



**A COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM  
IN THE HEART OF BROOKLYN**



# THE NEED

Youth in Brooklyn continue to process trauma from the isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic, the daily barrage of news about global conflict and the pressures of social media.

City budget cuts leave schools and communities with little access to arts programs, particularly in under-resourced neighborhoods.

# THE OBJECTIVE

To empower youth in our community with innovative, no-cost programming that uses music, poetry and song to facilitate creative expression and community building.



# THE CHALLENGE

The local Title 1 schools that our students attend - MS 890, MS 246 (The Walt Whitman School), Ditmas JHS 62, MS 442, and PS 139 - have little to no arts funding.

# 52%

do not have a music class, club or program at school.

# 87%

only have access to music education through our program.

At private middle schools, like Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School, students participate in band, choral and orchestra programs three to five days a week within the school curriculum. Many of these students also take private music lessons and participate in a variety of arts and cultural activities outside of school.

Public schools in our Flatbush neighborhood, like Ditmas Junior High School, that mostly serve low-income students are less likely to have music offered as a significant part of the curriculum. Most families have few resources to rent instruments and pay for lessons and are unable to make up for the gap in creative enrichment activities.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC EDUCATION



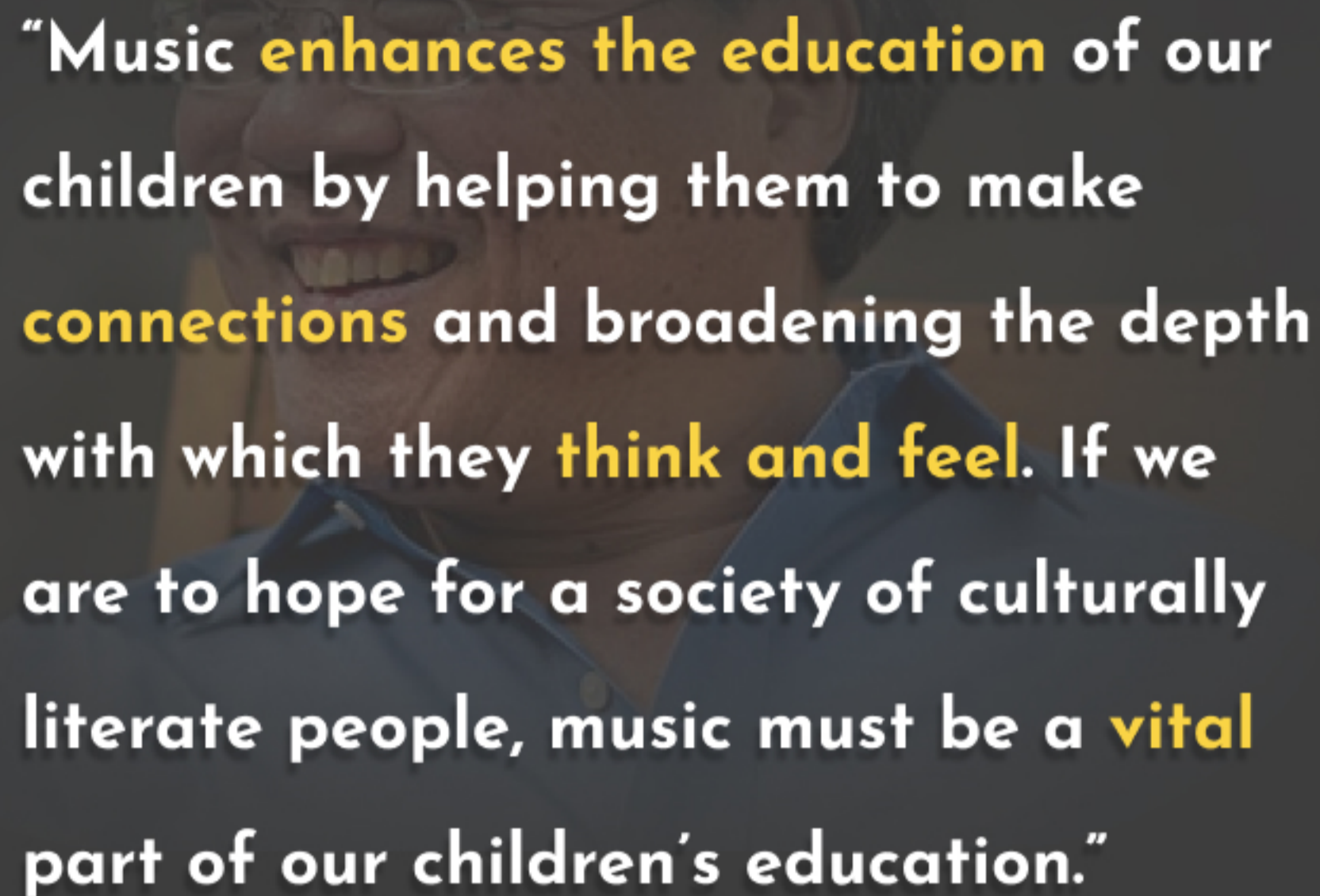
Middle school students who learn music score significantly higher on algebra assignments in ninth grade than their non-music educated counterparts.

