

THE BEAT

2026-2027



THE COMMUNITY ISSUE

THIRD STREET MUSIC SCHOOL



From the Executive Director
VALERIE G. LEWIS
 What is a community music school?



As our beaming students took their final bow to jubilant applause at our Summer Musical Theater Workshop presentation of *Willy Wonka, Jr.* I was once again awestruck by our Third Street community. In just three short weeks, our talented students memorized their lines, rehearsed together, supported one another, and formed new friendships that culminated in three outstanding performances. It's moments like these that make me so proud of the powerful work that we do together all year long.

Third Street was founded 132 years ago with the spirit of community at its core. It began as a settlement house that offered refuge, support, and music education to immigrant families newly arrived to the Lower East Side. At that time, serving a community meant meeting the needs of your neighbors right outside your front door.

And while we continue to hold our history close, Third Street has grown and adapted to support our families in a rapidly changing world. Today, our community stretches far beyond our East Village home and can no longer be defined by a single neighborhood, age group, background, or artistic discipline.

We instead find community everywhere we look: from the courage of our adult students picking up an instrument for the very first time or the first time in years, to the excitement of first-graders starting their lessons in dozens of public schools across the five boroughs. It lives in the traditions that root us in our neighborhood, like our preschoolers returning each year to paint the majestic ginkgo trees in front of our building. And we feel it at our gala, where guests, honorees, and longtime supporters come together around a shared belief in Third Street's mission and values.

I see it in my own life as well. As my youngest heads off to college, I'll seek new ways to explore my artistry and connect more deeply with our community. From sharing a work-in-progress with our Adult Performance Workshop to exploring new music with my rock band, Psychedelic Stomp, there are ample opportunities to make connections at Third Street.

Third Street will continue to evolve, and so too will our understanding of what it means to serve and empower a community. But through it all, our shared belief in the importance of music and dance education—and its power to enrich lives—will continue to bring us together. I look forward to being in community with you in the year ahead.

Clockwise from top left: Third Street Summer Willy Wonka Jr. cast. *Psychedelic Stomp.* Third Street Gala host Michelle Buteau, Honoree Vanessa Williams and presenter Jillian Hervey

On the Cover: Third Street students: Chelsea Pucay, Chloe Pucay, Aurora Ordway, David Ordway, Arwen Monzon-Sanders, Donovan Monzon-Sanders and Jooahn Choe.



Our Community Speaks!

The reviews are in: Third Street is...

“One of the best music schools in NYC!

Every instructor has been nothing short of excellent — talented, warm, and truly dedicated.”

—Cynthia Sanders

“Perfect musical education for all — from toddlers to octogenarians!”

—Carlyle G. Leach



“Really great supportive environment.”

—Lyndsy Welgos



“Warm and welcoming is the best way to describe Third Street!”

—Natalie Williams

“At Third Street, we feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, regardless of our financial or musical ability. Third Street is like a second home where people of all ages can gather, and the magic it brings to the community is created by dedicated, hardworking staff, administrators, and faculty who change lives every day. Thank you!”

—Eva Yang

“It's a great place to learn”

—Andre Hetu





KARA SAXON, Community Hero Award



Our Community Celebrates!



JILLIAN HERVEY, Presenter and VANESSA WILLIAMS, Distinguished Artist Award



The Third Street Gala is always a grand celebration of arts education and its transformative power, but this year it was also a celebration of the larger community that makes this joyous annual event possible. With “We are Family” as the evening’s theme, the gala brought together generations of students, parents, grandparents, alumni, teachers, board members, and many friends.

That spirit was reflected in this year’s honorees. We were thrilled to present Vanessa Williams with the Distinguished Artist Award. While audiences know her as one of the industry’s most respected and versatile performers, our community also knows her as a proud Third Street Preschool grandparent. She dazzled the audience with a beautiful medley of her greatest hits, including the beloved modern-day classic, “Save the Best for Last.”

We were also delighted to present Board Member Kara Saxon with the Community Hero Award. She is a dedicated board member, fierce advocate for arts education, and longtime Third Street parent. Her 11-year-old son, Alex, made the evening even more special when he commanded the room with a beautiful rendition of Bruce Springsteen’s “Dancing in the Dark.”

While we love seeing so many familiar Third Street faces gathered under one roof, one of the evening’s greatest joys is welcoming the new members to our community who discover us through our board members, alumni, and families.

