

Stars Align at Manhattan School of Music Gala Honoring Isabel Leonard and Dr. Han Jo Kim

CBS's Elaine Quijano hosts a glittering celebration of artistry and achievement in New York City

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, November 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Manhattan School of Music (MSM) will honor two

distinguished alumni, Dr. Han Jo Kim (P '98) and Grammy Award-winning opera star Isabel Leonard (P '98, HonDMA '21), at its upcoming Precollege Gala on Saturday, November 15th, 2025, in New York City. Hosted by CBS News correspondent Elaine Quijano, the evening will celebrate more than a century of MSM's leadership in arts education and the enduring impact of its Precollege Division on generations of young musicians.



The Precollege Gala recognizes individuals whose careers embody the artistry, innovation, and mentorship that define the institution's mission. Dr. Kim, an internationally renowned spine surgeon and Director of the Complex Spine and Scoliosis Center at the Hospital for Special Surgery, is celebrated for his groundbreaking surgical contributions and humanitarian work in Ghana, where he has performed life-changing operations on pediatric and adult patients. Isabel Leonard, one of the most acclaimed mezzo-sopranos of her generation, continues to grace the world's most prestigious stages, from The Metropolitan Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper to Carnegie Hall, where she is a Perspectives Artist this season. Both honorees exemplify the excellence that the School's founder, Janet Daniels Schenck, envisioned when she established Manhattan School of Music more than a century ago.

The gala program will feature performances by outstanding Precollege students, including violinist Isaiah Shin (P '32), pianist Christopher Ramos (P '26), and soprano Isabella Moon (P '26), as well as a performance by Winter Donnelly (P '27). These performances reflect the school's mission to nurture artistic excellence and personal growth in young musicians. Remarks will be delivered by MSM President James Gandre, Board Vice Chair and Precollege parent Kishore Ballal, acclaimed pianist Simone Dinnerstein (P '89), and celebrated composer and pianist Chloe Flower (P '00), known for her viral GRAMMY® Awards performance with Cardi B and her advocacy for music education. The program will also include a special virtual greeting from Robert Lopez (P '93), the Oscar-winning songwriter of Frozen and Coco, followed by a cocktail reception featuring student performances. Among the distinguished guests due to attend are real estate

mogul and business expert Barbara Corcoran, Dr. Bryan T. Kelly (President/CEO of Hospital for Special Surgery), Chocolate entrepreneur Maribel Lieberman and Sylvia Hemingway.

The annual Precollege Gala underscores MSM's commitment to cultivating exceptional talent through its rigorous Saturday program for students ages 8 to 18, a tradition that reflects the School's founding as a community music school for children. With instruction in both classical and jazz disciplines, the Precollege Division provides comprehensive musical training that prepares students to excel at leading conservatories and universities around the world.

Proceeds from the event will support the MSM Precollege Scholarship Fund, ensuring that future generations of gifted young artists can pursue their musical dreams regardless of financial means. Founded in 1917, Manhattan School of Music remains one of the world's foremost conservatories, known for its distinguished faculty, innovative curriculum, and alumni who continue to shape the global musical landscape.

About Manhattan School of Music (MSM):

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Opera Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege program continues to offer superior music instruction to 525 young musicians between the ages of 8 and 18. The School also serves some 6,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed and pioneering Distance Learning Program.

For more information on Manhattan School of Music, its history, and its curriculum, visit:

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