

NEW YORK, Oct. 16, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Joseph W. Polisi, President of The Juilliard School, today announced the creation of the Kovner Fellowship Program at Juilliard that will be endowed with a gift of \$60 million – the largest single one-time gift to the School – from Bruce and Suzie Kovner, long-time supporters of the School. Providing full tuition, and living expenses, the Fellowships recognize the excellence of Juilliard's classical music students and enhance the School's 100+ year tradition of attracting and developing the most talented musicians in the world.

The scholarships cover the full cost of attendance – tuition, room and board, plus an annual stipend for enrichment and development activities – beginning with 25 students in the first year and increasing up to 52 undergraduate and graduate students annually in classical music programs by 2018. It is the only scholarship program that covers all expenses for the entire course of study at Juilliard.

In acknowledging the importance of the fellowships, Dr. Polisi said, "This extraordinarily generous and visionary gift from Bruce and Suzie Kovner will ensure that future highly gifted Juilliard musicians will be able to pursue their studies with no financial concerns, freeing them from the heavy debt burden that has caused long-term financial challenges for many students. The Kovners' support of our performing artists reinforces Juilliard's ongoing commitment to educate future generations of artists who will bring their talents to communities large and small around the world in the time ahead."

Juilliard alumnus and current faculty member, pianist Emanuel Ax, reacted to the announcement of the Kovner Fellowship Program by saying, "The prospect of seeing these hugely talented young people have the luxury of focusing on their studies and musical growth is absolutely thrilling. I am overwhelmed by the generosity and thoughtfulness of this gift and can only express to Bruce and Suzie deep gratitude on behalf of the many wonderful kids whose life this will change."

Kovner Fellows will be designated from the universe of classical music students applying to The Juilliard School and from among current undergraduate and master's level students. These classical music students at Juilliard have the opportunity to be considered for a Fellowship throughout their years of attendance. While the primary focus of this contribution is to create the Kovner Fellowship Program for classical music students, a portion of the gift will be allocated to sustain general scholarship levels for all students across the three Juilliard divisions of dance, drama, and music. Reinforcing and expanding Juilliard's scholarship support is a significant component of the School's strategic plan and an area that is of critical importance for the future.

Bruce Kovner, chairman of The Juilliard School's board since 2001, and Suzie Kovner, a member of the Juilliard Drama Council, are making the gift to Juilliard at a time when institutions of higher learning see incoming classes demonstrating increased financial need, and as the performing arts also struggle for support. Acknowledging that fact, the Kovners said, "The level of talent, potential and dedication that the students at Juilliard represent is incredibly inspiring and especially deserving of recognition and support. We hope the program highlights the value that Juilliard School and the arts community place upon these young people as the future of classical music."

The Juilliard School was founded in 1905 as the Institute of Musical Art. As an institution dedicated to excellence in the performing arts since its inception, Juilliard has educated thousands of aspiring artists from around the world in the fields of dance, drama, and music, and further instills a strong sense of activism and arts advocacy in its students. Ninety-one percent of Juilliard's students currently receive financial aid.

In addition to its undergraduate and graduate programs in the college division, Juilliard also offers pre-college programs in music as well as a continuing education program for adults; community outreach programs throughout the New York metropolitan area, and specialized music training for children from under-represented populations.

One of Lincoln Center's original constituents, Juilliard's second century began with a major expansion of its facilities, adding 39,000 square feet of state-of-the-art studios, theaters, and rehearsal studios, growing with the needs of a thriving cultural community in the US and abroad. Its student body is drawn from 47 states and 44 foreign countries. With an annual enrollment of approximately 850 college level students – almost 100 of whom are dancers, and nearly 80,

actors – Juilliard typically may enroll up to 650 music students each school year.

Juilliard alumni are working artists who carry with them the highest standards of their profession throughout the world, and for more than a century have shaped global culture. From the concert stages – Van Cliburn, Itzhak Perlman, Emanuel Ax, Yo-Yo Ma, Alan Gilbert; and the world of opera –
Leontyne Price

,
Renee Fleming

,
James Levine
; to Broadway and film –
Richard Rodgers

,
Audra McDonald

,
Marvin Hamlisch

,
Henry Mancini

,
John Williams
; to name only a few, Juilliard's alumni have created a rich musical legacy. Also too numerous to list completely is the roster of remarkable actors, dancers, playwrights, and choreographers who call Juilliard their alma mater. Among them are:

Laura Linney

,
Kevin Spacey

,
Patti LuPone

,
Kevin Kline

,
Jessica Chastain

,
Andre Braugher

,
Pina Bausch

,
Robert Battle
, Ohad Naharin,
Mercedes Ellington

,
Paul Taylor
, and many others.

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