

Oberlin Conservatory

MAGAZINE



2016

Oberlin turns 150
with celebrations
near and far

Testing theories
with America's
prof of the year

Jazz Studies
finds its voice—
and voice teacher

What's a nice
choral director
doing in prison?

An insider's look
at Oberlin's vast
Special Collections



RITE STUFF

Members of the Oberlin Orchestra bask in the adoration of a sold-out Symphony Center and maestro Raphael Jimenez after the final notes of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, the concluding piece from the conservatory's January tour to Chicago. For more images of Oberlin's 150th anniversary celebrations see page 28.



Greetings from Oberlin

This sesquicentennial year of Oberlin Conservatory has afforded our community a moment in which to reflect on the place and role of music—at Oberlin and within the broader world—as well as our contributions to advancing that role. Oberlin is committed to the highest levels of artistry: We seek to instill in our students the technical, musical, and artistic skills they will need to succeed in their professional lives. Oberlin accomplishes this within a culture of vibrant curiosity that leads organically through dynamic experimentation to tremendous impact. Indeed, for the past 150 years, Oberlin Conservatory has not merely prepared our students for the profession, but has superbly prepared them to create the profession.

I am tremendously excited about the future of music. Even more exciting, however, is Oberlin's role—students, faculty, and alumni—in creating that future. At the conclusion of this important year in our history, we embrace the spirit and ambition of our founders, who even amidst the social and political strife of 1865 saw great hope in the transformative power of both music and education.

Jessye Norman renewed this hope in her commencement address to the Class of 2016 when she stated, “Art brings us together as a family because it is an individual expression of universal human experience. It comes from that part of us that is without fear, prejudice, malice, or any of the other things that we create in order to separate ourselves one from the other. Art makes each of us whole by insisting that we use all of our senses—our heads and our hearts.” Certainly this has been evident at Oberlin throughout the past year, from the exquisite performances by our students in Chicago in January to the 150 impromptu “pop-up” concerts that suffused campus during Commencement and Reunion Weekend.

As we embark on the next 150 years of Oberlin Conservatory, we join Jessye Norman in the quest to “live artfully,” and to continue to equip our students to create musical lives of substance, dimension, and significance.

Thank you for your continued support of music and of the conservatory; it remains the most tremendous privilege to serve as dean.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kalyn
Dean of the Conservatory

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COVER, KALYN: TANVA ROSEN-JONES '97

JENNIFER MANNA, WALTER NOVAK, SUSAN MOODY, GENE SMIRNOV, TANVA ROSEN-JONES '97



Student musicians perform at the Cat in the Cream Coffeehouse, home of weekly Jazz Forums throughout the academic year.

Jazz Studies Finds Its Voice

Growing demand and collaborative opportunities lead to appointment of versatile singer La Tanya Hall

After 43 years of jazz instruction at Oberlin, the Division of Jazz Studies has appointed its first faculty member dedicated to vocal studies. Multifaceted singer La Tanya Hall will serve as teacher of jazz voice, a position that begins with the 2016-17 academic year.

The addition of jazz voice addresses a growing demand among prospective students and bolsters the experience of other conservatory students, according to Bobby Ferrazza, professor of jazz guitar and director of the jazz program.

“It strengthens our whole department,” Ferrazza says. “It diversifies our ensemble experiences, giving instrumentalists the opportunity to learn how to play with singers and learn directly how to accompany singers, which is a very important skill. It also presents new collaborative opportunities for our arrangers and composers.”

Hall herself has collaborated with a long list of celebrated performers across a variety of genres, including Harry Belafonte, Diana Ross, Bobby McFerrin, Burt Bacharach, Quincy Jones, Aretha Franklin, and Patti LaBelle. She has appeared as a soloist with the American Composers Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony, and the St. Louis Symphony, among other ensembles. Her debut recording, *It's About Time*, was released in 2008 to widespread acclaim.

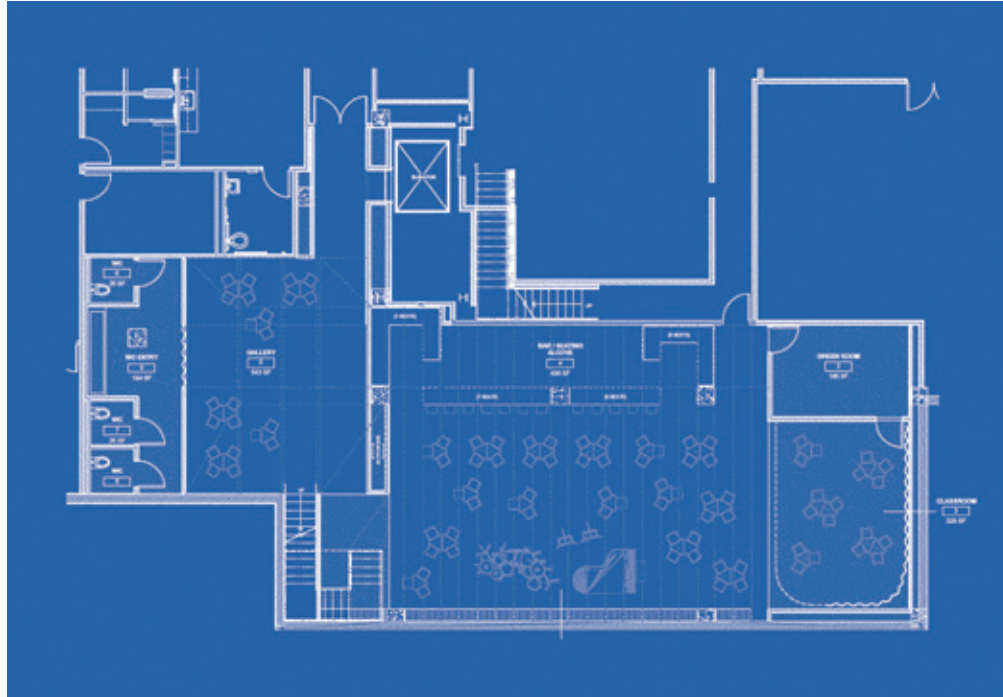
Early in 2016, Hall accompanied Grammy-winner Rob Thomas on a tour of Australia and performed a series of shows with jazz singer Catherine Russell in New York City. In late April, she began a U.S. tour with Steely Dan that extends throughout the summer.

“La Tanya Hall brings an extraordinary combination of talents and focus to the jazz division,” says Professor of Singing Lorraine Manz. “She is a premier, versatile performer and a superb teacher of singing. She readily connects to the spirit of those individuals she mentors, and she will lead Oberlin jazz singers into a most promising future.”

Hall has taught at the New School and at Five Towns College in Long Island, N.Y. She has sung at festivals around the world and teaches master classes with the National YoungArts Foundation. She is a graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder, where she studied music and journalism.

Hall counts the years she has devoted to teaching among the most rewarding experiences of her career. “I respect the process and consider it a gift to be able to teach this next generation the fundamentals of the jazz vocal legacy,” she says. “This music is steeped in tradition, and I continue to be touched and amazed at the dedication of the younger generations to keep it alive.”

MATTHEW LESTER



Future Venue Fuels Creativity at the Nexus of Campus and Community

The long-awaited Hotel at Oberlin hosted its first guests and special events in the spring of 2016. Meanwhile, construction began this summer on an exciting new phase of the burgeoning Green Arts District at the corner of East College and North Main streets: a subterranean multipurpose facility that will reside below the hotel lobby and restaurant.

Named the William and Helen Birenbaum Innovation and Performance Space, the venue will serve a purpose as unbounded as its name suggests. By day it will take on a curricular vibe, as faculty and students take advantage of it as a sort of “lecture lounge” and learning lab. By night it will transition into a performance space for a wide variety of recitals and other events presented by the conservatory. The room’s flexible performing area subtly rises above the main floor, which offers various seating configurations accommodating more than 100 guests.

Benefiting from its location at the heart of downtown Oberlin, the space is intended to connect campus and community life through its programming and amenities—most notably a sleek and stylish bar that extends along the east side of the room. For student musicians, the Birenbaum Space offers a performance setting that is distinct

from campus venues and more closely resembles the locales they may encounter as professionals.

“The Birenbaum Innovation and Performance Space represents a singularly powerful opportunity to further the conservatory’s mission of training the next generation of great artists,” says Dean of the Conservatory Andrea Kalyn.

The space was designed by Jonathan Kurtz of Westlake Reed Leskosky, the Cleveland firm responsible for the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building, Stull Recital Hall, and renovations to the Apollo Theatre and Bibbins Hall, among other campus projects.

Unveiled in 2009, Oberlin’s Green Arts District is a plan for building and renovating a 13-acre city block—home of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Hall Auditorium, and the former Oberlin Inn—to be energy self-sufficient and carbon neutral, providing a model for sustainable construction everywhere.

In keeping with the vision for the district and following the lead of the Hotel at Oberlin, the Birenbaum Space will be constructed in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Platinum standards, the highest attainable rating for energy efficiency. Its design will incorporate exposed concrete and materials including cork, rubber, metal, and glass.

Construction is estimated to be complete in time for an autumn 2016 opening.

New Fund Promotes Latin American Engagement

Violinist Clara Engen ’16 was one of four Oberlin students whose string quartet led a weeklong chamber music workshop with teenage musicians in Panama over the summer of 2015.

The trip was an offshoot of Oberlin’s 26-year-old Panama Project, an annual winter-term program held in conjunction with Panama’s Asociación Nacional de Conciertos. It was made possible through the Miriam Gomez Palacio ’67 Support Fund, which provides opportunities for Oberlin students and faculty to foster deeper engagement with Latin America and build new relationships with musicians in the region.

“Each class was designed as a laboratory experience where students could ask questions and experiment, try new things, and learn from each other,” says Engen, who was joined by violinist Elizabeth Castro Abrams ’15, violist Marlea Simpson ’17, and cellist Rachel Mills ’16. “All the students went above and beyond our expectations, achieving incredible musicality and understanding of their pieces in such a short time. We were so proud of them.”

Also benefiting from the Palacio Fund in 2015 was Associate Professor of Jazz Arranging Jay Ashby, who is deeply involved with efforts to link the conservatory with the musical world of Latin America. Ashby’s affinity for Brazilian jazz was developed during a 10-year stint as soloist with Astrud Gilberto, as well as on tours and recordings with a roster of prominent Brazilian artists. During the fall semester, he traveled to the Brazilian cities of São Paulo, Campinas, and Rio de Janeiro to meet with representatives from various music-based community outreach initiatives.

“Many of our conservatory students are actively seeking, exploring, and trying to develop ways to access a more intuitive or visceral connection to music,” Ashby says, noting that there is much to be learned from the emphasis on aural tradition in Brazilian music education and the manner in which music permeates Brazilian culture overall.

“Many Oberlin students have embraced the effect of globalization and the continued blurring of cultural lines, especially where music is concerned.”



Trio Ligatura violinist Dana Johnson, cellist Aaron Wolff, and violist Corey Worley perform Andrew Norman’s *The Companion Guide to Rome* at the Kennedy Center in February 2016.

New Program Supports Multidisciplinary Projects

XARTS, a new component of Oberlin’s Creativity & Leadership Project, provides competitive grants to support multidisciplinary artistic—and often collaborative—student projects with an entrepreneurial focus. Two application rounds each year award up to \$4,000 for six projects. Ventures proposed in the fall are completed over winter term; spring awards support summer enterprises.

Funding for XARTS was made possible by a gift from the Bernard family, inspired by the experience of Meade Bernard ’11, who explored the interrelationships of music and the liberal arts while earning degrees in TIMARA and English.

Launched in the fall of 2015, the first XARTS grants were awarded to projects exploring themes of globalization, political and social power of media, and women’s mental health.

One of the more adventurous projects was conceived by Kirk Pearson ’17, a double-degree candidate majoring in geology, cinema studies, and music composition, and Patrick Gilfether ’15, a Shansi Fellow in Indonesia for 2015-16. They told the story of a piece

of sashimi through film, music composition, sound design, and computer programming, illustrating the globalization of modern society as they tracked a single tuna from a Sumatran sea to a Japanese restaurant. The resulting film, *Fin*, screened in Oberlin during Commencement/Reunion Weekend in May.

English major Anna Gelman ’16 got the idea to write the play *I Do It So It Feels Like Hell* when she studied Sylvia Plath in an Oberlin poetry class. Her creative process involved two collaborators and a trip to Newnham College in England, where Plath studied as a Fulbright scholar. They performed the play in March under Gelman’s direction. Ariana Silvan-Grau ’16 portrayed Plath, and Zoë DePreta ’17 was assistant director and stage manager.

A project approved for summer 2016 involves research on the musician’s interpretive process. The ensemble Trio Ligatura will collaborate with an architectural historian and collect audio and video footage from nine churches in Rome that inspired composer Andrew Norman’s work *The Companion Guide to Rome*. From this material, they will create a multidisciplinary multimedia installation that helps audiences experience the musician’s interpretive process.



Student Director Leads *Dido and Aeneas*

Jason Goldberg ’16 became only the third person in conservatory history to craft an individual major in opera directing, a program he pursued with the guidance of Associate Professor of Opera Theater Jonathon Field. Goldberg’s final project was a monumental undertaking: a production of Henry Purcell’s 1680 tragic opera *Dido and Aeneas*, which he co-presented with Case Western Reserve University in April.

“The more I researched the work, the more I wanted to do a historically informed version of this masterpiece because the story’s themes of love lost, honorable intentions, social pressures, and base desires are all very relevant today,” says Goldberg, who also majored in voice performance under Professor Lorraine Manz. “Incorporating Baroque gesture and stylized movement into the production allows the opera to live in its natural setting and highlights its drama and themes.”

The production featured a cast of Oberlin vocal performance majors as well as dancers from Case Western Reserve University’s Baroque Dance Ensemble in numbers choreographed by Case instructor Julie Andrijeski. Nicholas Capozzoli ’15, MM ’16, who recently earned a master of music in historical performance, served as harpsichordist and music director, leading an ensemble of Oberlin Conservatory student musicians who performed on Baroque instruments. Goldberg was the show’s producer and director.

“When I told Jonathon Field I wanted to produce *Dido and Aeneas*, he was silent,” Goldberg told ClevelandClassical. “Then he said, ‘*Dido*—why *Dido*? That’s one of the most difficult pieces because you have every element of theater in it!’ And I replied, ‘That’s exactly why I want to do it.’”



YEVHEN GULENKO

Freedom Sings

Winter term comes alive with a former slave's emotional story

It makes sense that a deeply moving opera grounded in 19th-century abolitionism would have the imprint of Oberlin all over it. Composer Nkeiru Okoye '92 wrote *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom* to illuminate the former slave's courageous story through the power of music and drama.

Co-produced by Oberlin Conservatory and Cleveland Opera Theater, *Harriet Tubman's* Midwest debut was fueled by the artistry of Oberlin students past and present, including soprano Amber Monroe '17 in the title role. It included four performances in northeast Ohio churches and a packed house at Finney Chapel that marked a stirring finale to the 2016 winter term.

As crowds swelled, critics raved: *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* called *Harriet Tubman* "an emotionally charged and musically sublime experience." Monroe, likewise, was praised for her "powerful and thrilling voice and her impressive acting ability."

"To be there on stage in Finney was somewhat of a surreal experience," says Okoye, director of music theory and composition at the State University of New York at New Paltz. "I remember being in Finney during my first couple of months at Oberlin, attending shows on the Artist Recital Series. Suddenly the tables have turned, and now I'm the one that's on stage. To have done this at Oberlin—my alma mater—is just an amazing experience."



Micaela Aldridge '16 (pictured) and Rebecca Printz '16 portrayed the title character in Oberlin Opera Theater's fall 2015 production of *The Rape of Lucretia*.

Rape of Lucretia Opera Opens Door to Discussions

When Oberlin Opera Theater presented Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* in the fall of 2015, the tragic tale was complemented by a series of interdisciplinary programs that addressed themes ranging from the often tragic role of women in art throughout the ages to Lucretia's relevance in 21st-century America.

Believed by many historians to be based on the story of a real Roman woman, *The Rape of Lucretia* has been recounted numerous times in the arts and literature over the past 2,000 years, including Shakespeare's 1594 poem "The Rape of Lucrece." That story was one of several discussed in the talk Women in the Ancient World, an exploration of art and literary depictions of Lucretia and other tragic women. It featured college faculty members Nick Jones (English) and Chris Trinacty (classics), as well as Allen Memorial Art Museum curator Andaleeb Banta.

Another program, Violence and Virtue: Framing *Lucretia* in the 21st Century, focused

on the significance of the production in contemporary America and in what ways it can spark productive conversations. It included a panel featuring faculty members representing an array of disciplines, from history to feminist studies to comparative American studies.

A third program, Reading Britten: *The Rape of Lucretia* in Context, explored musicological and theoretical perspectives on the work and addressed such issues as why tragic women have played key roles in opera throughout the ages. The panel included music history professor Danielle Ward-Griffin of Christopher Newport University and three members of the conservatory faculty: *Lucretia* director Jonathon Field and music theorists Andrew Pau and Jan Miyake '96.

"The advantage of being a college and conservatory combined is that we have the structures to really have these conversations," says Meredith Raimondo, Oberlin's Title IX coordinator and the facilitator of the Violence and Virtue panel. "Gender-based violence is a longstanding problem, and I have a real belief that some of the solutions lie in art."



Cash Prizes Doubled for 2016 Cooper Competition

Each summer, the Thomas and Evon Cooper International Competition invites two dozen of the world's most talented young musicians to Oberlin to compete for an opportunity to perform with the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall and claim part of a generous prize package.

Beginning in 2016, that prize package grows considerably: The competition's overall cash awards have been doubled to \$40,000—including \$20,000 for the top finisher. It represents the highest-valued first prize of any competition for its age group.

As in past years, the top three finalists also earn full-tuition scholarships to attend Oberlin Conservatory. For the first time, participants are eligible for travel assistance on a case-by-case basis, thus opening the doors for more young artists from around the world than ever before.

The enhanced prizes and travel assistance are made possible through the generosity of the competition's title supporters, 1978 Oberlin College graduate Thomas Cooper and his wife Evon. The inaugural Cooper Competition for piano was held in 2010; the competition has alternated between piano and violin each year since. Past champions include Italian pianist Leonardo Colafelice and American pianist George Li, who won the Cooper Competition at age 14 and was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2016.

YEHEN GULENKO, ROGER MASTROIANNI
JULIE CROOKSTON-GULENKO '15

David S. Boe Returns for Organ Dedication

A pipe organ gifted to Oberlin by one of the school's longtime faculty and administrators was celebrated with a February concert in the instrument's new home of Fairchild Chapel.

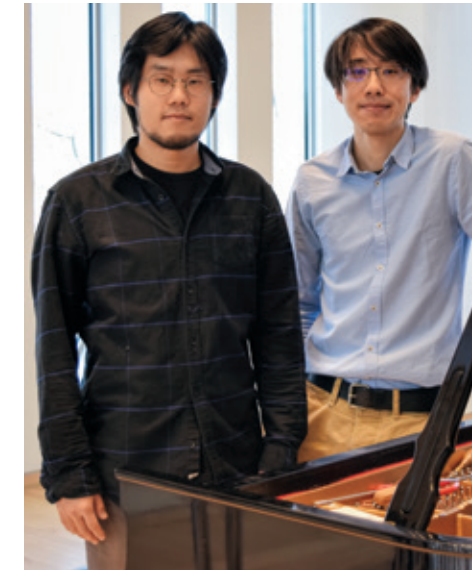
David S. Boe, an emeritus professor of organ and former dean of the conservatory, returned to the campus he served for more than 30 years for a program that featured organ faculty member Jonathan Moyer AD '12 performing works by a host of 17th- and 18th-century composers. Moyer was joined by faculty, students, alumni, and guest artists.

