



YANA WEBINAR

Necessary Relevance: The Role of the Arts in Society

YANA has developed a series of programs to explore the role of arts and culture in society, particularly in a tenuous economy and amidst fervent social justice movements. Join us for any or all of the upcoming programs featuring Yalies in all parts of the arts and cultural sectors.

Beyond Performance and Exhibition

December 16, 2020

Art and music touch all of our lives in some way or another. They are deeply entrenched in human experience and history and have been studied in a wide range of fields. From history and performance to anthropology, sociology, and the sacred and ceremonial rituals in many world religions, the “arts” are intrinsically part of human experience.

This program explores this larger role of arts, music, and culture in our society beyond performance and exhibition. Panelists include practitioners and experts from the fields of K-12 school programs, social justice, religion, ableness inclusivity, and trauma healing.

[DAVID BLASHER '01](#) | *Chair, Director,* [Drama Club NYC](#)



David is a leader across legal and artistic settings in corporate and nonprofit organizations, where he helps teams perform at their best. He is the Board Chair for Drama Club, a nonprofit that provides theater and improv programming and positive mentorship to incarcerated and court-involved young people in NYC. Using imagination and ensemble, Drama Club creates a stage for young people to share their voices and enjoy the power of play. Recently, Drama Club proudly joined the YANA network.

Additionally, most recently at NBCUniversal, David was the Director of Global Legal Operations and Innovation, where he managed and developed initiatives to improve connectivity and effectiveness across the legal departments of all NBCUniversal business units. Prior to NBCU, David worked in legal technology and as a litigation associate at Davis Wright Tremaine. For fun, he plays the cello with a rock band, and he relishes any chance to use musical metaphors to illustrate an idea. B.A., Yale University; J.D., University of Oregon School of Law.

SHANNON KILEY | *Music Therapist, Yale New Haven Children's Hospital*

Shannon Kiley (MM, MT-BC) is a board-certified music therapist and musician committed to improving well-being through music. Shannon received her Master of Music in Music Therapy from Florida State University in 2012, and has experience working in a wide variety of clinical settings, serving populations from premature infants through elders. Shannon is also a performing musician and composer; she was honored with an Artist Excellence Fellowship Award from the CT Office of the Arts in 2018. Shannon has been working with the Child Life & Arts for Healing Program at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital since January 2017, where she specializes in the use of music technology to support hospitalized infants, children, and teens.



DANTES RAMEAU MUS '07 | *Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, [Atlanta Music Project](#)*



Born in Ottawa, Canada, bassoonist Dantes Rameau is Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlanta Music Project since 2010. With a mission to empower underserved youth to realize their possibilities through music, the Atlanta Music Project provides intensive, tuition-free music education to underserved youth right in their neighborhood.

As Executive Director of the Atlanta Music Project, Dantes has secured over five million dollars for the organization and has grown programming to 350 students, 50 teaching artists, 10 employees and five program sites. The Atlanta Music Project's youth orchestras and choirs perform over 40 concerts each year at venues across metropolitan Atlanta, from community centers to Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Dantes has developed key partnerships for AMP including with the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, The Kindezi Schools, Clayton State University and the Atlanta Public Schools. In 2019 Dantes led the three million capital campaign that led to the establishment of AMP's first ever headquarters space, the AMP Center for Performance & Education.

Dantes holds a Bachelor of Music in Bassoon Performance from McGill University and a Master of Music in Bassoon Performance from the Yale University School of Music. He also completed a Performance Certificate at Carnegie Mellon University. In 2010 he graduated from the Sistema Fellows Program at the New England Conservatory, where he studied non-profit management and music education. He is a graduate of the 2012 class of LEAD Atlanta, a leadership development program for Atlanta's outstanding young professionals, and the 2015 class of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute. He is currently a three-year fellow at the University of Maryland's DeVos Institute Arts Management Fellowship.

Dantes performs regularly with the faculty of the Atlanta Music Project. He was recently soloist with the Orchestre Symphonique des Jeunes de l'Ontario Français in Ottawa, Canada. He has performed with the Aspen Chamber Symphony, Charleston Symphony and Wallingford Symphony and has also performed at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center.

A passionate teacher, his teaching credits include El Sistema in Venezuela, and the Yale School of Music's Music in Schools program. He is currently the bassoon teaching artist with the Atlanta Music Project. In addition Dantes has lectured at Emory University, the New England Conservatory, and Clayton State University.

A unique and compelling voice for social change through the arts, in 2010 Dantes was one of 25 groundbreaking creatives to be awarded \$25,000 from AOL Artists' 25For25 grant program. He was selected to Ebony Magazine's 2013 Power 100, a list of the nation's most influential African-Americans. He is also the recipient of the McGill University Alumni Association's 2014 James G. Wright award, presented to young alumni who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to service and made a difference in the community.

Dantes has spoken at conferences and symposiums, including Bloomberg Philanthropies, Sound Music at the Kennedy Center, Georgia Art & Criminal Justice Forum, Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta and the Yale School of Music Symposium on Music Education. He speaks about topics ranging from music education and non-profit management, to fundraising and community development through the arts.