High school students who participate in music ensembles report the lowest lifetime and current use of harmful substances (tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs).

Schools with music programs have an estimated 90.2 percent graduation rate and 93.9 percent attendance rate compared to schools without music education, which average 72.9 percent graduation and 84.9 percent attendance.\*

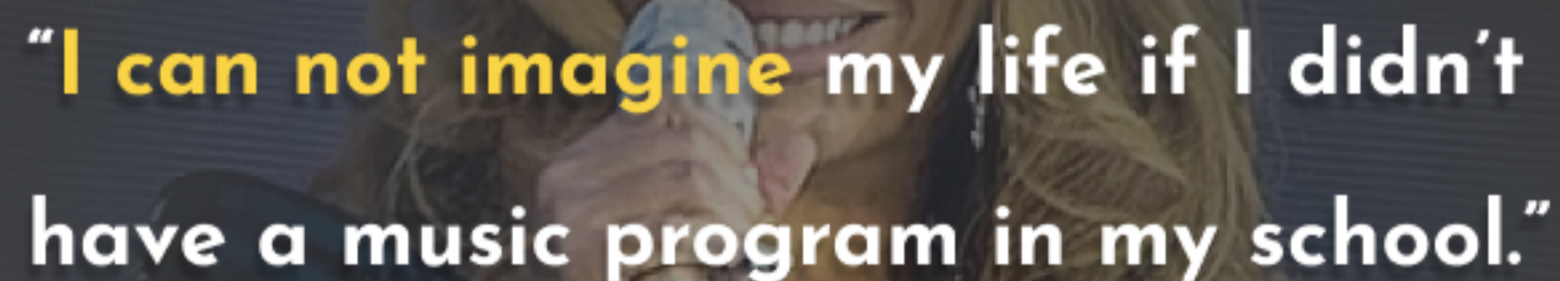


**BROOKLYN  
PORCH  
MUSIC**



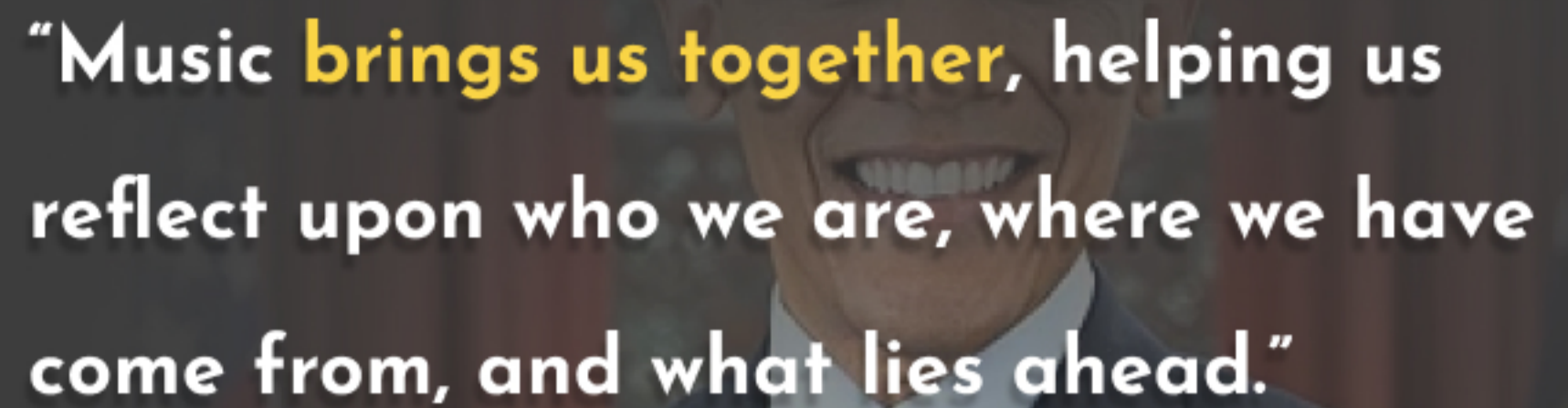
“Music **enhances the education** of our children by helping them to make **connections** and broadening the depth with which they **think and feel**. If we are to hope for a society of culturally literate people, music must be a **vital** part of our children’s education.”

