ext. 6 or hmarlow@communitymusicworks.org.