

## Welcoming our New Board

It is truly a privilege to serve! Board members serve staggered, two-year terms so that approximately half of the board members are elected each year. The positions open for election for the 2026-2028 term were VP Artistic Development, Treasurer, \*NEW\* VP Education, and Member-At-Large. Our new DGMC board is shown on the right.

Voting was conducted over the first 2 weeks of May via an electronic ballot sent to all DGMC members in good standing. Members had the option to either accept the nominating committee's slate or write in a candidate of their choice. The slate was elected unanimously by DGMC members.

DGMC is happy to welcome the return of Dan Moroz, a former board member, to the role of Member-at-large, and in a new board position of VP Education, Nicolette Cheauré.

Yes, it's a commitment and there is work involved, but it is very rewarding to have a positive impact in your community. If you are a DGMC member and potentially interested in serving on our board, or have questions

View our contact information at [downersgrovemusicclub.org/contact.html](https://downersgrovemusicclub.org/contact.html). Gloria Salazar may be reached by email at [president@downersgrovemusicclub.org](mailto:president@downersgrovemusicclub.org).

## Message from the President



Dear DGMC Members and Friends,  
Thank you to all for another wonderful club year for the Downers Grove Music Club. I hope you've enjoyed staying up to date with all the happenings this year through the past newsletter issues and the website.

### DGMC BOARD 2026-2028

**President** – Gloria Salazar  
**VP Artistic Development** – Chris Tang  
**VP Business Development** – Chris Garofalo  
**VP Education** - Nicolette Cheauré  
**Secretary** – Molin Wang  
**Treasurer** – Maureen Breau  
**Member-At-Large** – Rich Penner  
**Member-At-Large** – Dan Moroz

about board positions, please contact any board member. If you are on the fence about serving on the board, there are many ways to help out!

We deeply appreciate our continuing and departing board members. Their dedication, expertise, and tireless support have played a vital role in the progress of our music club. We are also honored to welcome our talented new board members and deeply appreciate their willingness to serve and help shape our future. 🎵

one another and raising money in support of the Student Music Awards.

As we reflect on the past year, it is also time to look toward the future centennial celebration for the DGMC. In 2027, we will turn 100 years old! This is definitely a noteworthy occasion for the DGMC. The planning has begun for the official celebration to take place in

September of 2027. We would welcome any volunteers who would like to help with this event. We definitely need a team effort. Stay tuned for more details to unfold and please reach out to help and volunteer. Also see Tom's historic article below.

Musically yours,  
Gloria Salazar, DGMC President

## A Look Back—and Ahead—for the Downers Grove Music Club

By Tom Ewing (DGMC past president #43)

The Downers Grove Music Club was founded in 1927, which means we're just a few short months away from celebrating 100 years—an incredible milestone! It's amazing to think that at the time, the United States itself had only been around for a little over half as long as today.

Life in 1927 looked pretty different. Calvin Coolidge was president, Model T Fords filled the roads, Charles Lindbergh made his historic trans-Atlantic flight, and music lovers were just getting used to the latest technology—a brand-new automatic record changer replacing the old hand-cranked Victrola. That shift helped spark a big move from live music to recordings. And right in the middle of all that change, our club was born.

Founded by Dorothy Craigmile as “The Musicians Club,” the group began with just six charter members—all women. Within five years, membership had grown to 39. By the club's tenth anniversary in 1937, 100 members and music lovers came together to celebrate at a silver tea—proof that the love of music was already bringing the community together.

A lot has changed since those early days. The way we listen to music, in particular, has been transformed over and over again—from records to digital streaming. Today, many people carry their entire music library in their pocket. But one thing hasn't changed: the Downers Grove Music Club's passion for live music.

For nearly a century, we've been connecting people to high-quality, live performances through free public concerts featuring talented local artists. We've also supported music education in meaningful ways—like



The Downers Grove Centennial Parade as it passes in front of Memorial Hall, then at 5126 Main, just north of the Main St. Cemetery. The U.S. Postal Service delivery truck was the first one in Downers Grove. Previously, mail had to be picked up at the Post Office downtown. The “*Spirit of Downers Grove*” sign on an airplane mockup is a nod to the historic Charles Lindbergh flight across the Atlantic in 1927, the same year as our founding.

donating a beautiful grand piano to the library and investing in programs that help young musicians grow and thrive.

And we're not slowing down. Through our student music programs, we continue to encourage and support the next generation, helping them develop their skills and confidence. If you haven't joined us yet, we'd love to see you at one of our free concerts at the library. Bring a friend! You can also learn more, watch performances, and stay current on upcoming events at [downersgrovemusicclub.org](http://downersgrovemusicclub.org).