Board Member and former Third Street parent Beau Everett brings his friends and colleagues to the gala every year. Many of his guests now look forward to the evening as much as he does.

“If I don’t send an email, someone is going to ask me when the Third Street gala is,” Everett said. “Whether they are architects, brokers, or developers, everyone says it is one of their favorite events of the year.”

Former faculty member and Board Member Jeff Peretz loves to invite his personal community each year. As a musician and producer, he takes particular joy in bringing fellow artists to the gala, many of whom are discovering Third Street and its mission for the first time.

“Third Street keeps the social and cultural fabric of humanity intact in a country where many people believe that arts education is expendable,” said Peretz. “It is so important for me to share Third Street so that as many people as possible see how important it is to keep it alive.”



MICHELLE BUTEAU, Host

IN OUR COMMUNITY

Meet Third Street Guitar Faculty and Rock Band Master

BRYAN VARGAS

Q. What is the core message you hope every student takes away from your lessons or guidance?

A. I want my students to know music is great. It can bring us joy, focus, calm, and help eliminate our fears and anxieties. It can help us to bond, make friends, and heal divides. I want my students to know that every person has value and that music is a powerful tool for recognizing that value in ourselves and others.



Q. How do you transform a group of individual musicians into a supportive “band family”?

A. You must make sure that every student knows that what they contribute has value, that what they bring has tremendous worth. And then once they know their own worth, they can easily see that what the other students bring to the table is equally important. And that when they work together, the group is what makes the experience great. Seeing the students make these connections is the most rewarding part of my job.



Q. What skills does a student get from playing in a rock band?

A. Playing in a band is being on a team. You must learn how to work together. You must take responsibility for knowing your role (your musical part) and then be able to interact with the other musicians and form a complete musical unit. These team-building skills are invaluable in any field of study or work environment. I strongly believe that playing music together with others is a great way to prepare for life in general.

Q. How do you create a safe, supportive environment for students to share original songs?

A. Students are surprisingly very open and supportive of other students bringing in original songs and ideas. Students may be shy, but I always remind them our class is about learning to try new things.



Q. What sparked your own passion for music when you were a student?

A. I was born with a passion for music. My mother said that I would often wake her with my singing from the crib. I have early childhood memories of loving songs from *Sesame Street*, Beethoven symphonies, even songs by the Bee Gees & Queen that I heard on the radio. When I was 7, my dad bought me a copy of Michael Jackson’s *Thriller*, and I was officially hooked on music for life. I started piano lessons, but in middle school, my love of Rock & Roll led me to switch to the guitar. I had many great teachers over the years, all of whom helped guide me, but the passion for music was always there. To this day, nothing brings me as much joy as music.

Third Street Faculty

On the time they understood the power of community



SABRINA ISAAC
ISO at Third Street
Woodwind Section Coach

“The most meaningful experiences I’ve had as a teacher came from working with a student who initially came to music class extremely shy and lacking confidence. I saw her gradually come out of her shell in class, but it was the day I saw her laughing with her band friends in the hallway that reminded me that music education is about learning an instrument; it’s also about giving students a place to belong and making friends.”



ADAM TENDLER
Piano Faculty
Music & Dance School

“My first piano teacher would have ‘class meetings’ in his home every couple of months. He would have us clap rhythms and do musical exercises as a group before we played our pieces. If I’m honest, I didn’t look forward to it — but I did feel like I was part of a community, observing the older students who played ‘harder’ music, and keeping track of my own progress as I moved through the ranks. Eventually I came to cherish these informal recitals for how they built a community from the youngest to the oldest in his studio.”



ANASTACIA JULIAN
Dance Faculty
Music & Dance School

“I remember unexpectedly booking a dance job with an artist I had worked with before. It felt like such a full-circle moment. Learning the choreography was more innate, and sharing laughs in the process made the space feel safe. We moved as one, with a shared understanding of how to put on the best performance. The show went well, and I got to see and support other artists who performed. The whole experience felt like I was exactly where I was supposed to be, surrounded by a community of people who shared my love of the arts.”



YVONNE LAU
Piano and Suzuki Faculty
Music & Dance School

“I am proud of my students, past and present, who work hard and enjoy learning to make music. I remember performing a Live Sounds concert a few years ago, and so many students came to listen and support the faculty performers; I felt so grateful! The Third Street community is such a joyful and supportive school, and I am delighted to be a part of it.”



