

NEWSLETTER | MAY 2025



THE PRESSER FOUNDATION

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

2024-25 Advancement of Music

The Foundation awarded \$1.45 million in Advancement of Music grants to 148 Greater Philadelphia organizations in February, including 30 first-time recipients and 47 organizations operating with budgets under \$100,000.

This year's recipients demonstrated strong commitments to community engagement through local partnerships, non-traditional venues, multilingual programming, and free events. Many organizations focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives while continuing robust educational outreach and youth programs with free music lessons, school partnerships, and mentorship opportunities.

The Foundation is proud to support these organizations making a difference in their communities and contributing to Greater Philadelphia's arts scene. Learn more in the [news release](#).

2024-25 Capital Support

The Foundation announces new Capital Support grants totaling nearly \$1.1 million in single-year and multi-year grants to 22 music organizations, with \$634,120 to be distributed this fiscal year.

From ensuring ADA accessibility and safer facilities to upgrading technology and performance spaces, these investments enable organizations to better serve their communities through music education and performance. We recognize that behind every upgraded lighting system, new riser, or renovated space is an opportunity to remove barriers to musical excellence and broaden participation. By investing in these infrastructure needs, we're helping to create sustainable musical futures for organizations and the diverse communities they serve.

A complete listing by category of the grantee organizations is included [here](#).

EVENTS

Celebrating the Legacy of Theodore Presser and The Presser Foundation

The Presser Foundation's founder Theodore Presser, music educator and publisher, passed away in October 1925. He filled much of his life with philanthropy, including building and supporting the Presser Home for Retired Music Teachers. Following his passing, his philanthropic legacy lived on through the establishment of The Presser Foundation.

To celebrate this milestone and a century of music philanthropy, the Foundation is collaborating with Temple University's Charles Library and its Special Collections Research Center to host an exhibit from September to December 2025. Grantees and the wider music community will be invited to a reception on November 21, 2025 from 7-9pm at the Charles Library to commemorate this momentous occasion. Stay tuned for more information.

NEXT MOVEMENT: Equity Arc Reflection

In a challenging time for the nonprofit sector and those supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI efforts), The Presser Foundation invited [Equity Arc's](#) Executive Director Stanford Thompson and Associate Director Magee Capsouto to present at the Next Movement Idea Forum. This gathering provides a vital space for music organizations to share knowledge and strengthen collective resolve.

The insights shared during this particular Next Movement session were profound and actionable; the gathered organizations also reinforced the idea that gathering together, building relationships, and collaborating are essential components to weathering whatever storms lie ahead.

We encourage you to [watch the recording](#) (password: .Um%q5nU) to fully appreciate Equity Arc's transformative work and [read our reflection](#) to see our top five takeaways from the session.

NEXT MOVEMENT: August 2025

The Foundation looks forward to hosting its next Next Movement of the year in August! More information and a registration link will be shared via social media and on our website soon. To learn more about Next Movement, check out [the website](#).

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Undergraduate Scholar Award Spotlight: Julia Grady



The Foundation recently named 262 exceptional music students nationwide as 2024-25 Undergraduate Scholar Award recipients, investing \$786,000 to accelerate the next generation of musicians. Each Presser Scholar receives \$3,000 in recognition of their outstanding achievements in musical and academic performance, leadership and service, and contributions to building inclusive communities.

One of the exceptional students receiving the award is Instrumental Performance and Music Composition major Julia Grady (she/they) of Baldwin Wallace University.

As a double major in viola performance and composition, she maintained excellent preparation through organization and discipline. Their remarkable progress included three memorized concertos and consecutive Lauria Competition finals appearances. Her kind, analytical approach and positive determination contributed significantly to her success.

As Steward and Chorister for the BW chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon, Julia developed meaningful outreach concerts and guided members toward scholarship opportunities. As principal violist, she consistently demonstrated leadership, working closely with the Concertmaster and Conductor to address musical and technical challenges while mentoring their section. Their gratis work as lead stage manager for Conservatory performances, including the Bach Festival, ensures the success of these cornerstone events. Their willingness to volunteer their time to tutor peers in Musicology, Theory, and Composition without compensation, is driven purely by a desire to support their fellow students.

Julia's LGBTQ+ advocacy included active participation in the campus Pride Hive Association, fundraising for the Cleveland Trans Choir, and collaborations with LGBTQ+ artists. This commitment to inclusivity began with co-founding a high school GSA and Diversity Union and continued in her welcoming efforts for new Conservatory students.

