

The First Bank of Greenwich supports the arts with INTEMPO's Artist-in-Residence program

By Susan Shultz

(Ad) When Lou Chen, CEO of INTEMPO, received a donation of a rare violin from an anonymous donor, there were discussions of next steps – the first of which was to certify its value.

“We had an inkling that we had been given a valuable instrument, but we still had to verify its authenticity,” he said.

“When we found out it was a 150-year-old Giuseppe Sgarbi violin – of which there are not too many in circulation – worth up to \$100,000, we first saw it as an unexpected windfall and considered selling it,” Chen said.

But after further internal discussion, the decision was made to embrace it as a transformative asset for the program – with the generous support of The First Bank of Greenwich.

As a result of the donation, Chen and his team decided to launch a new Artist-in-Residence Program in collaboration with Orchestra Lumos, Fairfield County's foremost professional orchestra. The program is designed for emerging young violinists seeking career support. For a term of two years, INTEMPO will provide the rising artist with the exclusive use of the violin.

Additionally, the residency will provide performance and teaching opportunities at INTEMPO, a \$10,000 annual stipend, an annual commissioned work, and concert appearances with Orchestra Lumos and their renowned music director, Michael Stern.

The artist will be chosen through a multi-round competition adjudicated by INTEMPO staff, Orchestra Lumos musicians, and leading artists, including **solo violist Jordan Bak**, solo violinist Stefan Jackiw and Houston Symphony concertmaster Yoonshin Song. Finalists will perform in recital on Saturday, May 23 at Stamford's Emerson Hall, with the winner featured in a recital alongside INTEMPO students on Wednesday, June 10 at the Kveskin Theatre. Tickets are



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available at intempo.org.

Support from The First Bank of Greenwich

Chen said financial support from The First Bank of Greenwich has been vital for INTEMPO in launching this emerging artist program.

“INTEMPO is making a significant investment in this residency because we know it will benefit our students. We have raised \$68,500 already in the past three months, thanks to generous support from The First Bank of Greenwich and other sponsors,” Chen said.

While many music education non-profits offer residencies for talented young musicians, Chen noted that few – if any – are tied to an instrument of such rarity and value.

“I am most grateful to The First Bank of Greenwich – they've been showing up for INTEMPO in a major way. They are showing faith in our program, our community, and our students by committing support at this early stage,” he said.

Chen said that it is largely due to Bank President Frank J. Gaudio and his team, who see it as “more than a bank,” but also a commitment to supporting the arts.

That commitment goes beyond financial, Chen added.

“I mean, Frank goes to so many events, I don't know when he sleeps,” Chen said.

“It is an understanding that we are partners and we amplify

each other's work – we are co-invested in the arts and culture scene in Fairfield County,” Chen said.

“Frank and our other sponsors have done so much to promote this, and I think that is the kind of reciprocal, collaborative, and creative relationship that nonprofits thrive on, and to be honest, don't get enough of – and that is why it is so notable,” Chen said.

INTEMPO's inaugural Artist-in-Residence will be announced this May and will be installed for two years.

About INTEMPO

Founded in 2011, INTEMPO teaches multicultural and classical music to children predominantly from immigrant backgrounds. It reaches over 500 children annually through after-school, in-school, summer, and partnership programs in Lower Fairfield County.

For more information, please visit intempo.org.

About The First Bank of Greenwich

The First Bank of Greenwich is committed to celebrating the arts and culture of the area and recently committed to partnering with Stamford's Avon Theatre's extensive renovation and road tour.

For more information on The First Bank of Greenwich, visit greenwichfirst.com.

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