The Opus 23b organ was made in 1976 by John Brombaugh & Co. and installed in the Oberlin home of David and Sigrid Boe in 1977. It was reassembled in Fairchild Chapel late in 2015. "The Boe organ has a full and clear voice in its new home," David Kazimir '99, Oberlin's curator of organs, noted in the program for the dedication. "The warmth of the quarter-sawn white oak case glows in the natural light of the nave and has a quiet and pleasing visual presence in the space. Such placement honors the noble and gracious donors who have made this wonderful gift possible."

Karen Flint '64 Honored with Baroque Performance

Faculty and students from Oberlin's historical performance department joined forces in October for a tribute to longtime Oberlin Trustee Karen Flint '64. Held in Stull Recital Hall, the concert featured the Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, which includes faculty members Marilyn McDonald (Baroque violin), Michael Lynn (recorder), Catharina Meints (viola da gamba), and Webb Wiggins (harpsichord). They performed music by Bach, Sweelinck, Telemann, and Simpson.

A trustee from 1981 to 2015, Flint teaches harpsichord at the University of Delaware and has been artistic director of the early music ensemble Brandywine Baroque since its founding. In recent years, Flint and her husband Peter commissioned and gifted to Oberlin an exemplary Gräbner-style harpsichord. They also created a permanent fund to support annual Flint Initiative Grants, intended for conservatory students to develop entrepreneurial initiatives over winter term through the Creativity & Leadership Project.



Yu Jiaao (left) and Chun Yen Chen, the first recipients of the Artist Diploma in Piano Technology.

Piano Tech Program Graduates First Class

In the fall of 2014, Oberlin collaborated with Steinway & Sons to launch an exclusive two-year program called the Artist Diploma in Piano Technology. Intended for advanced technicians looking to hone their already developed skills in tuning, repair, and restoration of modern and historical keyboards, the graduate-level program yielded its first class in the spring of 2016.

"The program is designed to bridge the gap between piano technology and the concert pianist," says John Cavanaugh, Oberlin's executive director of keyboard technology. Cavanaugh administers the program, with additional instruction and mentorship from fellow Oberlin technicians Robert Murphy and Ken Sloane, visiting teachers from Steinway's New York factory, and independent master technicians.

Both graduating students have stepped directly into coveted positions: Chun Yen Chen has been hired as a senior piano technician by Steinway & Sons in his native China. Yu Jiaao, also from China, earned an esteemed one-year fellowship in the piano technology department at the Juilliard School. He will work at Tanglewood in the summer and in New York during the 2016-17 academic year. After that, he will most likely return to his home city, Beijing, where he plans to work as a technician and teacher at one of Beijing's conservatories.

Young Performer Makes Carnegie Hall Debut

Sixteen-year-old musician Ethan Olaes appeared in the first violin section of the New York Pops for its performance of John Williams' Theme from *Jurassic Park* on April 8 at Carnegie Hall. Through a new collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, Oberlin City Schools, and Oberlin Conservatory, Olaes receives the state's Autism Scholarship to meet some of his high school requirements through the study of violin, piano, voice, and classical guitar. He works regularly with conservatory student teachers, who are mentored by their professors. The student teachers on Olaes' team are tenor Santiago Pizarro '17, violinist Sophie Davis '17, pianists Chloe DeSouza '17 and Stephen Joven-Lee '18, classical guitarist Lenny Ranallo '16, and Associate Professor of Music Theory Jan Miyake '96.

Oberlin is the first post-secondary institution in Ohio to be an approved education provider for the Autism Scholarship.

Olaes joined in the celebration during Oberlin's 2016 Commencement/Reunion Weekend, performing on one of numerous pianos arranged outdoors across campus. He is the son of Carm Olaes '92.



Ethan Olaes joins in the celebration during Commencement/Reunion Weekend.



Students Devote Winter Term to Outreach in Jordan and Scotland

While more than 100 conservatory students devoted their winter term to Oberlin's 150th anniversary tour in Chicago (see page 28), others embarked on intensive learning experiences in a variety of locales.

Eight students spent the month of January in Jordan through a cultural exchange sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. Led by Assistant Dean for Academic Support Chris Jenkins, the group consisted of a classical trio and a jazz quintet that performed in schools and visited the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan. In addition, they toured heritage sites in Jordan such as the Roman Citadel, the Dead Sea, and the ruins of Jerash.

The trip, designed to promote music education and cultural exchange, was funded in part by the Julie Taymor '74 Student Support Fund for Arts and Culture Abroad and the U.S. Department of State.

Jenkins says the experience brought about enormous growth and maturity. "In America, our perception of Arabs tends to be monolithic. It's a really beneficial

experience for Americans to visit that part of the world because it has a direct effect on our politics. Any time students can leave the Oberlin bubble and enter an uncontrolled environment, to assert themselves in a space where everyone is different, it helps them grow up and learn the social rules of others."

Also during winter term, two students from the conservatory's Technology in Music and Related Arts (TIMARA) department presented sound art and compositions and attended lectures for two weeks at the University of Aberdeen's sonic arts program in Scotland.

Accompanied by Visiting Assistant Professor Joo Won Park, Christiana Rose '17 and Daniel Karcher '17 exchanged experiences on the creative use of music technology. They spent a third week taking in Scotland's culture, from its historic castles to its modern concert halls.

"The students and faculty at Aberdeen made us feel at home," says Rose, who majors in TIMARA and cinema studies. "It was a great experience to share the work from my recital and see what other music and composition students thought of it. There was an interesting overlap between our work and theirs."



Opera Legend Marilyn Horne Names Rubin Scholars for 2016

Singing for Marilyn Horne in a master class is a profound honor—and sometimes a little nerve-wracking—for Oberlin's voice majors. An opera legend and celebrated advocate for young singers, Horne is a strong voice to have on your side.

Following her 11th annual Oberlin residency in February 2016, Horne named Siena Miller '16 of Portland, Ore., and Juliana Zara '16 of Oxnard, Calif., recipients of the 2016 Rubin Scholarship. Each will receive \$5,000 toward furthering their musical careers.

Granted to the most promising conservatory singers, Rubin Scholarships were established in 2013 by philanthropist Stephen Rubin, president and publisher of Henry Holt & Co. and a longtime friend of Horne's.

"It was so surreal to learn from Ms. Horne," says Miller, a student of Daune Mahy who will begin graduate studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia this fall. "She has such a deep, unparalleled understanding of this world. She has lived through the golden era of opera and has so much wisdom to share." This summer, Miller will perform in the Gerdine Young Artist Program of the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and at the Chautauqua Voice Institute.

"I'm immensely grateful for the chance to study so closely with such a special artist," says Zara, a student of Marlene Rosen who will complete her studies in the fall of 2016. "I have been so inspired by the opportunity. I'm energized by the artistry and creativity affecting classical music around the world, and I hope to pursue musical opportunities abroad with the aid of this scholarship."

Zara will be featured in a student-led production of Poulenc's *La voix humaine* in the fall and plans to apply to graduate school for 2017-18.

TERRANCE FANORS, SCOTT SHAW



Renaissance Guy

Why generations of Collegium singers returned to pay tribute to their leader

It's a cliché that Oberlin changes your life. Less overstated but no less true is the notion that singing in Collegium Musicum under the direction of Steven Plank does the same. Just ask any of the 50-plus singers who returned to Oberlin in early November 2015 to sing Alessandro Striggio's extravagant 40-voice motet "Ecce beatam lucem" and to celebrate Plank's 25th year with the ensemble.

"It's hard to overestimate the importance that Collegium and Dr. Plank had on my life," says Christopher Macklin '04, now a professor of musicology at the University of Illinois.

"Dr. Plank was such a huge influence on my musical education that there's not much I wouldn't do to support him or celebrate his legacy," offers David Crean '06, organist at Wittenberg University. Or, in the simple formulation of New York flutist Martha Cargo '07: "There's nothing like it."

To them and to so many others, there's something ineffable about congregating in Fairchild Chapel every Monday and Wednesday to blend voices in polyphony, with the bearded, bow-tied, blue-blazered Plank at the helm, peppering his musical directives with witticisms. "There's this remarkable joy of music-making because everyone is there because they want to be there doing it," Plank says.

The enthusiasm extends all the way to Plank, Oberlin's Andrew B. Meldrum Professor of Musicology, who became director of Collegium 10 years into an Oberlin career that has reached 35 years and counting. "Directing Collegium was an opportunity that very much made Oberlin rather more special for me," he says in his warmly enunciated, enchantingly proper brand of English.

And the opportunity to celebrate 25 years of it? "This is just as blissful a possibility as I can imagine."

Oberlin's Community Music School Launches Endowed Fund

The Community Music School, established in 2003 as Oberlin Conservatory's pre-collegiate music program, provides private lessons and a range of classes for 235 northeast Ohio students from age 3 to adult.

Housed in the historic Burrell-King House, the school offers private lessons, including Suzuki instruction, in 10 instruments and voice. There are classes—with waiting lists—that teach music as a native language to very young children and those that incorporate singing and movement. Older students may also study theory, eurhythmics, chamber music, and electronic music composition.

Beginning this year, an endowed scholarship will make the school's resources available to children who otherwise may not be able to attend. The Aideen N. Zeitlin Memorial Scholarship Fund honors the memory of the late educator and her lifelong passion for music education. Created through gifts from family and friends, the fund also helps further the school's mission of providing instruction to area families regardless of financial need. Income from the fund supports one annual scholarship for one-hour music lessons.

The first recipient of the Zeitlin Scholarship is Gunnar Brennecke, an 11-year-old violist from Lorain County. He is a dedicated student at the Community Music School, where for five years he has studied privately, participated in chamber music, and performed regularly on recitals.

A native of Ireland, Aideen Zeitlin studied violin at the Royal College of Music and enjoyed a successful career performing in London. She moved with her family to the U.S. in 1965 and became one of the most influential violin teachers of young children in Boston. She also led two training orchestras at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. In 2013, Zeitlin and her husband moved to Kendal at Oberlin to be near their daughter, Louise Zeitlin, director of the Community Music School. Aideen Zeitlin passed away in 2014.

Donations to the Zeitlin Scholarship Fund are encouraged so that it may benefit additional students. Visit <http://bit.ly/ZeitlinMemorialFund> to make a contribution.



Director of Conservatory Audio Services Paul Eachus (left) works with a student to live stream a spring performance in Finney Chapel.

Student Recitals Now Live Streamed at Oberlin.edu

In years past, many Oberlin students set up live streams of their recitals using laptop computers or other devices, in hopes of accommodating family and friends who were unable to make the trip to campus. The results mostly were plagued by low audio-video quality and spotty delivery signals.

Beginning with the spring 2016 semester, that frustration has been alleviated by access to far better and more reliable resources. In fall 2015, the conservatory faculty approved a measure providing juniors and seniors with the support to stream their required degree recitals through Oberlin's website. That means Conservatory Audio also got very busy: The number of live-streamed concerts has jumped from roughly 70 each year to more than 350.

The conservatory has been video broadcasting live concerts on oberlin.edu since September 2012. These free programs initially featured annual Marilyn Horne

master classes, the conservatory's large ensembles, and faculty and guest concerts from five performance spaces on campus: Finney Chapel, Kulas Recital Hall, Warner Concert Hall, Clonick Hall, and Fairchild Chapel.

In the past year, Stull Recital Hall was outfitted with the necessary technology and added to the list of streaming venues. And over the winter, Conservatory Audio upgraded its tools so that multiple streams can be broadcast simultaneously and viewed on a wider variety of tablets, smartphones, and smart TVs, along with computers.

"Adding the live stream was a great help," says viola performance major Faith Roberts '16. "Most students were already live streaming their recitals through their own laptops, but something would inevitably go wrong and your family would be left with a bad connection or no sound. It's wonderful to have live-streaming capabilities in all the concert halls, and it's so easy to find them online and distribute to my friends and family."

YEVHEN GULENKO

The Sounds of Oberlin

Following is a roundup of the latest releases available on Oberlin Music, the official recording label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, dedicated to showcasing the artistry of Oberlin faculty, students, and alumni. Distributed by Naxos of America, Oberlin Music titles are available through digital music channels and select retailers worldwide. Learn more about these and other recordings at oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic.



full moon in the city
George Sakakeeny, bassoon

Professor George Sakakeeny delights in his instrument's ability to evoke a vast spectrum of emotions, from sorrow to joy. On *full moon in the city*, he joins forces with three Oberlin ensembles to deliver the premiere recordings of four modern works for bassoon.

The title piece, written in 2013 by Libby Larsen, playfully envisions a bassoon springing to life in a music-filled cityscape late at night. *Full moon in the city* and another piece that appears here, *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra* (1998) by Peter Schickele, both were written for Sakakeeny. They are paired with Russell Platt's *Concerto for Bassoon and Strings* (2008) and Augusta Read Thomas' *Bassoon Concertino* (2014). Together, the highly contrasting works serve as a showcase for the bassoon's varied role in the modern repertoire.

Full moon in the city features the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble and Sinfonietta, both under the direction of Timothy Weiss, and the Oberlin Orchestra, conducted by Raphael Jiménez.



Dvořák | Shostakovich | Tórrer
Oberlin Trio

Founded by conservatory faculty members in 1982, the Oberlin Trio has performed and taught throughout the world for well over 30 years. Since 2008, the tradition has been carried forward by pianist Haewon Song, violinist David Bowlin '00, and cellist Amir Eldan.

The three distinctive pieces that make up the trio's new release traverse disparate worlds en route to the same destination: Each one is an emotionally charged expression of its composer's life.

The recording opens with Dmitri Shostakovich's Trio No. 2, a compelling tale of human endurance and tragedy, informed by the swirling emotions of the composer's turbulent personal life and the toll of toiling in the shadow of oppressive Soviet Russia. It is contrasted by Joan Tower's *Big Sky*, inspired by her childhood memories of horseback riding amid the bucolic mountain valleys of Bolivia. Rounding out the CD is Antonin Dvořák's *Dumky Trio*: a suite-like collection of movements, alternately joyful and melancholic, inspired by traditional Bohemian music.

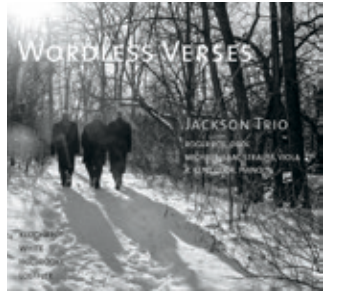


What Think You I Take My Pen in Hand to Record?
Salvatore Champagne '85, tenor
Howard Lubin, piano

Championed during his lifetime by such luminaries as Toscanini and Heifetz, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco composed some of the finest Italian music of the early decades of the 20th century.

A chance discovery of the composer's unpublished Shakespeare Sonnets, as well as a song cycle on texts from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, led to 15 years of research and performance by Professor of Singing Salvatore Champagne and pianist Howard Lubin, who retired from the Oberlin faculty in 2015. This recording makes these intimate and beautiful songs available to a wider audience for the first time.

The accompanying 66-page booklet, a collaboration of Tedesco scholars and the International Center for American Music, provides fascinating insight into Castelnuovo-Tedesco's life, work, and his impact on a generation of American composers and musicians—in addition to rarely seen personal photographs and other artifacts that capture the essence of Castelnuovo-Tedesco.



Wordless Verses
Jackson Trio

Poetry and lost love serve as the common threads of inspiration for this collection of atmospheric chamber music from the late 19th and early 20th centuries for the uncommon scoring of oboe, viola, and piano.

Available together for the first time, these evocative pieces make up the debut recording of the Jackson Trio, whose members—Oberlin faculty violist Michael Isaac Strauss and longtime colleagues Roger Roe (oboe) and R. Kent Cook (piano)—are active performers and educators in university and festival settings across America.

The poetry that serves as the programmatic foundation for each work comes from a diverse group of voices including American Victorian poet Edgar Allan Poe, Austrian lyric poet Nikolaus Lenau, 17th-century metaphysical English poet Andrew Marvell, and French musician and decadent poet Maurice Rollinat. The work most widely known and recorded is Charles Martin Loeffler's 1901 *Deux Rhapsodies*; the others are by three relatively unknown composers who wrote exceptionally well-crafted music: Felix Harold White, August Klughardt, and Josef Holbrooke.

DEEP DIVING WITH BARTÓK

BRIAN ALEGANT'S NOVEL APPROACH TO MUSIC THEORY HAS WON HIM WIDESPREAD ACCLAIM—AND THE DEVOTION OF A GENERATION OF STUDENTS.

BY DONALD ROSENBERG | PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MANNA



Welcome to the music theory class that bears no resemblance to those sit-still-and-listen-to-the-professor-lecture-and-take-endless-tests courses that undergraduates dread but endure.



"What makes us in awe of music?" Alegant asks. "I try to find as many ways as possible to make it meaningful for a student."

These students *want* to be listening, and much more. At the request of their lanky professor, they're on their feet in the center of Room 232 in Bibbins Hall, literally making this a standing-room-only event. They are singing syllables (la-si-do-do-si) that correspond to notes in the first movement of Béla Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*—not one of the most hummable pieces in the classical repertoire. As the students tentatively work their way around the slithering chromatic notes of the fugal opening, the professor listens closely, his face responding to what he's hearing.

"That was about what I expected," Brian Alegant says with a wry smile. "Can we clean it up?" They try again, and as their instructor encourages them with a blend of seriousness, humor, and aerobic alacrity, the phrases and patterns become more fluent.

"Everything in the movement comes from this idea," he says. "This is your introduction to Modernism." Alegant asks the students to sit down, then he moves about the room, encouraging them to answer his questions and question his answers. "How do the last three measures sum up the

movement's progress?" he asks at one point. A few minutes later: "After the climax, it's like a bizarro world. Everything's turned around. What's the character of the movement?" Several students offer astute descriptions. "Yeah, it's creepy," says the professor. "It's beautiful, but not a beauty I want to embrace. I find the celesta part almost hallucinogenic." The class is hanging onto every knowing Alegant word.

"It's spectacular," he says. "I wish I'd written it."

A lot of music students at Oberlin wish they could take Alegant's classes, but the waiting lists are long for all of them. In his two decades at the conservatory, where he serves as Barker Professor of Music Theory and chair of the Division of Music Theory, Alegant has won the admiration of students and colleagues for his keen musical instincts, breadth of knowledge, and innovative pedagogical approach. Others have noticed too. Last November, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education named him the 2015 U.S. Professor of the Year for undergraduate institutions—the first music professor in the award's 35-year history.

Alegant has nurtured music theorists and performing artists who have

gone on to distinguished careers. His Oberlin students, past and present, agree he is the master of all things musical he surveys—a teacher with the rare ability to elucidate both the technical and expressive sides of the works he shares in class.

