



Announcing The RSC ChamberMusicLab - Full Description

*Intensive Full Scholarship Honors Program for Advanced Pre-College Students
Subsidized Tuition and Scholarship Assistance for Middle School Junior Program*

The Rivers School Conservatory is pleased to offer a significantly expanded chamber music program, The RSC ChamberMusicLab, beginning in the second semester of 2020-2021. ChamberMusicLab will take place on Saturdays at RSC in Weston, MA. The program will feature intensive chamber music training, a steady diet of master classes, and ample performance opportunities. The full scholarship Honors ChamberMusicLab is for very advanced pre-college students, generally in grades 10-12. The Junior ChamberMusicLab is for serious middle school musicians.

ChamberMusicLab is an outgrowth of QuartetLab, a seven-year-old program created by Bruce Coppock, Chair of the RSC Chamber Music Department and co-founder of the Boston Chamber Music Society, when he was president and managing director of the renowned Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. It continued after his retirement to Boston in 2017; RSC is proud to house this program starting in 2020-2021. With its superior facilities, welcoming and intimate atmosphere, convenient location with free parking, and bucolic setting, RSC is ideally situated to host this program. With a primary concern for everyone's safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, all ChamberMusicLab instruction will take place in large, modern, and well-ventilated spaces, which have been thoroughly inspected and approved for much larger groups than the program will use. The entire campus is subject to rigorous health protocols and a mask mandate.

The ChamberMusicLab Vision:

To build a community of gifted and enthusiastic middle and high school musicians, drawn together by their mutual passion for chamber music and an unremitting willingness to work hard. Initially based in string quartets and piano trios, it is our hope that the program will grow to include wind and brass quintets, as well as mixed and percussion ensembles.

ChamberMusicLab Program Description:

ChamberMusicLab is an intensive chamber music study course, involving a year-long commitment of weekly three-hour rehearsals and coaching to learn and explore in-depth the experience of being in a chamber music group. ChamberMusicLab aspires to provide a quasi-professional experience, in order to teach both the musical and interpersonal insights required for success in chamber music. It demands a high level of individual instrumental proficiency, as well as curiosity about how one's part fits into the whole. It demands commitment to the exacting work of matching pitch, timbre, gesture, and stylistic concepts with colleagues, in a manner that sustains and grows relationships.

ChamberMusicLab Divisions:

ChamberMusicLab will take place at two levels, senior and junior. The senior program, **Honors ChamberMusicLab**, is designed for very advanced pre-college students (generally in grades 10-12) and



will provide full scholarships. **Junior ChamberMusicLab** is designed for serious middle school students in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades, and is intended to prepare students for the Honors ChamberMusicLab. Junior ChamberMusicLab will carry a tuition fee equal to the regular RSC chamber music program, but will provide double the instruction time. It will offer master classes, workshops and performance opportunities. As with all RSC programs, financial aid is available.

In **Honors ChamberMusicLab**, which will commence on February 6, 2021, students will be placed through auditions in chamber music groups, initially string quartets and piano trios. Most Saturdays, groups will spend 90 minutes in rehearsal and have 90-minute coaching sessions. Approximately ten times during the academic year, groups will rehearse and coach for an hour each and spend the third hour in master classes with internationally-renowned chamber musicians. In the prototype of this program, QuartetLab, participants have given polished, complete public performances of quartets of Brahms, Beethoven, and Bartók. One quartet performed from memory.

In **Junior ChamberMusicLab**, commencing in Fall 2021, students will be similarly placed through auditions into chamber music groups, usually string quartets and piano trios, and will rehearse for an hour and be coached for an hour. Rehearsals will be overseen by rehearsal helpers, who will aid in the learning of essential rehearsal techniques. As in Honors ChamberMusicLab, approximately ten times during the academic year, groups will rehearse and coach for an hour each and spend the third hour in master classes with internationally-renowned chamber musicians.

Core Faculty:

Bruce Coppock, cello, ChamberMusicLab Director
Gabriella Diaz, violin, Co-Artistic Director of Winsor Music
Danny Kim, viola, Boston Symphony Orchestra
Eugene Kim, cello, RSC Faculty
Ronald Lowry, cello, RSC Faculty

Schedule:

ChamberMusicLab has been scheduled not to conflict with area youth orchestra rehearsals. Both programs will take place concurrently on 30 Saturdays annually between September and May from 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Each program will have two shifts – 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. During the 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM hour, common to each shift, both divisions can come together approximately every three weeks for master classes and performances. In recognition of competing schedule demands, such as SATs, PSATs, ACTs, and religious holidays, the program has also been designed to offer a smorgasbord of chamber music-related activities – critical listening, repertoire sessions, sight-reading, the coach sitting in as a player/coach as appropriate – when one or more members' absence renders regular coaching impractical. With mutual agreement of participants and coaches, occasional sessions may be moved to Sunday.

