

MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

# LEDGER LINES

VOLUME XXXIII | 2023



UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

School of Music  
and Dance

# LEDGER LINES

is the annual magazine of the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance. Letters, photos, and contributions from alumni and friends are always welcome.

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Dear Friends,

We have just embarked on another truly extraordinary year at the UD School of Music and Dance – enrollment is up, we've added new academic programs, and our students are showcasing the incredible talent we've all come to appreciate and crave. As the leaves begin to turn, it's the perfect moment to reflect on the past few months.

The following pages are filled with stories and photos of recent accomplishments and accolades by SOMD faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It's been my privilege to serve as your dean for more than five years and I never stop being amazed by the reach and impact of the work being done in and around the School of Music and Dance.

As we read this edition of Ledger Lines and reminisce about recent projects and successes, it's important to consider all the work we still have left to do. On page 34, you can read about the launch of our new "Spotlight Scholarships" campaign. The initiative is designed to secure the funds that will create new and exciting opportunities for our current and future students. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more and get involved. Bright Futures Begin in the Spotlight.

Thank you for the time and support you give to the School of Music and Dance. Whether you're a long-time donor, passionate alumnus, or a dedicated audience member, your involvement in our community is invaluable. I look forward to seeing you in our concert halls and dance theatres during our 2023-2024 academic year.

Respectfully,

Sabrina Madison-Cannon  
Phyllis and Andrew Berwick Dean



# CONTENTS

- 02 STUDENT DANCE COLLECTIVE RETURNS
- 06 PHD CANDIDATE NAMED VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
- 08 PROFESSOR TURNS OCEAN DATA INTO SOUND
- 10 UPLIFTING KOREAN & KOREAN-AMERICAN COMPOSERS
- 12 ALUMNUS WINS NATIONAL OPERA COMPETITION
- 13 ELEVATING UNDEREXPLORED COMPOSERS
- 14 CYKLER SONG SCHOLARS COMPLETE INAUGURAL YEAR
- 16 THREE STUDENTS JOIN EUGENE SYMPHONY
- 18 PROFESSOR WOWS AT COACHELLA
- 20 SOMD FACULTY PERFORMS IN NPR TINY DESK CONCERT
- 21 ALUM COMPOSES WORK INSPIRED BY SON
- 22 PROFESSOR PRODUCES AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY
- 24 THE PIANO MAN
- 26 ONCE A DUCK, ALWAYS A DUCK
- 27 FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER OF THE YEAR
- 28 WELCOME! FOUR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN SOMD
- 30 RECENT GRAD AWARDED TENURE-TRACK POSITION
- 32 NEW DIRECTOR OF JAZZ STUDIES
- 33 DOUBLE REED EXCELLENCE ABROAD
- 34 SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOLARSHIPS
- 36 RETIREMENTS
- 37 IN MEMORIAM
- 38 DONOR HONOR ROLL

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# STUDENT DANCE COLLECTIVE CULMINATES WITH EUGENE PERFORMANCE

By Kristen Hudgins

The Student Dance Collective (SDC) is back! After a 6-year hiatus, the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance has restructured and rebranded SDC, which was previously called the UO Repertory Dance Company.

SDC is a student ensemble whose primary purpose is to elevate dance in Oregon through community engagement, outreach, and public performance. Its design is modeled after a professional dance company experience where dancers are selected through an audition process, rehearse regularly to learn repertory and new choreography, and tour to other cities to offer classes and performances.

This spring, the experience culminated with SDC concert, "Ascend! an evening of dance," which impressed the Dougherty Dance Theatre audience on June 9. "It was great!" SDC dancer and sophomore BFA dance student, Emily Andaya, said. "There was a lot of love in the audience," SDC dancer and senior dance student, Nailah Lewis, said. "I'm so proud of the work we did."

For the thirteen SDC students, "Ascend" was a triumphant accomplishment, since they learned the entire program of seven pieces in about 60 hours, which is the normal time it takes to learn two pieces for any other dance concerts.



## THE "ASCEND" PROGRAM

The works showcased a variety of genres from hip-hop and jazz to tango and contemporary. They were choreographed by faculty, students, and one guest choreographer, Quilan "Cue" Arnold. Arnold is a professional dancer, teacher, and activist who visited campus in May for just 48 hours to teach his piece, mimicking a professional setting.

"It was very intense!" Lewis said. "But he made the process seamless. He is a brilliant choreographer. He teaches in a way that encourages us to think about why we're doing certain movements. He emphasized that throughout his process, so it made it easy to be invested in the piece."



Assistant professor and SDC co-director, Hannah Thomas, hired Arnold after receiving funds from SOMD's Committee for Equity and Inclusion grant. Arnold's piece, called "Club KINGDOM" was "inspired by sanctuaries of black diaspora, the church and the club. We know that you can bring Saturday night to Sunday morning and so those were two huge inspirations." "I'm very honored that I was brought here by Hannah Thomas and SOMD," Arnold said.



The SDC ensemble learned six additional works, choreographed by faculty and students. "Pages Missing" by professor and SDC co-director, Brad Garner, was originally staged in 2005 and has been performed several times since. It was also selected twice to be performed at the American College Dance Association (ACDA) gala. "It's a special piece for me," Garner said. "I really wanted to include it in this debut year of SDC."

Thomas' "8th Ave" is a hip-hop piece which honors legend Doug E Fresh and his contribution of beatboxing to hip-hop music. Her second piece "dunamis." was a collaboration with senior Zoe Vander Hyde and described as a "powerful contemporary piece" by Garner. Both were choreographed alongside students. Instructor Florabelle Moses choreographed "Tango momentum" which is a ballet and tango fusion. Senior instructor Rita Honka contributed "Trio B" which is a fusion of Africanist and contemporary dance. The minimalist style plays with patterns and repetition.



"Etc." was choreographed by SDC's own student dancers, Emily Andaya and Devra Charlton. The duet was performed in March at ACDA, and it combines elements of contemporary dance with improvisation. "I hope all audience members were able to experience the sensations Devi and I brought to the creation of 'Etc.' within themselves," Andaya said. "As both the performers and creators, we hope we can continue to push the boundaries of performance contexts and our relationship to the viewer."

## THE FUTURE OF SDC

Next year, Garner and Thomas hope to get a few more schools involved in Portland, Bend, or Coos Bay areas. UO students interested in joining SDC will be asked to audition in fall. Their next home concert is scheduled for April with outreach to follow.

Anyone who joins is bound to feel a great sense of community, Lewis and Andaya say. "Traveling with this group and literally experiencing blood, sweat, and tears has brought us together," Lewis said. "My fellow SDC dancers were my friends before, but this experience brought us that much closer and those are truly connections that are not going to fade away."

## OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

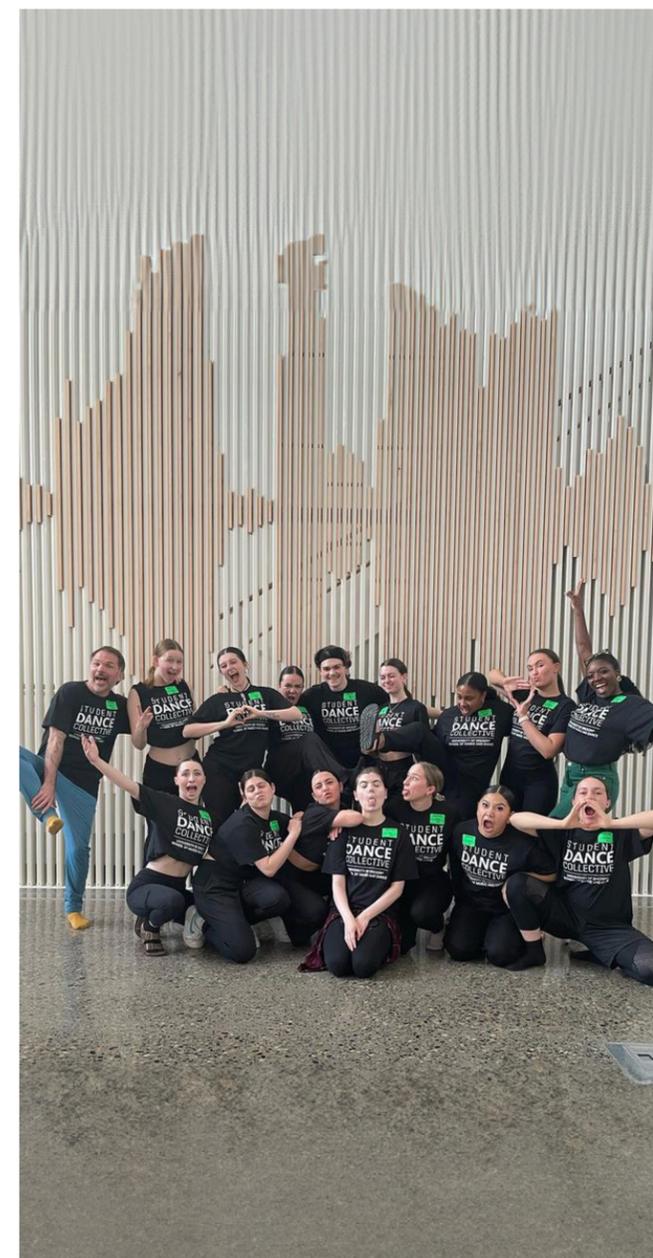
Prior to the home concert, SDC took "Ascend!" on the road to three K-12 schools in the region. They traveled to Arts & Communication Magnet Academy in Beaverton, Turning Point Dance in Medford, and Vancouver School of Arts and Academics in Vancouver, WA.

In addition to performing, they also hosted masterclasses and invited the younger students to perform as well. "It was a lot of fun!" Lewis said. "It was cool to meet some students who are already planning to come into the dance program as well as the younger kids. Knowing we all share that same passion for dance was very inspiring to me and I hope it was for them too."

At each school, the SDC students also engaged in Q&A sessions where the younger students often asked about life as a UO dancer. "It is important to amplify the work that's going on here in SOMD," Andaya said. "It was especially important to do that here in our region so students can learn what we're all about."