As we approach our **100-year anniversary**, we'll have plenty more to share, so stay tuned! 🎵

# Spring House Benefit Concert

PERFORMED SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026 AT 7PM



Inspired by classic salon gatherings, *House Concerts* offer a uniquely intimate atmosphere and foster a deeper connection between the audience and performers than at a public event. Plus, our benefit house concerts are for a great cause – 100% of proceeds support our annual Rising Star and College Music Student Awards we give to talented, local high school musicians!

This concert featured the artistry of Chris Garofalo- piano and harpsichord, Carolyn May- flute, Andrew Molina- cello. The audience enjoyed a newly commissioned Sonata for Flute and Piano, composed by Chris Garofalo. Andrew Molina, PhD/MD at University of Chicago, a past DGMC Rising Stars and College Award recipient, shared beautiful works by Bach and Poulenc. To conclude the enchanting evening, guests enjoyed a delightful wine and dessert reception following the concert.



We are very grateful to our amazing artists who donated their time and talent, as well as our generous supporters – many of whom are regulars at these benefits. View the concert video and photos here: [DGMC Student Music Awards Benefit Concert](#). Thank you so much for truly making our student music awards program possible! 🎵

## Our dear friend, Marilyn Wilgocki

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Marilyn Wilgocki on March 19, 2026. Marilyn was a long time resident of Downers Grove and member of the Downers Grove Music Club, having served on the board including as the club president for many years. Her obituary is available online for more information: [Marilyn Wilgocki Obituary](#)



## 2026 Piano Honors Recital



Since its inception in 1943, our Piano Festival and Competition has evolved into one of the community's most prestigious and celebrated events. The Honors Recital, which features the top-performing piano students from our 2026 Piano Festival & Competition, was held this year on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 1:30 and 3:00pm at the Downers Grove Public Library. This year we had a record number of participants, 127 total participants! This included 119 In-person participants and 8 Remote participants.

Congratulations to all the students selected to perform in the Honors Recital — your dedication and achievement are truly commendable. A heartfelt thank you as well to the teachers and parents whose guidance and support helped make this possible. Also, our deepest gratitude to the volunteers and judges whose tireless efforts made this year's event such a success. Finally, we deeply appreciate *The Family of Beatrice L. Chiswick* and the *Rotary Club of Downers Grove* for again funding the Junior and Senior Competition Awards. Students awarded cash prizes are shown below. 🎵

# Rising Stars Concert

FEATURING THE MUSIC AWARD RECIPIENTS & PIANO COMPETITION WINNERS

The annual Rising Stars Concert was held on Sunday, March 22, 2026 at the Downers Grove Public Library. This event showcases the talent of previous year's DGMC student award winners and this year's Piano Festival Competition winners. It is also our tradition to highlight area student ensembles at the event.

Performances were given by: **Joanna Adjokatcher**- Flute (2025 Rising Stars Music Award Recipient), **Avery Tin**- Piano (2025 Piano Festival level five division honorable mention), **Alyssa Rawson** – Viola (2025 Rising Stars Music Award Recipient), **Nova Weng** – Piano (2026 Piano Festival Senior Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place), **Lilliana Ruiz** – Flute (2025 Rising Stars Music Award Recipient),



**Claudia Meek** – Violin (2025 Rising Stars Music Award Recipient), **Sydney Mashek** – Piano (2026 Piano Festival Level Four Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Place), **Max Zhao** – Piano (2026 Piano Festival Junior Competition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place), and **Melody Ramos** – Piano (2026 Piano Festival Junior Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place).

Congratulations to all the participating students – you were truly amazing! 🎵



SEE ALL THE EVENT  
PHOTOS AND VIEW THE  
VIDEO OF THE RECITAL AT:

[2026 Rising Stars](#)

## Junior Competition Winners

Isabelle Wu	1 <sup>st</sup> Place, \$300 Award, Beatrice L. Chiswick Scholarship Fund
Nova Weng	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place, \$150.00 Award, DGMC Music Award Fund
Christopher Nakamura	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place, \$75.00 Award, DGMC Music Award Fund

## Senior Competition Winners

Emily Hu	1 <sup>st</sup> Place, \$700.00 Award, Rotary Club of Downers Grove
Max Zheng	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place, \$300.00 Award, Rotary Club of Downers Grove
Nova Wang	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place, \$150.00 from the DGMC Music Award Fund

# 2026 Student Music Awards



Each spring, DGMC is pleased to present several Rising Stars Awards and College Music Awards to deserving music students in their senior year at a District 99 high school who are planning to attend college in the fall following graduation. These monetary awards are given to students at each District 99 high school in the areas of Band, Choir and Orchestra. The recipients are selected based on the merit of their musical accomplishments.