Theodora Nestorova, a soprano from Boston who majors in voice performance with a minor in music theory, is taking Alegant's Music Theory IV class—the one in which the students have been singing and analyzing Bartók. "It's hands down the most amazing class I've taken here," the sophomore says. "The way he presents all of these pieces, all of this information, is so unique and special that it doesn't feel like learning in the traditional sense of the word."

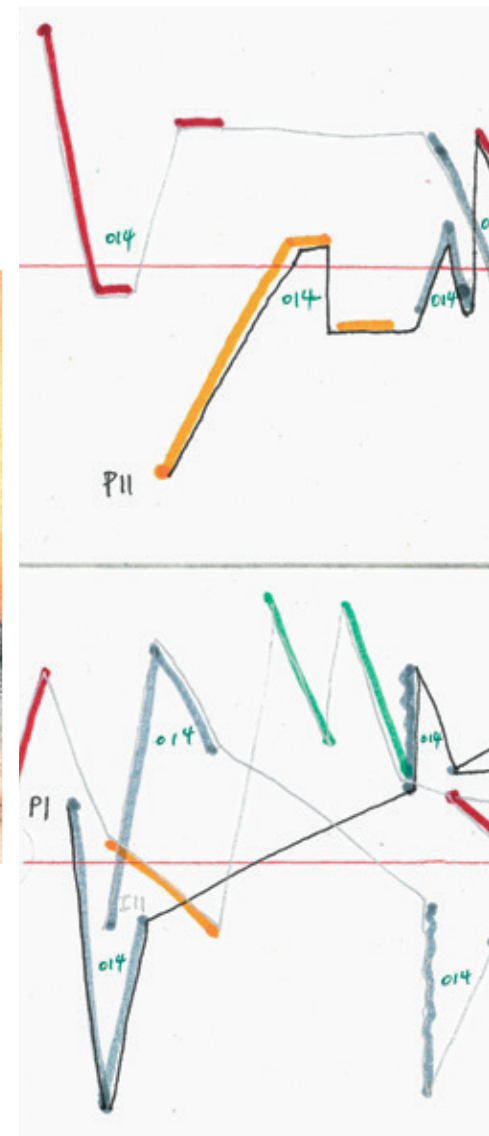
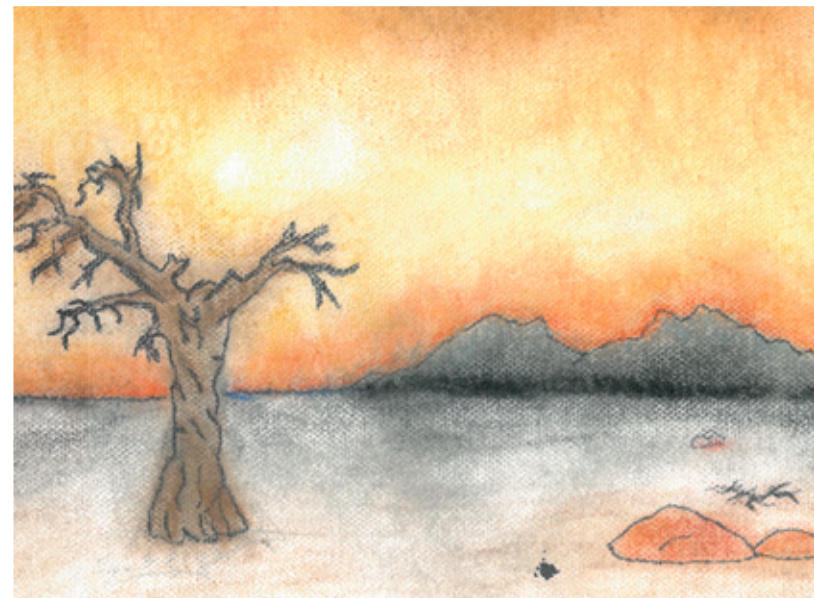
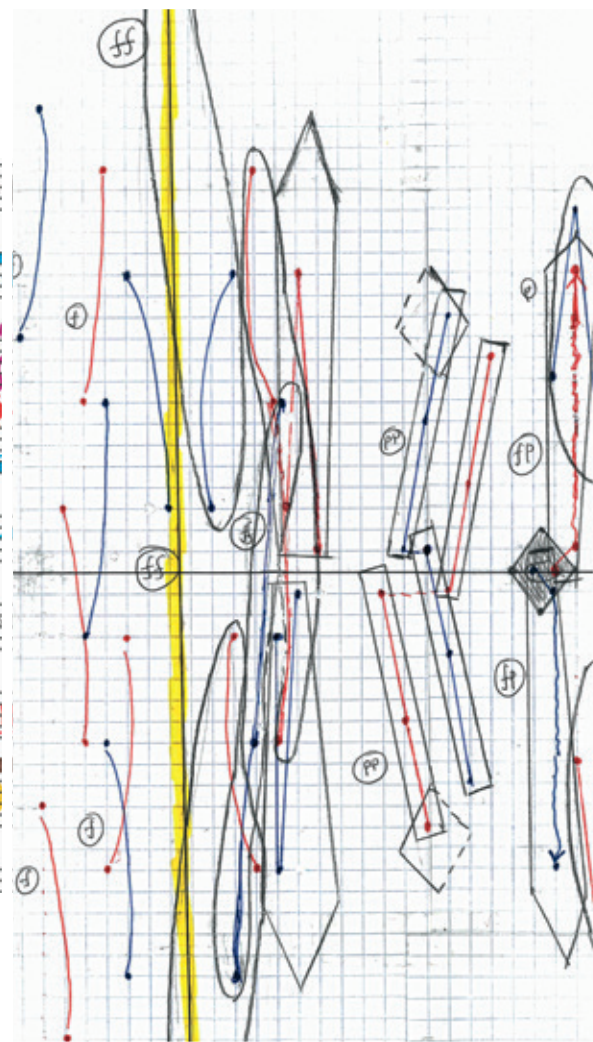
Similarly, no teacher at Oberlin has affected Aaron Wolff's thinking more than Alegant. "He has a deep understanding of music, but he really cares about your engagement more than your understanding," says the fourth-year cellist, who also majors in comparative literature. "That will make theory more of a lifelong tool."

Violist Daniel Orsen, a fourth-year student from Pittsburgh, is equally

awed—especially by Alegant's "musicality, insane inner ear, analytical chops, and experience. He has been one of my biggest influences here. The raw musical education I've gotten from him has been more than I dreamed of when I came to Oberlin."

The man with the insane inner ear is a 56-year-old Philadelphia native who set out to be a concert pianist but came to the conclusion his gifts lay elsewhere. Alegant began playing piano at a young age, inspired by his mother, who sat at the keyboard for hours after she tucked her son in bed at night.

"My mother plays only by ear, and pretty much everything," Alegant says, seated in his pristine office on the third floor of the conservatory's Bertram and Judith Kohl Building. One of the pieces he heard his mom play over and over was the first movement of Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony, which planted itself in his ear and helped reveal to him how music works. "In the development section, I would think, 'OK, this is going to come next and this is going to come next and then we'll come back.' It was interesting and meaningful." ▶



BRIAN ALEGANT'S MAP QUEST

"In its simplest form, a road map can be a timeline or flow chart," Alegant wrote in a 2013 article for *Current Musicology*. "But it can also be an elaborate landscape of observations, correspondences, and associations, with text descriptions, symbols, staff notation, rhythms, colors, and shapes. A road map can be teleological or non-linear; literal or abstract; monochromatic or multi-colored; sparse or dense; small or large; hand-drawn or created with a music notation program.

"I would argue that a road map—like any piece of writing—is provisional. There is no right or wrong way to create one, although some maps are definitely more compelling, thoughtful, and musical than others.

"The idea behind a road map is to capture the important characteristics of a work and represent them in some way that makes sense. For this reason I occasionally ask students to re-map the same work later in a semester. The results often reveal—to student and instructor alike—significant refinement in hearing and sophistication in modeling. Road maps facilitate deeper engagement with music, foster critical listening skills, and provide a creative outlet for students—especially those who are visual learners."

Realizing he had perfect pitch, Alegant once let his mother know something was amiss. "She only played in the keys of C and G and didn't do accidentals. I was 5 and she was playing something by Chopin, and it was driving me out of my mind. She wasn't playing the F#. I remember going down and saying, 'It's this note,' and hitting the F#. She told me to go upstairs. The next day, I put the recording on the turntable and made her listen to it."

Alegant acknowledges he waited too long to take piano seriously, starting formal lessons only at 17. He attended Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, for two years as a pre-med/Russian studies major, but spent most of his time practicing. He abandoned medicine and transferred to the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts to study piano with Susan Starr. "I didn't want to work that hard and wasn't that good," says Alegant, who moved on to Temple University for a master's in piano accompaniment. At Temple, he discovered that music history and theory were more suited to his analytical brain. A PhD in music theory from the Eastman School of Music sealed his future. He taught at McGill University for six years before joining the Oberlin faculty in 1996.

During his last semester at McGill, Alegant began to formulate alternative methods to teach music theory. He didn't want to simply lecture and subject students to quiz after quiz. He was more invested in connecting students directly to the music and giving them the tools to use music theory throughout their careers. He developed what he calls an "anti-

lecture format" that comprises constant interaction, discussion, writing, and other techniques to keep the class riveted. "What makes us in awe of music?" Alegant asks. "I try to find as many ways as possible to make it meaningful for a student."

He gradually developed approaches that have become keys to his success as a teacher. The most unusual is the road map: "a representation or documentation of how one hears a work unfold in time," as he puts it. Students take a piece of music and depict—often on musical staves—the melodic and harmonic shape, or anything else they want to focus on. The results often are imaginative explosions of notes, symbols, clouds, sunshines, waves, and other musical and natural phenomena—whatever it takes to convey what's significant about a composer's creation. As Alegant has put it: "Road maps facilitate deeper engagement with music, foster critical listening skills, and provide a creative outlet for students—especially those who are visual learners."

Two other innovations are crucial to Alegant's pedagogical process. One has an immersive moniker: scuba diving. "It's doing way less material and going over it in way greater depth," he says. "It's learning in degrees, and it's more transformational. Sometimes we spend a week on a piece." The other is a grading system that dispenses with most traditional letter grades ("Pass+, Pass, and F—it's crazy easy," Alegant says), does away with dastardly quizzes, and includes input from the students. "I still don't know the difference between a B+ and an A- paper. It used to drive me crazy that most of what we did as professors would rationalize the grades we give."

Alegant takes his students through the gamut of what is imprecisely called "classical music," which implies creations only of distant times. In fact, he spends a healthy share of class time on 20th-century and contemporary music, including "works that are seemingly impenetrable." He says he's "particularly passionate about it for so many reasons. It gets a bad rap. If these students are going to have careers in music, they have to play contemporary stuff. It's just the thing that lights a fire under me." As it has for decades.

Recent music dominates the subject matter of Alegant's dozens of scholarly papers and publications, including a book, *The Twelve-Tone Music of Luigi Dallapiccola* (University of Rochester Press, 2010). In the past few years, he has taken up performing again to play music he savors, no matter how challenging it may be. He recorded his Eastman mentor Robert Morris' *Refrains* in 2014 with cellist Paul Dwyer, a 2007 Oberlin grad and former Alegant student.

Dwyer, a member of the period-instrument ensemble Diderot String Quartet and assistant principal cello of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra, was one of the people who wrote letters of recommendation about Alegant for the U.S. Professor of the Year Award.

"He understands the language of music as profoundly and on as many levels as anybody I have ever talked to or worked with," Dwyer wrote in his letter. "He takes students' fear out of the notion of 'analysis' and relates it to processes any musician intuitively goes through on her own anyway. Meanwhile, Brian not only challenges his students to think harder and dig deeper, but he gives them the tools to communicate the music—and about

the music—in compelling ways. He has made making and understanding music a much more meaningful experience than any of us knew it could be."

Alegant says it was "humbling and gratifying" to receive the award. "It's a capital H honor. It's wonderful for the conservatory. It's wonderful for music theory." And it's wonderful for his other Oberlin class for upper-level students, Analysis & Performance, the motto of which is derived straight from sports-talk radio: "Have a take. Don't suck." In order to do so, the students develop strong opinions as they compare and contrast recorded performances of favorite Alegant pieces. "What don't you like? Where are the dead spots? What is the performer's take? How do you craft a compelling interpretation? It's the funnest and hardest thing I teach."

Alegant prepares for his classes—"I've never taught the same class twice"—in the western Cleveland suburb of Lakewood, where he lives with his wife, Marci, director of preparatory and continuing education at the Cleveland Institute of Music. (Their son, Jordan, is a bass player in Boston.) However nice awards may be, Alegant is mostly interested in expanding his students' views of music, which he calls "a foreign language."

"I encourage them to speak music at the highest possible level," he says. "That means you think about it, you speculate, you listen carefully—you

DONALD ROSENBERG IS THE EDITOR OF *EMAG*, THE MAGAZINE OF EARLY MUSIC AMERICA. HE IS THE FORMER MUSIC CRITIC OF *THE PLAIN DEALER*, AUTHOR OF *THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA STORY: "SECOND TO NONE,"* PAST PRESIDENT OF THE MUSIC CRITICS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA, AND A VISITING FACULTY MEMBER AT OBERLIN.

FRIDAYS WITH THE GUYS

Jody Kerchner couldn't imagine leading a choir at the local prison. Now she can't imagine walking away.

BY ERICH BURNETT | PHOTOS BY WALTER NOVAK

JODY KERCHNER WRITES BECAUSE SOMETIMES SHE CANNOT SPEAK.

When she's unable to pinpoint the emotions to sufficiently answer *how did it go today?* she turns to her computer, where the words tumble out in cathartic waves.

Since November 2015, Kerchner's Friday afternoons belong to the group of singers she affectionately calls "The Guys." Her Friday evenings often belong to her blog, *Singing Behind Bars*. That's where the swirl of sensations she feels before, during, and after each visit to the prison 14 miles up the road complete their journey toward coherent meaning. For 90 minutes every week, inmates at the Grafton Reintegration Center find solace in making music with "Dr. K." Collectively they are known as OMAG—shorthand for Oberlin Music at Grafton. And collectively they are starting to sound surprisingly good.

Fridays at Grafton are the hardest work Kerchner does, and also the most gratifying. She doesn't know where her path will lead, but she senses it doesn't end anytime soon.



UNTIL THE SUMMER OF 2015, THERE HAD BEEN NOTHING MUCH IN Kerchner's world to indicate that this was coming. Half a lifetime ago, she earned degrees in music education and vocal performance, and later added a PhD in music ed. Initially a grade-school music teacher, she now found herself 20 years into a fulfilling life in higher education—all of them at Oberlin, where she is director of the Division of Music Education.

Kerchner's introduction to prison started at a baseball game she attended with an Oberlin acquaintance, Emeritus Professor of English Phyllis Gorfain. Three years earlier, Gorfain had launched a drama program at

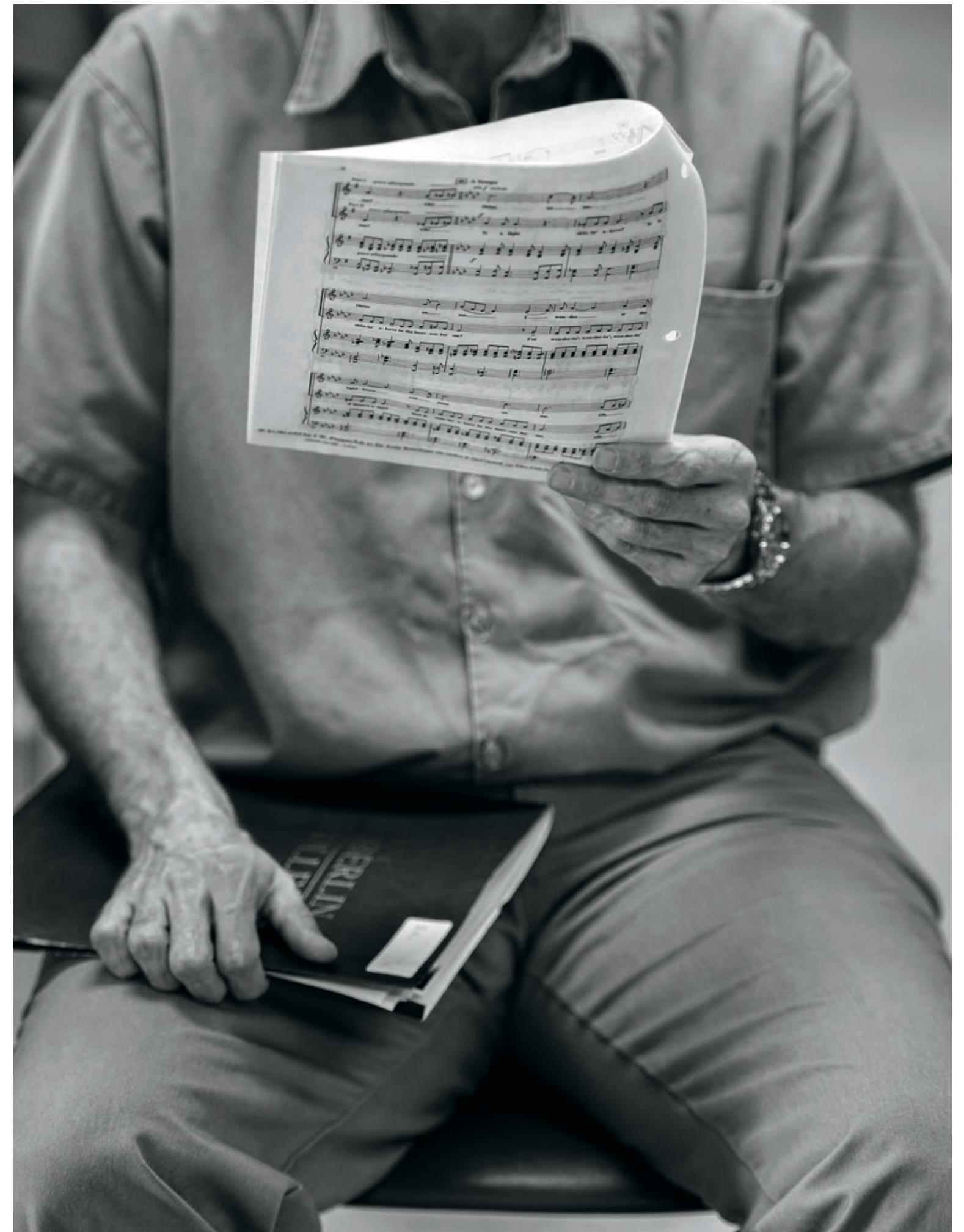
Grafton with the help of four Oberlin students. After six weeks, 12 men performed scenes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* for an audience of peers and prison administrators. After six more weeks, another eight men performed scenes from *Othello*. Deemed a success, the program was invited to continue under the moniker ODAG: Oberlin Drama at Grafton.

At the game, Gorfain went on about her experience and what might come next. "The guys really want to start a choir," she told Kerchner, casually noting that such a program would require a driving force. And then she stopped herself and said: "...It's *you*."

"It wasn't on my bucket list of things to do in life," Kerchner remembers thinking. "And then on the way home I said to my husband, 'I know you were watching the baseball game, but I think I might be conducting a prison choir in the fall.'" She grappled with the notion of whether she could do it. Then she visited Grafton and met the residents. From the start, Kerchner recognized key parallels between the teacher's life she had been living and the one she was stepping into. And she imagined potential outcomes that could rival any she had ever seen.

