

Special Music School (P.S. 859) at Kaufman Center

Kaufman Center
Merkin Concert Hall
Lucy Moses School
Special Music School

The Special Music School at Kaufman Center is a groundbreaking public school for musically gifted children offering musical training, including private instrumental lessons, during the regular school day. The school combines intensive instrumental study with a rigorous academic program, providing a strong foundation for a lifetime of music without compromising academic studies. Modeled on the renowned special music schools of the former Soviet Union, the Special Music School at Kaufman Center successfully ensures that music is a primary component of each child's education.

Founded in 1996, the Special Music School represents a unique public/private partnership between Kaufman Center, a nonprofit multi-arts organization, and the New York City Department of Education, which funds the academic portion of the students' education. The music program is fully funded by Kaufman Center through private contributions. As with all public schools, tuition is free to residents of the five boroughs of New York City. The music program goes from kindergarten through grade 12.

Leadership: Lydia Kontos, *President*; Jenny Undercofler, *Music Director*; Katherine Banucci-Smith, *Principal*; Sean Hartley, *Chair of Admissions*; Ellen Brofman, *Music Program Coordinator*

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www.kaufman-center.org

Academics

The Special Music School combines the music program with a rigorous academic curriculum in a holistic learning environment that encourages children to make connections between all forms of knowledge, from music to mathematics. Its students consistently score at or near the top of all New York City public schools on statewide and citywide reading and math tests. Every child (K–8) has two private lessons per week on an instrument in addition to at least three other music classes, which might include Theory, Chorus, Dalcroze Eurhythmics or Music History, and a performance class—all taught by distinguished music professionals. Approximately three-quarters of each student's time is spent on academic subjects. The curriculum is based on New York State and New York City learning standards.

Parental support and involvement are very important due to the extra challenges presented by the dual focus of the curriculum on both music and academics. Parents also help support the school through service and voluntary contributions.

Eligibility

The Special Music School is intended for children who exhibit strong musical potential and whose parents feel that music should be a primary component of their children's education. Students must live in one of the five boroughs of New York City to be eligible. Each year, the school accepts a new kindergarten class, and there may additionally be a limited number of places for students in grades 1-8. Acceptance of K-2 students is based solely on an assessment of musical giftedness through a series of age-appropriate individual and group activities relating to music; no prior musical training is necessary. Children applying for grades three and above will have an instrumental audition.

High School Students

The facility at the Goodman House at 129 West 67th Street can accommodate grades K–8. Special Music School high school students receive their academics at partner high schools.

Special Music School students in grades 9-12 can audition to enter Kaufman Center's **Young Artist Program**, which offers highly motivated music students an intensive course of after-school study. Each week, Young Artist Program students have a 90-minute private lesson, 60 minutes of ensemble coaching, a 60-minute seminar-style class exploring music theory, literature and composition, and a 60-minute ear-training class. In addition, they participate in regularly scheduled solo and chamber music recitals. Students wishing to enter the Young Artist Program in the fall of 2009 should call 212 501 3390 or visit specialmusicschool.org for details.

Application Information

For an application and deadline information, please call 212 501 3390, email smsa@kaufman-center.org or visit kaufman-center.org. There is a \$25 application fee that is waived if the family states that it is unable to pay. Open House meetings at which program information is provided and questions are answered are held several times throughout the year. No reservations are needed.

Kaufman Center

Kaufman Center is New York's creative home for listeners, learners and performers. Founded in 1952 as a community school for pre-conservatory music training, today's Kaufman Center provides entertainment, education and inspiration for more than 75,000 New Yorkers each year. In addition to the **Special Music School**, it is home to **Merkin Concert Hall** and **Lucy Moses School**, New York's largest community arts school.