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THE PEOPLE'S MUSIC SCHOOL NAMES TOM BRACY TO NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE

Bracy, former head of Merit School of Music, to join as Executive Director (Chicago)

Chicago, September 10, 2020 - [The People's Music School \(TPMS\)](#) is pleased to announce that Tom Bracy, former Executive Director of the Merit School of Music and National CEO of The Harmony Project, will be joining the school's leadership team as its new Executive Director (Chicago), serving under the school's President and Artistic Director Jennifer Kim-Matsuzawa.

"Tom is a seasoned, purpose-driven leader who brings a tremendous combination of capabilities to People's at a very transformative time. His model of servant leadership and embodiment of our core values will be a critical anchor as People's navigates uncertain times and new terrains," said Matsuzawa.

As Executive Director (Chicago), Bracy will oversee all Chicago-based programming and assets, including our 850 students, 70+ faculty/staff members, 4 thriving program sites across Chicago and our nationally-recognized SLAM program. Bracy has a tremendous track record of impact, including founding his own consulting firm (Bracy Group, LLC) to equip educators, school districts, and non-profit organizations with tools to build their programs, and serving as the Executive Director of the Merit School of Music. He earned his Master of Management, Master of Business Administration, and Master of Human Resources Management from North Park University in Chicago.

"I have had the distinct honor as a music educator to serve our youth for the past 30 years," said Bracy. "My work has taken me across the country these past 6 years, and I am happy to come home to once again serve here in Chicago. I can think of no better place to do this than at The People's Music School. I look forward to serving our youth with our exceptional leadership, dedicated staff, and talented faculty."

Bracy has joined the team at a pivotal time as the school prepares for a full year of virtual learning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. He began consulting with the school in March 2020, and played a critical role in its rapid, highly successful transition to a virtual learning platform. During this time, TPMS achieved several milestones including a 91% engagement rate among students, 23 virtual concerts over a 7-day Performapaloozathon, and a virtual summer program that enrolled twice as many students than ever before. According to Board Chair Michael Buck, "Tom's extensive experience and deep passion for the TPMS mission will



significantly enhance our ability to achieve the ambitious vision we have to transform music education.”

President and Artistic Director Jennifer Kim-Matsuzawa will continue to lead the overall organization as it expands to meet demand for its rigorous, accessible, community-infused learning system. TPMS will be announcing a number of expansion pilots that will bring this learning system and its associated proven outcomes to underserved communities, even more critical now at a time of great challenge and deep hardship for our young people.

Natalie Butler, Dean of Learning and Teaching, and Kemper Florin, Director of Development, will continue their groundbreaking and successful work on the organization’s leadership team. Alli Henry and Carolyn Sybesma will be departing this fall to pursue other professional and personal goals after laying important groundwork that underlied TPMS’ transformational journey over the past 5 years, from a deficit-riddled hidden treasure to a nationally-recognized high-growth role model in the field of music education.

About The People’s Music School

The People's Music School is the only completely free music school, focused solely on Chicago’s underserved children. The mission is to deliver access to the benefits of high-quality, immersive music education. Through intensive instruction and performance, students achieve excellence in music that transfers to the classroom and beyond. They grow musically, socially, emotionally and intellectually, and develop a foundation of responsibility, self-esteem, resilience and purpose. The school serves 800+ students annually hailing from over 50 zip codes across Chicago, and over 90% are of color. 100% of their seniors graduate high school and enroll in college.

The school’s students have performed with Yo-Yo Ma, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Third Coast Percussion, Jimmy Chamberlin of the Smashing Pumpkins, and have partnered with Chicago Public Schools, Bottom Line college prep, Louder Than A Bomb and [Obama Summit](#), among many more. The school has been featured widely in the media for its innovation, impact and excellence including [Billboard Magazine](#), [New York Times](#), the [Today Show](#), [ABC 7 Chicago](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [Crain’s Chicago Business](#), [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Univision](#), [CBS News](#), and [WGN](#). To learn more about The People’s Music School and upcoming events, please visit: www.peoplesmusicsschool.org.

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