"Schools and prisons are both institutions, yet they serve contrasting purposes," she wrote in her first blog post. "School institutions are investments of hope and inspiration in students' futures. Prisons, on the other hand, are institutions seemingly devoid of hope and societal investment. Rather, they exist to separate and punish those whose behaviors deviate.

"But do prisons need to be defined as such?" she asks. "How might the arts, in this case music, be used as a viable tool to introduce or reintroduce incarcerated people to parts of their best human selves? How might prison residents reimagine and recreate themselves by engaging in song? ►



How might prison residents learn to be a community of learners, a community of musicians, and a community of empathetic citizens?”

She doesn't know the answers yet, but she's also not the first to ask. Evidence of prison choral groups dates at least as far back as 1838, when British education writer W.E. Hickson witnessed one in the Dutch city of Rotterdam and was prompted to note: “Music may be regarded as a great moral engine, which when wisely directed, can produce the most beneficial results.”

During the second half of the 19th century, *The New York Times* made multiple references to prison choirs at the maximum-security Sing Sing prison, according to a report by Roc Lee at the Catholic University of America. The ensemble's longtime director was quoted thusly: “We have been favored...through crime and misfortune, with some of the best musical talent, giving us a prison choir surpassed by few choirs in either city or country.”

In modern America, concerns over the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system start with a dire numbers problem: According to a White House report issued in April 2016, U.S. prison population has grown by 350 percent since 1980, even as crime rates have fallen dramatically over the same span. The U.S. accounts for 5 percent of the world's population, yet houses 25 percent of its prisoners. And while 600,000 of them are released every year, three out of every four are rearrested within five years.

Researchers and activists agree that rehabilitation is critical to lowering recidivism rates, and numerous choirs and other arts-based prison programs have yielded evidence of their efficacy. The East Hill Singers, made up of volunteers and residents in the Lansing Correctional Facility in Kansas, have thrived since their founding in 1995. Among the group's former members, only 18 percent have been rearrested—a figure representing roughly one-quarter of the national average. One of few prison choirs that schedules performances outside the prison walls, the East Hill Singers were the subject of a 2014 PBS documentary called *Conducting Hope*.

Data from a 2009 study of the Oakdale Prison Community Choir by University of Iowa Professor Mary L. Cohen includes a collection of statements from the singers. “I have a much better attitude and feeling about myself inwardly since joining the choir,” wrote one.

“I am able to connect with a better side of myself,” offered another.

And still another: “It's nice to know there are people in the outside world who really care about us.”



ON A BRISK AND SUNNY FRIDAY AFTERNOON IN MID-MARCH, KERCHNER rounds up fourth-year voice majors Joshua Blue and Jack Schmieg and makes her way to Grafton. This week she has brought along Oberlin Director of Vocal Ensembles Gregory Ristow '01, who will lead exercises in Dalcroze eurhythmics, a series of principles developed to teach the basics of music through motion and aural training. At the security

EVEN DURING THESE EARLIEST NOTES OF THE DAY, IT IS CLEAR THAT KERCHNER IS EXACTLY THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THIS JOB: A WHIRLING BUNDLE OF ENTHUSIASM AND JOY.

checkpoint, Ristow declares an aged blue duffel bag stuffed with 20 tennis balls.

Today there are 18 residents awaiting Kerchner and her cohort—a few more than she sees in a typical week. They are young and not so young, mostly 20s through 40s, with a few in their early 60s. Most sport wrinkled blue pullover shirts and crisp khaki pants that fit just a little too big. Some wear tan or gray tops emblazoned with the words “DRC INMATE” in large black letters across the back.

The session starts with stretching, which most of the residents endure with all the commitment of beer-league softball players. But moments later, they sing a G-major scale that sounds way better than a softball team should. Then they sing it as a round and sound even better. More than just the relatively melodious music now circulating the room, there is a clear sense of commitment from every voice.

Even during these earliest notes of the day, it is clear that Kerchner is exactly the right person for this job. Counterbalancing the firmness with which she gives each instruction, there is a bounce in her step that matches the bounce in her voice. She is a whirling bundle of enthusiasm and joy, with a smile that's set for repeat. She enraptures the residents from first notes to last, and it seems they do the same for her.

And they are comfortable together. *Everyone* looks comfortable, in fact—from the residents, to the teachers, to the student aides who have made numerous visits to Grafton and return with every opportunity.

“It's a way to give back in the best way I know how to,” says Schmieg, a Philadelphian who has worked with Kerchner since they met in her choral conducting course in his first year at Oberlin. “I'm a firm believer in music bringing people together in the most unlikely ways.”

Schmieg was reeled in to help at Grafton by his good friend Blue, who has done considerable outreach of his own with Opera Theatre of St. Louis and with a high school cappella group in his Illinois hometown. Every time either of them takes the lead on a song, The Guys are blown away.

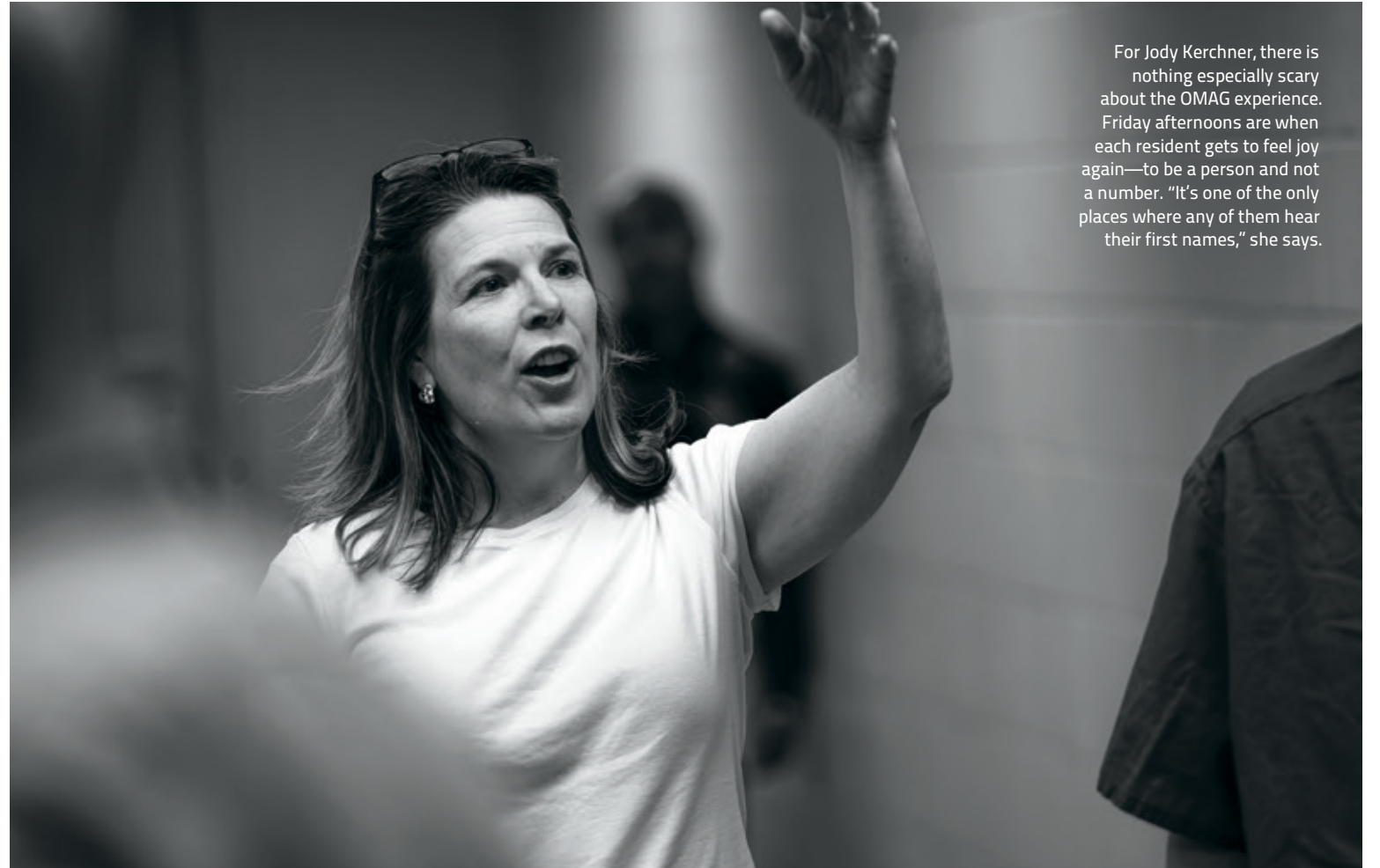
“When you're doing outreach in schools or other communities, the audience can sometimes react negatively or neutrally to what you are doing,” Blue says. “They may not have any desire to hear a choir or a performance or take part in singing. With the guys at Grafton, every time we walk through the door we are met with a group of people who genuinely want what it is we have to offer. I believe that many of them crave the opportunity to create something as part of a group. This is what makes this outreach much more intimate and connected for me. I spend time with these guys every week for months, and I get to know them and become a part of their weekly routine, and in turn they give me so much. Knowing that what I do helps them to enjoy life and music even just a tiny bit makes it all worthwhile.”



KERCHNER ENTERED INTO THE EXPERIENCE NOT KNOWING—AND not *wanting* to know—what offenses landed these men in her presence. But as the bonds of music grow, details trickle out here and there, and sharper images come into view that she increasingly must contend with in her own way. To her they are simply The Guys, but they are also, to a man, guilty of significant offenses. Among the 18 who take part in rehearsal on this day, exactly one is permitted to speak for this story. The rest must remain in the shadows for the sake of their victims.

But Kerchner chooses to cling less to the backstories that sometimes wend their way to her ears and more to the positive interactions she experiences every week. *Live in the moment*, she often reminds herself. *Meet each one of them, human to human.*

“They didn't know anything about me going in, so I didn't feel that the information about their former lives was important to the music-making process,” she says. “I really grappled with the question *Do they deserve this?* They've done some pretty heinous things. They've killed. They have robbed. They have stabbed. And when I see stories about these people on the news, ►



For Jody Kerchner, there is nothing especially scary about the OMAG experience. Friday afternoons are when each resident gets to feel joy again—to be a person and not a number. “It's one of the only places where any of them hear their first names,” she says.





A stolen credit card landed Matthew in Grafton, where he busies himself with numerous jobs to prepare for life on the outside. TOP: Oberlin Director of Vocal Ensembles Gregory Ristow leads residents through a rhythm and coordination exercise using tennis balls.

“IT’S IMPORTANT NOT BECAUSE OF THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE, AND MAYBE NOT EVEN BECAUSE OF THE MUSICAL SIDE, BUT TO GET US IN TOUCH WITH OUR OWN ROOTS AS TO WHY WE DO MUSIC.”

I get angry and I say *They deserve what they get.*

“And now I see faces. And I don’t feel that anger. I feel open compassion. I think if I had known things from other people’s vantage points beforehand, it would have clouded my perspective. As we grow more comfortable with each other, we allow our narratives to unfold organically and with each person as the primary resource, without reading it or hearing about it secondhand.”

Kerchner finds herself asking *What does it mean to be a prisoner? Does an offender’s past define who he is now?*

To Cynthia Williams, the answer is a resolute no. For 20 years, the social worker has served as program coordinator at Grafton, ensuring that residents have more to look forward to than cinder blocks and strip searches. Because of Williams, Oberlin Drama at Grafton was given an opportunity and thrives. And because of Williams, Oberlin Music at Grafton is doing the same.

She notes how most caseworkers in Ohio juggle dockets laden with misery. “I get to be doing mostly positive things all the time,” she says with a healthy dose of satisfaction, as she cradles the amiable dachshund mix she totes with her throughout the prison grounds. “I really embrace restorative justice, and this is a great model. I don’t think offenders should just do time. They need to *habilitate* themselves, because it’s often not a case of rehabilitation.”

IF YOU ARE A NUMBER IN THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION and Correction, Grafton Reintegration Center is the place you want to be. If not for the razor wire and security checkpoints, you might mistake it for a community college circa 1986, its plenitude of concrete, drop ceilings, fluorescent light, and linoleum converging in a rainbow of beige and white.

At Grafton, opportunities are plentiful for offenders to right their path. There are numerous academic programs, trades, hobbies, and jobs to keep the mind occupied as the days and weeks creep by. Residents have earned a place at the Reintegration Center not necessarily because they committed lesser crimes, but because they have demonstrated a commitment to preparing themselves for life on the outside. Most who are sent here face no more than two remaining years of their sentence. Though transgressions can send them back “behind the wall” to the adjacent higher security facility, the wise ones have their eyes set beyond the wall.

Matthew, for one, seems to get it. Forty-five years old, he is a peaceable house painter with close-cropped blond hair, cool blue eyes, and a wispy goatee that masks a softening jawline and betrays his first traces of gray. When he rolls up his sleeves, the names of his son and daughter appear in ornate black ink that runs up the inside of his forearms. If you weren’t meeting him here, he could pass for a plumber or a cable guy or your neighbor. His prison nickname is “Buddy,” and it suits him perfectly well.

Matthew stole a credit card from a female acquaintance and used it to buy Christmas gifts for his children and girlfriend. For that he is four years and three months into a sentence that he hopes will give way to a halfway house by this time next year. In the meantime, he takes business classes, serves on an advisory board, and juggles four or more jobs at Grafton. He knows it could be worse, and he knows it doesn’t get any better than Friday afternoons with Dr. K.

Like most in the choir, Matthew came in with no idea what Kerchner’s hand gestures meant or how all the dots on the page result in music. But he’s learning. “It takes you out of this environment to come here,” he says

earnestly, his knees bounding up and down to dissipate the nervous energy. “I like the way she keeps our attention. She calls it ‘herding squirrels.’ We learn just by watching her. We didn’t know what we were doing at first, but it’s getting easier. And she’s so animated, it just cheers you up.”

Asked what he listened to on the outside, Matthew conjures an apologetic smile and then raises his left fist. Crudely tattooed across the knuckles is his four-letter response: O-Z-Z-Y.

“I grew up in the inner city in Akron, where my school didn’t have time to teach kids music,” he says. “It’s a beautiful thing to have this.”

AFTER AN HOUR OF VOCAL EXERCISES AND LAUGHS AND TENNIS balls bouncing about the room during a coordination game with Ristow, The Guys turn to their songbooks for the first time—to measure 40 of the gospel tune “Shine on Me.” It is one of several they need to rehearse for a concert planned for late April. At one point, Ristow uses the song to lead a drill in off-beat emphasis, snapping his fingers through counts of 1-2-3 as Kerchner helps each man find the right measure.

Next comes an exercise that replaces rhythmic figures in “Shine on Me” with a word that matches the pattern. For this game, Ristow suggests using state names. When he asks for a match for the triplet figure, there is a momentary pause of bewilderment. Then the group’s mousy keyboard player—one of the few musically inclined members in the bunch, with an education in music theory and composition—confidently exclaims “Florida!” And with that, lightbulbs go on throughout the room. They quickly fill in Maine, Utah, Texas—and when specifically looking for a word that would extend the vowel sound to cover a long whole note rhythm, they come up with Rome. They sing the song again, with the states illustrating the rhythms of the tune. Then they return to singing the song’s lyrics: “Shine on me, Shine on me, I wonder if the lighthouse will shine on me.” They get it.

As 4:30 arrives and then passes, they remain engrossed in the song. And there is much more music to cover, so Kerchner continues without pause, seemingly hoping that the officials eyeing them from the back of the room won’t notice that they’re out of time. Next up is “Beauty All Around,” which quickly breaks into a lovely round of “Beauty before me, beauty behind me, beauty above, and below, and all around...”

As the final moments of class slip away, they run through one last song for the concert: “May the Stars Remember Your Name,” written by a choir member at the Oakdale Prison in Iowa who longed to glimpse the night sky again:

Once captive now I’m freed, they begin, once blind now I see the beauty of the night that’s calling to me.

Here I go, on my own, the cover of darkness to carry me home.

And the stars, and the stars remember, remember my name.

With that the day’s session ends, and each resident shuffles back to the monochromatic life he left at the door. Soon enough, Kerchner will retreat to her blog, and then she will return next week. The Guys will return too, for as long as Grafton remains their home.

“I feel it’s important not because of the intellectual side, and maybe not even because of the musical side, but to get us in touch with our own roots as to why we do music, from this emotional place that we can’t describe,” says Kerchner. Then she pauses to consider the enormity of it all.

“It’s ineffable. We might never get the words to describe this, but it’s one of the most important things we’ve ever done.” ■

ODES TO JOY

Oberlin honors 150 years with performances near and far.

FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF, OUTSTANDING young musicians have followed their dreams to Oberlin so that they may live those dreams around the world.

Throughout the 2015-16 year, Oberlin anniversary celebrations—featuring faculty, students, alumni, and others—took place across campus and beyond. Among the year's signature achievements were three performances at Carnegie Hall by piano professor Peter Takács as well as a joint commission and performance of Bernard Rands' Concerto for English Horn with the Cleveland Orchestra featuring professor Robert Walters.

The grandest of the celebrations—a weekend tour to Chicago in late January—began with weeks of tenacious and enthusiastic preparation spanning from early autumn through the bleakest days of winter. On the morning of January 28, more than 100 conservatory students boarded three buses en route to Chicago, where they shared their artistry on stages and in nine schools across the city. The Contemporary Music Ensemble presented two scintillating performances that included a North American premiere at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall. One night later, the Oberlin Orchestra's concert left a sold-out Symphony Center breathless at the conclusion of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. By day, the students knelt on grade-school stages and opened their hearts to children transfixed by the music and the stories they shared.

Born in those days were life-changing moments for those who made the trip and for those who greeted them along the way—more dreams taking root at Oberlin and blossoming on the global stage.

Experience the moments that made the memories >

MEANWHILE... BACK AT GANZ HALL:

The Contemporary Music Ensemble was first to hit the stage in Chicago, performing two concerts in one evening. The program included the Grammy-winning composition *Meanwhile...* by Oberlin professor Stephen Hartke. The audience included members of the Oberlin-founded ensemble eighth blackbird, which also won a Grammy for its recording of the piece.



OCT 18 | CARNEGIE HALL, NEW YORK

Now four decades into his Oberlin career, Professor of Piano Peter Takács remains one of the conservatory's most active faculty members. In October, November, and January, he was the featured performer for a three-part series at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall—and each program was previewed for Oberlin audiences in three Warner Concert Hall performances.

Titled "The Beethoven Experience," the series showcased works that revealed Beethoven's evolution from virtuosity to mastery and finally to transcendence. Presented as a signature event in honor of Oberlin's 150th anniversary, the concerts were part of a new program at Carnegie called Key Pianists, developed by former Takács student Terry Eder '79.

A major exponent of Beethoven, Takács called on several colleagues and Oberlin affiliates to join him in programs that included solo piano works, chamber music, and songs. He presented Beethoven's very first and last piano sonatas, as well as the *Pathétique* and *Waldstein*. New York Philharmonic principal cellist Carter Brey and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra principal clarinetist Boris Allakhverdyan '06 played with Takács in October, Los Angeles Philharmonic principal cellist Robert deMaine performed in November, and violinist Soovin Kim and Austrian tenor Virgil Hartinger (a former professional studies student of Richard Miller at Oberlin) joined Takács in January.

