



## **Kaufman Center and Opus 118 Harlem School of Music Create Partnership to Save Celebrated Music Program for East Harlem Children**

New York City music education nonprofits Kaufman Center and Opus 118 Harlem School of Music have created a partnership to ensure the continuation of Opus 118's music education programs for children in East Harlem. Kaufman Center, New York City's premier pre-college music education institution, will lend its management expertise and other resources in support of Opus 118's internationally recognized in-school programs as well as its community music school in Harlem, which offers children one-on-one and ensemble instruction after school.

Of the new agreement, Opus 118 founder **Roberta Guaspari** said, "I have always felt that it is of primary importance for all students to have the opportunity to study music as part of a core curriculum. With Kaufman Center's help I feel that Opus 118 can advance this goal further than ever before."

The story of Ms. Guaspari's struggle to keep music education alive in Harlem's public schools inspired two Oscar-nominated films – the 1996 documentary *Small Wonders* and the 1999 feature *Music of the Heart*, starring Meryl Streep – and moved violinists Arnold Steinhardt, Itzhak Perlman and Isaac Stern to rescue the school program when it was faced with budget cuts by the Department of Education. More recently, Opus 118 has once again faced financial difficulties that threatened its existence, but the new alliance with Kaufman Center will enable its programs to continue without interruption.

Kaufman Center Executive Director **Lydia Kontos** said, "We at Kaufman Center have long admired the work of Opus 118, and are thrilled at this opportunity to expand our ability to serve families in low-income communities in which many children do not have access to quality music education and the many lifelong benefits this training can provide."

**Stacey Spencer-Willoughby**, President of the Opus 118 Parents Association, says, "This agreement with Kaufman Center represents the fruition of all the hard work and dedication of the community and the children the program trains – children who believe in the dream of beautiful music and a chance to share it. We are excited and proud to be a part of it."

The alliance between Kaufman Center and Opus 118 is supported by **The New York Merger, Acquisition and Collaboration Fund** (<http://www.nymac.org>), an initiative established to encourage

and enable long-term collaboration between nonprofit organizations working in New York City. NYMAC's grant commitment of \$55,500, which will be awarded upon Kaufman Center's and Opus 118's successful raising of \$55,500 in matching funds, represents a strong belief in the benefits of the two organizations' work to bring music into students' lives.

### **About Kaufman Center**

In addition to providing scholarships that enable children of diverse backgrounds to study music at its facility at 129 West 67th Street, **Kaufman Center** offers low-cost music education to public school children through its **Success Through Suzuki Program** in Harlem and its after-school program based at the Frank Sinatra High School of the Arts in Queens. Thousands of children from Title 1 public schools across New York City have experienced classic Broadway musicals for the first time at free performances of Kaufman Center's **Broadway Playhouse** series for schools.

Founded in 1952 as a community arts school, today's Kaufman Center comprises **Lucy Moses School**, New York's largest community arts school; **Merkin Concert Hall**; and **Special Music School**, a K-12 public school for musically gifted children.

### **Kaufman Center**

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