JAKE VICHNIS
Music Production Teacher
Music & Dance School

“I learned from playing in a jazz combo that you have to always be there for each other. If you mess up a note, nobody judges you; they help you. I learned I had to consciously choose to give up solo tendencies—like playing too loud, rushing the tempo, or playing out of sync—so the group could sound good. That jazz combo experience taught me playing with a group creates community.”



AMOS GABIA
African Percussion Teacher
Third Street Partners

“This year’s drumming showcase at Third Street Partner school Children’s Workshop made me feel like part of an amazing community. I felt connected to the talented students on stage and their families. The parents showed so much support that they asked to jam with the students. Music brings families, students, and communities together. It brings joy to everyone.”

OUR COMMUNITY POSTS



Strings Faculty member Chiu-Chen Liu regularly posts about how dedicated her students are to learning (follow on Instagram @ChiuChenLiu).



Proud parents and caregivers are in every audience at Third Street. Kosuke Fujitaka routinely shares wonderful videos of the progress of Third Street piano student Hana. See the learning @pinponic.



Piano Faculty and Suzuki teacher Yvonne Lau (follow @vonnlau) knows how to combine music lesson dedication with fandom!



Percussion faculty member Martin Vejarano shares the joy, happiness, and fun involved in music lessons. Enjoy the joy @martin_veja

Post — Share — Follow — Third Street

Thank you to our Community of Supporters

Third Street by the Numbers		
For Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026		
Total Support & Revenue \$11,336,146	INCOME	TUITION & FEES \$7,667,191
		CONTRIBUTIONS \$1,654,206
		FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS \$1,568,749
		GOVERNMENT \$446,000
TOTAL EXPENSES \$11,335,123		Operating Expenses
TOTAL ASSETS \$27,465,965		
TOTAL LIABILITIES \$3,978,354		
NET ASSET BALANCE \$23,487,611		
		MUSIC, DANCE & PRESCHOOL \$5,786,393
		PARTNERS PROGRAM \$1,281,754
		FINANCIAL AID \$1,211,525
		PERFORMANCES \$351,330
		MANAGEMENT & GENERAL \$1,832,156
		FUNDRAISING \$871,965

Thank you to the foundations, corporations, board members, neighbors, friends, and government agencies that empower Third Street and our mission to ensure access to music and dance education.

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THANK YOU!

ISO AT THIRD STREET

By honoring the past, Third Street students are shaping the future of American music.

On June 14, the ISO at Third Street Symphony Orchestra came together to film a music video commemorating 250 years of our country's history. With their instruments in hand and their heads held high, they filmed a passionate rendition of John Philip Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever* and performed the American Western anthem *Cowboy Overture* by John Williams.

Between takes, the community of young musicians sat together and reflected on the meaning of American music and what makes someone a member of the American community. The students described the American musical tradition as bold, loud, and deeply patriotic. Yet when asked what had inspired them as young musicians—what they listened to growing up in their homes all across New York City—their answers painted a far more layered picture.

Seventeen-year-old violinist Ella said she was raised listening to Swedish rock. Helen, a pianist from Midwood, Brooklyn, grew up listening to K-pop alongside jazz greats such as Louis Armstrong. Violinist Sydney, whose parents grew up in North Carolina, was raised on traditional American country music.

By bringing these diverse influences into their music-making and their relationships with one another, our students build a community that, like our country, is defined by the many voices that come together within it.

“American music is much more complex than people often believe. It is not just thematically patriotic with a distinctly loud sound,” Sydney said. “America is such a new country, and I feel like our music demonstrates all of the chapters of our history, every member of our community, as well as the influences of so many different countries.”

SCAN TO WATCH
THE AMERICAN
MUSIC 250 VIDEO



“American music demonstrates all of the chapters of our history, as well as the influences of so many different countries.”



MORE THAN MUSIC

A Community of
LIFELONG
LEARNERS

When Jimmy Valentino first walked through Third Street’s doors 15 years ago, he hadn’t picked up a clarinet in over four decades. He had played in his high school marching band and later during his service in the Vietnam War, but life and his career had gotten in the way. “I had finally decided to retire, and I wasn’t looking for a new relationship with a person,” he said. “I was looking for a new relationship with life.”