The K-12 students also asked about the opportunities available for dancers after graduation. From commercial dance to academia, Garner helped lay out the various paths to take. "Many believe that dance is just a recreational activity, but it is actually an international field of research. There are endless professional possibilities from production to marketing or any field that values collaboration, creativity and discipline. Students go all over the world doing all kinds of cool jobs right out of UO. Dance is fun, yes. But It's also a real, viable career path."

In the future, SDC intends to maintain its relationships with these K-12 schools. "This outreach is part of a healthy ecosystem, and for us to serve our purpose as a state institution," Garner said.



# PHD CANDIDATE NAMED VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT UNC GREENSBORO

By Kristen Hudgins



For three weeks, PhD candidate Emily Milius anxiously awaited one of the most important phone calls she would ever receive. She was eager to learn if she got the job as Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. She had just applied for the position at the beginning of June, wrapped up a round of interviews on the 28th, and was told they would be in touch soon. On June 29th, her phone rang. It was good news.

"I held it together on the phone," Emily recalled. "Then I just started crying. I was sobbing! I was over the moon." But this was just the beginning. The clock started, and she had less than a month to move across the country from Eugene to North Carolina for the 2023-24 school year! She arrived in August and led her first class on August 16. It was one of three sections of Aural Skills 3 that she taught this semester. "I love teaching!" Emily said, "I get into the classroom, and I feel like it just energizes me."

While she is not in the classroom, she is hosting office hours, attending meetings, prepping lesson plans, and writing her dissertation for the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance (SOMD). Prior to SOMD, she received her bachelor's in vocal performance and master's in music theory from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. After graduation, she taught music theory and history as an adjunct professor at Stephen F. Austin and Angelina College.

When she first moved from Texas to Eugene in 2019 to start her PhD in music theory, it was not only a physical journey but an emotional one. For three years, she had applied to several PhD programs in music theory around the country and was rejected by each. Discouraged but hopeful, she went to a conference in San Antonio, Texas where she met Dr. Stephen Rodgers. After discussing her research interests, he encouraged her to apply to SOMD's PhD program, and she got in! "I felt really supported during the entire application process," she said. "I really liked the program, and I was excited about the West Coast since I had never lived there before. The ocean, mountains, all the nature is gorgeous."

PHOTOGRAPHER JAVEON BUTLER



Soon after arriving in Eugene, Emily knew she had made the right decision. She found her seminars on topics such as analyzing vocal timbre in pop songs and text and music analysis fascinating and intellectually stimulating, and her advisor and committee were welcoming and supportive. When it came time to write her dissertation, she chose a topic that was personal for her. She is examining the intersections of voice and trauma in popular music. More specifically, she is analyzing songs written and performed by women about sexual assault and demonstrating how vocal timbre conveys their experience of trauma.

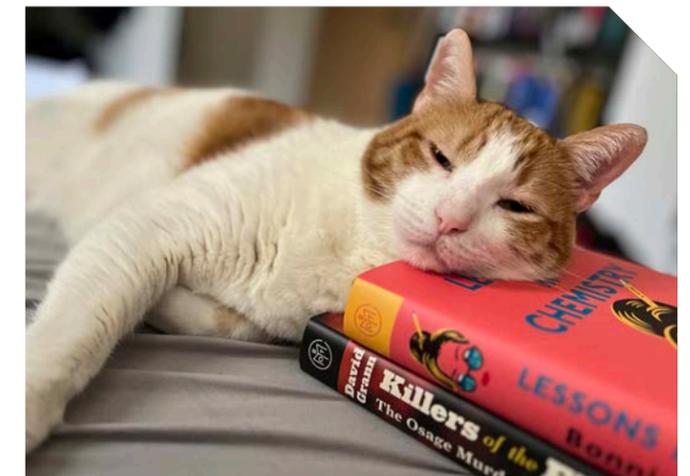
She was drawn to this topic for three reasons. One, she grew up singing pop, jazz, and R&B. She also performed in musicals. Her background as a singer drew her to question how artists make their songs expressive.

Second, she has always been interested in songs that make a profound impact on their listeners. And third, she is a survivor of sexual assault. "It is such a big problem, not only in society, but specifically in the music industry," she said. "It is very prevalent within that industry. Talking about the way artists express that experience and how they feel afterwards, has been healing in a sense."

Outside music and teaching, she researches psychology, feminist studies, race studies, sexuality studies, and pedagogy (especially trauma-informed pedagogy). "I really enjoy bringing all these ideas from outside of music studies into my music analysis and research as well," she said. "Interdisciplinary research is very fulfilling to me, especially with topics that are very personal to me."

Emily also enjoys visual art. She studied calligraphy growing up, alongside her grandfather, who was an architect and artist. "He started talking to me about calligraphy and got me a couple of calligraphy books and pens, and I dove in headfirst!" she remembered. "I just loved it." Emily also loves the art of tattooing, a passion she developed at an early age. Growing up in a conservative household, she did not get her first tattoo until college. "Getting tattooed has been a great outlet, not only for creativity, but it is also therapeutic to me to get tattooed. They can tell such a beautiful life story and can be so amazingly exquisite and artistic."

Currently, Emily lives in Greensboro with her sweet kitty, Forte. Her goal is to complete her SOMD dissertation by spring 2024 and she plans to continue teaching afterward.



# PROFESSOR MAKE WAVES BY TURNING OCEAN DATA INTO SOUND

By Ed Dorsch

When Jon Bellona says listen to the ocean breathe, he's not talking about the sounds of the surf. The senior instructor at the UO School of Music and Dance is referring to the cyclical exchange of carbon dioxide between air and sea.

For a three-year pilot project funded by the National Science Foundation, Bellona and a national team of researchers have transformed a year of carbon dioxide readings taken off the coast of New England into sound. Their audio exhibit is one of five case studies they created to help museums, aquariums and other informal learning environments make data more accessible.

This July Bellona brought the project to the Eugene Science Center, where visitors had opportunities to take a listen. By observing their reactions and asking questions, Bellona got useful, real-time feedback – the kind of candid responses children are so good at providing.

For the sonic interpretation of carbon dioxide flux, Bellona made gas released from the ocean sound like wind that gets louder as the amount leaving the water increases. When carbon dioxide gets absorbed, it sounds like Jell-O being slurped.

Listening to both sounds at once offers insights into oceanography and climate change. The slurping option wasn't his first choice, but Bellona went with it based on feedback from children and adults who are blind or have limited vision.



In collaboration with researchers from across the U.S., Bellona is exploring how informal learning institutions can put sound to work through a process called sonification. A common example: The Geiger counter is one of the earliest sonification models that clicks at different speeds to indicate radiation levels.

Amy Bower, the principal investigator for the project titled "Accessible Oceans: Exploring Ocean Data Through Sound," is an oceanographer who is legally blind. A senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Bower also works with the Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts.

Team member Jessica Roberts, an assistant professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology, is a specialist in learning sciences and interactive technologies. Leslie Smith is an oceanographer and science communicator in Tennessee who serves as executive director of Dive into the Ocean, Inc., an educational outreach organization.

"It's been awesome to have all these experts from different fields," Bellona said. "This interdisciplinary team has helped elevate the design and evaluation component, making our auditory displays more impactful out of the gate."

Many science exhibits incorporate sound, Bellona said. But they're limited to music, ambient noises or narration that enhances the experience without conveying quantitative information.



By sonifying discrete data sets that demonstrate scientific concepts – the research team calls these "data nuggets" – they hope to gain insights into what works for students and encourage science centers, aquariums and museums to add more sound exhibits.

Sonification makes learning more accessible for visitors who are blind or have low vision, helps promote data literacy, and reaches those who face challenges interpreting visual information. Bellona added that informal learning environments are designed to reach the general public and get kids excited about science, which makes their accessibility mission even more compelling.

Sonified data also can help scientists make new discoveries. For example, genetic researchers and astronomers use it to listen for patterns that can't be seen in massive data sets.

In addition to the carbon dioxide flux example, Bellona has sonified data nuggets from an underwater volcanic eruption, Tropical Storm Hermine and zooplankton reacting to a solar eclipse. The research team solicited ideas from teachers and students at schools for the blind in Massachusetts, Washington and Texas. They also conducted online surveys and are now testing their sound exhibits at informal learning facilities.

The feedback sessions included visits to the Atlanta Aquarium and the Eugene Science Center. Plans are underway for similar focus groups at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's Discovery Center and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

All this feedback will reveal what works best for their target audience, Bellona said, helping the team develop educational design guidelines. After the pilot project, they hope to obtain additional funding and build a prototype sound exhibit.



# UPLIFTING UNDERREPRESENTED KOREAN & KOREAN-AMERICAN COMPOSERS

By Kristen Hudgins



Years in the making, University of Oregon School of Music and Dance Associate Professor Dr. Wonkak Kim is nearing the finish line on a project that uplifts and celebrates underrepresented clarinet and piano works of Korean and Korean-American composers.

He has curated eight such works and recorded them for a CD, which Kim describes as a “musical fusion of Korean traditional and contemporary Western/Korean music.” He also recorded video performances of three of the pieces, so they can be distributed online to a wider audience.

“The ultimate goal of the project is to expand our repertoire and expose people to a different style,” Kim says. “The repertoire was almost nonexistent. This CD and the videos will almost double what is available in our existing repertoire—as there is really no standard repertoire by Korean composers yet.”

## THE PROCESS

Kim conceptualized the project about a decade ago but recalls there was not as much encouragement or interest in this type of program. “Nowadays, I think there’s so much more enthusiasm and momentum for people to seek out this music,” he says. “It’s exciting!”

Starting in 2019, Kim had an opportunity to commission two pieces by Korean composers. The project picked up steam in 2020 when he received the University of Oregon Presidential Fellowship, totaling \$13,000. He used the funds to commission three more pieces. The pandemic slowed progress, but after discovering several more works, he curated eight pieces to make a full recital program.

Funding from the Fellowship and SOMD’s Committee for Equity and Inclusion grant was used to cover audio and video recordings. Grammy-winning audio engineer and producer, Brad Sayles, recorded the audio and UO’s Jasper Walton recorded and edited the videos.