- Yo-Yo Ma



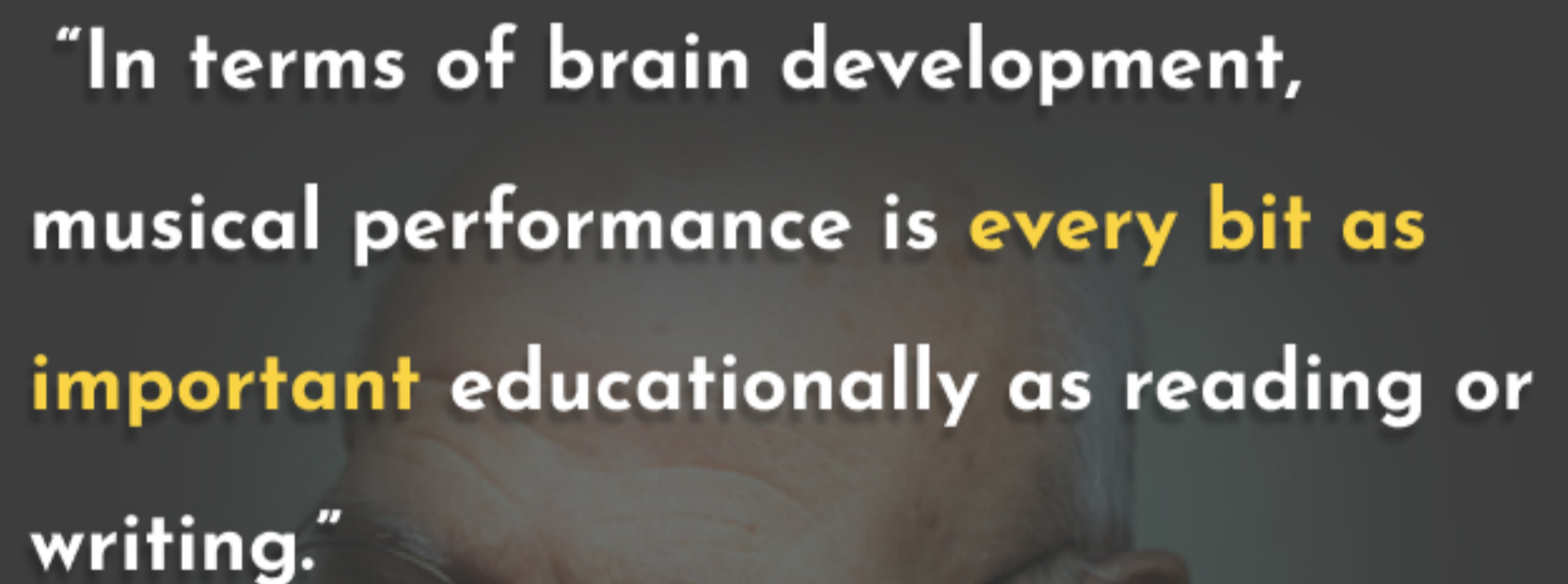
“**I can not imagine** my life if I didn’t have a music program in my school.”

- Beyonce



“Music **brings us together**, helping us reflect upon who we are, where we have come from, and what lies ahead.”

- Barack Obama, Former USA President



“In terms of brain development, musical performance is **every bit as important** educationally as reading or writing.”

- Oliver Sacks, Neurologist & Writer



# THE OPPORTUNITY

Our neighborhoods are among the most racially, ethnically and economically diverse in America, presenting a unique opportunity for connections across social barriers.

Our students, families and teachers bring a rich cultural diversity of musical influences.

There is demand for live music! All of our concerts are well attended by a mix of families and community members.

