

**Memphis Music Initiative**

**Memphis, TN, 2-18-21**

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Memphis Music Initiative to Host Virtual HBCU Music Auditions**

Memphis Music Initiative (MMI) is excited to sponsor a day of virtual music auditions for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) on Saturday, March 13. Participating institutions include:

- Howard University
- Jackson State University
- Tennessee State University
- Fisk University
- LeMoyne-Owen College
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Current high school seniors who are interested in pursuing jazz, instrumental performance, vocal performance, music education, and more are encouraged to audition. See attached flyer for details.

HBCUs have played a key role in the shaping of Black life, culture, and identity. Today, they continue to be an engine for Black economic progress, social justice movements, and Black art. Many of Memphis' talented young people attend storied HBCUs across the country, where they are honing their academic and creative skills in a space that allows their cultural identity to flourish—all while bringing with them their unique perspective as Memphians.

"HBCUs have been a critical highway to economic success, personal growth, artistic development, and knowledge building with our young people," said Amber Hamilton, Executive Director, MMI. "MMI is thrilled to connect the artistic genius of our young Memphians to the world of opportunities represented with our HBCU partners. Memphis has a long tradition of providing the soulful soundtrack to the nation. We can't wait to continue that tradition through the best marching bands in the world."

Today, more than 228,000 students are enrolled at 107 HBCUs across the country.

Memphis is a city with an incomparably rich musical heritage. Black creatives and musicians have shaped its culture and politics, and built and rebuilt communities across Shelby County. That legacy starts in the classroom. Our young people must continue to have opportunities to pursue their art and cultivate their talents—now more than ever. During difficult times, many creative young people find refuge, peace, and power in art. HBCUs provide an invaluable space for Black creatives to thrive and explore their interests and ambitions.

Interested students can register online via [this link](#). The deadline to register is Sunday, March 7.

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**MMI** leverages targeted philanthropic investments, programmatic offerings, and strategic capacity building to strengthen youth, community arts, and music engagement activities for primarily black and Latino youth in communities across Memphis and the Mid-South. 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. Their supports enhance the capability of nonprofit organizations to deliver programs and to secure funding/resources beyond those provided by MMI, so that youth always have access to high-quality music programming.

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*For more information on how we are impacting youth, through transformative music engagement, visit our website at <http://memphismusicinitiative.org/> or find us Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @mmusinitiative.*