

Portland State University Foundation Philanthropic Cultivation Award

Mario Díaz, M.M.

MARIO DÍAZ is an Adjunct Instructor in the College of the Arts, Artist Associate at Willamette University, Director of the PSU Guitar Series, and head of the guitar program at Young Musicians & Artists. He is a guitarist, vocalist, audio engineer, composer and educator whose musical activities have taken him across the U.S. and South America.

Instructor Díaz holds a Bachelor's degree from Portland State University (2006) and a Master's of Music in Performance from San Francisco Conservatory of Music (2013), where he studied with composer/guitarist Sergio Assad. In addition to teaching an eclectic mix of classes he most recently won a Regional Arts and Culture Council project grant (Spring 2019) for commissioning new duo works. During fall 2019, Instructor Díaz was a featured composer in the Homecomings concert (Third Angle New Music) for his newly commissioned chamber work *'Peace Offering'*.

Instructor Díaz has been a tireless advocate for PSU's music program, and specifically the guitar area, bringing extensive community attention and patron support to the university. He goes beyond just asking patrons for financial support—he demonstrates a commitment to philanthropic community-building, outreach, and long-term donor cultivation. With support from the university and community, he brought the Guitar Series back to life, and he has since brought internationally renowned artists to PSU to perform, including the legendary Assad Brothers and multiple winners of classical guitar's most prestigious competition, Guitar Foundation of America. He is clearly growing a dedicated base of supporters and planning for the future. In year two of this program, Instructor Díaz has nearly doubled the amount of donations, raising \$16,000 and establishing key relationships with a number of donors. In fact, current and past donors have already communicated their intent to increase their commitments next year, after which he plans to ask for several multi-year donations which will ensure that the series continues for many years to come.

The Portland State University Foundation Philanthropic Cultivation Award is given annually to a faculty or staff member in recognition of their role as a partner in cultivating philanthropic support for a priority program within their unit.