Yohanna Sowler found Third Street while searching for an arts-centered preschool for her daughter. Music had been an important part of her own childhood—she sang and learned guitar from her father—but the demands of raising a young family left little time to pursue it herself. Several years later, after her father passed away, Sowler returned to Third Street to learn a simple guitar song for his memorial service.

“Third Street has always been there to meet me where I am,” she said. “All I wanted at first was to make my way through one song, and now I play in a rock band and take weekly guitar lessons.”

Like many of our adult students, Jimmy and Yohanna first came to Third Street to reconnect with the music of their childhood. Along the way, however, they joined a community of learners of all ages and walks of life who are there to support them in their personal and musical endeavors. “When you are playing next to the same person for years, you learn how to help each other,” said Valentino. “You play with them through the sensitive moments in their music and the sensitive moments in life.”

Third Street’s adult students travel around the city to hear each other perform, check in when a familiar face is missing in rehearsal, and walk together to Third Street from their neighborhoods all around the city. For New Horizons conductor Oscar Thorp, this sense of community has shaped his own life just as much as it has his students’. When he first arrived in New York, the adult learners helped him find his footing and introduced him to its vibrant cultural scene.

“I will be grateful for them forever,” said Thorp. “It is more than just a player and teacher relationship. We are truly a team and trying to help each other be better.”



THIRD STREET PRESCHOOL

Shared Experiences
Build Community



Through these interactive, hands-on experiences, we encourage our students to engage with the wider world, but we believe it is equally important for them to feel rooted in the place where they learn.

“Every community is unique,” Frankel said. “When I build a curriculum, I try to incorporate the things in our specific neighborhood that make it special. One of those things is our Leafy George!”

Many years ago, a Third Street preschooler planted a ginkgo tree on our block. At the beginning of each school year, our preschoolers visit the tree and give it a special name. This year, they chose “Leafy George.” A beloved Third Street preschool tradition is returning to paint pictures of him throughout the year as he changes with the seasons.

Across the street, at Saint Mark’s Church at the Bowery, our preschoolers also host a food drive every Thanksgiving. In preparation for the holiday, they collect canned foods, create paper leaves describing what they are thankful for, and take a field trip to the room where the meal will be held.

“I want them to understand that sometimes we need help, and sometimes we can help others,” Frankel said. “In a community, we all take care of each other, and that is something that our youngest learners are beginning to explore.”

This past winter, our preschoolers transformed their classroom into a glow-in-the-dark Light Museum.

Complete with handmade art installations, cozy reading corners, and puppet shows, the museum brought warmth to some of the coldest days of the year.

That same week, Art Specialist Lala Copely led a unit on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The children read stories about his life and created doves with glowing oil pastels to represent his lifelong advocacy for peace. The doves were then displayed in our museum.

“Being part of an arts school allows us to build collaborations that help the children express the abstract ideas they are learning about,” said Preschool Director Debra Frankel.

Earlier in the year, our four-year-olds also explored the life and work of Keith Haring. After learning about his distinctive style and what mattered to him, they walked to the Brant Foundation to see several floors of his art. When they returned to the classroom, they crafted self-portraits using Haring’s materials and techniques.



IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO PUT ON A SHOW!

Inside the Third Street Dance Department’s annual Nutcracker production.

Every December, the Third Street community leaves our city streets behind and journeys to the Land of Sweets. Alive with leaping Candy Canes, twirling Snowflakes, and marching Mouse Kings, The Nutcracker stands as one of Third Street’s most cherished traditions.

When ballet teachers Cara Gargano and Kim Dooley-Kittay staged Third Street’s first Nutcracker in 1999, it looked far different. What began with just three dancers and a few makeshift costumes has since grown into a full-scale production held at the Manhattan Movement & Arts Center.

Long before opening night, our students are hard at work. Sixteen-and eighteen-year-old Valerie and Savannah Torres, who have grown up at Third Street, managed last year’s annual costume bake sale entirely on their own. They created prize baskets, partnered with SMAC, the local mac-and-cheese shop, and organized volunteer shifts—all to ensure that costumes remained free for every dancer. “Everyone was so excited when we were able to get new costumes, and I’m proud to say that I helped do that,” Valerie said.