Although students don't have access to music in the public schools, the neighborhood is home to a remarkable wealth of resources – professional musicians, educational institutions like Brooklyn College, performance venues like Kings Theater.

Mobilizing these resources can fill the gap left by the city and schools, thereby building community and enriching the lives of underserved children.



# WHAT WE DO

Brooklyn Porch Music provides no-cost, accessible, and high-quality music programming to participants who live alongside and look like the audience they are performing for, demonstrating the ability of all to access creative outlets and uplift their communities, without regard to age, race, or class.

With a focus on creativity, storytelling, collective improvisation, and music composition, the program encourages students to think independently and try new forms of expression.

Youth write songs and stories about their neighborhood, and perform them alongside their mentors and peers in underutilized public spaces.

Our curriculum provides a foundation in improvisation, music literacy, and aural training, preparing students with the skills necessary to be professional, creative musicians.

While the program focuses on jazz and pop music, it also incorporates material that is culturally relevant to the participating youth and mentors. We learn and perform music from Pakistani films, Argentinian folk songs, Arabic melodies, and Afro-Caribbean drum patterns.

Through intensive one-on-one mentorship with local musicians, original composition workshops, large group ensemble rehearsals and performances in interactive multi-generational community concerts, youth participants develop their skills as creative artists and explore the role of music in community building.

The program provides dignified, meaningful work for young professional musicians from working class neighborhoods in Brooklyn and pays them a living wage.



## MENTORSHIP SUNDAYS

Youth meet with a professional mentor musician for a private lesson

## STORY-TELLING THURSDAYS

Youth meet with mentors to compose melodies and write poetry on the themes that matter to them most

## ENSEMBLE TUESDAYS

Youth gather with professional mentors and peers for a big band rehearsals in which they learn to play their original compositions



# OUR STORY

Our program was inspired by Roy Nathanson's daily porch concerts beginning in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic. Every day at 5 pm, Roy and a group of local professional musicians played one song for a socially distanced audience. With community support, these concerts evolved into a dynamic, COVID-safe outdoor music program, which today has become Brooklyn Porch Music.

As seen in...

The New York Times

WNYC

NEW YORK POST

NOTICIAS

FOX 5

88.3fm WBG.org

Commonweal

From the New York Times: "That Healing Jazz Thing on a Porch in Brooklyn"

"Mr. Nathanson and his band played each evening from April 2 until Father's Day, 82 days total. In that time, they started a website, raised donations for local food pantries and penniless musicians, and lit up a neighborhood."



On WNYC "Pandemic Porch Concerts in Brooklyn Evolve into a New Music School"

"Beyond picking up tips on how to improve their technique, the porch sessions have helped the young musicians process their feelings in song. For example, one student wrote a meditation on sitting alone during the pandemic amid heaps of laundry. Others wrote about the avenues – Coney Island, Flatbush and Utica – that connect their communities."

"The fact that I'm 16 and playing with kids that go to middle school and even younger is incredible to me, because we can all bond over music," said Haiz Diallo. "To be doing something so communal is very important in these times."





# OUR IMPACT

Since 2020, we have served over 200 young people with eight seasons (two per year) of music programming.

In our 2022 program survey, an astounding 98% of students reported that our program positively influenced how they view themselves, and 95% reported that the program helped them form meaningful friendships with peers and adult mentors.

## Program Participation in Spring 2023:

- 88% average program attendance (present/expected)
- 97% of youth say they plan to return to the Program
- 87% felt good or great about Sunday Lessons
- 81% felt good or great about Ensemble rehearsal
- 100% of youth felt good or great about their relationship with mentors

## Program Outcomes in Spring 2023:

- 93% of youth report trying something new for the first time in  
• Porch Music
- 96% said Porch Music helped them to feel more confident
- 88% of youth said they made friends in Porch Music
- 100% of youth said that they felt part of something bigger than themselves

We continue to conduct surveys at the conclusion of each season to gather feedback to improve outcomes.



# OUR COMMUNITY



At Brooklyn Porch Music, we strive to cultivate respect and understanding for neighbors across class and racial divides, strengthening the bonds of our community.

Our program is no-cost but based on the mutual aid model, meaning everyone contributes what they can.

While the priority is for working class families, the middle class families involved support the program through making donations, transporting equipment, and bringing snacks for rehearsals.

All families have the responsibility to support their children in their musical journeys by reinforcing teaching and encouraging practicing habits.