The recordings were captured in March. Over three days, they recorded 45 minutes of music, taking more than 20 total hours. Kim played the clarinet and his wife, Dr. Eunhye Grace Choi, was on the piano.

“It’s a grueling process!” he said about the long days, made more challenging with a 1-year-old and a 6-year-old at home. “At the same time, I am ecstatic and relieved for so many reasons. This should have been done long ago. I am thrilled it finally came to fruition!”



KIM AND CHOI

## LIST OF WORKS ON THE CD

THE WORKS IN BOLD WERE COMMISSIONED BY WONKAK KIM

Jean Ahn - **Blush for Solo Clarinet (2018)**

Joanne Na - **Open Letters for Clarinet and Piano (2020, rev. 2022)**

Juri Seo - **Arcade for Clarinet and Piano (2022)**

Hyunjung Ahn - **A Beautiful Polonaise for Clarinet and Piano (2018)**

Jiyoun Chung - Ariaria for Clarinet and Piano (2022)

SiHyun Uhm - Parents Love for Clarinet and Piano (2017)

Eunseon Yu - **Red Light! Green Light! for Clarinet and Piano (2022)**

## THE IMPACT

Kim’s fundamental interest in creating this project is not solely tied to representation and diversity, but also to exposing a wider audience to high caliber works. “I do consider these as works by Korean female composers, but they’re also simply great works, new works, that we can play and will be added to our standard repertoire.”

One of the pieces has already proven a success. Shortly after Kim posted a video of him playing “Blush” by Jean Ahn on YouTube, it was selected to be one of the required pieces for the 2023 International Clarinet Association Young Artist Competition. “This is a prestigious, recognized competition with a storied history, so it is a big deal,” Kim said excitedly. “It is gratifying to think that ‘Blush’ is now being studied and performed by some of the most talented young players around the world.”

The hope is that these recorded videos will help those works earn the visibility and recognition they deserve. The three works that were video recorded include, “Open Letters,” “Arcade,” and “Red Light! Green Light!”

“During my studies in the United States, I have never seen a program that only comprised music by Korean composers,” composer of “Open Letters” and SOMD graduate with a Master’s in Music, Joanne Na, said. “In that sense, Professor Kim’s support for new music by Korean female composers is incredibly special and important. What I love about this project is that the whole program is attached to the strand of “Korean heritage,” but each piece is quite different from the others; it shows how strong and diverse the Korean female composers’ musical voices are. I hope this outstanding program brings more attention to the new music of Korean-American composers.”

## WHAT’S NEXT?

Kim’s video recordings are available on his YouTube channel, wonpleiades. The CD will be available in early 2024. Its release will not be the end of the project! He says it will be ongoing, with the goal of commissioning and recording dozens of pieces throughout his career.



KIM, CHOI, AND SAYLES HUDDLE AROUND A COMPUTER DURING THE POST-PRODUCTION PROCESS

## ALUMNUS TAKES

# 1ST PLACE IN NATIONAL OPERA COMPETITION

By Kristen Hudgins

Lawrence Barasa Kiharangwa (BM '21) secured a first-place win at the Jensen Foundation Vocal Competition this past May with arias from Mozart and Gounod, receiving \$15,000. "At the end of the day, it's all about having a good time and connecting to the audience, rather than showcasing that you have learned the skills, technique, or language," Kiharangwa said. "It's all about communication and connection."

A tenor from Kenya, Kiharangwa also impressed the judges at Shreveport Opera's Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year Competition, taking home \$5,000 for a second-place win, with pieces by Donizetti and Mozart.

While performing, he recalled Dr. Sharon Paul's message to sing with joy and meaning, and that everything must have an intention behind it. While on stage, he also had Dr. Karen Esquivel's voice in his head reminding him to "breathe for the phrase."

"Without them, whatever is happening in my life right now wouldn't have happened, honestly speaking," he said about SOMD faculty. Kiharangwa graduated from the University of Maryland with his master's degree in Opera Performance in May. Over the summer, he was an apprentice singer for the Sante Fe Opera. He received the 2023 Sullivan Foundation Career Development grant and is currently a studio artist at the Pensacola Opera in Florida.



# ELEVATING UNDEREXPLORED COMPOSERS

By Kristen Hudgins



Music Theory and Musicianship professor Dr. Stephen Rodgers has a passion for elevating underexplored composers. Earlier this year, he published a new book, *The Songs of Clara Schumann*. It examines Schumann's songwriting style, helping readers understand what makes her songs so beautiful and inventive. According to Rodgers, much has been written about her life, her relationship with her husband, and her career as a pianist. However, research into her songs is sparse. "Her work has been sidelined and pushed to the margins," he said. "That gave me the motivation to write about her incredible music."

Rodgers's podcast, *Resounding Verse*, has the same mission to elevate the works of underrepresented composers of art song. Launched in 2021, the podcast aims to reach not only scholars, performers, and educators, but also communities beyond academia. "To put it plainly, I wanted to do something that my music theory friends would get something out of and that my parents would enjoy," he explained. "My parents are not musicians, so I wanted to create something that would be accessible to people who aren't music nerds like me."

In his role as the inaugural Edmund A. Cykler Chair, Rodgers created a research stipend for graduate students called Cykler Song Scholars. It provides funds to two students annually to create projects about underexplored song repertoire. For example, 2022 Cykler Song Scholar Annie Liu Dyer created a website that examines a genre of popular music from Shanghai in the 1930s and 1940s, called *shidaiqu*. You can read about the latest Cykler Song Scholars on the next page.

SCAN TO LISTEN TO PODCAST



POSTCARD IMAGE OF CLARA SCHUMANN, IMSLP

# CYKLER SONG SCHOLARS

## COMPLETE INAUGURAL YEAR

The Cykler Song Scholars program provides a \$6,000 research stipend to two graduate students in the UO's School of Music and Dance. The award is intended to support students doing original research related to repertoire by underrepresented composers. Each year, the award will go to one student in the performance department and one student in the academic department.

The stipend is funded in part by Stephen Rodgers, the inaugural Edmund A. Cykler Chair in Music. The Cykler Chair is named for Edmund A. Cykler, former professor and associate dean of the UO School of Music and Dance. The position was created thanks to a gift from UO Foundation trustee Timothy Foo and matching funds from the UO Presidential Fund for Excellence.



During the 2022-23 academic year, Rodgers mentored selected students as they pursued their research projects. They also presented their work publicly at the end of the academic year.

The inaugural awardees were Annie Liu and Camilla Osses.

Liu, a master's student in musicology and bassoon, took on a project that was not only a challenging academic endeavor, but also a personal one. She used the funds, in part, to develop a Shanghai Song website [shanghaisong.org](http://shanghaisong.org), which launched April 10.

"Working on a website is very different compared to writing term papers and performing in concerts, which is what I typically do for school," Liu said. "It's gratifying and exciting to create something that is meant to reach broader audiences and exist beyond my time as a Cykler Song Scholar and student."

The site explores a genre of popular music from Shanghai in the 1930s and 40s, called *shidaiqu*. Examining this genre holds deep meaning for Liu and her family.

"My parents grew up in China and my mother's family currently lives in Shanghai—it is a city I have visited multiple times and that I love," Liu said. "*Shidaiqu*, to me, represents a musical snapshot of what the 1930s and 40s in Shanghai looked like—the influence of various foreign powers, a mixing of cultures, and a vibrant nightlife. This genre of popular music reveals a lot about the culture, politics, and entertainment of that time, which as a musicologist, is deeply interesting and prompts further study."

Through her website, Liu hopes the public can experience a genre of music they are unfamiliar with. They can do so by listening to song recordings and learning about the history of the genre and the singers who popularized it. For any musicians or scholars who come across the website, she hopes they consider incorporating the genre into their own research, teaching, and performances.

The Cykler award also funded Liu's travel to conferences. It has granted her the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Stephen Rodgers and devote time to her independent research during the academic year, which is a rarity!

Osses, a doctoral student in piano performance, created a professional recording of art songs by the Chilean composer Carmela Mackenna. She first learned about Mackenna while living in Chile, but soon discovered she did not appear in the official history of Chilean music. "When I heard about the Cykler Song Scholars program, I saw it as an opportunity to discover Mackenna's music and to give the community the chance to hear her music by recording her songs and creating a modern edition of this music," Osses said.

Osses analyzed Mackenna's music for seven months before recording four of her songs in May, helping her understand Mackenna's music language and style. The recording took place in Berwick Hall alongside SOMD faculty Dr. Camille Ortiz and Dr. Craig Phillips. "Their professionalism, musicality, and kindness made me feel very comfortable while rehearsing and recording," Osses recalled. "We recorded four songs in two days, and although it was challenging, we had a lot of fun!"

