

Celebrated Activist Songwriter Justin Tranter Donates Half a Million Dollars to Alma Mater Chicago Academy For the Arts

The Largest Donation in the History of the School Will Support Tuition and Scholarships for Students in Need.

CHICAGO, IL, USA, March 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Returning to the school that saved their life years ago and set them on a path to becoming one of the most celebrated activists and songwriters of the modern era, [Justin Tranter](#) is paying it forward by way of a donation of over half a million dollars to their alma mater [The Chicago Academy For The Arts](#). The unprecedented contribution serves as the single largest donation in the school's history, arriving at a time when it was needed most. During a period of tremendous financial challenges where nearly two-thirds of the Academy's families require tuition assistance, Tranter's gift will make it possible for life-changing scholarships and tuition assistance to be awarded. The Academy is more than just a school for Justin; it's a one-of-a-kind education experience. A creative environment that allowed them to be unapologetically themselves. A safe space following years of harrowing violence and bullying in public school as a teenager. Like The Academy did for Justin years ago, their gift will make it possible for students in need to continue calling The



Justin Tranter (photo credit: Christopher Patey)



2023 Chicago Academy for the Arts Showcase

Academy “home”.

Throughout the years, Tranter has continued to be a monumental advocate for The Chicago Academy for the Arts and remains a current member of their Board of Trustees. In 2018, Tranter made a substantial donation to the school to fund the “Justin Tranter Recording Studio” and transform their recording arts program. To this day, the program teaches aspiring music students to record, produce, and write in a studio with state-of-the-art equipment, and even gives them the opportunity to participate in songwriting classes that Tranter periodically hosts. Tranter also founded the school’s Annual AIDS Benefit, a student-run variety show with proceeds donated to support AIDS research and families affected by the disease, which recently hosted its 26th annual event in the fall of 2022. Since its inception, the benefit has raised tens of thousands of dollars for AIDS research, support, care and organizations.



Chicago Academy for the Arts Head of School Jason Patera (photo credit: IMAGO/ZUMA Wire)

“The Academy has a 40-year legacy of transforming the lives of emerging artists,” says Jason Patera, Head of School at Chicago Academy for the Arts. “It’s been a year of tremendous financial challenges — Covid has been particularly hard on us, as two-thirds of our departments are performing arts programs. Although the crisis appears to be abating, it will be a few years before we have fully recovered. So, Justin’s generous gift comes at a time when we need it the most.”

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This school made me the artist and songwriter I am today and it saved my life in more ways than I can count. I am proud to be able to support a place that educates young creatives.”

Justin Tranter

Justin’s donation arrives during a full circle moment for the superstar songwriter, who graduated from The Academy’s Musical Theatre Program in 1998. Now, nearly two decades

later, Tranter will soon take the reins of one of the most beloved musicals ever. As the executive music producer and songwriter for the Grease prequel series [Rise of the Pink Ladies](#) premiering on Paramount + this April, they wrote an astounding 30 songs for the first season of the series: the most ever for a single season of television.

Already having established themselves as one of the most prolific songwriters in music, an ACLU Bill of Rights Award-winning activist, a record label and publishing company founder with Facet House, and a co-creator of the heralded musical *Wild* directed by Diane Paulus, written by V (formerly Eve Ensler) and starring Idina Menzel, *Rise of the Pink Ladies* builds upon a growing repertoire of film and television projects that Tranter has shaped the musical identity of over the past few years — from Billy Porter’s directorial debut *Anything’s Possible* to Hulu’s record-breaking *Happiest Season*, Netflix’s runaway hit *Purple Hearts* and more. Just as they have throughout their life and career, Justin continues to redefine every new frontier they fearlessly tackle.

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