"The series was a great artistic and audience success: sold-out halls, standing ovations, and critical acclaim," Takács says. "It was an opportunity to communicate my passion for Beethoven and to express what I have learned since playing the cycle of sonatas in Oberlin from 1998 through 2000."

The series also revealed Takács to be a tough guy of the highest order: On the day after his November show, he suffered a fall that resulted in severe pain in his right hand that lingered for weeks. He continued to practice and drew raves for his third show in January. Afterward, he learned the hand was broken and underwent corrective surgery in March.



NOV 19 | FINNEY CHAPEL, OBERLIN

The Oberlin College Choir's November performance in Finney Chapel paid tribute to music and poetry from the Harlem Renaissance, each piece with an Oberlin connection.

R. Nathaniel Dett (class of 1908), the first African American graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, sought to reverse negative stereotypes associated with spiritual music that were propagated by minstrel shows of the day. The program included Dett's arrangements of "Ave Maria" and "Listen to the Lambs," which were typical of his quest to infuse spiritual elements into traditional classic forms.

Also included was William Bolcom's *The Mask*, a setting of songs commissioned by pianist and Oberlin native Natalie Hinderas '45, who became the first African American to perform as soloist for many major American orchestras.

The performance closed with "Plain-Chant for America" by William Grant Still, an Oberlin student who enlisted in the Navy during World

War I and went on to arrange music for W.C. Handy and Paul Whiteman.

The performance was conducted by Assistant Professor Gregory Ristow '01, Oberlin's director of vocal ensembles. Ristow's programmatic decisions were inspired by the speeches of First Lady Michelle Obama and activist Marian Wright Edelman at Oberlin's 2015 Commencement, and by the grand jury ruling in the Cleveland police shooting of Tamir Rice around that time.

"I found myself drawn to a program of music from and inspired by the Harlem Renaissance, with each piece either written or commissioned by an Oberlin alum," Ristow says. "I do not know what it is to be black in America, but in studying and sharing these words and music, I hope to better understand and be an ally for positive change. As we sang in our final piece, William Grant Still's 'Plain-Chant for America': 'For the dream unfinished out of which we came, we stand together.'"

TANVA ROSEN-JONES '97, DALE PRESTON '83



NOV 27 | SEVERANCE HALL, CLEVELAND

By the time the world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra was founded in 1918—with pivotal support from Oberlin's John Long Severance '85—Oberlin Conservatory was 53 years old and well into a phase of monumental growth. In 1919, the orchestra performed for the first time in Oberlin's Finney Chapel. It has returned to campus every year since—well over 200 performances and counting.

In November 2015, the institutions celebrated their shared history with a world-premiere performance of a work for English horn by composer Bernard Rands. Commissioned by Oberlin in honor of the conservatory's 150th anniversary, Rands' English Horn Concerto was performed at Severance Hall by Oberlin Professor of Oboe and English Horn Robert Walters, who is also solo English horn and an oboist in the orchestra.

The piece was lauded by *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*: "The new score boasted a compelling

drama rendered with an ever-shifting palette of musical colors and emotions...it was a vehicle for both thrilling displays of agility and soulful, plaintive expression."

Likewise, the performance drew vociferous praise: "Walters was a riveting protagonist, modeling not only the woodwind essential virtue of flawless breath control but also sheer, impassioned musicality. Neither the composer nor the audience could have asked for better."

"It's particularly meaningful to me to have one project combine both places that I live and love and work," says Walters. "I'm just beyond proud to be associated with Oberlin and to have something like this to commemorate the conservatory's anniversary." The concerto was given two additional performances that weekend and will be performed on campus with the Oberlin Orchestra and conductor Raphael Jiménez in the spring of 2017.

Subsequent recording sessions will lead to a CD release on the Oberlin Music label.

"WALTERS WAS A RIVETING PROTAGONIST, MODELING NOT ONLY THE WOODWIND ESSENTIAL VIRTUE OF FLAWLESS BREATH CONTROL BUT ALSO SHEER, IMPASSIONED MUSICALITY."



DEC 6 | WARNER CONCERT HALL, OBERLIN

Over two days in December, 82 performers from Oberlin's Piano Department—12 faculty and 70 students—played music spanning four centuries in an astounding 10 recitals, ranging from Bach to Chopin to Debussy to Kapustin and many others.

The performances served as the department's celebration of the 150th anniversary of the conservatory. Piano has always been an integral part of Oberlin: George Whipple Steele, the first director of the conservatory and one of its founders, was a pianist. By 1877, Oberlin was an all-Steinway school, and its collection now numbers some 240 of the world-class pianos. Many of the conservatory's chief administrators have been pianists, including current Dean of the Conservatory Andrea Kalyn and Emil Charles Danenberg, who also served as president of the college.

To help celebrate that history, three retired piano faculty—Joseph Schwartz, the Robert W. Wheeler Chair in Performance from 1960-98; Sanford Margolis (1972-2015); and Frances Walker Slocum (1976-91)—returned to perform with nine current piano professors in the weekend's closing concert.

"Former students returning for a visit often reflect that their years at Oberlin were among the most valuable and happiest of their lives," Professor of Piano and Chair of the Piano Department Alvin Chow said at the time. "There is no better proof of the magic that Oberlin still engenders to this day."

ALL ABOARD >

Three buses transported Oberlin musicians to Chicago on the morning of Thursday, January 28. Prior to departure, orchestra students recreated a signature photo from the conservatory's first tour—to New York in 1952. The original photo appeared in the 2015 *Oberlin Conservatory Magazine*.



Weary from the road but bright-eyed from the Windy City's afternoon bustle, students unloaded their bags and quickly sought out space for practicing.



Soprano Olivia Boen '17 performed live in studio on Fox 32 TV's morning show on January 29. That evening, the Chicago native sang the North American premiere of Jesse Jones' *One Bright Morning* with the Contemporary Music Ensemble at Ganz Hall (right). "There's nothing that can replace seeing your friends, colleagues, and family members in the audience," Boen says. "Singing with CME on the tour in my hometown is a memory I will always cherish—we made some amazing music, and I got to share it with some of my favorite people!"



Eight CME violinists delivered two fittingly frenetic interpretations of Andrew Norman's *Gran Turismo* at Ganz Hall. Prior to the tour, the ensemble performed the piece with conductor Timothy Weiss innumerable times during a six-hour, multi-camera video shoot in Clonick Hall. (View the final cut at bit.ly/Oberlin-GranTurismo.)



Associate Professor of Cello Darrett Adkins '91 joined CME for performances of Augusta Read Thomas' *Passion Prayers*, with the Chicago composer in attendance. "There is something pure and monastic about the work we do at home, and Oberlin will always be home to all of us," Adkins says. "But it's also true that being away together like we were in Chicago broadens and deepens connections and makes for better music-making on campus. And with the music-making that we know these Oberlin students will do in the future, the Chicago 2016 connections will serve American music for generations."

SPREADING THE JOY >

As members of CME rehearsed for their evening performances, orchestra students fanned out across Chicago Friday morning to interact with children at seven urban schools. "I was blown away by how engaged and receptive all the students were," says violist Nicolas Vigilante '19 (pictured far right). "They were obviously excited to have us there, and their energy was infectious. It was inspiring to see how many students there were who loved making music, even in elementary and middle school." Two additional outreach concerts were presented during the weekend at a Chicago-area high school and the Merit School of Music.



> The best-dressed party on Michigan Avenue, members of the Oberlin Orchestra pose—with the Oberlin poster behind them—outside Symphony Center moments before call on January 30.



< Bows fly as the Oberlin Orchestra and conductor Raphael Jiménez conclude the exuberant final chord of Hector Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overture*, the first work on the Symphony Center program. Prior to the performance, renowned musicologist and author Thomas F. Kelly presented *The Spectacle of the Sacre*, a captivating lecture chronicling the infamous 1913 premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.



> Chicago soprano Marcy Stonikas '02 soared in her performance of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with the Oberlin Orchestra. "It was a surreal experience all around," Stonikas says. "I have such love and nostalgia for Oberlin, and I was so pleased to hear and work alongside the amazing young musicians in the Oberlin Orchestra and Maestro Jiménez. And to have the opportunity to sing Strauss' *Four Last Songs*...priceless! I've always been a proud Obie, and it gave me so much pride to see that the torch of enhancing and supporting musical knowledge, potential, and talent is still burning strong there."



^ Bassoonist Thomas English '16 performed the plaintive and mysterious opening notes of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, the closing piece on the orchestra's Symphony Center program. "I was honored to be performing in such an amazing hall with so much history, not to mention performing with an enthusiastic orchestra and a truly artistic conductor in Raphael Jiménez," English says. "As he gave me the gesture to begin, utter and total silence filled the hall, and, well, I guess you had to be there for the rest."

MUSIC INFUSION >

As Obies past and present gathered for Commencement/Reunion Weekend, music was a driving force across campus.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A Commencement tradition, two recitals in Finney Chapel showcased the artistry of standout conservatory musicians; organist Nicholas Capozzoli '15, MM '16 performed at President Marvin Krislov's Crimson and Gold Convocation at Finney Chapel; participants and onlookers revel in one of many "pop-up" performances that took place across campus; the Oberlin Baroque Ensemble played to a full house in Fairchild Chapel.



> Acclaimed soprano Jessye Norman provided an inspirational address to the Class of 2016—a fitting conclusion to a very musical Commencement/Reunion Weekend.



MAY 23 | TAPPAN SQUARE, OBERLIN

The mere mention of the name Jessye Norman elicits instantaneous responses—"majestic," "powerful," "noble"—from musicians and music lovers across the spectrum. She is owner and ruler of an opulent and remarkably versatile voice, a towering artistic presence on stage. On the short list of opera's true legends, Norman enjoys a rare level of recognition among people even casually interested in opera and concert music.

But a young Jessye Norman envisioned a career in medicine—not music—and that same Norman throughout her years has demanded of herself a life of unwavering political and social engagement. Her passions have always been complex and varied—much like those of the Oberlin graduates she addressed on a stunning sunny morning at the 2016

Commencement on Tappan Square.

Raised in Augusta, Georgia, decades before the civil rights movement took hold, Norman ultimately chose a life of music, but she came of age with a mind open to countless possibilities.

"There wasn't any clear path as far as I could see," she said in a conversation weeks before her visit to campus. "In fact, I might have been the only person who thought that I was going to go to medical school. But the limits are only in our imagination. Singing was something that was such a part of my being that to not have gone forward in the profession would have been something that I would have regretted all my life.

"It's often not clear where you will go," Norman added. "If there were a path we all would take it, and books would be written about it, and we would all be safe and sound. But that's simply not how it works." ■

"SINGING WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS SUCH A PART OF MY BEING THAT TO NOT HAVE GONE FORWARD IN THE PROFESSION WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING THAT I WOULD HAVE REGRETTED ALL MY LIFE."

JOE BLOW

JOSEPH MARKOFF '65 DIDN'T HAVE A TRUMPET CAREER, BUT HE'S HAD A TRUMPET LIFE.



BY ERICH BURNETT | PHOTOS BY GENE SMIRNOV

JOE

AND PHYLLIS MARKOFF ARE SEATED AT A corner banquette in the restaurant of Chicago's posh Palmer House Hotel. The booth affords them an unfettered view of the dining room, where one by one and two by two, musicians are sidling in for breakfast. They are members of the National Brass Ensemble, an exclusive fraternity of 26 top players from around the country. In 2014, they were convened to record 400-year-old music by Giovanni Gabrieli and maybe play a show or two together.

On this Sunday in September 2015, through a small miracle of scheduling, they are together again to celebrate their newly released recording on the Oberlin Music label and to perform a concert just a couple of blocks down the street at majestic Symphony Center.

"These guys are all heavies," Markoff says, pulling away for a moment from his diminishing mountain of blueberry pancakes to scan the room. And indeed they are, each one a stellar brass musician from the orchestras of Cleveland and Philadelphia and New York, from Detroit, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston.

But perhaps the heaviest of them all is Markoff, an ophthalmologist by trade and a trumpet player by incurable passion. None of this—not the convergence of astounding talent, not the week they spent recording together at Skywalker Sound Stage in California, and certainly not this improbable performance in Chicago—could have happened without Markoff.

And Joe Markoff, he might tell you, never could have happened without Oberlin.

THE WILD CARD

When he was a teenage trumpet player, Markoff had the good fortune to study with the best. Armando Ghitalla was a celebrated performer with the Boston Symphony and mentor to some of the world's finest musicians.

"I wanted to be the *next* Armando Ghitalla," he remembers thinking. "Talk about fantasies."



As the time for college neared, Markoff would talk to his teacher about his hopes and his doubts, and about his confusion over what to do with himself.

"He told me: 'Go to Oberlin. They'll help you figure it out.'" And so Markoff went to Oberlin. There, his love of music soon was matched by his love of science. He continued to play in his spare time, but he transferred to the college to immerse himself in research.

Markoff earned a degree in psychology, then pursued a PhD at Syracuse University and an MD at the University of Minnesota. By day, he studied the physiology of ganglion cells in the retina. By night, he held fast to his trumpet, surreptitiously performing with the Syracuse Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. He also played with Ringling

Bros. and the Ice Capades, and he backed up entertainers like Tony Bennett and Sammy Davis Jr.

All of it was a joy—and all of it was strictly forbidden: Markoff had earned a military deferment in order to continue his studies. Any evidence that he was working on the side could land him in the jungles of Vietnam. He had numerous close calls—once wearing his tuxedo pants to a lab exercise—but escaped unscathed.

"You were a wild card," Phyllis, his wife since graduate school, interjects in a deadpan perfected over 48 years of marriage.

"What do you mean *were*?" he fires back with exemplary timing.

Markoff became renowned for his pioneering surgical work, restoring sight to the blind using a lens-implant technique

he helped develop. Over time, he built up one of the largest eye practices in all of Philadelphia. "I don't consider myself a smart guy," he is fond of saying when talk turns to his achievements. "But I do consider myself a *creative* guy. And I'd rather be that."

THE ONE PERSON

If Joe Markoff has made a good living as an ophthalmologist, he has made a good *life* in part by remaining active with his trumpet. He performs with the World Doctors Orchestra, and in recent years he has delighted in serving as house doctor for numerous Oberlin tours, including stints in China and with the Oberlin in Italy opera program. He has even taken a seat onstage when the student orchestras were in need of reinforcements.

"Life is a matter of balancing," he says. "Above all, you've gotta have a sense of humor. If it's not fun, forget it. You think I would be here if this wasn't fun?"

The National Brass Ensemble fun began with a lofty concept, born in 2011 over lunch between a pair of brass players: Cleveland Orchestra principal trumpet Michael Sachs and then-Dean of the Conservatory David H. Stull '89. Their admiration for a seminal 1968 recording of Gabrieli—one that featured 19 of the top brass players of the time—led to their shared dream to recreate the magic with the greatest brass players of today.

Markoff, an Oberlin trustee from 1999 to 2011, was identified as the one person who could make it happen. "I've been lucky in life," he explains. "And you've gotta give something back." And so he did.



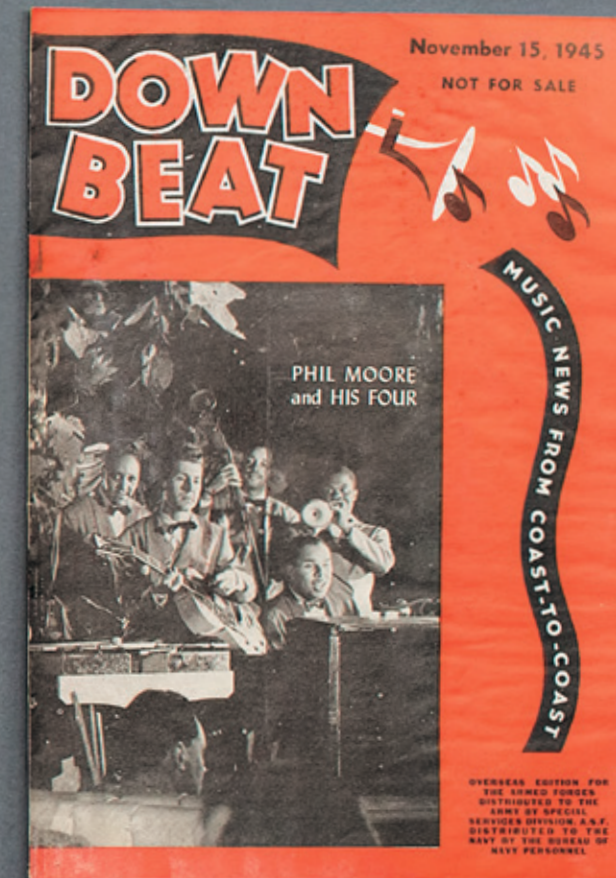
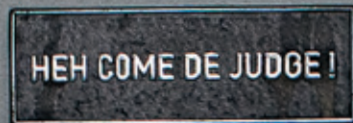
BRASS PLAYER'S DREAM

The 2015 Gabrieli recording on Oberlin Music was made possible by the generosity of Joe and Phyllis Markoff. Following the ensemble's sold-out concert in Chicago, some 400 fans bought the CD and waited in line for autographs.

LEFT: Joe Markoff (pictured with wife Phyllis) served on the Oberlin Board of Trustees for 12 years. "Not in my wildest fantasies would I ever have thought I'd end up as an Oberlin trustee," he says. "And neither, I might add, did anyone else."

And so here he is on this sun-splashed day in Chicago, sitting back with Phyllis and savoring each moment. In only its first days of release, *Gabrieli* has garnered rave reviews (ClassicsToday called it "Truly special by any standard"). In its afternoon concert, the National Brass Ensemble performed to a boisterous packed hall, like an all-star game that may never be played again. Afterward, 400 fans bought the CD and waited in an interminable snaking line to have each revered musician sign it.

"The amazing thing about these guys is that their egos are all sublimated for the good of the group," Markoff says. "I've never seen this in any corner of my life—in medicine or anywhere else. I've never seen this sense of camaraderie, of purpose, of eyeing the goal. It's very unique, and I'm proud to be a part of it." ■



UNSEALING THE VAULT

An insider's look at Oberlin's vast Special Collections with the archivist charged with their care.

BY JEREMY A. SMITH, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN
STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY BY TANYA ROSEN-JONES '97

Five years ago, when I walked into the vault on the lower level of the Bertram and Judith Kohl Building to begin my first day as caretaker of the Conservatory Library's Special Collections, I was overwhelmed by both the quality and the diversity of the treasures that greeted me there.

On a shelf to my left I saw an original, autographed manuscript of Igor Stravinsky's *Threni*, which sat alongside a pristine copy of Michael Praetorius' monumental 1619 work *Syntagma Musicum*.

One aisle over, I came across Leopold Mozart's influential 1756 performance practice treatise *Versuch Einer Gründlichen Violinschule*—along with the 1770 second edition, the 1806 Leipzig edition, the 1766 Dutch translation, and the 1770 French translation.

Two more aisles down sat one of the largest jazz collections in the world: 100,000 recordings and 150 shelf feet of rare magazines and newspapers, along with thousands of event posters, photographs, concert programs, and autographs.

