

Summer Pilot & Proof of Concept July 2023 through August 2023

THE CRESCENDO LAB IS THE FIRST INITIATIVE FROM THE PERSISTENT ENDEAVORS FOUNDATION, INC. (PEFI).

[HTTPS://MARIESDILLARD.COM/PERSISTENT-ENDEAVORS](https://mariesdillard.com/persistent-endeavors)

BACKGROUND

Initiative's purpose:

Address the underrepresentation of certain communities of color in American orchestras.



Lack of Diversity in Orchestras

Less than 2% of musicians in American orchestras are African American, according to the League of American Orchestras.

Only 4.3% of conductors are Black, and composers remain predominantly white as well.

Initiative's goals:

- Enhance the student's self-confidence and develop a deep appreciation for diversity in classical music
- Gradually increase the student's artistry and sound
- Co-create a deep joy for persistent practice and self-expression



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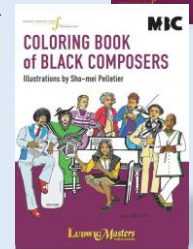
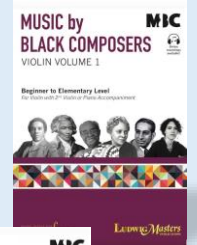
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Materials & Resources:

- <https://www.sfsymphony.org/EducationCommunity/Musical-Heroes>
- <https://www.musicbyblackcomposers.org/>
- Black Composers & Musicians
 - MBC VIOLIN VOLUME I, PUBLISHED BY LUDWIG MASTERS
 - MBC COLORING BOOK OF BLACK COMPOSERS
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@MusicbyBlackComposers>
- Emerging Black Composers Project
https://youtu.be/tnt7iRy58_g?si=ex30gWM3LtjDFh4G



Method:

- Engage new and emerging classical musicians for mentoring
- Establish a trusted mentoring relationship
- Set student-led goals
- Know your instrument
- Review fundamentals (clap rhythms, note reading, proper setup, bow hold, scales, arpeggios, etc.)
- Review new vocabulary
- Introduce appropriate History lessons about Black and brown composers and musicians (Florence Price, Scott Joplin, Sanco, Ignatius, Frederick Douglas, etc.)
- Play a song together



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Summer 2023 Pilot Participants:

- Five Black-identifying students (ages 5, 6, 10, & 12½)
- Beginner through intermediate-level on violin
- Five weeks (one meeting/week)

Summer 2023 Pilot Sessions:

- Set-up, Warm-up, Rhythm & Note Reading
- Age-appropriate History Lesson/Discussion
- Time to Play Together
- Time for goal setting



Significant Findings:

- Students of different ages (maturity) and instrument skill levels require slightly different approaches to achieve the desired result.
 - For example, younger students may need help distinguishing their left and right sides when facing their mentor (mirror image).
- Older students expressed some difficulty reconciling their feelings about race and racism.
 - So, more emphasis should be placed on a sense of empowerment, a call to action, and the opportunity for change.
- Heavy emphasis should be placed on supporting the student in finding a great teacher while supporting and encouraging a growth mindset.
 - Crescendo Mentors are role models and co-creators of an inclusive future for American Orchestras.
 - Helping our participants see themselves in classical music.



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What a participant says about The Crescendo Lab:

I love playing the violin, but I really love playing the violin with you, Marie. ~Participant



What parents say about The Crescendo Lab:

Our daughter loved her time with Marie, as she effortlessly combined caring and playing with learning. She teaches with an instinctive ease all the while inspiring our child to want to do even more.

~ Steve & Lauren



"I would pick the girls up, and they would literally not be able to stop talking for 30 minutes. They couldn't even wait to get in car. Both girls expressed joy because it was something they could relate to. Sometimes, you learn things because somebody told you to. But this was stuff that they cared about. So, I just thought this was a phenomenal experience."

~ Andrea

"Marie was amazing, and Jasmine absolutely loved their sessions together! Excited to see what your brilliant, talented, generous-spirited daughter does next! Keep shining and fearlessly doing your thing, Marie!"

~ Amy



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