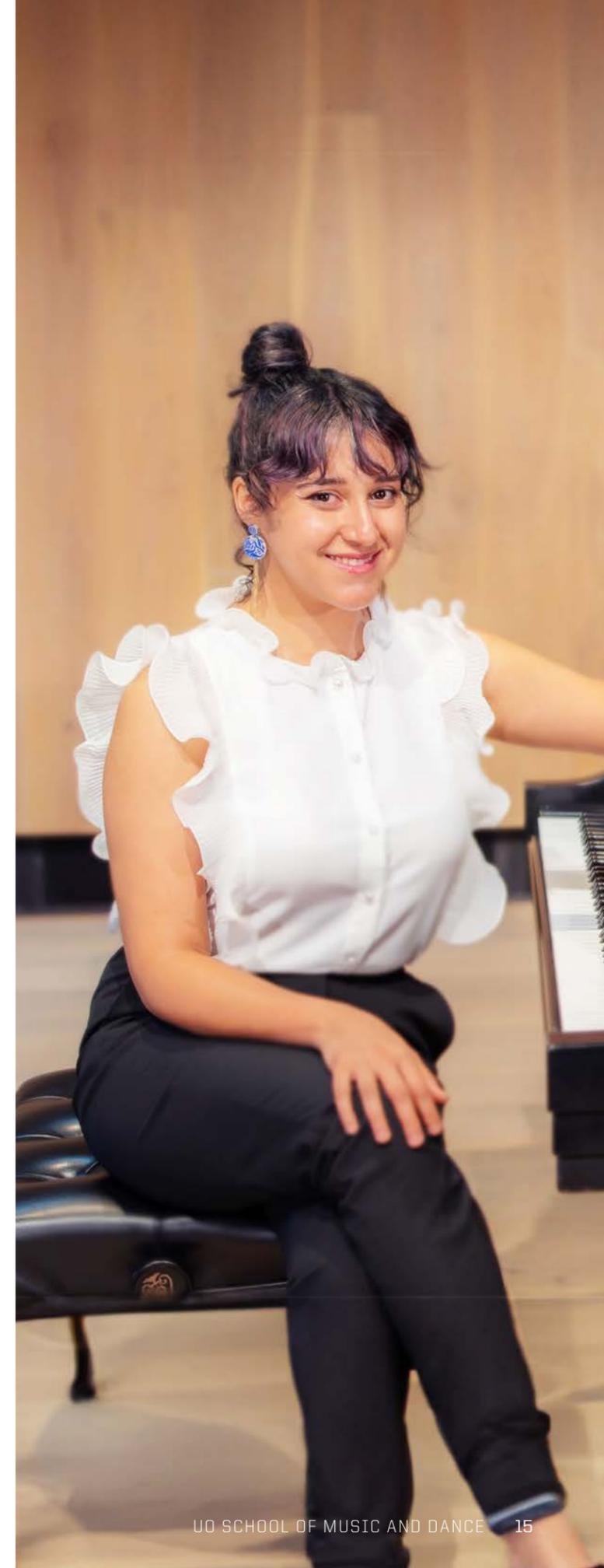
The songs date between 1929 and 1935 and had never been previously recorded. "I feel honored to be the person responsible for interpreting her music, performing, and sharing it with the community," Osses said. "Having Mackenna's music professionally recorded is not only a legacy to the public, but it is also for music students, performers, and scholars who are eager to listen and study new music."

The recordings can be found at [artsongaugmented.org/carmela-mackenna](http://artsongaugmented.org/carmela-mackenna). The recording engineer on the project was Joseph Wenda.

"I'm thrilled to be able to support Annie and Camila, both of whom are doing fascinating and important work," Stephen Rodgers said. "Edmund Cykler had a gift for communicating with a broad community of performers, scholars, teachers and lay listeners. I dreamed up the Cykler Song Scholars program in part to encourage graduate students to share underexplored song repertoire with those outside their home disciplines and outside the walls of the university."

The awardees for the 2023-24 academic year are Paula Alva Garcia and Madison Stepherson. Garcia's project will examine the music of Rosa Mercedes Ayarza de Morales, a Peruvian composer, choir conductor, promoter, and music teacher. Her research will culminate in a recital with fellow musicians from the Latinx community. Garcia also plans to publish an article about Ayarza de Morales and record some of her songs which have not been recorded before, contributing to the preservation and dissemination of Peruvian music.

Stepherson will research the songs of Miranda Lambert, a country singer-songwriter. "Despite country music's popularity and Lambert's commercial success, both the genre and her songs are underrepresented in music scholarship," Stepherson wrote. Her work will culminate in a scholarly article and conference presentation.



# THREE SOMD VIOLINISTS WIN POSITIONS WITH EUGENE SYMPHONY

By Kristen Hudgins



PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN WARD

Three students from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance (SOMD), studying with associate professor Hal Grossman, will join the Eugene Symphony (ESO) next month after winning positions earlier this year.

## SARAH WILFONG

Sarah Wilfong, a native Chicagoan, arrived in Eugene in 2021 to pursue her DMA in violin performance. Prior to landing in Oregon, she graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with her bachelor's and master's in violin. Wilfong has eight years of performance experience as a fiddle player in the all-girl country band, Mustang Sally. She toured with the group for 200 days (about 6 and a half months) every year. "It was wild!" she recalled. "It was an incredible experience."

This marks the first time she has won a position in a symphony. "Well, don't tell them that they actually hired a fiddle player!" Wilfong joked.

Wilfong was hesitant during the ESO audition process because she has a self-admittedly "bad track record" performing well under pressure. Therefore, she joined forces with a few graduate students in her violin studio to practice. "The act of playing for other people repeatedly helped desensitize the nerves a little bit," she said. "So, when it came time for the audition, I felt like I was in decent shape!"

Grossman also assisted in the preparation process. "He has a lot of orchestral and audition experience," she said. "He has taught these excerpts a million times, and his teaching strategy was excellent. I felt really prepared."

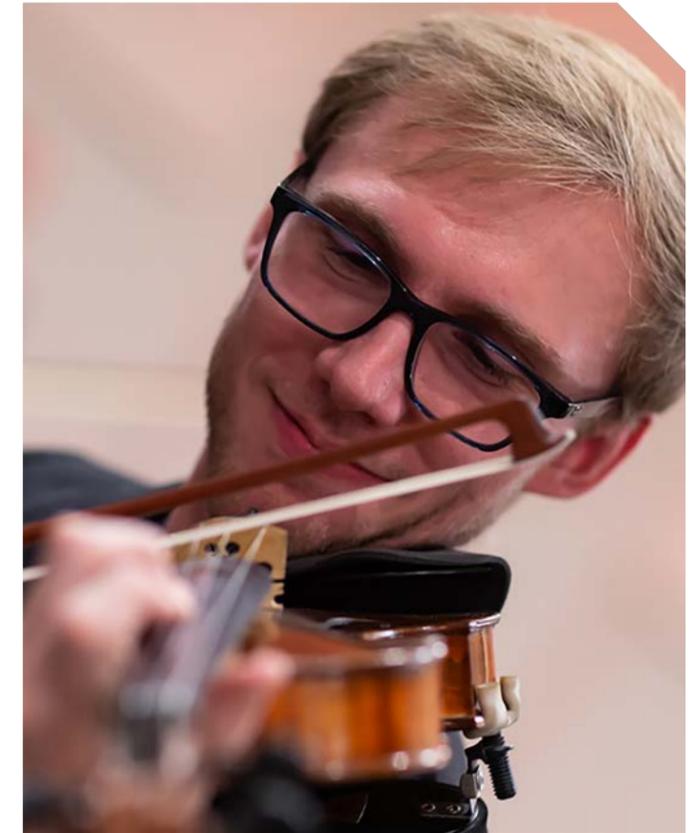
When she got the call that she had won the position, Wilfong was in a state of disbelief. Not because she believed she lacked the skills, but because she felt validated in the fact that she overcame her personal hurdle with audition nerves. "I am excited to be selected," she said. "My mission with my whole academic journey is to say, 'You are never too old to get better and try something different, to try something new to challenge yourself.'"

## BEN EHRMANTRAUT

Ben Ehrmantraut, who also won a position with the Eugene Symphony, has played the violin since the age of eight. "Music is a beautiful, cool, and exciting field," he said. "There are all kinds of analytical things about it that I enjoy, but what is most striking to me is that so many people come together around it."

A graduate of Concordia College, Ehrmantraut went on to University of Colorado Boulder for his master's degree. He graduated during the pandemic and started a violin studio while also performing with orchestras virtually. With a desire to pursue a career in academia, he came to Eugene in 2022 for his DMA in violin performance, studying with Hal Grossman. "It has been a great match," he said of Grossman. "I am really excited about the work that we are doing."

He is particularly looking forward to his time with ESO due to its frequent performance schedule and music selections. "The programming is great!" he said. "They incorporate the classics we all know and love, and they are also always looking to do new works as well. Just by virtue of the music that they program, I am thrilled to be here!"



## ISABEL PINNEY

Isabel Pinney, pursuing a BM in violin performance at SOMD, joined Wilfong and Ehrmantraut this September. A violinist since four, Pinney is honored to play with a professional orchestra as an undergraduate. "I have always dreamed about being in a professional orchestra since I was young and am ecstatic that I get to play alongside such great musicians!" she said.

She thanks the School of Music and Dance for the numerous opportunities it has provided for her to improve her technique and ensemble skills, and her professors who guided her along the way.

A junior, she intends to pursue a master's degree in music performance after graduating with her bachelor's from the University of Oregon. The Eugene Symphony's season began in September.



# PROFESSOR WOWS IN COACHELLA PERFORMANCE

By Kristen Hudgins

Four weeks of rehearsals all came down to this moment. The crowd, so large it spilled out of the Gobi Tent, chanted “Tobe, Tobe, Tobe!” The roar of their collective voices was barely loud enough to drown out the pounding of Hannah Thomas’ heart. Hannah, an assistant professor at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, struck a pose on stage, the band started to play, and rapper Tobe Nwigwe turned to the crowd and said, “You’re about to have one of the biggest, Blackest, boldest experiences in the Coachella Valley.”

What came next was a 45-minute celebration of Tobe Nwigwe’s music. Moving in sync with him, Hannah and the Black Angels Collective (BAC) danced in the mesmerizing performance. Hannah was one of the newest guest members of the group, which incorporates several styles, including hip-hop, which complements Tobe’s music. “Tobe brought in the Swag Surf, the Dougie and the Quan, so these hip-hop elements came into play,” Hannah explained.

But one of the most unique signatures of the BAC is that they also integrate ballet and contemporary dance, juxtaposing the rap and hip-hop music. Hannah says this dichotomy illustrates a cornerstone of Blackness.

“We can be anything we want to be,” Hannah says. “Having a Black experience is not being pigeonholed. We can rap, do ballet, contemporary, and perform angelic pieces. But everything is in excellence, and that is really what it is about.”

This message of Black excellence ties intimately into Hannah’s research interests. Her graduate thesis, “Her Brown Body is Glory” examines sisterhood, healing, and the joy of being around all shades of Black women. “Similarly, the BAC is made up of all shades of Black women,” Hannah said. “We all had different dance backgrounds, but our journeys brought us together for the beautiful opportunity to share rehearsal space and the Coachella stage.”

She also studies the endurance of Black joy and Black faith. Offstage, Hannah has witnessed both in action as Tobe uplifts his wife and children. He includes them in his process, and they often come to performances, his wife sometimes rapping alongside him.