While the program is designed to accommodate vagaries in the schedule, participants also must make a full commitment to ChamberMusicLab, and will be excused only under the aforementioned exigent circumstances.



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Guiding Philosophy:

The animating idea behind the creation of this program is that chamber music training teaches essential extra-instrumental skills and requires that they happen concurrently: chamber music forces simultaneous playing and listening, reacting and responding, leading and following, and, crucially, the art of being the soloist one moment, disappearing into the background next, and being a song partner next, and so on. One must hear and play one's part in the context of the whole, much like living one's life as part of a community. For that reason, rehearsals and coachings will always involve playing from the score, and possibly from memory.

The philosophy of the program is to teach chamber music skills in great detail from the very beginning. There is an intentional focus on quality of learning over quantity of repertoire covered. A group may spend an entire semester on a single movement. This implies intensive attention on execution (i.e. insistent focus on precision, accuracy of articulation, intonation and phrasing, style, and musical concept). Most importantly, the emphasis is on developing performances by participants that evince deep knowledge of the piece they have learned and palpable ownership of a common interpretive point of view. While rehearsals, master classes, and coachings take place on Saturdays, participants admitted to the program are expressly expected to prepare their chamber music parts as they would their solo repertoire, and to spend time listening to various recommended performances of their repertoire with the score as part of their preparation for Saturday sessions.

Life Skills Building:

Great chamber music playing can be compared to the phenomenon of a basketball team on a fast break. Just as a fast break requires players to execute technically while simultaneously running, passing, catching, reacting, reading the court, and having an awareness of where every player is at all times, chamber music requires that we play our instruments and parts well while simultaneously listening, reacting, adjusting, anticipating, and hearing the other parts. This is what ChamberMusicLab aspires to teach. Learning to navigate differences of opinion and personality and developing the radar to "read the room" are essential goals of this program. These skills, uniquely learned through immersion in chamber music, translate directly into skills young people need to succeed in any field – medicine, law, and many others in which the combination of talent, grit, and collaboration are critical success factors.

Giving Back:

ChamberMusicLab requires that students perform in the community and at special events to promote the study of music at RSC. As ambassadors for RSC and Rivers, all students and faculty are expected to exemplify The Rivers School's value of *Excellence with Humanity*.

Auditions:

Auditions for Spring 2021 Honors ChamberMusicLab will take place in two phases: Preliminary video auditions will take place online through "[Acceptd](#)" (December 21, 2020 deadline). Live final auditions will be held at RSC on January 23, 2021. Both individual musicians and pre-formed ensembles are welcome to apply. Applicants not accepted to ChamberMusicLab are always welcome to participate in the regular RSC chamber music program. Auditions for the 2021-2022 Honors and Junior Divisions will be



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held in Spring 2021. There is a \$15 fee to audition through “Accepted,” and admitted students will be charged a \$30 registration fee; these are the only fees associated with the senior program.

Testimonials:

Previous QuartetLab participants, all now studying at major conservatories in the U.S. and Europe, have been enthusiastic in their praise of the program:

“In five years of studying music in Boston, I can easily say that my QuartetLab experience was unparalleled. The opportunity to study chamber music, while having the time and guidance to delve deep into a work, is something incredibly rare. My three years of QL were like being in a professional quartet: I came to know my colleagues (friends really) in a very special way, learning how they think about music, and figuring out how we can come together to present a stunning, coherent, and innovative musical work.”

“QuartetLab is like no other chamber music experience I probably will ever have and gave us a profound connection to chamber music. The teaching challenged me and the other members of the quartet to become the finest chamber musicians we could be.”

“Thank you for making every Sunday this year a special musical experience. Your passion and utter love for music is contagious, making each week a reminder that music is what I want to spend the rest of my life doing. You have taught me countless things this year about how to be a chamber musician, but especially how to make a piece my own.”

“I cannot thank you enough for everything you’ve done for me and our group. I have learned more about music and chamber music from QuartetLab than any camp, master class or any other group in the past. I really feel like this experience helped me reach a whole new level of musicality. Thank you again so much for teaching us things we would otherwise never learn anywhere else and loving it through tough and fun times.”

“Through [QuartetLab] I have come to realize how vital it is to clearly communicate ideas and have a well-informed opinion about the music. Because you coached us on how to work with each other, I found I have the ability to tolerate and trust others. The slow and meticulous work on intonation has opened my ears to a new kind of projection: resonance. You reminded me that the music is why we play these amazing pieces, not the flashy dance that can be performed alongside it. But most importantly, you taught me how to sing. You taught me how to tell a story, how to take listeners on a journey without words or pictures. Thank you so much for your dedication and care.”

ChamberMusicLab participants will be presented in recital at RSC (as health circumstances permit), and at other venues in the Boston area. Ensembles will be supported in entering chamber music competitions as circumstances and ensemble readiness warrant.

For further information, please email Bruce Coppock at b.coppock@rivers.org.