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CONTACT:
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Statement from CSMA Executive Director in Support of Equity and Racial Justice

Dear CSMA Community,

Since its founding in 1968, CSMA has been dedicated to making the arts and arts education accessible to all, regardless of age, race, skill level, background or financial means. We are proud that all of our programs are designed to provide equity access to the arts and creative expression. We also recognize that equity can only be fully achieved by addressing historic injustices.

Black Americans and other people of color have been underrepresented in the arts as performers, staff and board members. They have had unequal access to a quality arts education and opportunities for artistic expression. The magnificent contributions of artists and musicians of color have been marginalized, if presented at all.

Over the last decade, CSMA has worked to elevate the voices of artists of color - particularly through our Community Concert Series and Mohr Gallery exhibitions. Recent events have provided important cultural experiences, such as Dr. Ronald McCurdy’s The Langston Hughes Project; John Daversa’s American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music of Freedom; Tiffany Austin’s Tribute to Ella Fitzgerald and many more. These events were all free and open to the general public. Financial aid has also been an important instrument to address equity. In 2019 we provided more than $545,000 in financial aid--the largest amount in our history--to support low-income students across the Bay Area.

Founded in 1968, the Community School of Music and Arts is Northern California’s largest non-profit provider of arts education programs. With a $6 million budget and 160-member staff and faculty, CSMA is one of the ten largest community schools in the United States. Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, CSMA is dedicated to making the arts and arts education accessible to all, regardless of age, experience, background or financial means.
We are proud of this track record and commit to doing more. Racial injustice and structural inequities continue to undermine our society and demean the human spirit. CSMA supports Black Lives Matter and stands in solidarity with the many arts organizations pledging to do more to create a fair and just society. We grieve for George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Breonna Taylor and the many others who have lost their lives to brutality and violence. As a community arts organization, we recognize the irreplaceable contributions of Black Americans and all people of color to our country’s cultural life and identity.

In the coming year, we will leverage each of our programs to promote equality and racial justice.

Our community events will bring attention to equity and social justice issues by featuring 1) a celebration of the legacy of the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King by the Marcus Shelby Quartet on January 16, 2021; 2) a special concert in honor of the 100th anniversary of Charlie Parker’s birth; 3) a concert highlighting the music of queer and women composers and composers of color; 4) a celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote; 5) a celebration of Latino music from Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic; and 6) a film screening of Venezuelan music and its role in daily life.

All of our onsite and community program teams will engage in a curriculum and activity review, with the goal of amplifying the voice and accomplishments of artists and musicians of color and marginalized populations. These plans are starting points for a deeper study and planning efforts.

Vickie Scott Grove
Executive Director

The CSMA Board of Directors has endorsed this statement.

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