PHOTOGRAPHER JAVEON BUTLER



PHOTOGRAPHER GREG NOIRE

“If you book me for a show and I can’t bring my wife and my kids I’m leaving,” Tobe raps in one of his songs. “To be able to see that experience as a Black woman who wants to have a family that supports the arts and uplifts love, celebration, that was really awesome to be around,” Hannah said. The messages of Black faith come through in his lyrics, and those values are also emulated in his daily life as a practicing Christian.

Hannah first fell in love with the mission and impact of the Black Angels Collective when she watched a video, documenting the behind-the-scenes process of producing a music video for Tobe’s song, “Father Figure.”

“I was entranced by the care that went into the cinematography and the filming,” Hannah recalled. “I also direct dance films, so I wanted to learn more about what they’re doing.” As an extra in two music videos, *FYE FYE* and *Mini Me* in 2021 and 2022, respectively, she watched how Tobe worked with his team. “I fell in love with the symbiosis between Tobe and Carmen, the choreographer,” she said. “I admired the trust he had in her vision and the way that they would work together to create visuals that are lasting, impactful, and iconic.”

In March, she took a chance and auditioned to be a member of the Black Angels Collective. She was offered a spot and rehearsals for their Coachella performance were

set to begin the following week. They were scheduled to last for one month, cutting into the UO academic term. She immediately sat down to start putting together an asynchronous plan for her students. She sent it off to the School of Music and Dance dean and department head and received their blessing. “When you want to do something, you can’t afford to have somebody else try to work your problems out for you,” Hannah said. “You have to give them solutions, not a problem.”

That is a lesson she has taught her students since coming back from the music festival. She also hopes to instill confidence in her SOMD students after she took a risk to go for what she wanted. “Bet on yourself!” she exclaimed. “Say yes! I have a couple of seniors who are about to go into the world of dance in some capacity and I am hoping that I inspire them to take a leap of faith.”

She also returned to Eugene reinvigorated as an instructor. While she assumes the role of choreographer in the classroom, her experience as a professional dancer will now inform the way she teaches her students. “I’m going into rehearsals with my students with a different understanding of what it means to be a choreographer, what it means to set your dancers up for success, and how to build community off the bat to get them to the best place possible,” she said. “I’m taking all I learned from my Coachella experience into my pedagogy.”

# 'IT WAS A PRIVILEGE': SOMD FACULTY PERFORMS NPR TINY DESK CONCERT

By Kristen Hudgins

There is an obvious reason NPR has penned its series of musical performances, Tiny Desk Concerts. The intimate office space in Washington, D.C. is where musicians from all genres come to play. The sounds emanating from the room, though, are larger than life. That was especially true when Kenny Garrett came to town. The award-winning saxophone player headlined a performance with University of Oregon School of Music and Dance assistant professor Keith Brown on the piano. "It was a really cool experience," Brown said. "It was a privilege to not only play on the world stage that is NPR but also with someone like Kenny who I have looked up to all of my musical career."

Kenny, Keith, and the rest of the band were invited to play at NPR Music while Kenny was in town to receive the National Endowment for the Arts' highest honor in jazz: the 2023 NEA Jazz Masters award.

During the 17-minute concert, the band performed three works. In the first song, "When the Days Were Different" you can hear "that spiritual belief along with gospel elements of the Black American church," writes NPR. "Hargrove" has a "hard bop infused R&B groove that builds momentum right up until the end" (NPR) and "For Art's

Sake," the final song in the set, "embraces both modern jazz and Afrobeat influences" (NPR).

Keith says playing alongside Kenny is challenging, but fun. "It's a great experience," he said. "As a master musician, it's an intense learning experience to play with him and he has a lot to teach us younger musicians."

While Keith has only been with Kenny's band since June 2022, their history goes far beyond that. Keith's father, Donald, played in several bands with Kenny, and they still work together from time to time when Donald produces some of Kenny's records. Keith and Kenny have also gigged together, so when Kenny's band was looking for a pianist, he thought of Keith right away.

Since he began playing jazz at the age of 18, Keith has performed and recorded with a who's-who of jazz luminaries. He hopes his continued experience gigging professionally will benefit not only him but also his SOMD students. "It's one thing to teach scales and it's another to help students tap into the emotional and spiritual element of playing music, which I tap into every time I step on stage."



# ALUM COMPOSES WORK INSPIRED BY AUTISTIC, NONVERBAL SON

By Kristen Hudgins

In the world of music, inspiration often strikes in the most unexpected places. For composer and guitarist, Justin Morell, the source of inspiration for his work, *All Without Words*, was his nonverbal autistic son, Loren. When Loren was 14, Justin recorded his spontaneous vocalizations on his phone, which he later transcribed into a melody and theme that would weave throughout the work's 12 variations. Justin says the theme reflects on his life with Loren, the struggles of learning how to connect with a child who has difficulty with the most basic aspects of communication, and the triumph of even the smallest successes.

A University of Oregon PhD graduate in composition, Justin found himself pausing during the composition process to appreciate the connection that was strengthening between him and Loren, who uses a picture-based system to communicate. "It was a gift," he said. "What began as a mission to celebrate neurodiversity became an opportunity for me to connect with my son and hear his voice in a way I had not before," he said. "The music is born of intense emotion—sometimes painful and sometimes joyful—and of hope for a compassionate future where all people are loved and respected for their humanity."



First recorded in an album, *All Without Words* evolved into a multidisciplinary performance presented by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in September. Musicians were joined by dancers onstage, and audience members could also enjoy a gallery exhibition of art inspired by the work. "To be a composer and have your music played by a brilliant orchestra and have all these people participate is a once in a lifetime experience," Justin said.

As for Loren, who is now 18, it is hard to say whether he understands that the entire production was inspired by him, for him. "The hard part about it is that you don't get to know," Jennifer Taggart, Loren's mother and Justin's wife, said. "We just don't really know what he thinks because he can't tell us."

The September concert was filmed as part of a documentary on the making of *All Without Words*, expanding its mission and reach. "I would hope that people who get to know the piece and the mission behind it take a moment to think about the fact that every person is an individual with value," Justin said. "We all have our own stories. We all have our own issues, but that is just the experience of being human." A release date for the documentary, produced by the Boundless Arts Foundation, is to be determined.

**'FORMIDABLE AND WICKEDLY FUNNY':  
SOMD PROFESSOR  
PRODUCES AWARD-WINNING  
DOCUMENTARY  
ON BELLA LEWITZKY**

By Kristen Hudgins



PHOTO BY LYN SMITH



PHOTO BY CALARTS



PHOTO BY HUAC

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF "BELLA," THE LEWITZKY DANCE COMPANY ARCHIVE, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, USC

**B**ella, a new documentary that examines and celebrates the life of artist and activist Bella Lewitzky, is dazzling audiences across the world.

Hailed as a modern-dance pioneer, Lewitzky was a California-based dancer, choreographer, and teacher. She was designated one of America's irreplaceable dance treasures by the Dance Heritage Coalition and won the National Medal of Arts in 1996.

University of Oregon School of Music and Dance (SOMD) associate professor Walter Kennedy worked tirelessly on the award-winning film about Lewitzky's life as the associate producer, alongside director and producer Bridget Murnane.

"Bridget and I felt we needed to cement Bella Lewitzky into dance history in a way that, up to that point, had not really been done," Kennedy said.

The project is immensely personal to Kennedy. He studied as a principal dancer at the Lewitzky Dance Company (LDC) for nearly two decades. He first set his sights on the company after watching Lewitzky perform for the first time with LDC.

"She was an incredible dancer," he recalled about the mesmerizing performance. "Her sheer physical capability was very intriguing. After the performance I thought, 'I want what she's having!'"



He was invited to join the California-based company in 1978, and dove headfirst into training with Lewitzky, signing a four-year contract.

"She was a very formidable human being," Kennedy remembered about his time in the company. "She could be tough. I learned a lot about brutal honesty and unvarnished truth from her."

Over time, they developed a friendship offstage.

"She could be wickedly funny," he said. "She'd always come off as so serious in rehearsals, but she did have a wonderful sense of humor. She was also loyal to people she trusted and cared about. She was unfailingly loyal."

That humor is highlighted in the documentary when a reporter shared Lewitzky's response to a question about whether she "named names" after being summoned to the House Committee on Un-American Activities to identify communists in the arts. Lewitzky responded, "I'm a dancer, not a singer."

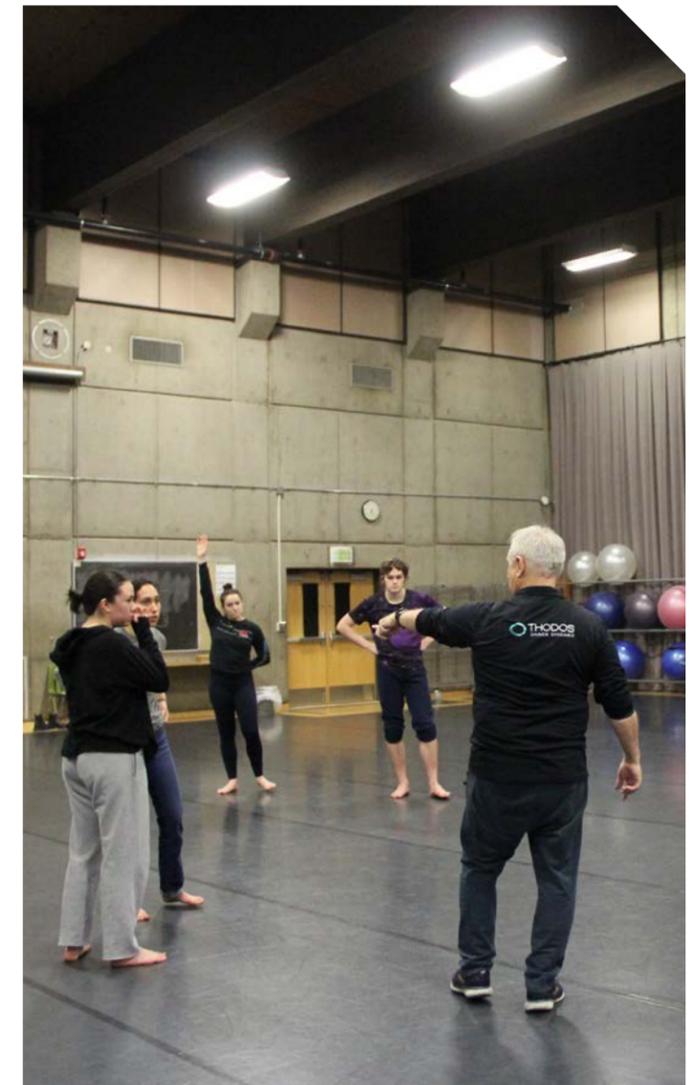
Her activism continued in 1990 when she sued the National Endowment for the Arts because it was requiring NEA grant recipients to sign an anti-pornography pledge. A federal judge later found the pledge unconstitutional. "I recognized that what I was looking at was pure, outright censorship," Lewitzky says in an archival clip in the documentary.