Behind the curtain on show day, our oldest dancers help our youngest ones. They demonstrate difficult variations and help find missing pointe shoes. Many of them, who have been performing in the show since they were just five years old, are eager to offer the same care that older dancers once gave them.

When the dancers are busy with rehearsals, Third Street parents also step in. Years ago, Valerie and Savannah’s mother, Lisa Torres, offered to pitch in on a task or two. Today, in addition to her full-time job, she spends each fall preparing costumes, and earning the title “Ballet Mom.” Other parents return year after year to pitch in, even well after their own children have graduated.

“It is just this beautiful, enduring tradition that is passed down,” said Dooley-Kittay. “When you are a part of the Third Street dance community, you are family.”

“When you are a part of the Third Street dance community, you are family.”





THIRD STREET PARTNERS

"We bring music and dance lessons directly to public schools."



Third Street’s commitment to delivering excellent, equitable arts education is not limited to our historic home on East 11th Street. Through the Third Street Partners program, we send teaching artists into public schools and community centers across all five boroughs to bring Third Street’s unique approach to students from 3K through 12th grade.

This past year, that commitment took shape through an exciting new partnership with Grand Street Settlement. This historic Lower East Side institution was founded on the belief that communities thrive through access and opportunity. We were delighted to introduce a new after school DJ program to great success and excitement.

Across the city, we also expanded our Early Childhood Strings Program. By providing both individual and group lessons to Pre-K and kindergarten students at P.S. 29 in Staten Island and P.S. 123 in Harlem, we laid the foundation for young musicians to continue their studies at Third Street.

“In the string world, many students start at a very young age. By second or third grade, many children have already been taking violin lessons for years,” explained Director Lauren Bloom. “We realized that instead of expecting families to find lessons, we could bring the lessons directly to their school.”

Whether we are working with kindergartners in Staten Island or middle schoolers in Manhattan, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to discover whether the arts are right for them. We also know that no two schools or communities are alike. That is why we work with each partner to offer programming that reflects its students’ interests and its broader culture.

“To really be useful to a community, we must listen to the voices of its stakeholders,” said Program Director Maria Kowalski. “It is about asking what a community needs and helping them to get it.”



Opposite:
Top - PS19 EVCS Salsa Class
Middle - Rose Center at Grand Street Settlement DJ Class
Bottom - PS 145 Ukulele Class

With a little help from our friends, our community expands!



This past February, Third Street hosted its first-ever Friends Week, inviting the friends of current students into our building to experience ensembles. Throughout the week, friends of friends enjoyed pizza, took Polaroids, and sat in on full-length rehearsals.

“Our current students are our best ambassadors,” said Director of the Music & Dance School Kyle Landry. “There is no one with the ability to connect as authentically with prospective students about what makes being part of an ensemble, and our community, so special, then their friends.”

Friends Week was not only about bringing old friends. It was also an opportunity to make new ones. In the weeks leading up to the event, Third Street conductors visited middle and high schools across the city. They spent full days teaching free master classes and playing alongside students. At the end of each visit, the young musicians were invited back to Third Street for Friends Week.

Brandon Tesh, Chief Programs Officer, commented after the “Friends Rehearsal” of the Symphonic Band, “It was incredible to hear the instant musical chemistry of the group when their friends were included. Learning to be a part of an ensemble requires making mistakes. It was wonderful to witness our students much more willing to laugh off a wrong note and try again when their friends were present. The song lyric is true: you get by with a little help from your friends”



Cultural Celebrations in 2025-2026 included a beginner-friendly belly dance workshop in honor of National Arab American Heritage Month and an interactive performance from Ajna Dance Company to celebrate Diwali.



Diversity CREATES Community

Every day, students travel from neighborhoods all across our city for music and dance classes, only to discover plenty of reasons to stay a little longer. While wandering down our halls, they may stumble across a free salsa dance party, make paper lanterns to celebrate the Year of the Rabbit, or try an exciting new food from another part of the world. Our Cultural Celebration Series offers regular opportunities for people to bring their whole selves to our community.

“We want Third Street to be a place where people feel seen and valued for all the different parts of who they are,” said Director of Student Services Loyi Malu, who curates the series. “Everyone brings different interests, experiences, and traditions into this building, and we want them to feel like there is room for all of that here.”

