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Cincinnati Youth Choir Names Ryan Ellis and Cindy Ellis Co-Artistic Directors

Cincinnati, Ohio (July 3, 2026) – Cincinnati Youth Choir (CYC), Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), today announced the appointment of **Ryan Ellis** and **Cindy Ellis** as Co-Artistic Directors, effective with the 2026–27 season. The husband-and-wife artistic team will lead CYC's artistic vision, programming, and instructional direction in partnership with Executive Director Nicholas Pridonoff. Learn more at cincinnatichoir.org.

“Ryan and Cindy bring a level of artistry and international experience that is rare to find, and an even rarer commitment to youth music education,” said Nicholas Pridonoff, Executive Director. “This is an exciting moment for Cincinnati Youth Choir, and we can’t wait for our families and the broader community to meet them.”

CYC KICKOFF: MEET & GREET THE NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Saturday, August 1, 2026 – 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Watson Recital Hall, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

“We are hoping to bring the City That Sings even closer together, ushering in an exciting new chapter of CYC where we honor our roots, build musicianship, and remain relevant in a rapidly changing music industry,” said Ryan Ellis.

Families and members of the community interested in learning more about the Kickoff event or CYC's 2026–27 season can contact Nicholas Pridonoff, Executive Director, at executivedirector@cincinnatichoir.org.

Ryan Ellis Biography

Ryan Ellis is a jazz pianist and music educator based in Miami, Florida, whose performance career has taken him to venues across Miami, New York, Hawaii, and the Caribbean. Ryan currently leads the choral program at Miami Arts Studio, where his ensembles have earned national and international recognition. He is the founder of MAS Records Inc., a nonprofit, student-led record label that pairs students with industry professionals to teach the business side of music. Ryan has spent twenty-five years as

a music educator in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, including the last ten leading the choral program at Miami Arts Studio.

Cindy Ellis Biography

Cindy Ellis is a vocalist, choral director, and clinician whose ensembles have performed at Carnegie Hall, the Florida, Southern, and National Conferences of the American Choral Directors Association, and the 2024 BBC Proms Music Festival in London. As a jazz vocal soloist and alto with the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, she has collaborated with Jacob Collier on performances at the Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center, and on recording projects including a performance alongside Coldplay for NBC's Saturday Night Live. In 2024, she conducted her students at the Miami stop of Jacob Collier's DJESSE Vol. 4 World Tour. A performance of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by her ensemble at the ACDA National Conference in Dallas went viral, drawing widespread attention to her work as a choral educator. Cindy is Miami Arts Studio's 2025 Teacher of the Year, a 2025 Grammy Music Educator Semi-Finalist and 2026 Quarter-Finalist, and serves as the World Musics & Cultures Coordinator for the ACDA Southern Region. Her TED Talk with Jacob Collier is set to be released soon.

The Cincinnati Youth Choir, Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, is a nationally celebrated, award-winning choral organization entering its 34th season. Each year, hundreds of Greater Cincinnati youth in grades one through twelve grow in choral artistry in this educationally based organization. CYC's Bel Canto Choir has been a featured ensemble in China, Japan, Italy, England, Wales, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Costa Rica, and across the United States. CYC choirs have had the distinct honor to perform in some of the world's best concert venues such as Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Forbidden City Concert Hall, St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City and the World Expo in Milan, Italy. CYC has performed with the Cincinnati's Symphony, Pops, Opera, and May Festival while regularly collaborating with CCM's ensembles and operas. CYC has commissioned over 80 works for treble voices.

Cincinnati Youth Choir also thanks the following for their support of our programs:



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