

COLBURN

About Colburn

OVERVIEW

Colburn is a home for music and dance in Los Angeles, providing world-class performing arts education for its students and exceptional performances and programs for the public. This mission comes to life through a community of artist-faculty dedicated to excellence, and in state-of-the-art performance spaces and educational facilities that welcome students, audiences, artists, and performing arts organizations from Southern California and across the globe.

LOCATION

200 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CAMPUS

A busy downtown campus welcomes an estimated 10,000 people each week, including students attending classes, lessons, and rehearsals; community partners who rent the current performance and lecture spaces; and audience members who enjoy the offerings of over 500 performances a year. Colburn's current facilities include the 430-seat Zipper Hall and 189-seat Thayer Hall, as well as rehearsal areas, practice rooms, studios, administrative offices, and a residence hall.

Colburn has been a pioneer in the cultural development of downtown Los Angeles' Grand Avenue, and in 2028, will celebrate 30 years in DTLA. Colburn is an anchor of the arts corridor that was, in early 2025, recognized by the L.A. Board of Supervisors as the Grand Avenue Cultural District (GACD).

In September 2027, Colburn will open a transformational campus expansion designed by Frank Gehry, which includes Terri and Jerry Kohl Hall, a 1,000-seat concert hall in-the-round; the Dance Center, five professional-sized dance studios including a 100-seat studio theater; and gardens that bring fresh air and green spaces to the downtown landscape.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Colburn presents more than 500 music and dance performances each year, featuring internationally acclaimed visiting artists, faculty, alumni, students, and guest presenters. Offered at accessible prices, these performances open the door for anyone in Los Angeles to experience the transformative impact of the performing arts.

ACCESS

Robust scholarship support and active community engagement programs ensure that the Colburn experience is accessible to all. Over \$16 million in annual scholarship support helps students reach their full potential, regardless of their ability to pay, and community programming serves 17 Title I public schools within a six-mile radius of the campus.

Each year, more than 2,000 students from around the world study at Colburn to benefit from the renowned faculty, exceptional facilities, and focus on excellence that unites the community.

ACADEMIC UNITS

The Conservatory of Music opened in 2003 with one goal: to train the very highest level of instrumental performers for careers in music. The Conservatory's undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as specialized certificate and post-graduate programs, are designed to address the needs and goals of pre-professional musicians at all stages of development. Outstanding performance opportunities, unparalleled faculty, and a unique all-scholarship model covering tuition, room and board for all students have allowed the Conservatory to produce dynamic young soloists, chamber groups, and orchestra musicians. In the short time since the Conservatory's inception, over 140 alumni have gone on to professional orchestra positions.

The Music Academy brings exceptional pre-college students from around the world to Colburn and takes their training to the next level. Young musicians ages 14 to 18 balance performance, musical instruction, and academics in a residential program that prepares them for conservatory study and performing careers at the highest levels of achievement.

The Community School of Performing Arts welcomes passionate, dedicated students of all ages, from seven months of age to adult, and is committed to making the highest quality music education available to all. It offers private instruction and group classes through over 120 classes each year in orchestral instruments, piano, guitar, voice, jazz, drama, and more—taught by world-class teachers.

The Trudl Zipper Dance Institute is dedicated to developing the talent and ambitions of its students, from beginners starting in Youth Dance to a national pool of aspiring professionals in the Dance Academy. Students receive training in ballet, tap, musical theater, and modern genres as part of a comprehensive dance education that emphasizes the joy of dance through artistic and technical accomplishment.

Serving all of Colburn's academic units, the **Center for Innovation and Community Impact** empowers the musical and dance leaders of tomorrow by nurturing students' passion and ability to serve their communities, preparing them for sustainable careers, and embracing the development of new ideas. The Center for Innovation and Community Impact embodies Colburn's commitment to developing young artists with the curiosity, skills, and commitment to make a difference in their field.

MILESTONES

1950: The University of Southern California College of Music establishes a preparatory school, offering piano classes for children from preschool through senior high school.

1956: The school's band and orchestra give debut performances.

1972: The Preparatory School is renamed the USC Community School of Performing Arts.

1978: The Community School relocates to the former McMahon Brother Furniture warehouse on Figueroa Street.

1980: The Community School of Performing Arts is taken over by Richard Colburn's California Foundation, with Toby Mayman as executive director and Fran Zarubick as dean.

1983: Joseph Thayer becomes dean.

1986–87: Jazz program begins under the leadership of Harold Battiste. Chamber Music Institute begins under Lia Starer Levine.

1988–89: The School's name changes to the R.D. Colburn School of Performing Arts.

1992–93: The school establishes a scholarship program based solely on need. Jascha Heifetz Studio gifted to the School.

1995–96: The school name is changed to the Colburn School of Performing Arts, officially the Colburn School.

1996–97: Groundbreaking occurs for new building at 200 South Grand Avenue.

1998: On June 30, Colburn moves into its new home on Grand Avenue. Dean Thayer presents a strategic plan for the Conservatory to the board for review.

2003–04: The Colburn Conservatory of Music welcomes its first official class of 15 students.