All families contribute food for seasonal potlucks, hand out flyers in their neighborhoods and help set up for concerts.



# THE HEART OF BROOKLYN

## Concert Locations:

- 1 The Junction / Hillel Place
- 2 Newkirk Plaza
- 3 Avenue C Plaza
- 4 Artmaggedon
- 5 Flatbush Frolic
- 6 Newkirk Open Streets

## Lesson Locations:

- 7 Residential porches in Ditmas Park
- 8 Rehearsals at Jalsa Grill & Gravy

Flatbush is made up of Jamaican, Caribbean, Pakistani, African American and various Latinx communities.

48.6 % Black

19.9 % White

19.5 % Hispanic or Latinx

9.2 % Asian

Kensington is made up of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Orthodox Jewish, Latin American, Central Asian (Uzbek and Tajik), Polish, Italian, Australian and Russian communities.

47.9% White (mostly Eastern European immigrants)

6.9% Black

24.1% Asian

17.6% Hispanic or Latinx

Two very different neighborhoods within our catchment have a wide range of diverse cultures living and working together. Both are made up of a majority of recent immigrants to the US.

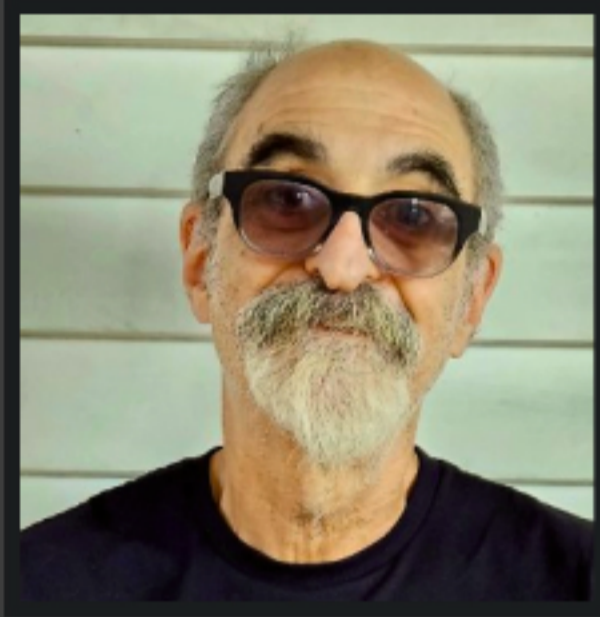


# VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- Expand catchment to include more youth from Title 1 schools in East Flatbush.
- Repair and update our instrument inventory.
- Strengthen existing, and form new relationships with community organizations.
- Support a robust concert schedule of twenty outdoor community performances a year.
- Provide year round programming through the summer and winter seasons.
- Employ full-time staffing to support program and fundraising efforts.
- Establish a permanent brick and mortar location for rehearsals and equipment.

