

Stephanie Manning named as Rubin Institute Fellow for 2022

by Daniel Hathaway



Third-year Oberlin bassoon major Stephanie Manning is among 18 aspiring music writers to be named Fellows of the Fifth Biennial Stephen and Cynthia Rubin Institute for Music Criticism, which will convene at the San Francisco Conservatory from June 16-20.

Founded at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2011 by book publishing executive Stephen Rubin, the Institute is designed to further the art and craft of critical writing about music. Keynote addresses are given by the nation's top music critics and public concerts are reviewed by the fellows and critiqued by professional journalists in private workshops.

The Institute will culminate in the awarding of the \$10,000 Rubin Prize in Music Criticism to the fellow who demonstrates exceptional promise in music criticism. Institute graduates have gone on to write for such publications as the *New Yorker*, *Boston Globe*, and *Washington Post*.

Manning, a native of McLean, Virginia, will join colleagues from a dozen states who are studying at 16 colleges, music schools and universities, including the City University of New York, Boston University, Columbia, Harvard, the New England Conservatory, Princeton, Rice and Stanford. This year's [Fellows](#) have for the first time been selected from an open pool of applicants. Those who have been invited to San Francisco will have all their expenses paid.

“There’s a nice range of people who are doing their bachelor’s and master’s degrees, as well as young professionals, which I think is cool,” Manning said. “Their bios show a diverse array of experiences, and the many different pathways that people have taken to

find their way to music journalism. I think that's indicative of music journalism as a field."

Manning herself qualifies both as a degree candidate and a young professional. At Oberlin, she has taken the "Introduction to Music Journalism" course — team-taught by visiting teachers Mike Telin and Daniel Hathaway of *ClevelandClassical.com*, and its second semester continuation, "Practicing the Art of Musical Journalism." She demonstrated such a flair for the subject that Telin and Hathaway invited her to join the masthead of their Cleveland publication, which has become the go-to source for classical music coverage in Northeast Ohio since its founding in 2008.

In fact, those Oberlin courses were designed to prepare student writers for their initial foray into music journalism when the Rubin Institute was launched ten years ago. Two other *ClevelandClassical.com* staffers — managing editor Jarrett Hoffman, and correspondent Peter Feher — are former Rubin Fellows.



Rubin Fellows 2011 & 2015

"Taking those Music Journalism classes sort of appeared out of nowhere, but then they became a big thing for me," Manning said. "The classes I had with Mike and Dan, and the opportunity to write for *ClevelandClassical.com* have been transformative. It's meaningful to have the work I've been doing in the Northeast Ohio community be recognized on a national level.

"In terms of age, I do feel like a small fish in a big pond, but I think that's a good thing because I know that there is still so much to learn. I have one more year on my undergraduate degree and there's so much that I am still trying to figure out about the future.

Manning said that going to the Rubin, getting to meet people who do the kind of work that she does in real life, and attending and writing about performances by the San

Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, and SFJAZZ, is a great opportunity. “I think that for me as a writer, SFJAZZ will be a particularly nice challenge because I don’t normally write about jazz. Or about opera, for that matter.”

To help meet those challenges, during the Institute Manning and her colleagues will have access to the accumulated wisdom of a distinguished group of journalists, including Natasha Gauthier (*Opera Canada*), Gary Giddins (formerly of the *Village Voice*), Joshua Kosman (*San Francisco Chronicle*), Janice Page (*Washington Post*), Tim Page (Pulitzer Prize-winning critic and author), John Rockwell (formerly of *The New York Times*), Steve Smith (Culture & Arts Editor at WNYC), Heidi Waleson (*Wall Street Journal*), Zachary Woolfe (*The New York Times*), and Stephen Rubin himself (founder and benefactor of the Institute, and consulting publisher for Simon & Schuster).

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