

the lewis prize for music

community | collaboration | leadership

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MEMPHIS-BASED ORGANIZATIONS STAX MUSIC ACADEMY AND MEMPHIS MUSIC INITIATIVE RECEIVE NEW COVID-19 FUNDING FROM THE LEWIS PRIZE FOR MUSIC

New funding for Memphis Music Initiative and Stax Music Academy will support holistic music education programs during COVID-19

[The Lewis Prize for Music](#) — a creative arts philanthropy — announced today the recipients of its COVID-19 Community Response Fund. A total of \$1.25 million will be awarded to 32 Creative Youth Development (CYD) organizations across the U.S. that have adapted and responded to the pressing needs of the young people they serve amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Memphis Music Initiative (MMI) and Stax Music Academy (SMA) announced today that they each received funding of \$50,000 for their youth music education programs.

Amber Hamilton, Executive Director of Memphis Music Initiative, said, “This grant is validation that Memphis is on our way to providing the best programming in the nation in creative youth development, and it provides the resources we need to continue to improve. Our young people need our support now more than ever, and we will show up for them despite all challenges.”

Stax Music Academy Executive Director Pat Mitchell Worley echoed those sentiments: “This Lewis Music Prize grant to two Memphis organizations is further evidence that our city is not only steeped in musical past no other city can claim, but also proves that we continue working into the future by preparing new generations of young people to join the music industry and carry this flame forward. This recognition of our work only strengthens our resolve to continue making meaningful, impactful change at a time when the world is facing many challenges.”

The Lewis Prize for Music invests in youth music organizations and their leaders to facilitate positive change through access to music education. Each of the COVID-19 Community Response Fund recipients, including MMI and SMA, provides young people with opportunities to learn, perform and create music while also serving their immediate and unique needs around food, transportation, mental health, and academics.

From Flint, Michigan to Montgomery, Alabama, to Oakland, California, recipients cultivate leadership opportunities and safe spaces for the young people they support. Many of the recipients have budgets of less than \$100,000 per year, and two-thirds are led by people of color. Through community-driven and youth-focused approaches, recipient organizations have become safe havens for the young people they serve during COVID-19.

“Access to music enriches the social fabric of our lives,” said Daniel Lewis, Founder and Chairman of the Lewis Prize for Music. “The organizations and leaders we have chosen to support in these times play a critical role in the lives and communities of the young people they support. In the face of unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and racial injustice across the country, Creative Youth Development organizations are devoting all of their resources to uplift both the creative and material well-being of young people and their families. We are thrilled to support these organizations – including the Stax Music Academy and Memphis Music Initiative -- and advocate for the entire Creative Youth Development field.”

Like many local arts and grassroots organizations, MMI and SMA were both forced to adapt quickly to the reality of a global pandemic. MMI developed several contingency plans that would preserve virtual summer programming, regardless of quarantine status. Both organizations provided new digital programming along with other vital services that ranged from helping with technology needs to providing locations for food drives. Knowing that many of the families they work with would be impacted financially by COVID-19, MMI remained committed to paying their interns for their time—regardless of their ability to work onsite—and the Stax Music Academy suspended all tuition payments for the rest of the school year.

Both organizations plan to continue, fine-tune, and enhance digital programming in the coming months and will be making announcements soon about exciting new plans.

“The Lewis Prize for Music is committed to supporting young people and the adults in their lives who give them love, safety, and a musical voice,” said Dalouge Smith, CEO of The Lewis Prize for Music. “These 32 grantees work to break down barriers of inequality every day. They also do more than offer programs and services to young people, they include them in decision-making, which is needed now more than ever.”

The grants announced today range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. In addition to MMI and SMA, they will support the following Creative Youth Development organizations:

- **317 Main Community Music Center** (Yarmouth, ME)
- **A Place Called Home** (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Beyond the Bars** (Philadelphia, PA)
- **Beyond the Natural** (Baltimore, MD)
- **Cambridge Community Center** (Cambridge, MA)
- **Center of Life** (Pittsburgh, PA)
- **Crescendo Detroit** (Detroit, MI)
- **Enriching Lives Through Music** (San Rafael, CA)

- **Hyde Square Task Force** (Jamaica Plain, MA)
- **FAME Foundation for the Advancement of Music & Education** (Bowie, MD)
- **Memphis Music Initiative** (Memphis, TN)
- **MEOW Cares, Inc.** (Montgomery, AL)
- **Music Beyond Measure** (Montclair, NJ)
- **Neutral Zone** (Ann Arbor, MI)
- **New City Kids** (Jersey City, NJ)
- **Pico Youth & Family Center** (Santa Monica, CA)
- **Play on Philly** (Philadelphia, PA)
- **ROCA Music Program** (Brownsville, TX)
- **RYSE Youth Center** (Richmond, CA)
- **Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective** (St. Louis, MO)
- **Stax Music Academy** (Memphis, TN)
- **Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village** (Flint, MI)
- **The Choir School of Delaware** (Wilmington, DE)
- **The Heartbeat Music Project** (Crownpoint, NM)
- **The HUBB** (Newark, NJ)
- **The Jessye Norman School of the Arts, Inc.** (Augusta, GA)
- **The TETRA** (Detroit, MI)
- **White Hall Arts Academy** (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Youth Empowerment Project** (New Orleans, LA)
- **Youth on Record** (Denver, CO)
- **Youth Radio** (Oakland, CA)
- **ZUMIX** (East Boston, MA)

More information about the COVID-19 Community Response Fund recipients can be found at: <https://www.thelewisprize.org>. The Lewis Prize for Music will open its second annual Accelerator Award process in the summer.

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About The Lewis Prize for Music

The Lewis Prize for Music believes that music in the lives of young people is a catalytic force to drive positive change in our society. It partners with leaders in diverse and vibrant communities who invest in young people by providing access to safe, inclusive spaces where they can build powerful relationships through music.

The organization is the brainchild of philanthropist Daniel R. Lewis, who has spent the last 19 years focusing on philanthropic efforts in the social and musical arts field, including founding the Miami Music Access Fellowship, serving as the founding chairman of The Cleveland Orchestra Miami Residency/Miami Music Association, chairman of the Spring For Music Festival and chairman of The Management Center. Learn more at www.thelewisprize.org.

About Memphis Music Initiative

Memphis Music Initiative (MMI) invests in youth through transformative music engagement, inspiring creativity and liberation mindsets for black and brown youth in Memphis. MMI's work centers equity and restorative justice, using Memphis' black musical legacy as a muse for cultural pride, self-expression, and self-worth. MMI invests in two ways: through direct programs that connect youth to high-quality in-school, after-school, and summertime opportunities, and by providing funding and resources to advance organizations working with young people. In addition to operating direct programs that expand access to music engagement opportunities for black and brown youth, MMI also supports the ecosystem of community organizations that work to extend music and arts engagement opportunities for black and brown youth.

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About Stax Music Academy

Stax Music Academy (SMA) is an afterschool and summer music institute located adjacent to the Stax Museum of American Soul Music at the original site of Stax Records. Through intensive music education and youth development programming, it prepares its students for post-secondary success as socially conscious adults, regardless of path, whether it be attending college or entering the music workforce. Since its founding in 2000, SMA has educated and mentored more than 3,000 students and its alumni can be heard around the world, teaching, performing, recording, and more at the highest levels of the music industry.

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