



October 6, 2022

The Board of Directors of Sistema Toronto announces the upcoming departure of long-time Executive Director, Christie Gray. Christie has been appointed incoming CEO of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. While we are sad to see her go, we are delighted to congratulate her on this exciting opportunity.

The Board of Directors is also excited to announce that Dr. Shawn Earle has been appointed incoming CEO of Sistema Toronto, and will assume his role on 31 Oct 2022.

Canadian clarinetist Dr. Shawn Earle enjoys an active career as a performer, educator, and administrator. He is committed to music education, having been Assistant Professor at the University of Virginia, Lecturer at University of Regina, Washington and Lee University, Clarinet Instructor at the University of Victoria, a high school Band Director, delivering numerous masterclasses, teaching artist at the El Sistema-inspired Saint James Music Academy in Vancouver, and maintaining a private studio.

Dr. Earle is currently the Director of Artistic Administration and Education and Outreach for the Regina Symphony Orchestra where he manages six concert series, innovates and implements creative education and community engagement projects, while seeking out and maintaining community partnerships. Through his role at the Regina Symphony, Dr. Earle has established the El Sistema-inspired *Regina Symphony Music Makers Program*, a free music program for underserved children grades 4-7.

Dr. Earle has performed throughout Canada, the USA, Europe, and Australia as a chamber musician and enjoyed collaborations with notable ensembles including the Ecosono Ensemble (he is featured on two recordings, *Glacier Music* and *The Ceiling Floats Away*), Albemarle Ensemble, Aventa Ensemble, Novo Ensemble, Cascadia Reed Quintet, and the Lafayette String Quartet. As an orchestral musician, Dr. Earle has performed with the Charlottesville Symphony, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Okanagan Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Vancouver Island Symphony, Regina Symphony Orchestra, and Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra.

Dr. Earle holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of British Columbia as well as a Master's degree from the University of Victoria, a Bachelor of Education from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor of Music from Acadia University.

Marcia Lewis Brown, Sistema Toronto's Board Chair remarked, "*Shawn's education, expertise and passion for social change through music education make him a stand-out candidate for this role. His experience within the El Sistema community, expertise in providing excellence in music education for priority communities, and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for children and youth in music were evident from our first conversation. We are excited to support Shawn's leadership and vision for Sistema Toronto in the coming years.*"



Regarding his new position Shawn noted that *“Sistema Toronto’s mission for transformative change through music education is one that I have been passionate about throughout my career as an educator. I’m thrilled to have this opportunity to lead a team of musicians and educators who deeply believe in music as a tool for social change and I’m very excited about creating opportunities for equity and inclusion for this inspiring community of students.”*

In speaking about her upcoming departure, Executive Director Christie Gray said, *“It has been one of the true joys of my lifetime to build and create the Sistema Toronto community with my colleagues and work with the incredible children of Parkdale, Jane/Finch, East Scarborough and Lambton Park over the last seven years. I will always value and cherish the time I had being part of Sistema Toronto, and I am excited to see new growth and changes under Shawn’s leadership.”*

Sistema Toronto works with 300+ children and their families from neighbourhoods in Toronto with some of the city’s highest child poverty rates – Jane-Finch, East Scarborough, Lambton Park, and Parkdale. Students work together for ten hours per week to learn orchestral instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass), percussion, and choir while developing important life skills like confidence, empathy, and self-advocacy. Participants receive instruction with professional musicians, instruments to learn on, performance opportunities, and a daily nutritious snack at no cost to participants’ families. Sistema Toronto students face a variety of challenges. Many are newcomers to Canada, others are on the autism spectrum, and some have experienced trauma. The program is designed to equip kids living on the margins with the skills they need to escape generational poverty and succeed in all areas of life. For more information, visit www.sistema-toronto.ca.



Christie Gray



Shawn Earle