[WILBUR NEUSHWANDER-FRINK](#) | *Executive Director, [Open Arts Minnesota](#)*

Wilbur is Executive Director of Open Arts Minnesota, a non-profit dedicated to the mission of inclusive theatrical and literary opportunities for people of diverse abilities and ages. Open Arts Minnesota is an organizational participant in the Charter for Compassion. Wilbur has worked for over 27 years as an ally in Minnesota's Self-Advocacy Movement; a social justice movement for people with disabilities. Wilbur founded three inclusive, community theatre groups in southwest Minnesota and serves as their director and playwright. She has a BS in Nursing from University of Wisconsin, Madison and an MS in Educational Leadership from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Wilbur has received a number of recognitions such as the Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award, A VSA Minnesota Arts Advocate Award and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Pathfinder Award.



[SEBASTIAN RUTH](#) | *Founder & Artistic Director, [Community MusicWorks](#); Lecturer, Yale School of Music*



Sebastian Ruth is a musician, educator, and organizer whose work explores new roles for music making in contemporary society.

Sebastian is the Founder and Artistic Director of Community MusicWorks, a nationally recognized organization that connects professional musicians with urban youth and families in Providence, Rhode Island.

Community MusicWorks has been called a “revolutionary organization” (The New Yorker) that builds cohesive urban community—through music education and performance—that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians in underserved urban neighborhoods of Providence, RI. CMW's programming includes a full season of chamber music performances

and commissions by its twelve musicians in residence and guest artists; a free, robust music education program for 150 neighborhood young people; workshops, student concerts, and community dinners that involve families and the wider community; and fellowships and training programs that prepare a next generation of musicians to pursue socially-engaged music making.

As a violinist and violist in the MusicWorks Collective, Sebastian has had the opportunity to make music in Providence, Boston, Los Angeles, Banff, and New York, and to collaborate with the Borromeo, Kronos, Muir, Miro, Orion, and Turtle Island String Quartets, pianists Emanuel Ax and Jonathan Biss, violist Kim Kashkashian, oboist Frank Rosenwein, and violinist Jonathan Gandelman.

Sebastian graduated from Brown University in 1997, where he worked closely with education scholars Theodore Sizer, Mary Ann Clark, and Reginald Archambault on a project exploring the relationship between moral education and music, and with members of the Charleston String Quartet in Brown's chamber music program. Influential music teachers have included Michele Auclair, Lois Finkel, Pamela Gearhart, Kim Kashkashian, Eric Rosenblith, Rolfe Sokol, and Mela Tenenbaum.

Since 2013, Sebastian has served as a Visiting Lecturer at the Yale School of Music, designing and teaching courses on the connection between music and civil society, including an online course on the Coursera platform, called "Music and Social Action." From 2016 to 2018, Sebastian served as an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Music at Brown University.

Sebastian is an enthusiastic participant on the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture's cabinet, with a title of Secretary of Music and Society, and Sebastian serves on the advisory board of the Sphinx Organization.

In 2010, Sebastian visited the White House to receive the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from First Lady Michele Obama on behalf of Community MusicWorks. In 2012, Sebastian received an honorary doctorate in music from Brown University, and was named by Strings Magazine as among the 25 most influential people in the string music world. Sebastian is a recipient of a 2010 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for "forging a new, multifaceted role beyond the concert hall for the twenty-first-century musician."

Sebastian lives in Providence, is married to violinist Minna Choi, and is a father to two awesome daughters.

[ELLEN PRIEST DIV '77](#) | *Abstract Painter*, [Eyeball It!® Studio Art Program](#)

Ellen Priest is an abstract painter. Her jazz-based paintings on layered, collaged paper have been shown in museum and non-profit spaces in the Northeast, including Saint Peter's Church in midtown Manhattan. She has received two awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Eyeball It!® is her studio art program for 7-13 year-olds, available online and free since 2014. It has users from Alaska to Florida and the UK to Australia. It's new website offers nearly 100 photos of children's artwork done in response to the Projects and Drawing Exercises. Eyeball It!® is an outgrowth of Priest's own studio practice and a response to the lack of visual art education for kids – something she feels passionate about changing. To view her own art: ellenpriest.com.





Pastor Jared Stahler is interested in the interface of religion and society, and pays particular attention to the voices or viewpoints of persons placed by the powerful on the margins of church and society.

At Saint Peter's Church he works with leaders to continue to enrich the use of arts in liturgy as a form of mission and ministry, and is engaged in renewing the church's commitment to newcomers in a changing religious landscape. He has served Saint Peter's Church since 2005.

Pastor Stahler is an alumnus of Yale University and Oberlin College. At Yale he studied jointly at the Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music, receiving, in addition to a Master of Divinity degree, a

Diploma in Lutheran Studies and a Certificate in Liturgical Studies. Pastor Stahler holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Organ Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music at Oberlin College where he studied with James David Christie and Haskell Thomson.

Pastor Stahler is a leader in numerous church-related organizations, and has served on the boards of and has been a consultant for a number of secular not-for-profit organizations. He was a participant in the White House Gifts to the Future Millennium Conference on philanthropy hosted by President and Mrs. Clinton and the Corporation for National Service.

Interfaith and ecumenical relationships are important accents of Pastor Stahler's ministry. He is a founding member of the Faith and Public Policy Roundtable in New York City and serves in various liturgy/arts-related capacities with the Metropolitan New York Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He is a member of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue of New York and a frequent participant/presenter in ecumenical conferences and events.

Pastor Stahler is an opera enthusiast. He and his family enjoy traveling and good food.