"I think people should be encouraged to feel that they can speak up openly," Kennedy said. "I think that, in some respects, Bella paved the way for a newer generation of artists to not only be involved in their art but also in politics."

Lewitzky's artistic and political endeavors, on display in the documentary, have enchanted audiences across the world. Last year, Kennedy attended the Madrid International Film Festival where it won two awards: *Exceptional Showcase of the Arts* and *Best Cinematography for a Documentary*.

"The audience in Madrid was blown away by it," Walter recalled. "They said it was incredibly moving and important to see a citizen like Bella step forward and get involved in the political sphere."

The documentary has taken home several other awards including *Best Feature Documentary* at Dance Camera West in Los Angeles, Festival Internacional Cine de America in Mexico, Film Fest International in Edinburgh, Montgomery International Film Festival in Delaware, and Worldwide Women's Film Festival in Arizona.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A grand piano has 12,000 parts!



## MIKE'S MATH

### HOW MANY TUNINGS HAS MIKE DONE IN HIS CAREER?

46 years of professional work x 800 pianos a year = **36,800 tunings**

(that's an average of one piano a day, every day, for 101 years!)

36,800 tunings x 230 strings per piano = 8,464,000 strings (playing the note only once)

8,464,000 strings x 12 keystrokes on average per string = 101,568,000 tuning notes played

## KEEPING SOMD IN TUNE THE PIANO MAN

It's 6:30am on a cold October morning. The University of Oregon (UO) campus is still, but a lone car occupies a space near the Frohnmayer Music Building. A middle-C pierces the quiet, early-morning air. Piano Technician Mike Reiter has arrived 90 minutes before students and faculty to ensure the keyboard on the Beall Concert Hall stage is tuned, warm, and ready for lessons. This is how most days start for the man who keeps the School of Music and Dance's vast catalogue of 140 pianos, harpsichords, clavichords, and organs in peak working order.

Largely self-taught, Mike has been working as a piano technician since 1974. His five decades in the industry have led to gigs with Tina Turner, Jane Powell, Bill Mumy, Cher, and Herbie Hancock.

In 2016, Mike landed at the University of Oregon. He immediately went to work revamping the on-campus piano shop and raising the bar for keyboard experience at the School of Music and Dance (SOMD). He's grown the SOMD inventory to \$7 million-worth of keyboards. He mentors five burgeoning technician students. On any given day, Mike tunes between one and six keyboards, averaging 60 minutes per instrument. His skill set and dedication is an invaluable resource, necessary to the smooth function of SOMD performance and pedagogy.

Mike is passionate about maintaining the incredible keyboard gifts that have come from donors throughout the years. He understands his obligation to preserve these instruments – some of which pre-date the U.S. Constitution. He'll also tell you that his most memorable and rewarding moments come from seeing the facial expressions of piano owners when their family piano is restored and put to good use by the next generation of musicians.

Mike's career features a plethora of accolades and experiences, but his role with the Piano Technicians Guild is, perhaps, his true legacy in action. Having contributed to the original publication of *Guidelines for Institutional Piano Maintenance*, Mike now serves as the Chair for the College and University Technicians (CAUT) Committee. His team is tasked with identifying which professional qualities enable CAUT members to be successful in higher education roles, as well as methods they use to secure their positions. He's also exploring the feasibility of CAUT certification for future keyboard technicians. Mike emphasizes the need for well-rounded college and university technicians who can budget, interact with donors, and partner with administration.

On this particular October morning, winter has set into Oregon. The UO heaters have been turned on. As the temperature changes, 140+ keyboard instruments have gone out of tune. Mike, his student disciples, and his contractors – all of whom are dedicated to offering the best keyboard experience possible – know there are many weeks of early-morning tunings ahead. And they wouldn't want it any other way.



## ONCE A DUCK, ALWAYS A DUCK KATHIE HSIEH

**K**athie Hsieh knows what it means to wear the yellow and green. She attended the University of Oregon from 2013 through 2020, graduating with two undergraduate degrees in Percussion Performance and Music Education, two graduate degrees in Percussion Performance and Nonprofit Management, and a Graduate Certificate in Arts & Culture Leadership. Having spent seven years at UO, she now leverages her experience to support the next generation of Ducks as the Student Services Coordinator and Graduate Advisor for the School of Music and Dance (SOMD).

Attending the University of Oregon was Kathie's dream come true. "UO had the perfect music program for me," says Kathie. I wanted to study with the world-class professors. Prior to committing to UO, I had a chance to take a tour of SOMD, sit-in on classes, watch Oregon Marching Band rehearse, and meet current students. The plethora of opportunities, welcoming atmosphere, and unique experiences at SOMD helped me make my decision to come to UO."

During her time as a Duck, Kathie was a member of Mu Phi Epsilon (a co-ed international professional music fraternity), played cymbals in the Oregon Marching Band, and performed with various student-led music groups. She made life-long friends and collaborated with faculty members who helped her grow creatively and intellectually. Her time at SOMD and UO allowed Kathie to play with Eugene Symphony and hold an internship with Oregon Mozart Players.

Since joining the SOMD staff in 2021, Kathie has been an advocate for collaboration inside and outside the classroom. "With healthy collaboration, we can create a student-centered experience that helps everyone find joy, passion, and inspiration in their studies."



## FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER OF THE YEAR MARISA FINLAYSON

**M**arisa Finlayson (MM '19) stands out among her peers. Her passion for music and education is only matched by her unwavering desire to spark social change and create opportunities for her students. In 2022, her efforts were recognized when she was named "Teacher of the Year" by San Jose High School.

A clarinetist from Davis, California, Marisa came to Oregon to study with Dr. Wonkak Kim and play in ensembles with Dr. Jason Silveira. As she worked toward her graduate degree in Music Education and teaching certificate, Marisa found inspiration in the classrooms of *Music of African Diasporas* with Dr. Habib Iddrisu and *The Psychology of Music* with Dr. Beth Wheeler. One memory that particularly stands out is building mbiras out of bobby pins with Dr. Juan Eduardo Wolf.

After graduation, more motivated than ever, Marisa took a post in the Bay Area, teaching music and coaching boys volleyball and cheer. It only took three short years before her exceptional talent and drive were formally noted. "I was absolutely humbled and felt a sense of imposter syndrome when [the Teacher of the Year] award was presented to me," Marisa shared. Though she was surprised, the recognition

was well-deserved, given the work and transformation she had done within the school and surrounding community.

As a result of COVID-19, district funding was removed for the arts, so Marisa developed creative ways to make affordably functional instruments for her students. Taking a page from her time with Dr. Wolf at UO, Marisa built drum pads made of wood and garage foam tiles. She also partnered with an organization in Oakland to provide her students with classes on hip-hop and rap. Beyond music, Marisa re-established the boys volleyball team, which has not been present on campus for over 10 years.

"I'm able to see the magnitude and lasting positive effects a UO degree has on me," she explains. "I can say, with all honesty, that I would not be the teacher I am today had I not attended the University of Oregon. At any opportunity available, I speak to the benefits of continuing one's education. Especially, the benefits of continuing one's music education."

Marisa is currently researching diversity within repertoire selection and hopes to apply to the DMA in Music Teaching and Learning program at the USC Thornton School of Music.

# WELCOME!

## FOUR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN SOMD

University of Oregon School of Music and Dance (SOMD) was pleased to welcome four new faculty members to Eugene starting in the 2023-24 school year: Brian Hsu, Sunmi Chang, Joyce Wei-Jo Chen, and Leander Star.



### BRIAN HSU

In September, Dr. Brian Hsu joined the SOMD as Associate Professor of Piano. "I am thrilled to be a part of the UO family, and I look forward to discovering everything Eugene has to offer," Hsu said. "Go Ducks!" Since his concerto debut at the age of 16 with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Hsu has gone on to establish himself as a pianist of great energy and unusual communicative ability. Critics have described his performances in superlatives, noting his "breadth of expression and technical ability."

He is an experienced performer, traveling around the globe to dazzle audiences in North America, Europe, Asia, and South Africa. His US solo debut recording, *Night at the Opera: Part I*, consists of opera transcriptions for solo piano, and was released in the fall of 2018. Previously associate professor of piano at Loyola University in New Orleans, Hsu served as a staff accompanist at Yale University and University of Michigan, staff accompanist and chamber music coach at Eastern Music Festival, piano faculty at the McAlester Institute in Oklahoma, and piano faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan. He was also an adjunct professor at Siena Heights University and taught at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts.

He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School, Artist Diploma from Yale University, and DMA from the University of Michigan. [www.brian-hsu.com](http://www.brian-hsu.com).



### JOYCE WEI-JO CHEN 陳瑋若

As the new Assistant Professor of Historical Keyboards, Dr. Joyce Wei-Jo Chen is overjoyed to be in Eugene. "I am honored to take on this opportunity to help reconceptualize early music pedagogy and curriculum, expand the period-instrument collection, increase visibility and outreach of the HPP program, and make SOMD a center for Historical Performance Practice in North America!"

Chen is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Music (Historical Musicology) and the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Humanities at Princeton University. Under the guidance of Wendy Heller, she is working on her dissertation, "Musica Experientia/Experimentum: Acoustics and Artisanal Knowledge in the Global Seventeenth Century." It explores the intersection between science, music, and aesthetics involving instrument-making, sensory experience, and the development of acoustical theory.

