

The Oberlin Conservatory of Music

Ranked consistently among the nation's top liberal arts schools, Oberlin College is committed to rigorous academics, artistic and musical excellence, and social justice. Founded in 1833, Oberlin was the first institution of higher education in America to adopt a policy to admit students of color (1835) and the first college to award bachelor's degrees to women (1841) in a coeducational program. Oberlin's distinct history of challenging intellectual and social conventions shapes the student experience today, which fosters strong bonds among a diverse community of bright and talented students from around the world. Oberlin's combination of a leading liberal arts college and a world-class music conservatory creates an unparalleled learning environment.

Awarded the 2009 National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama and called a "national treasure" by the *Washington Post*, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music is recognized as one of the foremost professional training institutions in the world. Established in 1865 as one of the two divisions of Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, the conservatory is America's oldest continuously operating conservatory of music and is the only major music school in the U.S. devoted primarily to the education of undergraduate musicians.

The conservatory prepares artistically talented and intellectually gifted students for professional careers in music and a lifetime of effective advocacy for the arts. The degree programs of the conservatory are designed to develop understanding and insight into the arts, as well as the knowledge, skills, and technical competence essential to professional musicians. The members of the conservatory's internationally distinguished faculty are dedicated to both teaching and professional performance. Central to its mission are the more than 500 performances and events Oberlin produces each year by ensembles, students, and faculty of the conservatory and by guest artists, including residencies by Distinguished Professor of Voice Marilyn Horne, Professor of Conducting Robert Spano, and guest conductor Sir Simon Rattle.

The effectiveness of an Oberlin Conservatory education can be measured in the success of its students and graduates. Among recent awards won by conservatory students and recent graduates are the Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition Grand Prize (2008, 2007, 2003, 2002); Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition Grand Prize (2007, 1996); Fulbright Scholarships (nine in the last five years); and Javits Fellowships (three in the last four years). In 2008, eighth blackbird, a contemporary music ensemble fully formed at Oberlin, won the Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Oberlin has performed at Carnegie Hall to rave reviews (Oberlin's performance of the Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra* was described as "stellar" by the *New York Times*); launched a national record label (Oberlin Music) distributed on iTunes and other digital media channels; performs annually at the Kennedy Center as part of the Conservatory Project Series; and undertook a nine-day tour of China with its 66-member student orchestra, performing to critical acclaim and capacity audiences in five cities, including Beijing and Shanghai. The conservatory supports innovative student-developed performance projects and arts initiatives through the Creativity & Leadership project, Oberlin's new entrepreneurship program, funded by a \$1.1 million grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman and Burton D. Morgan Foundations.

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A leader in music education, Oberlin offered the country's first four-year degree program in public school music (1921); introduced the Suzuki method of string pedagogy to the U.S. (1958); was the first U.S. undergraduate institution to establish a program in electronic music (1969); and is building the world's first gold-level LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) music teaching facility, the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building. Oberlin was the first professional music school to admit African Americans, including Pulitzer Prize winning alumnus George Walker. An Oberlin graduate founded the Cleveland Orchestra, and its extraordinary concert facility—Severance Hall—carries his family name.

Conservatory alumni and faculty have won countless Grammy Awards and international competitions, gained national and international stature as performers, conductors, composers, scholars, educators, and arts administrators. Graduates hold leadership positions and perform with all major orchestras including Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, the National Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic, and with distinguished opera companies such as Lyric Opera Chicago, the Metropolitan, and San Francisco. Other alumni have pursued successful careers in jazz, chamber music, or the film industry. Many others teach in schools, colleges, universities, and conservatories around the country, and Oberlin leads all undergraduate institutions in the number of graduates who go on to earn doctorates in music.