Four Rising Stars and two College Music Awards were announced and presented to the recipients at school



College Music Award Recipients, from left to right: Emma Heer (DGN - flute) and Evangeline Selking (DGS - flute)



awards night or music ensemble events that are held at the two District 99 high schools.

DGMC also awards Private Lesson Awards to 5th-7th grade students enrolled in the District 58 Orchestra program. The award amount is approximately \$360 per award recipient, to cover the typical cost of 12 private lessons. They are generously funded by the Shelby Bulut Memorial Fund. Students apply for this award by submitting a written application.

Award winners are selected based on their demonstration of hard work so far and their eagerness to challenge themselves going forward.

Six students were selected this year. Our hope is that once these students have been introduced to private lessons, they will continue beyond the initial 12-week period and enjoy many years of music excellence. This year's Rising Star and College Music Awards recipients, and the Private Lesson Award winners are listed in the table at left. Congratulations to all our talented students who received DGMC student music awards in 2026.

## Rising Stars Awards (\$500 each)

Andre Cheng, (orchestra, violin) – Downers Grove North High School  
 Ryan Perry, (band, trombone) – Downers Grove North High School  
 Jovana Bogdanovic, (band, flute) – Downers Grove South High School  
 Emily Feylo, (band, oboe) – Downers Grove South High School  
 Leah Achilles, (band, flute)- Downers Grove North High School

## College Music Awards (\$1000 each)

Evangeline Selking (flute) – Downers Grove South High School  
 Emma Heer (flute) – Downers Grove North High School

## Elementary and Middle School Private Lesson Awards

Harper Zawadzki, violin (5th) – El Sierra Elementary School  
 Avery Frankovic, viola (6th) – Hillcrest Elementary School  
 Bianca Ricca, violin (7th) – Herrick Middle School  
 Tommy Dussman, cello (7th) – Herrick Middle School  
 Madeline Avery, viola (5th) – Lester Elementary School  
 Riya Sullivan, violin (6th) – Lester Elementary School



Madeline Avery received a private lesson award.

May each step in your musical journey bring new opportunities and unforgettable experiences. We look forward to learning where your talent and dedication take you next. 🎵



# Join/renew/donate

Except for our fundraiser music events, our programs are open to the public and free of charge. As part of our commitment to music education, DGMC holds an annual Piano Festival & Competition to encourage and challenge students. DGMC also awards music scholarships to deserving students each year, plus makes investments in our schools and community that foster musical arts development.

## We can't accomplish our mission without you.

All our support comes from annual membership dues and generous donations. When you support DGMC, you're putting a violin into young hands, you're filling public spaces with live music, you're inspiring the next generation, and more!

For further information about joining and the benefits of membership please visit our website at [downersgrovemusicclub.org/member.html](http://downersgrovemusicclub.org/member.html), or email us at [memberdir@downersgrovemusicclub.org](mailto:memberdir@downersgrovemusicclub.org).

Thanks for helping us keep music free, alive, and accessible! 🎵

## Member Organization & Events

**Dan Moroz** is a Chicago saxophonist, composer, and music educator. Dan's original music can be found on all major streaming services, including Spotify, iTunes, and Amazon. For more information about his performances or private instruction opportunities, visit <https://www.danmoroz.com/>.

**Downers Grove Choral Society** has been performing concerts in the western suburbs of Chicago since 1959. For more information about the Choral Society, visit [www.dgcs.org](http://www.dgcs.org).

**Grant Street String Quartet:** This quartet was formed in 2010 by four professional musicians in the western suburban area of Chicago. To learn more, visit <http://www.grantstreetstringquartet.weebly.com>.

**PianoForte Studios: Thomas Zoells**, director, and owner of the PianoForte Chicago piano store. For more information, call (312) 291-0000 or visit <https://pianofortechicago.com/concerts-events/>.  
PianoForte Studios, 1335 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

**West Towns Chorus:** Chartered in 1948, the group is one of the premier men's a cappella choruses in the Chicago area. More information is available at [www.westtowns.org](http://www.westtowns.org). See also information on their upcoming event on the previous page of this newsletter.

**Sinfonietta Bel Canto:** with Dan Pasquale D'Andrea, Artistic Director/Conductor. For more information, please visit [www.SinfoniettaBelCanto.org](http://www.SinfoniettaBelCanto.org) or call 630-384-5007.

**Solaris Concert Season:** Nicolette Cheauré is the founder and director of the new Solaris Concert Series that is housed at Divine Savior Catholic Church in Downers Grove. Solaris will feature solo and chamber music from students and performers who either live in the immediate Western-Chicago suburbs or music majors who study at schools in the Chicago area. The initial concerts have been excellent and have featured a few of our past DGMC High School Music Award winners – all who are pursuing music degrees or careers. Be sure to check their Facebook page @SolarisConcertSeries to get the latest info. 🎵