2004–05: Groundbreaking for Olive Street building.

2006–07: The Colburn Conservatory Orchestra debuts in Walt Disney Concert Hall. 12-story residence hall added to campus.

2008: Trudl Zipper Dance Institute established.

2010: The Colburn Music Academy welcomes its first class of students. 2014: Jenifer Ringer, former principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, chosen to lead the new Colburn Dance Academy, part of the Trudl Zipper Dance Institute; Dance Academy welcomes the first group of students.

2018: The Center for Innovation and Community Impact is created. The Colburn Orchestra completes its first international tour with performances in the UK and Ireland. Colburn co-presents the 2018 Primrose International Viola Competition with the American Viola Society.

2019: Negaunee Conducting Program created under the direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen; first class of Salonen Fellows enter the Conservatory. Viano String Quartet is named the first Chamber Ensemble-in-Residence; the group wins first prize in the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

2020: Colburn celebrates a milestone achievement as the Access Fund surpasses the initial scholarship funds goal of \$10 million. The Access Fund provides need-based scholarships to students of the Community School of Performing Arts. Through the generous support of more than 250 individual donors, the power of Colburn continues to be accessible to all in Southern California.

2022: Colburn unveils Frank Gehry designs for a transformational expansion of its campus to benefit students and the community, announces \$270 Million raised to date in support of the new concert hall and dance facilities.

2023: Second international tour with chamber music performances in London, Dublin, Berlin, and Paris; international dance educator Margaret Tracey named Dean of the Trudl Zipper Dance Institute; \$4 Million gift from the T. Robert Greene Foundation names Chair of Conducting Studies held by Esa-Pekka Salonen in honor of Maestro Ernst H. Katz.

2024: Groundbreaking occurs for the new concert hall and dance facilities; noted dancer, teacher, and choreographer Janie Taylor named Artistic Director of the Trudl Zipper Dance Institute

2025: Colburn's Recovered Voices program expands into Music Restored: The Ziering-Conlon Center for Exiled and Suppressed Composers, a leading center for performance, recording, and learning; Colburn celebrates topping-out of Frank Gehry-designed campus expansion; L.A. Board of Supervisors recognizes the Grand Avenue Cultural District (GACD).

2026: The Colburn Orchestra makes its Ojai Festival debut with two performances under the baton of festival music director and Colburn faculty Esa-Pekka Salonen.

LEADERSHIP

Andrew Millstein, Chairman, Board of Directors

Carol Colburn Grigor, Life Chairman Emeritus, Board of Directors

Sel Kardan, President and Chief Executive Officer

[Complete List of Board of Directors](#)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND CAREERS

Seniors in the [Community School of Performing Arts](#) go on to top music programs, Ivy League universities, and the best universities in the nation. Recent graduates have gone on to attend Brown University, Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Northwestern University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of Southern California, and UCLA.

[Music Academy](#) students are accepted to prestigious conservatories and music programs including the Colburn Conservatory of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, The Juilliard School, and the San Francisco Conservatory. In 2026, 18 year-old Music Academy graduate Starla Breshears was one of the youngest-ever musicians to join the San Francisco Symphony. Since the Music Academy was founded, 23% of graduates have gone on to the Colburn Conservatory.

Over 140 [Conservatory of Music](#) alumni hold professional orchestra positions, and graduates also form internationally renowned chamber ensembles, teach at distinguished conservatories and universities, and enter top post-graduate programs around the country. Recent graduates have won the following positions: Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and U.S. Coast Guard Band.

Graduates of the [Dance Academy](#) perform across the globe in ballet companies including the New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Pacific

Northwest Ballet, and National Ballet of Canada. Colburn's Dance Academy and Youth Dance graduates have joined the following professional and pre-professional dance companies in 2025-26: Alonzo King Lines Ballet, Ballet Austin Butler Fellowship Program, Houston Ballet, Nevada Ballet Theatre Trainee Program, Pacific Northwest Ballet Professional Division, and School of American Ballet, New York.

NOTABLE ALUMNI

[Kris Bowers](#) – composer, jazz pianist, and filmmaker
[Calder Quartet](#) – string quartet
[Calidore String Quartet](#) – string quartet
[Robert Chen](#) – violinist
[Billy Childs](#) – composer and jazz pianist
[Brandon Coleman](#) – pianist, composer, and producer
[Danielle de Niese](#) – soprano
[David Fung](#) – pianist
[Anthony Gonzalez](#) – actor, Miguel in the Pixar film *Coco*
[William Hagen](#) – violinist
[Leila Josefowicz](#) – violinist
[Fabiola Kim](#) – violinist
[Geneva Lewis](#) – violinist
[Kevin Lin](#) – violinist
[Anne Akiko Meyers](#) – violinist
[Nokuthula Ngwenyama](#) – composer and violist
[Blake Pouliot](#) – violinist
[Eric Reed](#) – jazz pianist
[Albert Cano Smit](#) – pianist
[Michael Tilson Thomas](#) – conductor
[Donald Vega](#) – jazz pianist
[Viano Quartet](#) – ensemble

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