She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Harpsichord Performance from Stony Brook University and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from UC Berkeley. Dr. Chen has been on faculty at St. Joseph's University, the University of Delaware, and Delaware State University, where she also introduced a pilot program of HBCU early music access project in collaboration with Early Music America and the Princeton GradFUTURES program.



### SUNMI CHANG

Dr. Sunmi Chang is SOMD's new Assistant Professor of Violin. "I am absolutely delighted to embark on this new journey of learning and nurturing the next generation of aspiring musicians!" she remarked.

Chang has performed widely and to acclaim throughout North America and Europe as a solo artist and chamber musician. She attended the Yehudi Menuhin School in England, during which she performed regularly in concerts at Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Royal Albert Hall, and Purcell Room. She continued her studies at the Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule in Berlin, Germany. Chang also earned a Master of Music degree at Yale University and Doctor of Musical Arts in Violin Performance at University of Michigan.

She was a full-time tenured member of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra from 2009-2015 and has maintained an active teaching studio for more than twenty years, teaching all levels of students. She was a faculty member at the Chamber Music Institute Program at Music@Menlo for many years and was also a board member and a judge of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Youth Chamber Music Competition.

Prior to coming to Eugene, she served as the artistic director of Summit Chamber Music Series, which aspires to bring joy, peace, comfort and encouragement to Morgantown, WV by presenting world-class chamber music performances throughout the season. More on Dr. Chang's background and accomplishments can be found at [www.sunmichang.com](http://www.sunmichang.com).



### LEANDER STAR

The School of Music and Dance (SOMD) welcomed Leander Star to campus this fall as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Horn. He will teach the horn studio while Professor of Horn Lydia Van Dreel undertakes a new role with the UO Clark Honors College. "My goal, first and foremost, is to be a good mentor and keep up Lydia's great work," Star said of his three-year appointment. "I have some big shoes to fill!"

Star spent the previous eight years teaching horn at the University of Mississippi and at Rhodes College. A Portland native, he is thrilled to make his way back across the United States to Eugene. "It is a joy to be back!" Leander exclaimed.

Star is a tenured member of the Oregon Ballet Theater and Portland Opera Orchestra and can often be seen performing in the pit at the Keller Auditorium and in other venues in the Pacific Northwest. A graduate of Northwestern University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he is a founding member of the avant-garde wind quintet, The City of Tomorrow.

# RECENT GRADUATE HORN INSTRUCTOR AWARDED TENURE-TRACK POSITION

By Kristen Hudgins



University of Oregon School of Music and Dance Instructor of Horn, Justin Stanley, made a cross-country trip to the Volunteer State after this year after accepting a tenure track assistant professorship at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Justin credits his professional music experience and time at UO for landing the new gig. After receiving his bachelor's in music performance at New York University and his master's in horn performance at the New England Conservatory in Boston, he came to SOMD to pursue his Doctor of Musical Arts in Horn Performance.

He chose UO after a honeymoon trip to the West Coast with his husband. On their road trip from San Diego to Seattle, they stopped in Eugene. He quickly realized they were in Duck country, and perused SOMD's website while enjoying downtown.

"I looked up Lydia Van Dreel and thought, 'Wow! Their career looks a lot like I want mine to look,' so that was when I decided to apply. I auditioned and loved Lydia and the town. And the rest is history!"

The DMA program was a perfect fit for Justin for several reasons. One, he was able to dedicate more time to teaching and performance, playing three full recitals. He was also able to work consistently by landing gigs with several groups, including Oregon Mozart Players, Eugene Symphony, Newport Symphony, and Oregon Symphony.

The quality of the faculty and the interesting research they were conducting also drew him to the program. "When I first got here, it was mind blowing. SOMD is a real gem. From Lydia to Dr. Abigail Fine in Musicology, there are so many great minds here!" he said. "That is the biggest strength of the school."

Outside of his coursework and regional performances, he was involved in several other opportunities that laid the foundation for his future career in higher education. He helped launch the Dean's Student Advisory Council, an organization that helps Dean Sabrina Madison-Cannon liaise with the student body. Madison-Cannon, who has also been a "great mentor" to Justin, later invited him to join the Dean's Advancement Council. He also served as the Northwest Horn Society (NwHS) scholarship chair and is the current communications and outreach chair on the NwHS board. He also started a podcast through the organization.

After completing his DMA in 2021, he was granted the opportunity to teach at UO. Professor Van Dreel announced their intention to go on sabbatical, and Justin was invited to teach in their absence. "I had a great opportunity to find out what it's like to teach in higher education full time, right after my doctorate," Justin said. "It all worked out, which is great!"

He started out with quite a bit of nerves but quickly got into the rhythm of teaching. "Let me tell you, I was a bundle of nerves before school started back in late September 2022. But then I told myself, 'I can do this!'"

This experience has prepared him for his new position at Tennessee Tech, as well as the "portfolio career" he had prior to his time at UO.

"That's what we're calling careers where you have a lot of different jobs all related to the music field," Justin said. "It's part of a freelancer's life these days, especially if you really want to be engaged in performance."

He started an artist management company where he did public relations, marketing, booking, and networking for a variety of chamber ensembles and classical soloists. He was also the education director at a small music school in Quincy, Massachusetts. He later became a co-owner of the school which also sold instruments and did instrument repairs. He also taught at All Newton Music School, a community music school outside Boston. He founded two chamber ensembles—including American Prize-finalist "Some Assembly Required" – and freelanced with several orchestras. His path to a career in music started when Justin was a kid. He grew up in Texas where band programs are extremely popular, and he started on horn in sixth grade band. "I tried piano and guitar before that and was terrible at them, truly awful!" he said. "I am still bad at them. But horn was the first time I found an instrument that I felt like I could start to express myself. It has a similar range to my

own voice, so it feels like I can really speak through it. It's also very versatile. We have our tender, lyrical moments, and then our more bombastic, big moments. I can use it to say whatever I want."

Decades later, his passion for music and horn led him to Tennessee Tech University.

"I don't want to downplay what I've done in my career so far to get to this point, but it does feel very lucky and wonderful that I accepted a tenure-track position almost straight out of my DMA," he said. "It's surreal. It's incredible."

Justin taught several courses this past semester while also performing with the Cumberland Quintet, Brass Arts Quintet, and Bryan Symphony.



# PAUL KRUEGER PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF JAZZ STUDIES

By Kristen Hudgins

When jazz students returned to Eugene in the fall, they found a new Director of Jazz Studies at the helm. "I am flattered and honored!" new director, Paul Krueger, said following his promotion. In addition to Krueger's administrative duties, he teaches several courses. "The students here are hardworking, high achievers, and they are a joy to be around," he said. "Working with them is the highlight of my day, and I love watching them grow here at UO."

Paul earned his bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and his master's degree in jazz studies from the University of Oregon's School of Music and Dance. After graduation, he taught at Washington High School in South Dakota, Willamette University, and Lane Community College. He returned to UO's campus as an instructor of jazz studies in 2016 before serving as interim director starting in 2022, and now director.

"Our jazz studies program has a tradition of excellence that I'm looking to sustain," Paul said. "It has been a strong program for a long time under the direction of Steve Owen and I have always been inspired by his leadership. As the director, I want to facilitate a positive environment where students can maximize their abilities and where faculty have the support and the resources that they need to help students on that journey."



PHOTO BY KEITH MUNSON

# DOUBLE REED EXCELLENCE ABROAD

By Kristen Hudgins

World-class double reed artists and pedagogues from across the globe gathered at Mahidol University in Thailand for the International Double Reed Society (IDRS) conference in July. Seven University of Oregon School of Music and Dance faculty members and alumni attended, strongly representing SOMD overseas. "I believe this is a testament to the strength of the program and the commitment to excellence its graduates embody," Aaron Pergram, an SOMD alum and conference attendee, said. "Not only were the University's faculty and graduates present at the conference, but their music, artistry, and skills were presented as performers, composers, and teachers throughout the week."

UO SOMD alumnus Cooper Wright co-hosted the five-day event. He graduated with a Master of Music in oboe performance in 2009 and is currently an Instructor of Oboe at the Mahidol University College of Music in Thailand. "When I heard that Oregon faculty and composers were coming, it really meant a lot to me," he said. "It is great to see that UO is willing to sponsor faculty to attend international conferences to recruit, represent, and display the talent that comes out of the university. It shows to the community that the University of Oregon is willing to continue to honor the legacy of the alumni, while also uphold and progress its reputation and standard of excellence."

Beyond organizing the conference, Wright (pictured right) also performed, accompanied by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra.

Three additional alumni attended and performed: Brian McKee, Aaron Pergram, and Sophia Tegart. McKee, a bassoonist, performed in a chamber music recital. He is currently the program director for the Youth Orchestra in Salinas in California. Pergram received his DMA in bassoon performance in 2012. At IDRS, he served as a performer and final round judge for the Norma Hooks Young Artist International Competition for Bassoon. Following the conference, he returned to Ohio where he is Assistant Professor of Bassoon at Miami University.

Alumna Sophia Tegart performed with the Pan Pacific Ensemble in Thailand. She received two master's degrees from SOMD in flute performance and musicology. Currently, she is the Assistant Professor of Flute at Washington State University.

Three faculty members, Dr. Steve Vacchi, Lydia Van Dreel, and Melissa Peña performed and presented at IDRS. Professor of Bassoon Steve Vacchi led a contrabassoon masterclass and performed a solo bassoon recital which included works by two UO alums, Aaron Pergram and Katherine Saxon, a 2005 graduate with a master's in composition.

Professor of Horn Lydia Van Dreel performed in a recital alongside Associate Professor of Oboe Melissa Peña. "It was wonderful to attend this event with my double reed colleagues from UO," Van Dreel said. Peña, too, noted it was a joy to share the stage with Van Dreel. "I feel incredibly fortunate to have phenomenal artists and collaborators as colleagues in the SOMD," she added.