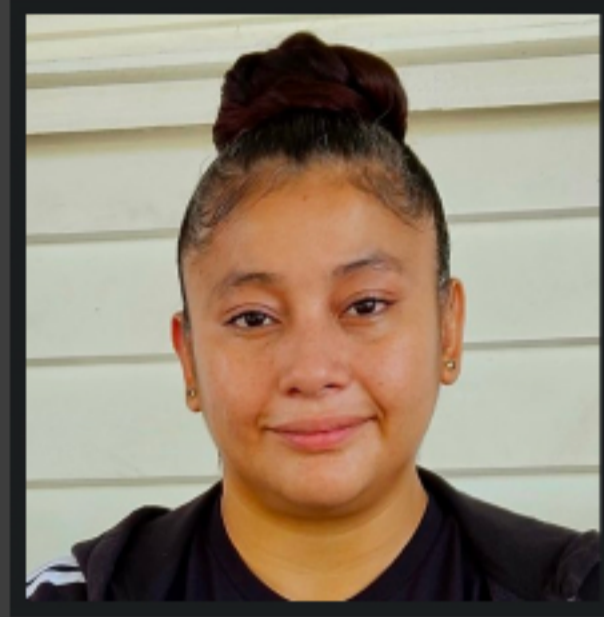


# OUR TEAM



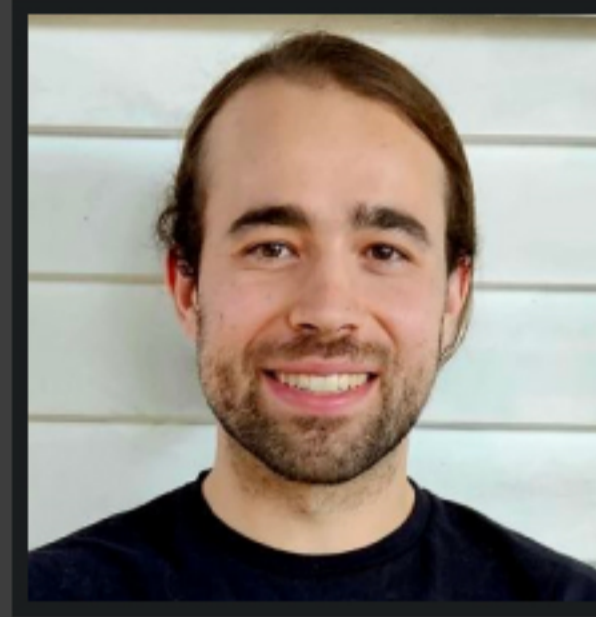
**Roy  
Nathanson**

Artistic Director



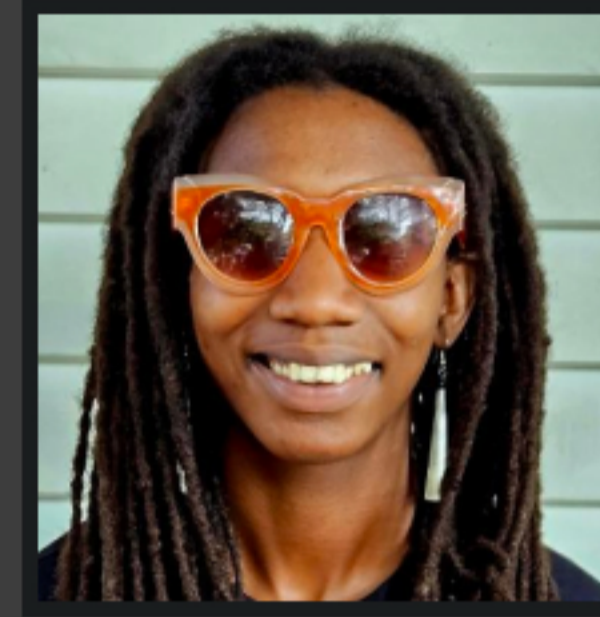
**Jessica  
Martinez**

Outreach Coordinator



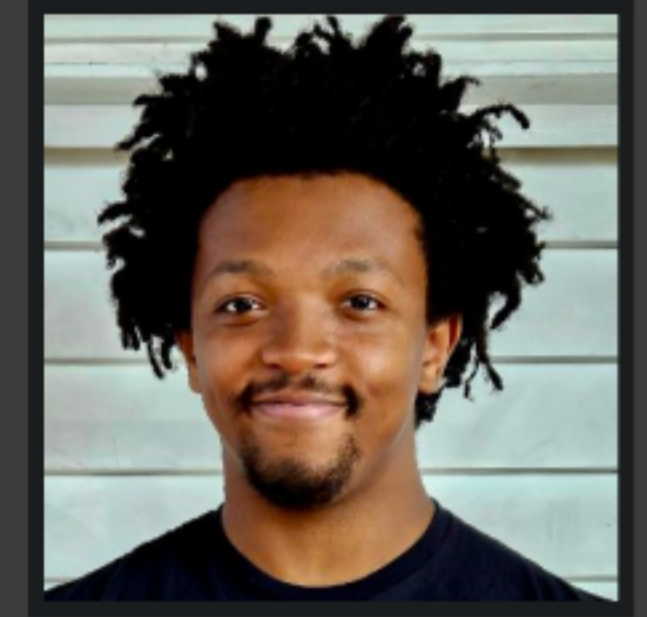
**Aidan  
Scrimgeour**

Piano



**Keyanna  
Hutchinson**

Guitar



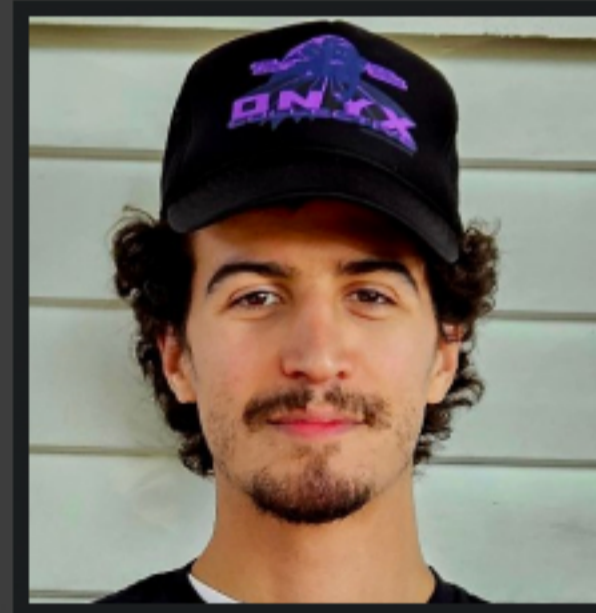
**Evan  
Lawrence**

Bass



**Eric  
Alabaster**

Drums & Piano



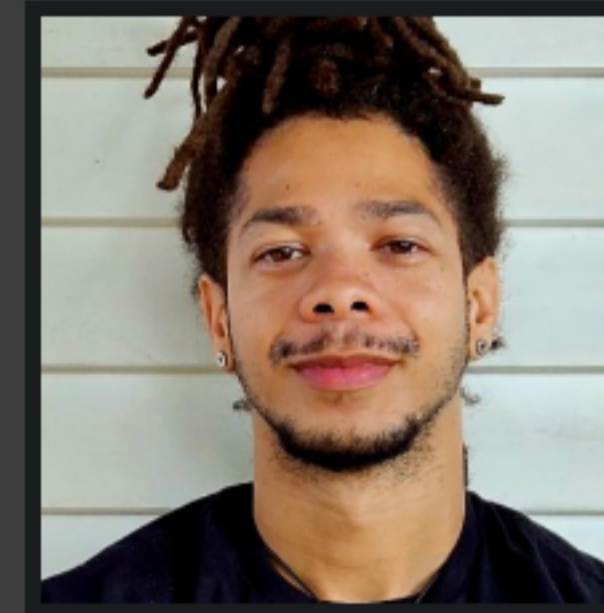
**Isaiah  
Barr**

Saxophone



**Milena  
Casado**

Trumpet



**Justo  
Kelly**

Voice



# OUR SUPPORTERS

## Partners



## Funders



# OUR NONPROFIT HOST

Brooklyn Porch Music is proudly hosted by Jazz Passengers Music Projects, Inc. (JPMP)  
a 501(c)(3) exempt New York not-for-profit corporation, NYS Charities Bureau No. 47-67-89, EIN No. 45-5568813

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JAZZ  
PASSENGERS  
MUSIC  
PROJECTS, INC.



# TESTIMONIALS



At Porch Music I found friends and feel able to express myself. You get to learn more instruments and they have really nice teachers.

- Amy Lee Romelus (13 years old)

It's one of the best things going on for our child. Not only is he learning music but he is engaging with the community.

- Allison Garber (parent)



I have been participating in this amazing music program since it was launched in Spring 2020. It has benefited my life in many aspects because there was nothing to do in our community during the brutal, lonely pandemic. This program has assisted me in developing two new skills, which are: playing the piano, and composing music lyrics. This program offers a great message, which is: community and working together. I will forever treasure this and keep it with me as I get older because not only is it a valuable message, but it also teaches you to give back to the community, and overall be a positive influence to all of us.

- Evan Skeete (14 years old)



It's a whole group of people who love doing what they do best and a safe place for musicians. I highly recommend it for people who like performing and for those who want to make new and lasting friendships

- Nia Fisher (13 years old)

Caden has learned to play the guitar rather quickly. The instructors are amazing. It's a nice community. He's around others with like interests. It's an invaluable opportunity to grow in his interests.

- Maricel Charles (parent)



I have been lucky to be a part of this music program since spring 2020. In that time, I have indirectly and directly learned skills that can benefit me with whatever adventures my future holds. In this productive environment, I've learned how to work well with others, I've improved and honed my skills regarding playing instruments, but most importantly, I've learned that learning is most effectively done in groups, where we can all collaborate and share ideas to improve as a whole. I feel very fortunate to be surrounded by the kind and supportive people who are our student mentors and teachers. As always, a big shout to everyone supporting the program, and I hope you realize the impact that you're able to make on our community.

- Oscar Tutschulte (14 years old)