And that was just the first 15 minutes. Since then, I've continued to be awed by Oberlin's rich Special Collections, the physical core of which includes the James R. and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection, the Frederick R. Selch Collection

ON THE OPENING PAGES:

L to R: Transverse flute in C by Alfred G. Badger, late 19th century (Selch Collection); Argus C3 camera and open reel tape (Hinton Collection); three miniature books by Nina Dulabaum, Miriam Owen Irwin, and Mark Palkovic (ca. 30 mm each); artifacts from the Hinton Collection; autographed cabinet card photograph of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky; *Down Beat* magazine from 1945 and Louis Armstrong LP (Neumann Collection); Bryant's *Songs from Dixie's Land*, 1861, and trade card advertisement for Mason & Hamlin Organ Company (Selch Collection); personal date book of Milt Hinton, 1968 (Hinton Collection); 19th-century post horn and belt buckle from Selch's 1982 Off Broadway musical *Play Me a Country Song* (Selch Collection).



This American church bass, one of about 60 in the Selch Collection, was made by Abraham Prescott around 1810.

of American Music History, the Violin Society of America/Herbert K. Goodkind Collection, and the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection. Together, these and Oberlin's other collections form a research archive that is the envy of music libraries across the globe, and additional requests are made regularly from others wishing to share their wonderful collections with Oberlin.

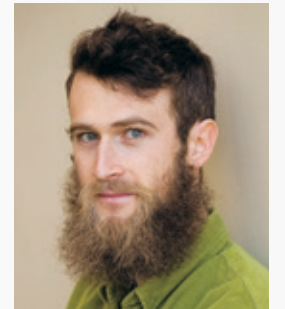
I am contacted routinely by preeminent researchers, who often make esoteric inquiries that can be answered only by hands-on access to our collections. But it's the uses of these materials by Oberlin's own faculty and students that most excites me.

As you'll see in the pages that follow, these collections—autographs, rare printed and manuscript music, books and periodicals, recordings, instruments, ephemera, and iconography—offer a unique opportunity for our researchers to explore the rich material traces of music's past as they pursue their own artistic and intellectual projects at Oberlin in the present.

FREDERICK R. SELCH COLLECTION OF AMERICAN MUSIC HISTORY

The Selch Collection includes 6,000 books representing the most influential writings in the history of musical thought, a large amount of sheet music, some 800 musical instruments, as well as paintings, prints, drawings, tintypes, slides, and paper photographs. The collection developed out of Selch's interest in 19th-century American music, which led him to help found the American Musical Instrument Society in 1971 and the Federal Music Society in 1976. The collection arrived at Oberlin in 2010.

COLLECTION CONNECTION



Leo Harrington '16 *Trumpet and History;* *Fulbright Fellow*

During the spring 2014 semester, I took a private reading on the history of the trumpet with Professor Steven Plank and wrote my term paper on a Courtois slide trumpet in the Selch Collection. That work led to a job as an assistant to Jeremy Smith in spring 2015, researching many other historic brass instruments in the Selch Collection for an exhibition at the 2015 Historic Brass Society conference, held in Oberlin. The exhibition featured rare and unique instruments from the collection alongside written material that I authored and audiovisual selections I assembled.

That experience was one of several at Oberlin that I drew on this year in my Fulbright application. While the musicology research I'll be pursuing on a Fulbright-Austria Combined Grant in Vienna next year doesn't relate explicitly to organology or the Selch Collection, the hands-on research experience I gained from working with the collection was very valuable for my growth as a student and music historian.

COLLECTION CONNECTION



Clara Engen '16
Violin and History

I used the Violin Society of America collection for my personal research on Ole Bull, a Norwegian violin virtuoso known as the "Nordic Paganini." The collection includes old instruction books printed with Ole Bull's portrait and comments; it has biographies, memoirs, and correspondence (some in Norwegian, some in English). The memoirs and correspondence especially helped me form an image of Ole Bull in my mind: musically gifted, idealistic, and dramatic; financially irresponsible; and incredibly nationalistic.



The oldest work in Oberlin's collection, Ottmar Luscinius' *Musurgia seu praxis musicae* (1536, Selch Collection) is a Latin translation of Sebastian Virdung's 1511 *Musica getutscht*, the first printed work in the West dealing exclusively with musical instruments.

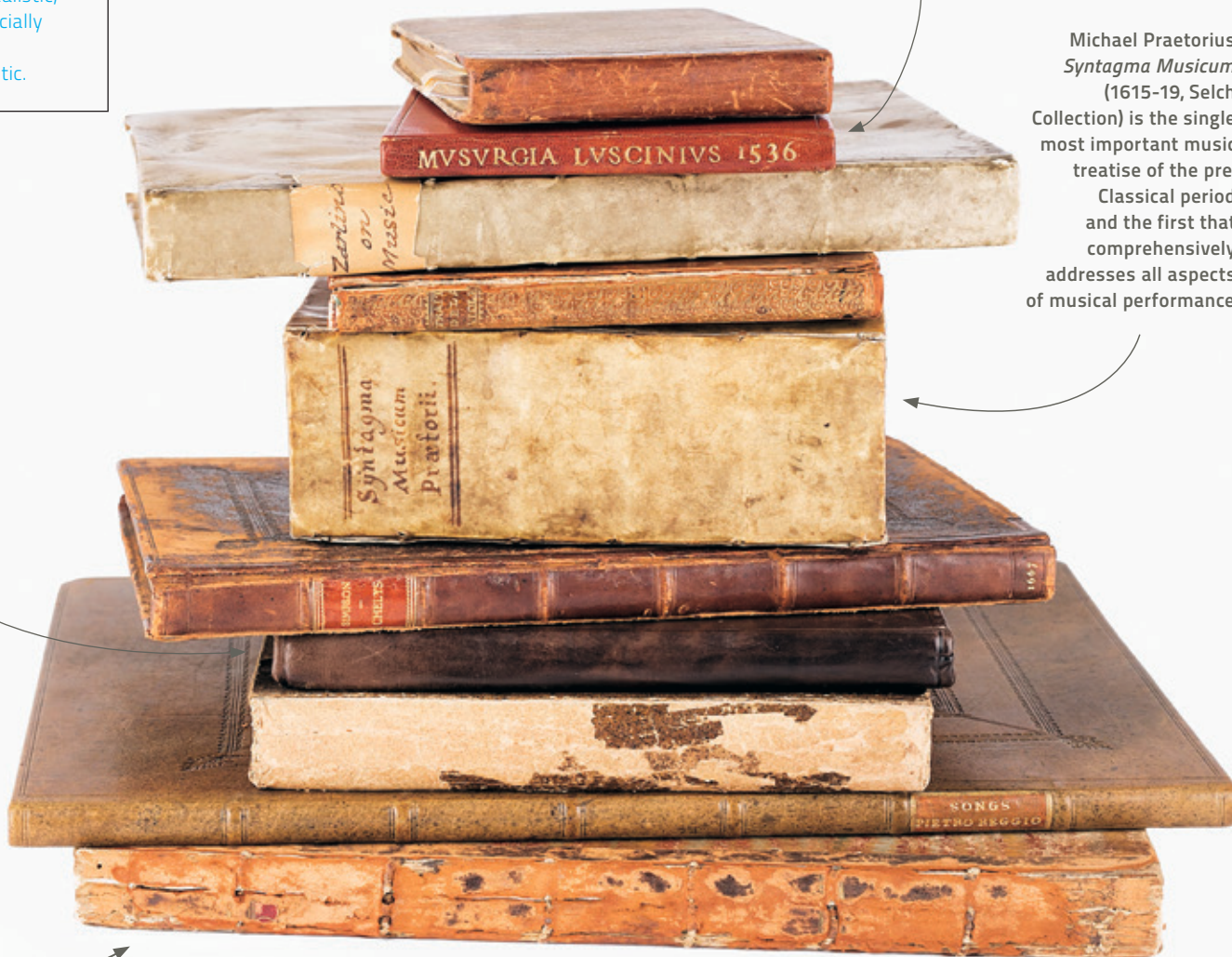
VIOLIN SOCIETY OF AMERICA/HERBERT K. GOODKIND COLLECTION

The Violin Society of America/Herbert K. Goodkind Collection was described by Itzhak Perlman as "the most significant single collection of literature in the world about the making, playing, and teaching of stringed instruments." Including more than 1,200 book, score, and periodical titles dating from the 17th through 20th centuries; over 550 auction catalogs; miscellaneous research files; institutional records for the Violin Society of America; and a variety of visual materials, it was acquired jointly by Oberlin and the Violin Society of America in 1986.

Michael Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum* (1615-19, Selch Collection) is the single most important music treatise of the pre-Classical period and the first that comprehensively addresses all aspects of musical performance.

Samuel Holyoke's *The Instrumental Assistant* (1801, Selch Collection) was the first comprehensive American tutor for musical instruments.

Francesco Geminiani's *Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751, VSA/Goodkind Collection) is the best-known summation of the 18th-century Italian method of violin playing.



MILTON J. AND MONA C. HINTON COLLECTION

The Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection comprises materials created or compiled by the Hintons throughout their lives. A distinguished bassist and accomplished amateur photographer, Milt Hinton enjoyed an extensive career that stretched for more than seven decades. The collection includes datebooks, correspondence, financial records, artifacts, newspaper clippings, photographs, and other materials that provide an unrivaled view of the life of the man widely known as "The Judge," one of the most accomplished bassists of the 20th century. It arrived at Oberlin in January 2014.



One of Hinton's many passports, which chronicle his extensive international travel from the early 1950s through the 1990s.

Beginning in 1952, Hinton maintained personal datebooks that documented his daily musical activities. These were essential during the nearly two decades that he was a first-call bass player in New York recording studios.

COLLECTION CONNECTION

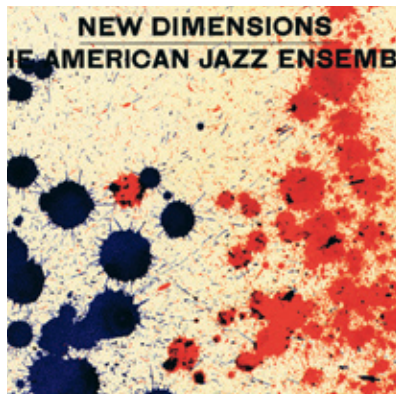


Kate Earl '17
Cognitive Science; Fulbright Fellow

I was interested in working in the jazz Special Collections because of my experiences listening to jazz as a swing dancer, and I learned very quickly upon starting the job that for years I had been dancing to many songs featuring Milt Hinton's bass. My primary work on the Hinton Collection was digitizing Milt's datebooks, as well as organizing his family's financial records and correspondence. It has been rewarding to learn so much about someone who helped to create the music that has been an important part of my life.



MILT HINTON, JONAH JONES, AND CAB CALLOWAY IN HAVANA (CA. 1951); COURTESY OF THE MILTON J. HINTON PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION



COLLECTION CONNECTION



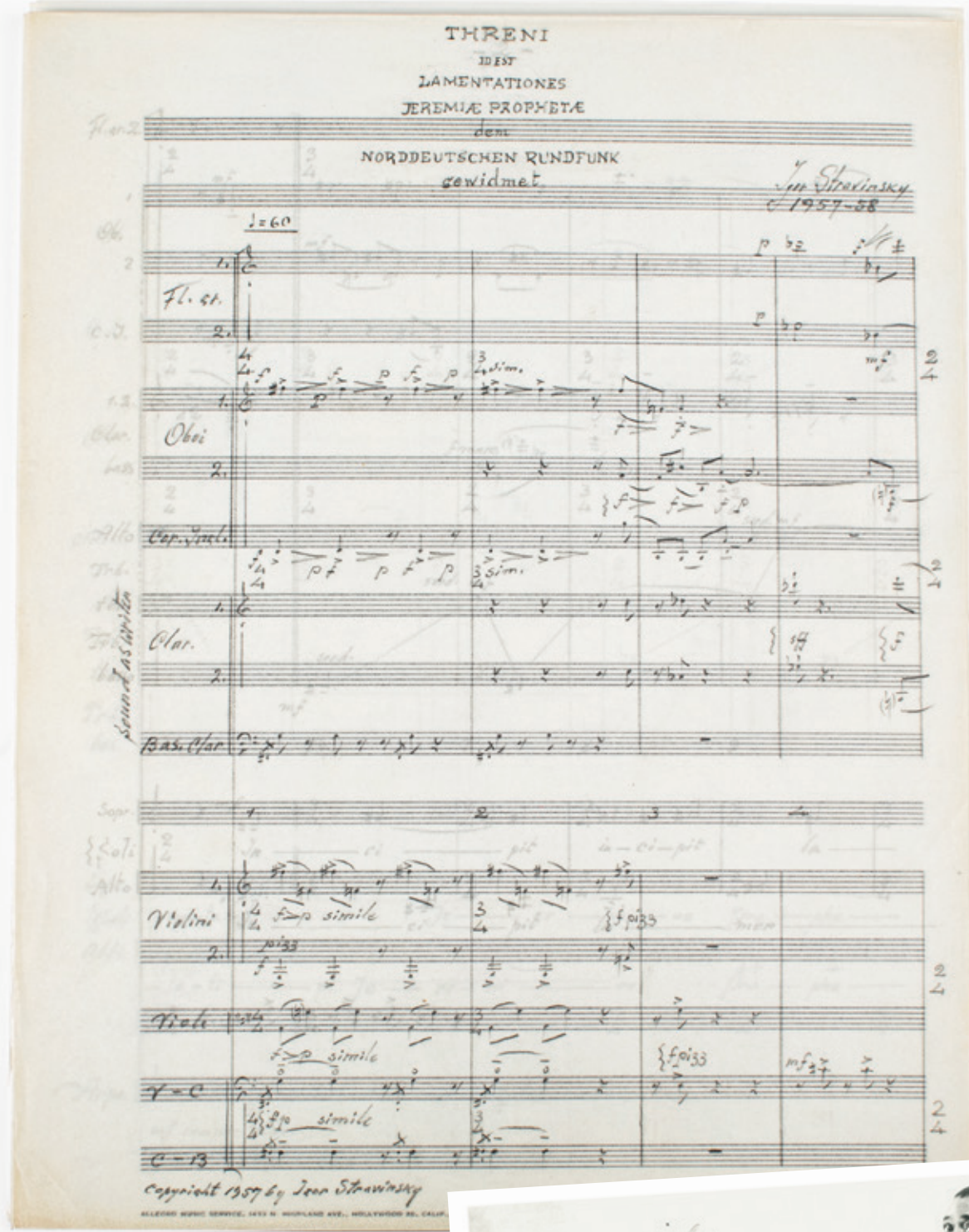
Emerson Hunton '16 Jazz Drums

Working in Special Collections for three years opened up a lot of ideas for me about what archival work and conservation work really is. It started with me just wanting to learn more about the records in the collection, but now I would love to work at a museum or an archive. It's valuable to have a totally new set of skills that I hadn't had any experience with before, but still have it be topical and related to my studies.

At one time, my teacher, Billy Hart, wanted to do a lot of old Max Roach music for a concert, and a lot of those recordings are hard to find. But we have the whole discography down in the vault: These recordings that would be very expensive—or simply out of print—are available to us here.

JAMES R. AND SUSAN NEUMANN JAZZ COLLECTION

The Neumann Collection consists of more than 100,000 jazz recordings as well as 150 shelf feet of rare jazz magazines and newspapers. It also includes several thousand books on jazz, more than 10,000 photographs and autographs of musicians, and nearly 2,000 posters promoting films and events. Neumann began collecting shortly after his graduation from Oberlin in 1958. Over time his collection developed into a near-comprehensive repository for the history of jazz. The initial portion of it was delivered to Oberlin in 2011.



Igor Stravinsky gifted this manuscript of the 1958 work *Threni* to Oberlin as a demonstration of his gratitude for the exemplary musicianship the students and faculty displayed during his March 1963 residency. This piece is the first fully twelve-tone (or dodecaphonic) work by the composer.

SIGNING BONUS

The Conservatory Library has compiled a unique collection of musicians' photographs, autographs, and correspondence from a number of donors including C.W. Best, Frederick Marks, Charles Morrison, Frank Shaw, James R. Neumann, and Stanley King. Included here are signed photographs of Count Basie (Neumann), Nadia Boulanger (Shaw), Toshiko Akiyoshi (Neumann), Ron Carter (Neumann), Lionel Hampton (Neumann), and Louis Armstrong (King); autographs of Sun Ra, Illinois Jacquet, Hazel Scott, and Charles Mingus (all Neumann); and a letter from Clara Schumann (gift of Virgilius and Alberta Kasper).



June 17th 1963
 Dear Mr. Sta,
 as I do not like to play without rehearsal my opinion arranged my opinion so that I can come for the Friday rehearsal to you on Saturday morning at 10 past 11 o'clock. Will you kindly care for the music and receive me yours very sincerely
 Clara Schumann

Sun Ra




Charles Mingus



To a great artist Nat Lionel Hampton





Jeremy A. Smith is Oberlin Conservatory's Special Collections Librarian and Curator of the James R. and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection. He received a BM in music theory from the University of South Carolina's Honors College and a PhD in musicology from Duke University. His publications have appeared in *Notes: The Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* and *Jazz Perspectives*.

Untangled Webb

After years of making music in Oberlin, Webb Wiggins is ready to unwind.

WEBB WIGGINS DOESN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT comes next, but that's never bothered him before. After 11 years as Oberlin's associate professor of harpsichord, Wiggins concluded his teaching career in May. Before long, he might find himself in Florida—near his undergraduate alma mater, Stetson University, and near family in his native Georgia. But he also loves Washington, D.C., and he still owns the condo where he lived when he taught at the Peabody Institute. There is much of Europe he longs to see, and much of Holland he would love to return to.

There are many places Wiggins may end up, but for once it won't be Oberlin. "I've been loving what I've been doing so much, and that's why I've done it for so long," he says during an April conversation in his first-floor studio in Bibbins Hall. "And now I know it's time to leave. I'm tired."

Even before it was his home, Oberlin felt like home to Wiggins. At the urging of a colleague, he attended one of the first Baroque Performance Institutes, the influential summer program launched in 1971 by faculty members Catharina Meints and James Caldwell. "I came back a changed person," Wiggins says in his velvet voice. "Everything was so new and so comfortable and so right: The music I was hearing...the way it was performed." And so he returned year after year.

While pursuing a master's degree at the Eastman School of Music, Wiggins was nearly ensnared by the draft—an unthinkable fate for the avowed pacifist. Instead, he became a junior high teacher in North Carolina, then moved on to a 15-year stint at a community college. He worked in Holland and at the Smithsonian Institution and at Peabody. Finally he settled in Oberlin, assuming the role he has since called "the best harpsichord position in the country."

Wiggins has mentored a litany of outstanding performers here, among them Daniel Walden '12, who continued his studies at Cambridge and Harvard and recently earned a coveted Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in the Arts. Wiggins' steely blue eyes disappear in a squint as he joyfully recounts the achievements of Walden and other past students. "What I hope they got from me is the pleasure of making music on the harpsichord: the fun, the possibility to be expressive on an instrument that is not normally an expressive instrument, and imagining and hearing dynamics on an instrument that has no dynamics. It's one of the hardest things for people to grasp."