This past year, we hosted our first Diwali celebration in partnership with Ajna Dance Company. After learning about the holiday’s history, guests got up and moving with a lively dance lesson and had the chance to get henna designs. When a young girl who practices henna at home saw the artists decorating students’ hands, she approached the organizers and offered to share her expertise.

“We want Third Street to be a place where people feel seen and valued for all the different parts of who they are.”

This year’s cultural celebrations also created space for our teachers to bring other sides of their artistry to Third Street. During National Hispanic Heritage Month, teachers who spend their days instructing jazz or classical music performed at our lively salsa party. A faculty band led by Skye Steele, whose members rehearse together outside of the event, filled the concert hall with salsa music that had our guests dancing along.

“You can really see how people’s eyes light up when they can physically participate in a new culture or share part of the one they already belong to,” said Malu. “It is so much more impactful than just sitting in an audience and watching.”

We had another exciting first for our series during AAPI Month. In partnership with I Love Dance Company, we hosted a sold out K-Pop Dance Party. 30 young students arrived already knowing the songs and quickly transformed the concert hall into their own pop-star dance floor.

Student Services Associate Rachel Joo, who came up with the idea for the event after speaking with Third Street families, was delighted by its overwhelming popularity. “The kids were so excited to try these new dance moves,” she said. “The best way for us to develop this series is to keep listening to our community.”

OUR COMMUNITY OF LEADERS

Meet the Third Street Board of Directors

The Third Street board members are not just executives or supporters. They are the backbone of our school. Every single individual on this board is an active, passionate member of our school community. They are the familiar faces you see applauding at student concerts; they are dedicated parents and volunteers; they are generous supporters and vocal ambassadors. Because of their dedication, Third Street has achieved historic milestones. Because of their commitment, all New Yorkers can be a part of the Third Street community and experience the transformative power of arts education.

Q: What inspired you to join the Board of Directors community?



Hendrick Lee and Jessica Chu

A: I’ve always believed that music and arts education can shape a child’s confidence, creativity, and sense of belonging. Third Street’s commitment to making those opportunities accessible to every child is what first drew me to the Board, and years later, it remains what I find most meaningful about our programs and mission.

JESSICA CHU
Board Member Since 2021



Tara Elwin Meade
and Andre Meade

A: As an advocate for both youth development and creative expression, I was inspired by Third Street’s mission to provide high-quality music and dance education to people of all ages, backgrounds, and economic circumstances, particularly the Partners program, which gives underprivileged children access to the arts they would otherwise not have. Growing up, I experienced firsthand how transformative creative outlets can be for a child’s confidence, critical thinking, and emotional resilience, especially for someone from a family that could not afford them.

TARA ELWIN MEADE
Board Member Since 2024



Jameel Harb, Rachna Shah,
and Sonia Gonzalez

A: I was lucky enough to find Third Street while searching for preschools for my daughter. She, and then her sister, became preschool students, and I found our family surrounded by a community enriched by music and dance. As I gained more understanding of how Third Street contributes to the entire NYC arts community, I wanted to help further this mission and joined the board. Now, my youngest is still enrolled as a music student, and I am so thrilled to continue working with my fellow board members to support the unique community of Third Street.

RACHNA SHAH
Board Member Since 2021



Susan Bell and Byron Bell

A: Former Board Chair Stowe C. Phelps asked me to join the board; that was 25 years ago. In all my years, the board has been enthusiastic, hardworking, and inspiring. Everything else in the world seems to fail – except Third Street! The space is beautiful, the pianos are exceptional, and the community is such a positive force. I am the longest-serving board member, and at 91 years old, I can still say it is a joy to serve the students, the music, and to change lives. I love Third Street!

BYRON BELL
Board Member Since 1997

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

HELEN YE

From classical masterpieces to modern compositions, Helen brings passion to every key.



Helen started learning piano at Third Street with Yvonne Lau at the age of four.

Q: What has studying music given you?

A: I owe my life to music. It has given me amazing friends and a second family. It’s given me mentors like my teacher Bryan. It’s also given me a reason to keep going in life and a dream to work towards. I may already be a “great musician,” but that doesn’t mean I know everything or that I can’t be better, which is very exciting. That’s why I’m looking forward to learning even more.



Helen with her current Third Street piano teacher Bryan Ojeda after the Concerto Competition Winners Concert

“Helen is a dedicated, hard-working musician shaping up to be an incredible pianist and, most importantly, a sensitive, kind, empathetic person.”

