

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Philadelphia Youth Come Together as a Community through Music at the POP Virtual Winter Showcase

*Friday, December 18, 2020, Philadelphia, PA/Online:* Students from Play On Philly (POP), a tuition-free music education program, will share their collaborative innovative compositions and artistic projects at the *POP Virtual Winter Showcase* on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm ET. The *POP Virtual Winter Showcase* will feature K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students' virtual ensemble performance on paper violins created in partnership with Fleisher Art Memorial, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade students' musical variations on *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade students dancing and singing to Pharrell William's *Happy*, choreographed and taught by BalletX, and 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade students' reimagined electronic score for the opening of Walt Disney's *Lion King*. The showcase will conclude with the world premiere of a suite in four movements written by world-renowned composer and pianist Dr. Iman Habibi in collaboration with 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade POP students. The *POP Virtual Winter Showcase* will be hosted online and is free and open to the public by [registering on BigMarker](#).

Dr. Iman Habibi worked closely with 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade POP students on building their compositional skills and provided insights into his process as a composer. Students wrote musical ideas that Dr. Habibi incorporated into a suite in four movements. "I was blown away by the wealth of talent, and the excellence of the ideas I received...having been born in a war-torn Iran, where I was afforded little access to music education as a young child, I have come to truly appreciate the tremendous work Play On Philly does in making music education accessible."

**POP Virtual Winter Showcase** highlights our youth's artistic accomplishments as a community. The Winter Showcase is the culminating performance of session one of POP's innovative and free online virtual music program, which has been adapted from a year-round daily in-person after-school program in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Over the course of session one, over 208 students from Philadelphia and partner organizations across the Greater Philadelphia area and as far as Canada came together over the course of 10 weeks to cultivate their musicianship, music technology and instrumental skills, as well as expand their creativity through project-based learning. Each class shared individual musical ideas with each other and worked together to turn their ideas into collective musical compositions and projects. The *POP Virtual Winter Showcase* celebrates the community that our students and Teaching Artists have built together through their shared artistic voices.

"POP students have demonstrated their tenacity and desire to connect over the first session of our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Despite being apart, they have come together in the virtual classroom to create amazing musical projects," says Executive Director and Founder Stanford Thompson. "From learning music technology and producing an electronic movie score to working closely with a world-renowned composer like Dr. Iman Habibi, our students have had musical experiences that many students at their age across the nation rarely get access to. POP students accomplished these challenging musical feats as a community not only during a difficult time in this world, but in isolation. The Showcase will celebrate our students' creativity, innovation, as well as their sense of community during these challenging times."

What: POP Virtual Winter Showcase

When: December 18, 2020, 5:00 – 5:45 pm ET

Where: <https://www.bigmarker.com/play-on-philly/Play-On-Philly-Winter-Showcase>

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**About Play On Philly:**

Play On Philly (POP) provides high-quality music education to students, who would typically lack access, as a vehicle for life skills and academic achievement. During a typical year, we provide 2 hours of music instruction and ensemble practice every day after school and over 25 performance opportunities throughout the year. Students range from Kindergarten to 12th grade and are loaned an orchestral instrument at no cost. POP programming has proven results: our students score ten points higher on standardized tests and have improved behavior and study skills. We cultivate musical excellence, lifelong skills, and confidence. Learn more about POP at our website: [www.playonphilly.org](http://www.playonphilly.org).