

arts  
education  
njpac



ray

chew

the david g. berger  
master class series

## about ray chew

Ray Chew is an illustrious music director, producer and composer whose impact on the music industry and upcoming artists could not be overstated. Growing up in Harlem and the Bronx in the 1960s, Chew was surrounded by inspirational musicians and budding genres. After beginning music classes at age five, his musical journey showed promise at age six, when he received a scholarship to enroll in the children's program at the prestigious Juilliard School. Since he was committed to music from an early age, the Chew family ensured he received the hands-on learning experience he needed to succeed. Chew honed his skills as a musician at the Harlem School of the Arts and the Third Street Music School Settlement. Chew kickstarted his career as a pianist and arranger when he landed his first professional gig with Tony Award winner Melba Moore. By age 19, Chew was appointed music director by legendary Motown songwriting duo Ashford & Simpson.

Chew has contributed piano and arranging talents to numerous recordings, helping to create some of the most iconic songs in music history by Diana Ross, Luther Vandross, Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. His performances with some of the world's most popular artists (including Rihanna, Pharrell Williams, Justin Bieber, Aretha Franklin, Lenny Kravitz, Pitbull, Queen Latifah, Jennifer Hudson and Quincy Jones) have been immortalized in modern pop culture. Ray has also made a name for himself in the world of television. He was a member of the *Saturday Night Live* band in the early 1980s. He went on to become the music director for a number of high-profile shows, including *It's Showtime at the Apollo*, *Singing Bee*, *Sunday Best*, *Rising Star*, *American Idol*, *I Can See Your Voice* and *Dancing with the Stars*, the last of which he's been music directing since 2014. Ray's reputation as a music director has won him leadership for notable events, including Macy's 4th of July and Thanksgiving Day Parades, the 65th Primetime Emmy Awards, Harlem Week, the GRAMMY® Awards Premiere Ceremony, the NAACP Image Awards and President Barack Obama's Inaugural Neighborhood Ball.

Chew plays a foundational role as a co-founder and chairman of the Power 2 Inspire Foundation, which empowers young musicians and industry leaders. Workshops, lectures and master classes are available to the next generation of singers, songwriters, producers and business executives. Chew leads the RVMK Studio in Englewood, NJ, in support of the foundation. This cutting-edge and intimate facility nurtures and develops Power 2 Inspire alumni to produce top-notch creations and begin collaborating with other musicians.



## accolades

- Music director for *Dancing with the Stars* from 2014 to now
- Music director of President Barack Obama's Inaugural Neighborhood Ball
- Co-founder and chairman of the Power 2 Inspire Foundation
- Performed on *Saturday Night Live*

# vocabulary

## Accompanist

A performer who provides music for another musician or singer to perform with

## Composer

An artist who writes music, especially as a professional occupation

## Ensemble

A group of musicians or performers performing together. A music ensemble can be purely vocal (singing with no musical accompaniment – better known as a capella), purely instrumental or a combination of both

## Music Director

A professional who prepares and leads music groups, such as bands or choirs, for live performances or recording sessions. They hold auditions to find the right musicians, select the songs the musicians play, offer musical training, and provide feedback to help musicians improve

## Musicality

The level of excellence an artist has when creating, performing, or interpreting music in a highly skilled way

## Pianist

A musician who plays the piano. A pianist's repertoire may include music from various styles, such as traditional classical music, jazz, blues, and popular music, including rock and roll. Most pianists can play other keyboard instruments such as the synthesizer, harpsichord, celesta, and the organ

## Producer

A music producer is responsible for overseeing and guiding the creation of a musical recording, shaping the overall sound and artistic direction of a song or album. They work closely with artists, songwriters and recording engineers to bring musical ideas to fruition



“The whole concept of diversity should, could and does recognize that **the world is larger than one race or one culture.**”

— Ray Chew

## seed questions to consider

1. How might artistic merit give someone the platform to affect change?
2. What are the benefits of connecting with a vast network of artists and industry executives early in your career?
3. How do upcoming artists learn from the stories and achievements of artists who came before them?



## resources

### Websites

Ray Chew Live: All Things Chew  
[allthingschew.com/ray](https://allthingschew.com/ray)

Wikipedia | Ray Chew  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray\\_Chew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Chew)

Authority Magazine | *Social Impact Heroes: Why & How Ray Chew Is Helping To Change Our World* by Yitzi Weiner  
[medium.com/authority-magazine/social-impact-heroes-why-how-ray-chew-is-helping-to-change-our-world-83afc9079dc3](https://medium.com/authority-magazine/social-impact-heroes-why-how-ray-chew-is-helping-to-change-our-world-83afc9079dc3)

Multi-Talented Musician Ray Chew  
Opens Up On Road To Debut Album  
[msn.com/en-us/music/news/interview-multi-talented-musician-ray-chew-opens-up-on-road-to-debut-album/ar-AA1pgn7q](https://msn.com/en-us/music/news/interview-multi-talented-musician-ray-chew-opens-up-on-road-to-debut-album/ar-AA1pgn7q)

Music Director Ray Chew Releases Debut Single “Jam”  
[news.theurbanmusicscene.com/2024/08/ray-chew-releases-debut-single-jam](https://news.theurbanmusicscene.com/2024/08/ray-chew-releases-debut-single-jam)

Top 12 NJ Arts Events of Week: “Tribute to Funk!” WBLs anniversary concert, Bernadette Peters, more  
[njarts.net/top-12-nj-arts-events-of-week-tribute-to-funk-wbls-anniversary-concert-bernadette-peters-more](https://njarts.net/top-12-nj-arts-events-of-week-tribute-to-funk-wbls-anniversary-concert-bernadette-peters-more)

Ray Chew and Vivian Scott Chew Honored by National Music Council | All Things Chew  
[allthingschew.com/news/ray-and-vivian-honored-by-nmc](https://allthingschew.com/news/ray-and-vivian-honored-by-nmc)

### Videos

Ray Chew | *Dancing With The Stars* MD  
[youtube.com/watch?v=nA-IXS0cvQQ&t=953s&ab\\_channel=TheCareerMusician](https://youtube.com/watch?v=nA-IXS0cvQQ&t=953s&ab_channel=TheCareerMusician)

Making of *DWTS*: Music Director Ray Chew  
[youtube.com/watch?v=w1ww-yxMPKI&ab\\_channel=DancingWithTheStars](https://youtube.com/watch?v=w1ww-yxMPKI&ab_channel=DancingWithTheStars)

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## the arts in your school

**In-School Residencies:** NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

**Professional Development:** Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at [artseducation@njpac.org](mailto:artseducation@njpac.org). Or visit [njpac.org/education](http://njpac.org/education)

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## study the arts at njpac

**Saturday Programs:** NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

**Summer Programs:** Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.