Wiggins himself grasped it long ago. It's part of the reason he remains in demand as a performer: He was invited by a friend to join a "monster-scale" (by Baroque standards, at least) U.S. tour. He also plans to perform with the Folger Consort and other East Coast ensembles.

But for now, at least, his teaching days are over. "I am quitting something that I've been doing all my life. My whole identity is gone," he says in an oddly convivial tone. "I'm actually feeling pretty good about it, but I hope I will stay vital—and I say that in a sort of spiritual, zen-whatever sense of vital. I hope I don't start crumbling inside." —*Erich Burnett*

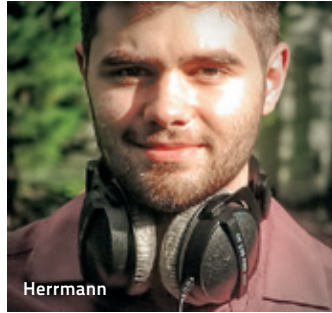


TANYA ROSEN-JONES '97

AIR FOR HARPSICHO
Webb Wiggins kicks back by the con pond, playing a "mother and child" virginal harpsichord made in 2004 and donated to Oberlin by Barbara Evans O'Donnell.

Student Accolades

2016 Conservatory of Music Honors & Awards



Herrmann

The Marshall Scholarship

Awarded to young Americans of high ability to study for a graduate degree in the United Kingdom.

Mitchell Herrmann '16 (TIMARA and Cinema Studies)

The Walter E. Aschaffenburg Prize

Awarded to a graduating senior for outstanding music composition.

John Burnett '16 (Composition)



Miller

The Louis and Marguerite Bloomberg Greenwood Prize

Awarded to graduating students excelling in cello, piano, violin, or voice.

Siena Miller '16 (Voice)
Joshua Blue '16 (Voice)

The Margaret Bos Stambler '84 Professional Development Award

Awarded to outstanding voice majors of great promise to enhance career opportunities.

Siena Miller '16 (Voice)

The Arthur Dann Senior Piano Competition

Awarded to the winner of this juried competition for excellence in piano performance.

Zi Xiao Li '17 (Piano)

The Rudolf Serkin Scholarship

Awarded to a student demonstrating excellence in piano performance.

Shiyu Yang '18 (Piano)

The John Elvin Piano Prize

Awarded to a student judged by the Piano Department to be the most talented in the junior class.

Zi Xiao Li '17 (Piano)

The Faustina Hurlbutt Prize

Awarded to an outstanding graduating student in cello, piano, violin, or voice.

Allison Freeman '16 (Piano)

The Piano Faculty Prize in Accompanying

Awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in accompanying singers and instrumentalists.

Evan Hines '16 (Piano and Voice)
Jake Holtzman '16 (Piano and Environmental Studies)

Flint Initiative Grants (FIG)

Awarded to innovative, motivated, and prepared conservatory and double-degree students to develop imaginative artistic projects.

Mohit Dubey '19 (Classical Guitar)
Leo Harrington '16 (Trumpet and History)
Judith Jackson '18 (TIMARA and Composition)

The James H. Hall Prize in Musicology

Awarded to a graduating senior for excellence in musicology.

Nicholas Capozzoli '15, MM '16 (Organ and Harpsichord)

The Selby Harlan Houston Prize

Awarded to a graduating senior whose performance in organ and music theory is of distinguished quality.

Nicholas Capozzoli '15, MM '16 (Organ and Historical Performance)

The Louis and Annette Kaufman Prize in Violin

Awarded to an outstanding student of violin.

Gregory Gennaro '17 (Violin and Math)

The Carol Nott Piano Pedagogy Prize

Awarded to an outstanding graduating senior for continued study in piano pedagogy.

Samantha Martinez-Brockhus '16 (Piano)

The Pi Kappa Lambda Prize for Musicianship

Awarded to students judged to be the most outstanding of those elected to Pi Kappa Lambda.

Nicholas Capozzoli '15, MM '16 (Organ and Harpsichord)
Allison Freeman '16 (Piano)
Daniel Orsen '16 (Viola)

The Wendell and Bettye Logan Prize in Jazz Studies

Awarded to a graduating student who has demonstrated excellence in performance or composition.

Lawrence Galloway '15 (Jazz Trombone)

The Earl L. Russell Award in Historical Performance

Awarded to a worthy student majoring in Historical Performance to assist with the purchase of a musical instrument.

Albert Bellefeuille BM, MM '16 (Organ and MM in Historical Performance)

Christa Cole '17 (Violin)



Zara

The Marilyn Horne Rubin Scholar

Awarded to an outstanding student of voice to support and further professional development.

Siena Miller '16 (Voice)
Juliana Zara '16 (Voice)

The Theodore Presser Undergraduate Scholarship

Awarded to an outstanding returning double-degree student for excellence in musicianship and liberal arts study.

Ben Cruz '17 (Jazz Guitar and History)

The Margot Bos Stambler '84 Professional Development Award

Awarded to an outstanding voice major of great promise to enhance career opportunities.

Joshua Blue '16 (Voice)

The James Stamp Award

Awarded for outstanding achievement by a trumpet player.

Ashley Hale '16 (Trumpet and Jazz Trumpet)

The Ernest Hatch Wilkins Memorial Prize

Awarded to a returning student who has demonstrated academic excellence in the three preceding years.

Christa Cole '17 (Violin)

The Avedis Zildjian Conservatory Percussion Award

Awarded to a continuing percussion major in recognition of outstanding performance skills.

Hunter Brown '17 (Percussion and TIMARA)



Walden

The Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship

Awarded to exceptionally talented young artists as they complete their training and begin their professional life.

Daniel Walden BM, BA '12 (Piano, Historical Performance, and Classics)

The Fulbright Scholar Program

Awarded to students for their academic merit and leadership potential with the opportunity to study internationally.

Leo Harrington '16 (Trumpet and History)

The Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Agnes Fowler Collegiate Scholarship

Awarded to sophomores or juniors majoring in music and strong in instrumental or voice performance.

Gregory Gennaro '17 (Violin and Math)

The Frank Huntington Beebe Award for Musicians

Awarded to gifted young musicians who wish to pursue advanced music study and performance abroad.

Maxwell Bessesen '16 (Jazz Saxophone and Law & Society)

The Oberlin Shansi Fellow Award

Awarded to current college and conservatory seniors and graduates to live and work in China, India, Indonesia, or Japan.

Henry Aberle '16 (Musical Studies and East Asian Studies)

The Kennedy Center Conservatory Project 2016 Participants

Soloists:

Giovanni Bertoni '16 (Clarinet)
Louis Pino '17 (Marimba)
Sophie Davis '17 (Violin)
Zi Xiao Li '17 (Piano)

Trio Ligatura:

Dana Johnson '17 (Violin)
Corey Worley '17 (Viola)
Aaron Wolff '16 (Cello)

Michael O's to the Max:

Nathan Rice '17 (Saxophone)
Michael Orenstein '17 (Piano)
Maximilian Weiner '18 (Bass)
Michael Ode '17 (Drums)

2015-16 Concerto Competition

Awarded annually to senior and artist diploma instrumental students.

Joshua Blue '16 (Voice)
Yiran Chen '16 (Violin)
Chelsea DeSouza '16 (Piano, Vocal Accompanying, and Politics)
Allison Freeman '16 (Piano)



Blue



Chen



DeSouza



Freeman

MILLER, ZARA; SCOTT SHAW

BLUE, DESOUZA; YEYHEN GULENKO; CHEN; DALE PRESTON '83; FREEMAN; WALTER NOVAK

Class Notes

1960s

Stanley Cowell '62 led a band at the Village Vanguard in New York's Greenwich Village in June 2015. After an extended hiatus, Cowell returned five years ago to pushing the envelope of jazz style in performance and recording projects. He has since released several albums, including his June 2015 solo piano album *Juneteenth*. "He played postbop originals and blues language and jarring electro-acoustic music; he articulated Art Tatum-like flourishes and runs as a matter of course, no matter the context; and he ended his set with a song played on African thumb piano," *New York Times* jazz critic Ben Ratliff wrote of Cowell's Vanguard performance. "Mr. Cowell is a bit unclassifiable, and jazz has a lot of use for his curiosity and challenge and friction, as well as his virtuosity."



Cowell

François Clemmons '67 was featured in StoryCorps 462: "In the Neighborhood" in March 2016, a podcast series hosted by Michael Garofalo and Jasmyn Belcher Morris. Clemmons talks about his friendship with Fred Rogers and his 25-year portrayal of the singing Officer Clemmons on the PBS television show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*—a role that made him the first African American actor to hold a recurring spot on children's

TV. Clemmons returned to Oberlin in May for Commencement/Reunion Weekend festivities: He presented a recital and reading from his book *On My Journey Now!* and sang at President Marvin Krislov's Crimson and Gold Convocation.

1970s

Los Angeles Children's Chorus Artistic Director **Anne Tomlinson '76** will step away from her role at the conclusion of the 2017-18

season following a 22-year tenure. Tomlinson will be named the chorus' artistic director emeritus in recognition of her immeasurable contributions. She is a frequent guest conductor and presenter at symposia, workshops, and national and international festivals.

Nita Van Pelt BM, MM Ed '79 retired from the Lake Oswego School District in Oregon after a 30-year career. At her farewell, she was honored with a bronze star to be installed at Lakeridge High School in Portland. Van Pelt, who was given Oberlin Conservatory's Distinguished Music Education Alumna Award in September 2015, was presented with the Mary V. Dodge Award for music teachers by the Portland Youth Philharmonic during an orchestra class at Lake Oswego High. "It's a real honor for me to be recognized," she says, "and it's especially an honor to close out my career with this award."

1980s

Daniel Kazez '80 has produced an iPhone app called InTune, designed to test and train intonation. Hailed

as "brilliantly simple," it's available at bit.ly/intuneapp. Kazez is the author of the textbook *Rhythm Reading* (W.W. Norton) and has given cello recitals across Europe.

Robert Sims '89 has released a CD of spirituals arranged by Roland Hayes and a biography entitled *Roland Hayes: The Legacy of an American Tenor* (Indiana University Press, 2016), in collaboration with Christopher A. Brooks. Sims also honored Hayes with an October 2015 concert and panel discussion at Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium, where he performed spirituals arranged by Hayes.

1990s

Jeremy Denk '90 was elected to the 2016 class of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Members are leaders in their fields who have made significant contributions to the nation and the world. The honor is also seen as a call to service, and the academy provides its members with opportunities to find common ground.

In September 2015, **Tony Arnold '90** became the first recipient in nearly 20 years of the renewed Creative Arts Award from Brandeis University. This led to a yearlong engagement with the Brandeis community, for whom Arnold presented a series of performances and workshops. She also held a 2015-16 residency at Boston Conservatory and gave a performance of György Kurtág's *Kafka Fragments* with violinist Movses Pogossian.

Now in its 20th season, the Oberlin alumni-founded Miró Quartet—featuring violinist **Daniel Ching '95** and cellist **Joshua Gindele '97**—parted ways with its record label and offered a free download of its latest release, *Transcendence*, a recording of Franz Schubert's masterwork String Quartet No. 15 in G Major, D. 887. The quartet presented an all-Beethoven program on Oberlin's Artist Recital Series in March 2016.

In February 2016, **Anne Howarth '97** shared a faculty recital at Tufts University on the theme of "Music Inspired by Words | Words Inspired by Music." In preparation, she solicited submissions of words—poetry or prose—inspired by music for use in the performance. The program included the world premiere of *Connect All. We All Connect.* for horn, soprano, and piano, commissioned by Howarth for the occasion. The text expresses

the power of live performance to make meaningful connections, and composer Oliver Caplan incorporated reversible elements into the musical setting, bringing attention to the idea that communication and connections happen in multiple directions. Last fall, Howarth also performed the Ligeti Trio for horn, violin, and piano with the Radius Ensemble and was a soloist in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds with the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra, with which she plays principal horn.

Violinist **Jennifer Koh '97** was named *Musical America's* Instrumentalist of the Year for 2016. She started the year by taking part in a Duke University study on brain function among musicians—a subject of great interest to Koh since she sustained a concussion in 2014. Among the study's findings was that brain activity increases whenever a person thinks about music or even listens to it; in the words of the lead researcher: "It's quite literally a whole body experience." Duke audiences know the feeling: Koh served as artist in residence while participating in the study.

Keeril Makan '97, associate professor of composition and music theory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, recently brought a new chamber opera to the stage. *Persona*, an adaptation of Ingmar Bergman's 1966 film with



Koh

a libretto by Jay Scheib, premiered in October 2015 at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, N.Y. "Music comes first in any opera, and Mr. Makan's 85-minute score, roughly as long as the film, compellingly drives the drama in *Persona*," *The New York Times* wrote. "Makan sets the text with striking sensitivity to when a moment demands conversational naturalness or supple lyricism... Makan's acute ear for harmony and eerie textures draw you in continually."

The Cleveland-based Baroque ensemble Les Délices, directed by oboist **Debra Nagy '00, MM '02**, presented *The Imaginary Orchestra: Arrangements from French Opera for Two Harpsichords* in Cleveland in January 2016. The program featured Oberlin alumni harpsichordists **Michael Sponseller '97, AD '00** and **Jacob Street MM '12**. Performances were held at Cleveland State University and Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights.

Mezzo-soprano **Marie Lenormand '99** performed in the 2016 Grammy-winning Best Opera Recording of Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* from Decca Classics. The production, in which Lenormand portrayed the White Cat and Squirrel, was recorded live in 2013 at the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival in Japan.

2000s

It's been a momentous year for **Rhiannon Giddens '00**. In the fall of 2015, the North Carolina native released her debut solo album, *Tomorrow Is My Turn*, which was later named Album of the Year at the inaugural International Folk Music Awards. Giddens also became the first American singer to be awarded Folk Singer of the Year at the 2016 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, hosted at London's Royal Albert Hall. She returned to campus in February 2016 to perform in Finney Chapel as part of Oberlin's Convocation series. The newly conceived program of protest songs, *Swimming in Dark Waters: Other Voices of the American Experience*, featured Giddens' former Carolina Chocolate Drops bandmate Leyla McCalla and singer-songwriter Bhi Bhiman.

In 2011, playwright, and lyricist **Greg Pierce '00** teamed with musical theater legend and Grammy-winning composer **John Kander '51** to fashion a musical called *The Landing*, which opened Off Broadway in 2013. In October 2015, Oberlin College presented a live reading of the production at the Apollo Theatre directed by associate professor and costume designer Chris Flaharty. Nine actors—ranging from first-year to professor—



Clemmons



Tomlinson

CLEMMONS: JULIE GROOKSTON GULENKO '15

COURTESY LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S CHOIR, JUERGEN FRANK

and four conservatory student musicians performed, with Kander and Pierce seated front and center.

Jonathan Stinson '01, assistant professor of voice at the State University of New York at Potsdam, won the ninth annual International Anthem Competition in 2015, hosted by the First Baptist Church of Worcester, Mass. Stinson won with his anthem "Beloved," featuring text from the Bible's First Book of John, Chapter 4, scored for choir, baritone soloist, cello, and organ. It received its first performances in May 2016, during the church's morning service and at the Choral Festival Concert.

Soprano **Alyson Cambridge '02** released a crossover album entitled *Until Now* in January 2016. An acclaimed classical singer who has performed on stages and in opera houses around the world, Cambridge puts forward an entirely different color palette and style on the album, which features jazz, soul, pop, and musical theater. "My hope for the album has always been to give an eclectic and thoughtful representation of me, in a range of non-operatic musical tastes, influences, and vocalism," she says.

In January 2016, *The Santa Fe Reporter* featured a profile on Belarusian-born composer and musician **Grisha Krivchenia '02**, who has joined an initiative called LifeSongs, which matches musicians with people who are nearing the end of their lives in a bid to compose original music based on their experiences. To Krivchenia, working with the elderly has been a longtime pursuit. "LifeSongs takes that one step further because, as musicians, we have these things inside ourselves we want to communicate, which is powerful, but going further is to meet with people who don't have those skills and working out how and what they would like to communicate," Krivchenia told the paper. "Yes, there is sadness there, but there is goodness as well, like, sometimes people at the end of their lives become incredibly clear

and lucid and realize that they don't have time to waste on anything but to cherish those they love."

Elizabeth DeShong '03 appeared in Chicago Lyric Opera's 2016 production of Verdi's *Nabucco*. *The Chicago Tribune* called DeShong "a breakout star" and "a first-rate Fenena, bringing a warmly appealing voice and supple legato line."

The Composer Portrait Series at Columbia University's Miller Theatre focused on the works of **Ashley Fure '04** in February 2016. The International Contemporary Ensemble, led by conductor David Fulmer, performed several of Fure's pieces, including the world premiere of *Etudes from the Anthropocene*.

Conductor **James Feddeck '05** made his subscription debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at its home in Symphony Center. The program featured CSO principal trumpet Christopher Martin as soloist in Haydn's Trumpet Concerto, Franck's symphonic poem *Les Éolides (The Breezes)*, and Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony. John von Rhein of *The Chicago Tribune* wrote, "The admirable results made clear why American orchestral managements such as Chicago's are placing such high faith in Feddeck and his burgeoning career...His canny application of sonic weight, rhythmic urgency and emotional intensity made certain that the music spoke with a sustained degree of color and excitement throughout." Feddeck's 2015-16 season also included debuts with the orchestras of Detroit, Colorado, Toronto, and Minnesota, as well as the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, and the Orchestre National de Lyon.

Theo Croker '07 released his second album, *Escape Velocity* (DDB Records/OKeh), in May 2016. The trumpet player performs with his

band DVRK FUNK (pronounced "Dark Funk"), which includes tenor saxophonist and flutist Anthony Ware, pianist **Michael King '12**, bassist Eric Wheeler, and drummer **Kassa Overall '05**. Saxophone player Irwin Hall also joined in on the album.

The Jasper String Quartet, now quartet in residence at Temple University, won the 2016 Fischhoff Educator Award. It recognizes the educational outreach of Fischhoff Competition alumni who have demonstrated outstanding and imaginative programming for children and youth in the United States, who have established professional careers in chamber music, and who have proven their ability to successfully build a career in both chamber music performance and outreach education. Formed in 2004 while its members were students at Oberlin, the quartet still features three of its original members: violinist **J Freivogel '06**, violinist **Sam Quintal '06**, and cellist **Rachel Henderson Freivogel '05**.

Eighth blackbird was awarded a \$400,000 MacArthur Foundation grant for Chicago arts organizations in February 2016. The MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions honors "exceptional nonprofit organizations that are engaged in the Foundation's core fields of work." The non-competitive awards go to fiscally healthy organizations that are at a critical juncture in their artistic growth. Now in its 20th year, eighth blackbird includes clarinetist **Michael J. Maccaferri '96**, cellist **Nicholas Photinos '96**, percussionist **Matthew Duvall '95**, and pianist **Lisa Kaplan '95**. Also in February, the ensemble garnered its fourth Grammy Award for Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance for its release *Filament* (Cedille).

Composer **Tim Rosser '06**, with bookwriter and lyricist Charlie Sohne, won the 2015 Jonathan Larson Award and ASCAP's 2015



Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award. Recently, they participated in New York's seventh annual 24 Hour Musicals, where their short show *A Better Me* featured Edie Falco. Their show *The Boy Who Danced on Air* was featured at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals in 2013. It received development and production grants from the alliance in 2014 and 2015, and made its world premiere at the Diversionsary Theater in San Diego in spring 2016.

