

## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

# Manhattan School of Music: Distance learning brings music expertise worldwide

### Benefits

- Enhanced sound quality for music transmission
- Conduct high-quality instruction over distance
- Enabled worldwide music community to connect

### Featured Products

- Polycom® RealPresence® Group Series



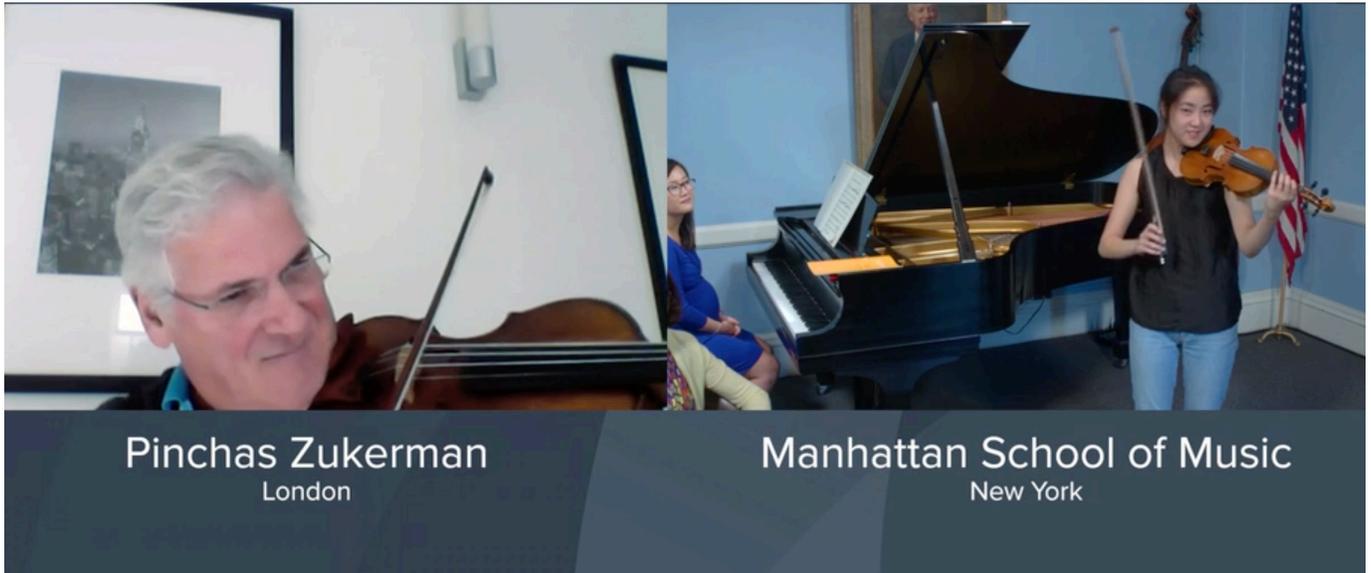
One of the world's most esteemed music conservatories, Manhattan School of Music (MSM), which celebrates its hundredth anniversary in 2018–2019, has more than 960 gifted undergraduate and graduate students hailing from more than 50 countries and almost every state. They come to MSM to study innovative curricula with the institution's world-renowned artist-teacher faculty, who are members of the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and more.

### Partnership with Gould Academy

Cellist Tommy Mesa is in Manhattan, but he has a music class in Maine to teach at 9:30 am. He logs on via Polycom RealPresence Desktop with Music Mode and connects with students from Gould Academy. As Distance Learning Doctoral Music Fellow at MSM, Mesa has been teaching in a blended-learning style, a combination of in-person coaching and Polycom® video conferencing. "I love being able to teach in person, but this system allows me to teach from outside the classroom or the studio with such clarity," he says. Sure enough, over video, Mesa guides the students playing in Maine: "Chloe, use more bow." Mesa indicates onscreen how much bow the student should be using. On the Maine side, Jim McLaughlin, Performing Arts Program Chair at Gould Academy, is in the room with his class. McLaughlin has partnered with Manhattan school of Music to bring private lessons and ensemble coaching to his students.

“By enabling different complexities and dynamics of sound, Music Mode transmits music with greater authenticity and integrity, with sustained notes and richer tones.”

Christianne Orto, Dean of Distance Learning and Recording Arts



The Distance Learning program that was launched in 1996 as the first of its kind at a major conservatory. The Dean of Distance Learning and Recording Arts, Christianne Orto, spearheaded the Distance Learning program, which connects students to music institutions and peer institutions worldwide. This year alone, MSM will be connecting to Denmark, Finland, Vienna, Canada, and the Netherlands in the spirit of bringing more educational opportunities to their student body.

### Music mode: Keeping music true to sound

In 1996, Orto knew that video conferencing technology could be a very powerful tool for MSM faculty to teach while touring around the globe. However, the technology was designed for speech communication and not for musical sound. Orto and Polycom collaborated with the engineering team in Austin, Texas, in a laboratory-like environment to develop Music Mode.

Music Mode is enhanced sound quality for music transmission. In traditional, speech-based conferences, sounds are adjusted so that all speakers are heard on the same level. Musicians need to hear whether sounds are loud or soft, full or flat. By enabling different complexities and dynamics of sound, Music Mode transmits music with greater authenticity and integrity, with sustained notes and richer tones.

“I think about how we are coaching our students to produce the best timbre [or sound quality] from their instrument,” McLaughlin says. “So, Music Mode is an amazing thing that allows you to hear the true timbre of the instrument over the Internet. Without it, I’m not sure that the lessons would not be as high-level quality as they are. We’ve only just scratched the surface on what we can do with our Manhattan school of Music partnership.”

### Student mentoring: A hallmark of MSM Distance Learning

“One of the unique aspects of MSM’s Distance Learning program is that we put this technology in the hands of our own students to educate and teach the next generation about how videoconferencing technology can help build a global arts community,” Orto says. “So, we let them create content that they deliver to classrooms and hospitals, community centers, senior centers, and libraries so that they can learn how to be tomorrow’s educators, performers, and advocates for the arts.”

Ana Garcia, MSM Digital Scholar, incorporates dance, images, videos, and activities to make her lessons an interactive experience for her students. “Using this medium has made me reflect more on my teaching skills, to make it seem like the screen is no longer there. It feels like I am in the room with them, so this platform works perfectly for me.”

## Embracing the future while celebrating history

Stefon Harris, Director and Associate Dean of Jazz Arts at Manhattan School of Music, embraces the distance learning technology for its ability to preserve and share jazz's historical roots. "Technology like this creates an opportunity for students to be engaged in other regions' various sounds of music," Harris says, "to keep their minds open so that the music does not become one-dimensional. The music remains solidly rooted in its original purpose."

## The technology disappears

David Geber, Director of Chamber Music and Chair of the Cello Faculty at MSM, remarks that once the instructor establishes a relationship with a student, the technology disappears: "I've watched this technology grow, and it's at a magical point of technical perfection." Geber appreciates the benefit it brings for students in that they are given the opportunity to build bridges to distant points, domestically and internationally, and make connections with other students and other teachers.

And that's what it's all about. In the future, Orto intends to expand to more audiences as the technology evolves so that MSM can continue providing exciting and vibrant virtual learning environments for lifelong learners around the globe.

"This is a way to reach the world and to really have an impact on people's lives, especially in places where they don't have access to this kind of instruction or these kinds of performances," says James Gandre, President of Manhattan School of Music. "To watch the students, the five-year-olds, get excited about something that they've never known anything about. Or to have senior citizens get involved in something they maybe knew a little bit about—but now know much more—is so powerful."

## About Polycom

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.

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