

History:

The Pittsfield Community Music School opened its doors to 40 students in 1940, thanks to the philanthropy of Winnie Davis Long Crane. While the name evolved into the more inclusive Berkshire Music School in 2002, the original mission remains steadfast: *...to provide quality education in music and musical opportunities to people in the greater Berkshire community regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, age, or ability to pay.*

The School moved to its 1870 historic Pittsfield home in 1943. A carriage barn on this Wendell Avenue property was restored in 1996 to create a 90-seat recital hall and additional teaching studios.



Berkshire Music School by Kinny Frelinghuysen

Mrs. Crane guided and served the Music School for 37 years. She and her husband, Bruce Crane, faithfully filled the annual gap between tuition income and operating expenses. Upon her death, Mrs. Crane generously bequeathed an endowment which continues to support the vision of the School today. Proceeds of this endowment do not meet the needs of BMS in 2008, nor did it provide for any depreciation and capital needs.

Profile:

Berkshire Music School, a private, non-profit organization founded in 1940

450+ students taking weekly private lessons and chamber coachings over a 34-week school year.

10 summer camps for young people ages 6-18.

40 faculty members, 50% with Masters Degrees.

Facilities open 60 hours a week for lessons and coaching, making BMS one of the busiest cultural facilities in downtown Pittsfield, includes 14 teaching studios and 90 seat recital hall.

12% of student body receives financial aid, work study or merit scholarships. No one is turned down for music lessons due to inability to pay. Annual Music Marathon supports financial aid and merit scholarships. \$22,000 distributed last year.

BMS alumni are attending Hartt School of Music, Juilliard, Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, Boston and Oberlin Conservatories. Twenty-four BMS students recently won positions in the Western Districts music competition, and 6 have recommendations to All-State.

BMS boasts more than a 90% retention rate. 7 new instructors were hired in 2007 to accommodate growth.

Off-site performances include events for the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Pittsfield, Goodwill Industries, United Cerebral Palsy, Tanglewood, OLLI, Berkshire Visitors Bureau and nearly every assisted-living/senior center in Berkshire County.

Grants awarded by Legacy Bank Foundation, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Berkshire Bank Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Rotary Club of Pittsfield, United Way of Pittsfield and a number of other local cultural councils.

BMS is an anchor in the Berkshire Creative Economy and an active member of Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Inc. and Berkshire Visitors Bureau.

Staff of 3 full-time and 3 part time, 10 member Governing Board, 15 member Advisory Board.