NEWS & INFORMATION

National Endowment for the Arts Funding

In early May, the federal government announced a plan to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

In [an article](#) written for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, reporters Rosa Cartagena and Peter Dobrin illustrated the ill effects that these dramatic funding cuts would have on arts organizations across the state, including music organizations in Greater Philadelphia. The NEA alone had 64 grants totaling \$1,463,000 to institutions and individual creatives in Philadelphia in 2025. Some of the programs that grants would have supported have already occurred, and organizations have to make up the difference. Others have to cancel planned programming. Many had no indication that funding would be canceled.

Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance president and CEO Patricia Wilson Aden summarized the situation: “Eliminating these agencies [NEA, NEH, and IMLS] would strip away critical resources from the institutions that preserve our nation’s heritage, strengthen our communities, and power our creative economy.”

The Foundation will share survey results regarding the impacts of federal funding cuts and upcoming policy changes that affect the arts. For now, we continue to listen to grantees and the community to understand the current grantees and community in order to understand the current environment. Our door is always open for any grantees who would like to share their thoughts and perspectives.

Blog Posts & Newsletter

Guest Blog Post: Remember that your organization can submit a guest blog post about your efforts and receive an unrestricted honorarium! Check out the guest blog post guidelines on our website, or read the guest blog post submission about [Capital Philharmonic of New Jersey](#).

Report Blog Post: The Foundation may also reach out to feature your organization based on information from your most recent grant follow-up report. Foundation staff will write the feature and share a draft with you before publication. Foundation staff will write the post and share a draft with you before publication. Check out a recent post about [Mamadêlê Foundation and their Afro-Brazilian music programming](#).

Board & Staff Updates

Board: Honoring Vera Wilson

As the Foundation concludes its 2024-25 fiscal year in June, we want to honor Trustee Vera Wilson, who will be transitioning to an Honorary Trustee role in July.

Wilson, the founder of Astral Artists, has been a Board Member since 1999. She has served on the Advancement of Music and Special Projects Committees, chairing the latter from 2006 to 2016. As the founder and long-time leader of Astral Artists, she brings a unique viewpoint to the Board, influencing grantmaking and providing guidance as to the needs of music organizations in Philadelphia.

Born in Argentina, Wilson moved to Philadelphia in 1968. After spending the first 12 years here raising her children, she began her career as a translator and then worked for the

Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and The Curtis Institute for Music. She founded Astral Artists in 1992, which supported hundreds of early-career classical musicians through individualized support, including access to a portfolio of exclusive opportunities in performance, education, and community engagement, and a strong professional network. Even after stepping down as Executive Director, Wilson has continued to support emerging artists. For her decades of service to the Philadelphia music community, she was honored by The Musical Fund Society with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2022.

Wilson remains active in the music community as a board member of both Tri-County Concerts (a Foundation grantee) and the Kingston Chamber Music Festival. She is also the Co-Chair of the Foundation's 100th Anniversary celebration, and we look forward to her continued contributions on the Advancement of Music Committee.

You can learn more about her life and career in [this blog post](#).

Graduate Music Fellow Reflection

Many thanks to the Foundation's incredible third Fellow, Daniel Jackson, for his service, insights, and thoughtful reflections this year! Check out some of his final thoughts below.

"As my time with The Presser Foundation comes to an end, I find it difficult to gather my final thoughts and move forward to the next chapter of my professional music career. Looking back, this Fellowship and the staff at the Presser Foundation arrived at a pivotal time in my life, helping to fill gaps in my knowledge of the business aspects of nonprofit organizations and philanthropy. Additionally, my responsibilities encouraged me to explore the vast music scene of metropolitan Philadelphia, as well as music organizations dedicated to enrichment and education."

"Overall, this has been an invaluable opportunity for learning, growth, and reflection on critical issues within the musical landscape. I am deeply grateful for this experience and inspired to continue advancing the cause of music education, diversity, equity, and inclusion in new and meaningful ways."

Summer Interns Announcement

The Foundation is pleased to welcome two undergraduate summer interns, Nathalie Borden and Jennah Bolden!

Nathalie (they/them) finished their sophomore year at Wesleyan University as a government and music major. As a student growing up in Philadelphia, they attended Settlement Music School, PYO Music Institute, and the Wildflower Composers Camp, all grantees of The Presser Foundation. They are a passionate advocate for preserving arts and cultural spaces and expanding access to music education.

Jennah (she/her) completed her sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in communications and minoring in psychology. She has volunteered for numerous nonprofit organizations in Philadelphia, including One Art Community Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters. She strongly believes that music is a powerful tool for self-expression and community-building.

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