–Bryan Ojeda



During the 2025–2026 school year Helen performed at the Third Street Gala, the ISO at Third Street American Music 250 recording, and Stowe C. Phelps Concert.

Q: What does it mean to be a part of the Third Street community?

A: To connect with people, to be challenged, and to have so much fun doing so.



Helen was one of four winners of the 2025 Third Street Concerto Competition

Q: What has kept you at Third Street since you were four years old?

A: At first, it was just discipline and the fact that money was being put towards my lessons. But that was when I was a kid. For the past few years, I’ve willingly worked hard because I love it, and I love working with people, and I love piano, and I love making music, and Third Street is an important part of my life, and I’m thankful I stayed. Plus, I have great teachers and friends here, and I am part of a community. I feel very loved here.

Q: What lessons have your teacher(s) given you that have stayed with you as you progressed?

A: The most important ones are: if you want to pursue something, go for it, but never sacrifice parts of yourself to achieve it. You do a little thing called “sustainable growth,” where you take care of yourself and give yourself grace, while still being able to work towards something and do what you love.

Third Street Creates Community

Community is the fundamental ingredient of our school and it is never more on display than when people gather shoulder-to-shoulder for a group picture. The Third Street community is a supportive environment of students, families, supporters, educators and staff with one common belief, the shared understanding that the arts have the power to connect us all.



Deena Parrilla's Dance Fusion Class pictured Calista, Kendall, Gabi, Kaiya, Oliya, Lyla, Mila, Ava, Nora, Joshua, Naomi, Anna and Sophia.

ISO at Third Street Concert Orchestra and friends pictured include Andromeda, Madeleine, Marina, Dorothea, Su, Eric, John, Isa, Rohan, Sylvie, Haruhi, Alice, Angela, Brian, William, Matilda, Aarush, Angelina, Caitlin, Charlotte, Emily, Chloe, Ailey, Penelope, Raschkes, Eleanor, Madeline, Bruno, Marie, Angeline, Aisholpan, Matthew, Esme, Angela, Leonidas, Thomas, Justin, Jane, Fynn, Daniel, Benjamin, Jordan, Aydin, Kyle, Asher, Liam, Chloe, Victor, Juan, Adina, Anika, Austin, Theodore, Alem, Lesley, Henry, Uriel, Owen and Conductor Page Silverman-Primm.



On Sunday, November 23, 2025, over 30 Third Street alumni from across the years came together to play music at Third Street's Anna-Maria Kellen Concert Hall.



Voice Department Master Class with Broadway performer, director and choreographer Billy Bustamante.



Third Street Rock Band department pictured includes Third Street Rock Bands members pictured Mildred, Temujin, Indigo, Miyad, Max, Camille, Zeana, Wyatt, Olumide, Daria, Julia, Calvin, Luther, Bulat, Rhea, Anan, Julian, Neko, Moss, Felipe, Beau, Aaliya, Zev, Akiko, Cassel, Khacy, Roxy, Lola, Rain, Olivia, Ezzie, Tullia, Pablo, Connor, Ora, Alice, Arwen, Ash, Donovan, Jonah, Hawke and coaches Robert Papacica, Bryan Vargas, Alejandro Flórez and Guitar Department Chair, David Moreno.



Willy Wonka youth ensemble cast: Grace, Hannah, Tadeo, Piran, Desi, Lyanna, Josephine, Ruth, Sunshine, Ocean, Sofia, Sejal, Simon, Marceline.

Join the Third Street Community!

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Third Street Music School

Thank you for being part of the Third Street community.

Third Street's mission is to provide equitable access to music and dance education to New Yorkers of all ages.

ALL ARE WELCOME AT THIRD STREET!



Claire Chan and Chiu-Chen Liu
Strings Department Faculty



Zaynah Jefferson
Production Assistant



Casey and Jessie Harper-Douglas
Third Street Preschoolers



Kenyatta Thompson
Security Guard



Joshua Selke, Kaiya Hadiatmodjo
Dance Students



Edwyn Pitre
Head Custodian



Soren Brooker, Joseph Fernandez, Harper Jimenez
Musical Theater and Instrument Students



Oscar Thorp
*Brass Faculty, ISO at Third Street Coach,
Concert Band Conductor, New Horizons Conductor*



Ora and Rain Barak
Rock Band Students