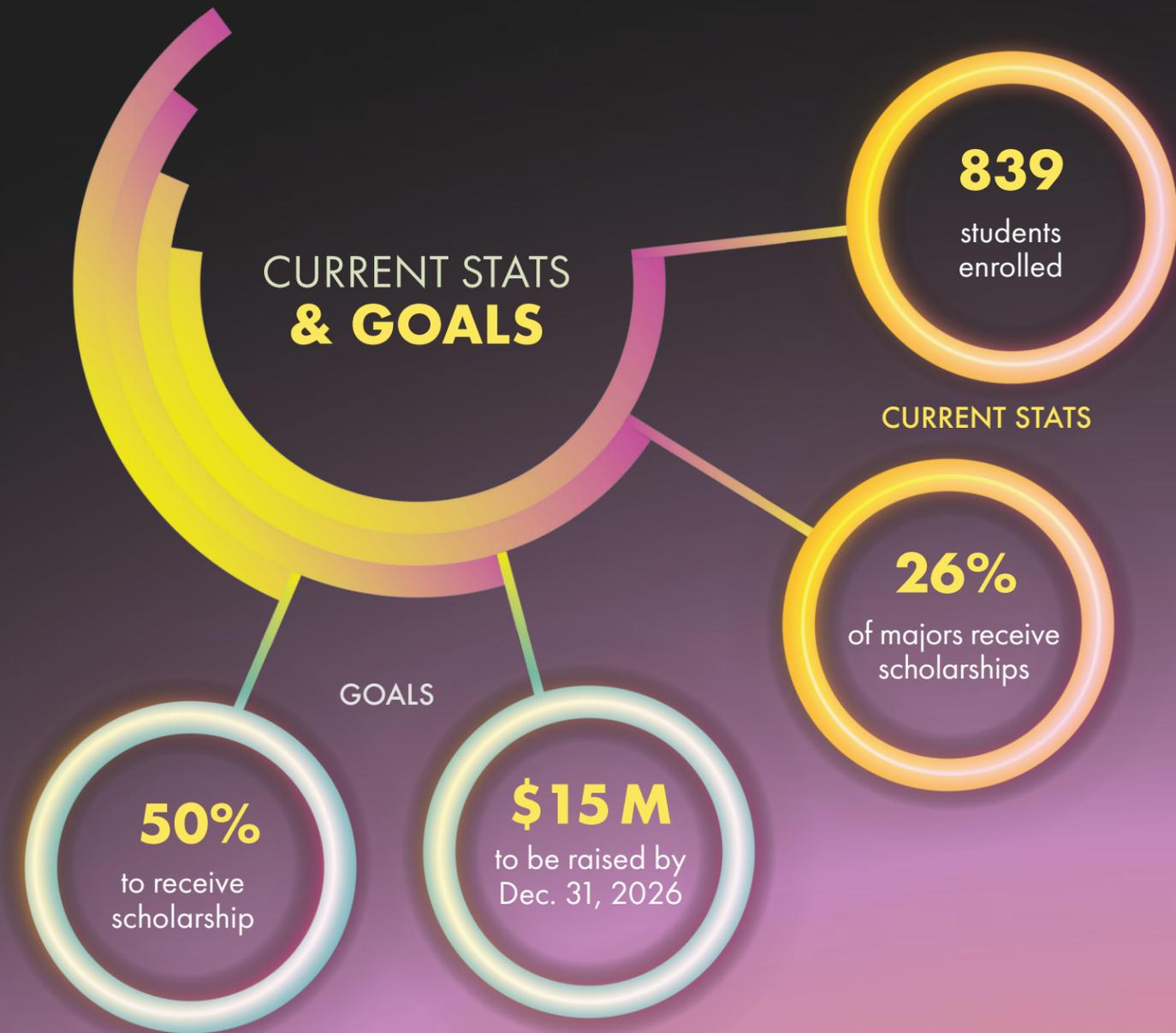
WRIGHT PERFORMS ALONGSIDE GORDON HUNT IN THE CONCERTO FOR TWO OBOES BY TOMASO ALBINONI

# SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOLARSHIPS

By Kristen Hudgins

This October, Dean Sabrina Madison-Cannon embarked on a mission to transform students' lives by launching a scholarship campaign to raise an impressive \$15 million in three years to fund student scholarships. "I'm excited for the opportunities this will create for our current and prospective students," Madison-Cannon said. "There are many talented, intelligent, and dedicated dancers, musicians, and future academics applying to our school. We want them to choose us. Scholarships can help make that happen."

The impact of scholarships is undeniable. Take, for instance, the story of Emily Andaya. She was offered a scholarship during the admissions process, and it helped seal the deal on her decision to enroll at the School of Music and Dance (SOMD). "As an out of state student, there is a financial struggle that's hard to navigate sometimes," the Las Vegas native said. "We all know this: college is expensive, so I am thankful to have my scholarship. It serves as a reminder to have gratitude and keep going even when it can be hard."



**MIKI SASAKI**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TRUMPET

"Being an out-of-state student is highly cost prohibitive. Scholarships would allow a lot more of these students to seriously consider Oregon."



**EMILY ANDAYA**

BFA, DANCE

"As an out-of-state student, there is a financial struggle that's hard to navigate. College is expensive, so I'm very thankful to have my scholarship."



**KATHIE HSIEH**

GRADUATE ADVISOR

"If I didn't receive a scholarship from SOMD, I would have gone to another school and studied a different major."



**SABRINA MADISON-CANNON**  
PHYLLIS AND ANDREW BERWICK DEAN

"There are many talented, intelligent, and dedicated dancers, musicians, and future academics applying to our school. We find ourselves losing these prospective students to schools that are better resourced. We want them to choose us."



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# Retirements

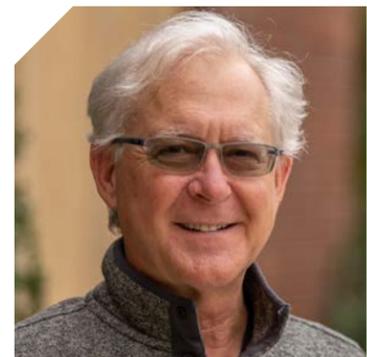
Thank you to these incredible seven people for their time and dedication to the University of Oregon, the School of Music and Dance, and the Eugene community. The entire SOMD family wishes them great happiness in the next phase of their lives and careers.



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*Professor of Violin*



**MARGRET GRIES**  
*Instructor of Musicology*



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*Senior Instructor of Music Theory, Aural Skills, and Keyboard Skills*



**CARLA MCSHANE**  
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*Professor of Jazz Studies*



**MARC VANSCHEEUWIJCK**  
*Professor of Musicology Coordinator, Collegium Musicum*



**CLAIRE WACHTER**  
*Professor of Piano*

# In Memoriam



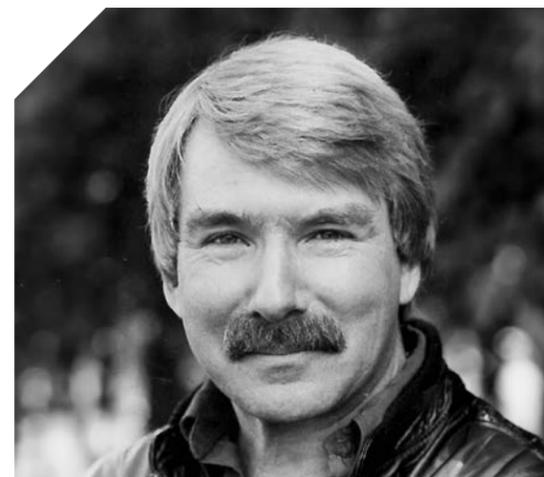
**Royce Saltzman 1928-2023**

Oregon Bach Festival (OBF) was deeply saddened to announce the passing of Dr. H. Royce Saltzman earlier this year. The OBF co-founder, long-time executive director, and board member died on Monday, April 3rd surrounded by his family. He was 94 years old. Royce began at the University of Oregon in 1964. Over the course of five decades, he served as professor of choral music, associate dean of the School of Music, national president of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), a founding member and president of the International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM), and co-founder and executive director of the Grammy-winning Oregon Bach Festival. He was also an integral member of the Civic Center Commission and the Performing Arts Center Commission, which brought the Hult Center for the Performing Arts to Eugene. After founding the Summer Festival of Music in 1970, Royce grew the small workshop and concert series into the three-week, international, multi-million-dollar Oregon Bach Festival. Throughout his career, Royce received a Distinguished Service Award from the University of Oregon, Chorus America's Distinguished Service Award, and Eugene Symphony's "Advocate for the Arts." He was honored by the Seventy-Seventh Oregon State Congressional Assembly for Cultural Contribution to the State of Oregon.



**Bernard J. Dobroski 1946-2023**

Former UO School of Music dean Bernard J. Dobroski died on February 19 in Highland Park, Illinois. He was 76 years old. Dobroski served as dean from 1986 to 1990. During his tenure, he also served as charter president of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the College Music Society and president of the Oregon Music Administrator's Association. Dobroski began his career as an accordionist and later performed as a tubist and keyboardist. He received a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, an MM from Catholic University of America, and an interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Northwestern University. Dobroski was quoted as having said, "Any institution can teach students to play louder or faster than anyone else. It is the truly educated person who can really reach out and fill his potential as a human being. Music is a thread in the fabric of a comprehensive education. We can't just be an ivory tower on University Place. We need to touch the lives of all our students." Dobroski is survived by his wife, Sally, and children, Andrea and Paul.



**Dr. Richard Trombley 1943-2023**

The University of Oregon School of Music and Dance is saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Richard Trombley. Dr. Trombley, known as "Dick" to family and friends, received his BS from Juilliard, his MMus from Manhattan School of Music, and his DMA from Stanford. He became an associate professor of flute and music history at the University of Oregon in 1963. He also taught film criticism. Trombley toured Europe for two years as a soloist and first-chair member of the Seventh Army Symphony and performed as a freelance musician for seven years in New York City – including several appearances at Carnegie Hall. He was a flutist with the UO Woodwind Quintet for 16 years, principal with Oregon Bach Festival for a decade, and principal with Eugene Symphony for 15 years. Dr. Trombley died September 5 in his home of Honolulu, Hawaii.

# Thank you from SOMD

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