Anna Vasilyeva '08, a former student of Sedmara Zakarian Rutstein, joined the piano department at Rutgers University in 2015. Her recent appearances include performances at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the National Opera Center of America, Bruno Walter Hall at Lincoln Center, and the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Washington, D.C. She continues to perform abroad as well.

2010s

Mingjia Liu '10, principal oboe for the San Francisco Opera, joined the woodwind faculty at San Francisco Conservatory of Music in January 2016. A native of Qingdao, China, Liu is gaining increased recognition for his teaching and recently gave master classes at the First Beijing International Oboe Festival at the Central Conservatory of Music, where he also performed recitals. Liu previously taught in the Pre-College Division at the San Francisco

Conservatory. In spring 2016, he filled in at Oberlin for oboe professor Robert Walters, who was on leave.

Lin Ma '11 was appointed assistant principal clarinet/third and E-flat clarinet of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in September 2015. A native of China, Ma studied with Richard Hawkins at Oberlin and with Richie Hawley at Rice University. Prior to his Baltimore appointment, he served in a one-year position as second clarinet in the Houston Symphony, and in 2014 he won the Ima Hogg International Competition and performed as soloist with the orchestra at Jones Hall.

Soprano **Sydney Mancasola '11** won the 2016 Mabel Dorn Reeder Foundation Prize and was honored at a luncheon at the Sally S. Levy Opera Center in St. Louis in February. The \$10,000 award celebrates the potential of artists in the early stages of their careers and offers support for the continuation of their artistic and professional development.

Violist **Amy Hess '12** won a section position with Lyric Opera of Chicago. She was previously a principal viola of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and received her master of music from Northwestern in 2014.

Daniel Walden '12 won the 2016 Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship for the Performing and Visual Arts, which awards \$50,000 a year for up to two years. A double-degree student at Oberlin, Walden studied modern and historical keyboards with professors Peter Takács (piano), David Breitman (fortepiano and clavichord), and Webb Wiggins (harpsichord). He earned a BA in classics and a BM in piano performance, and was Oberlin's first Gates Scholar, a highly competitive graduate program at the University of Cambridge. He is currently a PhD candidate and Presidential Scholar in Music Theory at Harvard University.

Xiomara Mass '10, AD '12 is a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and often plays with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Violinist **Wyatt Underhill '13** won the assistant concertmaster position with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra last winter. He graduated from Juilliard in May 2015, earning a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant and the William Schuman Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music.

Katelyn Emerson '15 has been appointed associate organist and choirmaster of the Church of the Advent in Boston, a position she begins in September 2016. She will assist in running the extensive music program, providing service music on the historic Aeolian-Skinner organ, Op. 940, and directing the Choir of the Church of the Advent and the Parish Choir.

Hannah Santisi '15 earned one of the first fellowships granted by the Cleveland Foundation. The year-long position is designed to inspire the next generation of public-sector leaders. Santisi will focus on the foundation's new arts strategy to increase access to mastery-based arts for all youth in the city of Cleveland. Since completing degrees in viola performance and sociology at Oberlin, Santisi has devoted her attention to Make Music Day, a 34-year-old festival held every year on the summer solstice. In 2015, 700 cities worldwide participated. Santisi helped Cleveland join in the festivities, organizing more than 50 free music events in 30 venues.

Violinist **Seo Yon Park '18**, a student of Milan Vitek, won first prize at the 2015 Alexander and Buono International String Competition. Her award was a recital in Carnegie Hall performed on October 25. Park also won the senior division of the Lima Symphony Concerto Competition in March 2016, playing the Sibelius Violin Concerto.



Oberlin was well represented at the 2015 Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival. Pictured front, from left: Ron Copes '71, Katherine Murdock, Rebecca Kalish '18, Josie Davis '14, and Jennifer Carpenter '14; back: Charlie Colwell '13, Jake Klinkenborg '14, and Sophie Davis '17.

The Bop Stop at the Music Settlement in Cleveland has forged a partnership with Oberlin Conservatory. This year they presented three jazz ensembles made up of current students or boasting Oberlin roots. Michael O's to the Max, a group with **Michael Orenstein '17** on piano, **Michael Ode '17** on drums, **Max Weiner '18** on bass, and **Nathan Rice '17** on sax, played new arrangements of standards and original compositions at its February 2016 show. In April, two more groups—

made up of students and alumni—explored free improvisation. Junior Ranger features trumpeter **Joe Suihkonen**, pianist **Eric Krouse**, guitarist **Noah Gershwin**, and drummer **Emerson Hunton** (all class of 2016). They released their first CD, *Monster Masks*, in February 2016. Possibilities was formed at Oberlin in 2009 by saxophonist **Tim Bennett '12**, **MMT '13**, bassist **Dan Stein '11**, and drummer **Peter Manheim '12**. Possibilities members are based in Chicago and New York City.



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Faculty Notes

Kendra Colton '83 was guest soloist in a performance of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with the Evansville (Ind.) Philharmonic Orchestra in April 2016. Oberlin's assistant professor of singing and a native of Evansville, Colton was also a featured soprano in the orchestra's February 2016 performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* alongside Oberlin colleague Timothy LeFebvre.

Associate Professor of Singing **Timothy LeFebvre** made numerous solo appearances in the past year, including oratorio performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the Wichita Symphony, a German lieder recital at Oberlin, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Butler (Pa.) Symphony, Brahms' *Requiem* and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen* with Symphoria (in Syracuse, N.Y.), Barber's *Dover Beach* with the Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble, Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem* with Downtown Singers (Binghamton, N.Y.), an opera concert at Newport Music Festival, and Beethoven's Mass in C and Ninth Symphony with the Berkshire Choral Festival.

Professor of Music Education **Joanne Erwin** conducted an orchestra in the Balboa Theater in Panama City, Panama, in August 2015. The ensemble was composed of Oberlin alumni who have participated in the conservatory's Panama Project over the years as well as local musicians who have taken part in the winter-term camp. "It was an exhilarating time of renewing old friendships and making music with great passion," Erwin says of the experience.

Associate Professor of Opera Theater **Jonathon Field** teamed up with alumna Kathryn Leemhuis '05 in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the DuPage Opera Theater in Illinois. A collaboration with the New Philharmonic Orchestra, this version saw Leemhuis in the role of Dorabella, and the audience chose who paired with whom in the end.



Sally Stunkel dedicated her career to teaching singers how to act. A former singer and dancer trained in the acting techniques of Meisner and Stanislavsky, she shared a unique set of skills with her opera theater students, dedicating hours of weekly class time to mask work, Baroque movement, and improvisation. Stunkel's unbounded imagination and unconventional approaches to directing resulted in refreshingly original winter-term operas throughout her tenure at Oberlin. In January 2015, she united the conservatory and community in a collaborative production of Michael Torke's *Strawberry Fields* (pictured in rehearsal) that included residents of the nearby Kendal retirement community. Stunkel herself retired from Oberlin in May after four years as associate professor of opera theater.

Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and Anthropology **Jennifer Fraser** released the book *Gongs & Pop Songs: Sounding Minangkabau in Indonesia* (Ohio University Press) in July 2015. This culminating project explores a little-known gong tradition from Sumatra called *talempong*, long associated with people who identify as Minangkabau.

Professor of Music Education **Jody Kerchner** has contributed chapters to and coedited the book *Musicianship: Composing in Choir*. It presents theoretical foundations and practical pedagogies for including composition and improvisation in school choral ensembles. Additionally, her coauthored chapter on international music education collaborations and partnerships was published by the European Association of Music in Schools. Kerchner served as guest

choral clinician for middle- and high-school choirs in Lorain County, at the Changing Voice Institute for area choral educators, and as guest conductor at an honors festival in Newburgh, N.Y. She is also the founder/conductor of Oberlin Music at Grafton, an all-male prison choir (see page 22).



Assistant Professor of Music Theory **Megan Kaes Long** received a 2016 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend.

The grant supports work on her monograph project, *Hearing Homophony: Characteristic Tonalities at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century*. Long will conduct research using archival materials including 16th- and 17th-century music prints at the British Library in London, the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Associate Professor **Jan Miyake '96** was elected treasurer of the Society for Music Theory and will serve a four-year term. She also published a review of *Heinrich Schenker: Selected Correspondence* in the December 2015 issue of Music Theory Online.

Organ professor **James David Christie '75** served on the juries of two major organ competitions: the Tariverdiev International Organ Competition on the Baltic coast in

Kaliningrad, Russia, and the Third International Bach | Liszt Organ Competition in Weimar, Germany. Christie was a guest at the XXX Tallinn International Organ Festival, giving solo recitals on historic German Romantic organs in Tallinn, Tartu, and Valga, Estonia, in 2015. He also gave solo recitals in Leipzig, Arnstadt, Schneeberg, and Bamberg, Germany; Blois, France; Amsterdam; Moscow; and Montreal. On U.S. soil, he appeared twice as organ soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, first in Berlioz's *Te Deum* with Charles Dutoit conducting and in Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony No. 3 with Stéphane Denève conducting. He was also featured soloist with the Fort Collins (Colo.) Symphony Orchestra in Denis Bédard's Organ Concerto and was a harpsichord soloist in Bach's Concerto in C Minor for two harpsichords, BWV 1060. Solo recitals in the U.S. included dates in Omaha, Wellesley, Tacoma, Seattle, Santa Fe, Columbus, Bethesda, and Sonoma.



The Man Behind the Concerts Says Goodbye

Since 1988, Oberlin Conservatory's affable facilities manager Eric Cowley set the stage for nearly 14,000 performances over the course of his career here. His world encompassed venerable Finney Chapel and other concert spaces around campus. This spring, he worked his last Oberlin event in favor of retirement plans and time with family. Cowley cut his teeth at the legendary Actors Studio and other spaces in New York. Here, he handled everything from stage lighting to managing student crews to artist relations. There is no one who knew better how each venue and concert should be supported. "You've always got to be careful backstage with artists who are going on because you never know what type of mood they're in," he noted.

Professor of Recorder and Baroque Flute **Michael Lynn** hosted a 19th-Century French Flute Extravaganza at Oberlin in October 2015. Presented in conjunction with the conservatory's historical performance, musicology, and flute departments—with key support from the Conservatory Library—the program included an exhibition of period instruments, a lecture on French flutists led by Tom Moore of Florida International University, and a talk and demonstration by Lynn. The evening closed with a recital featuring conservatory students and faculty members **David Breitman** (historical performance) and **Alexa Still** (flute). "I'm always interested in pairing a particular historical instrument with appropriate music, so this led me to begin investigating the available repertoire," says Lynn. That quest took him to the Frederick R. Selch Collection, part of the conservatory's expansive Special Collections (learn more on page 42). There, he

discovered a wealth of popular French pieces of the era. Lynn's busy year also included curating a flute exhibition from his personal collection and performing, teaching, and exhibiting at the National Flute Association Convention in Washington, D.C.; the Escola Superior de Musica in Porto and the ANIMUSIC Conference in Portugal; the New World Symphony in Miami; and in concerts in Pittsburgh, Richmond, and Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Zukerman Trio, with Oberlin Professor of Piano **Angela Cheng**, violinist Pinchas Zukerman, and cellist Amanda Forsyth, gave a concert at Kensington Palace in London in February 2016. The rare performance at the palace was a celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The trio's 2015-16 season included dates on five continents, among them performances at the 92nd St. Y in New York, Wigmore Hall in London, Easter Festival in Aix-en-Provence, the Sydney Opera House in Australia, Ravinia Festival in Chicago, and Bravo! festival in Vail, Colo. Cheng's performances away from the trio included concerto solo appearances with the symphonies of Vancouver, Edmonton, Okanagan (British Columbia), Wheeling, Minas Gerais (Brazil), and the Oberlin Chamber Orchestra. She also performed all five Beethoven piano concerti in concerts with the Victoria (British Columbia) Symphony in celebration of its 75th anniversary.

Composition faculty **Aaron Helgeson '05** had an eventful academic year capped off with a 2016 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award recognizing the evidence and merit of a completed body of work. The works for which Helgeson was recognized included *Snow Requiem* (premiered in 2015 by Professor of Conducting **Timothy Weiss** and Oberlin's Contemporary Music Ensemble, with Associate Professor of Violin **David Bowlin '00** and soprano Alice Teyssier '06 as soloists) and *Poems of*

sheer nothingness, a song cycle commissioned by Grammy-winning soprano Susan Narucki. The cycle was released on the Innova label in January 2016 and features performances by Narucki with the Talea Ensemble. It is paired with another of Helgeson's vocal works, *Notes on a page (of Sappho)*. Oberlin alums in the Talea Ensemble included violist Beth Weisser '03 and cellist Chris Gross '04.



Professor of Musicology **Charles McGuire '91** was a Humanities Writ Large Visiting Fellow at Duke University for 2015-16. While there, he continued research on musical festivals, including significant work on a digital humanities project: a relational database of British festival repertoire and personnel from 1695 to 1940. McGuire also received an Ohio5/Andrew W. Mellon Grant for Digital Collections to work on creation of the database with Oberlin College musical studies and conservatory students. McGuire presented papers on divas such as Angelica Catalani at British Musical Festivals at the Operatic Reflections and Reverberations conference at King's College in London and the Duke University Department of Music Seminar Series. He also presented a video on the relational database, which was part of a paper given by Conservatory Librarian **Deborah Campana** at the joint meeting of the International Musicological Society and the International Association of Music Librarians in New York. McGuire's publications this year include an analysis of Edward Elgar's *Sea*

YEHEEN GULEENKO, TANVA ROSEN-JONES '97
COURTESY MAAF



Pictures in a volume entitled *The Sea in the British Musical Imagination* (Boydell Press) and *The Great Works of Sacred Music*, a 16-lecture video class released by The Great Courses in November.

Andrew B. Meldrum Professor of Musicology **Steven Plank** published the article on composer Henry Purcell in the new *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and the Arts* and presented a paper, "See, even Night herself is here: Night, Purcell, and Evocations of James II," at Oberlin's Baroque Performance Institute and the Richard Murphy Colloquium. This fall, Collegium Musicum, under the direction of Plank, released its second CD, *Cantemus II*. A ClevelandClassical review of the recording noted: "From the first note to the last, Plank consistently draws a full-bodied, well-blended, pitch-perfect sound from his young singers."

Professor of Piano **Alvin Chow** and his duo partner and brother Alan gave two performances of two-piano works by Mozart, Poulenc, and Saint-Saëns with the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra at the Yuen Long Theater and Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall in May 2015. A member of the Cheng-Chow Trio, he also performed programs of music for four to six hands at one or two pianos on the Gina Bachauer Concert Series in Salt Lake City in February 2016 and on the inaugural

season of the Skyline Piano Artist Series at Northwestern University in May. The Chow Duo was invited back to perform at the Bachauer Concert Series finale in April.

Emeritus Professor of Ethnomusicology **Roderic Knight** published the article "A New Look at Classification and Terminology for Musical Instruments" in *The Galpin Society Journal*. In it, Knight takes on the venerable Hornbostel-Sachs classification system, published in German in 1914, and proposes improvements and additions to it. Of special appeal for Oberlinians is the inclusion of two color photos of the electromechanical siren on Oberlin Fire Truck no. 42, which is, in the jargon, a pulsating blown aerophone. Emeritus Professor of Physics Bruce Richards consulted on the project.

Kathy Abromeit, public services librarian in the Conservatory Library, attended the annual meeting of the Music Library Association in March, where she presented "Peer Instruction in the Oberlin Conservatory Library: Three Models of Engagement." Various forms of peer, collaborative, or cooperative learning are increasingly used in higher education. These models are recognized as valuable two-way, reciprocal learning activities. Often, the peer instructor's opinions matter more to first-year students than those of librarians or other authority



figures. Abromeit discussed three models she uses: peer library mentors at the reference desk and peer instruction in the classroom and in outreach programs.

Assistant Professor of Music Theory **Andrew Pau** published an article in the September 2015 issue of Music Theory Online titled "Sous le rythme de la chanson: Rhythm,

Text, and Diegetic Performance in Nineteenth-Century French Opera." In April 2016, Pau appeared as a six-day champion on the game show *Jeopardy!*

The Avon Lake High School Symphonic Band performed at Carnegie Hall in April 2016 under the direction of **David Eddleman**, a teacher at the northeast Ohio school and a visiting teacher in Oberlin's Music Education Division, and guest conductor **John Knight**, professor emeritus in music education. Avon Lake has been recognized by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation as one of the nation's Best Communities for Music Education.



Gary Bartz Earns Living Legacy Award

Alto saxophone player Gary Bartz came of age hanging out at Birdland and other influential nightclubs of New York City where top musicians of the day habitually gigged. As a young man, Bartz played in the Baltimore nightclub owned by his father. There, his world intersected with Art Blakey, with whom Bartz sat in on sax in 1965, cementing his place in the drumming frontman's Jazz Messengers.

Across a career spanning six decades, Bartz has performed alongside more jazz greats than he can count, from Max Roach to Charles Mingus and from Miles Davis to McCoy Tyner, with whom Bartz won a Grammy in 1995. In October of 2015, it was Bartz—Oberlin's professor of jazz saxophone—who was feted as a legend, earning the BNY Mellon Jazz Living Legacy Award in a ceremony at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

"I have been so honored to receive not just the Mellon Award but quite a few other awards," the 75-year-old Bartz said in May, hours before performing in a tribute concert for Miles Davis and John Coltrane at Lincoln Center. "I guess if you stay on the right path and live long enough, you begin to be recognized as an artistic survivor in this very tough world."

Losses

HERBERT HENKE (1931-2015)



Herbert Henke '53, MM '54 devoted 36 years to teaching as a member of the Oberlin Conservatory faculty, but his influence on students and colleagues spanned far beyond his conservatory years. He adored the life of an educator, and he embraced each opportunity he encountered. "I always found great satisfaction in teaching: children or adults, any subject matter," the professor of eurhythmics told *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* upon his retirement in 1998. "I love the variety that teaching offers, the search for new ways of imparting information, and the development of skills."

Henke remained firmly rooted in Oberlin for most of his life, but he traversed the globe frequently to share his gifts. In 1973 he served as music consultant to the National Center for the Arts in El Salvador. Five years later, he worked with the National Youth Symphony Program in Costa Rica. He led the chorale at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia, and he filled in for former students as a teacher in London, Sweden, and across Asia.

"I didn't know I was going to come to Oberlin and see the world," he quipped at the conclusion of his final semester in 1997.

In his early years on the Oberlin faculty, Henke taught conducting, keyboard skills, and techniques in secondary music education. With the retirement of Oberlin eurhythmics professor Ina Howland in 1974, Henke began to devote great energy to the century-old Swiss approach to musical training that emphasizes

movement. He became an internationally respected teacher of eurhythmics and found his expertise in great demand throughout the world. For nearly two decades before and after his retirement, he taught annual summer classes in eurhythmics at Carnegie Mellon University. "Herb brought a gentle passion for music and music education to his teaching," says Associate Professor of Music Education Jody Kerchner, whose Oberlin career began as Henke retired. "Herb remained committed to the cause of preparing future music teachers, frequently returning to our conducting and music education classes to share his expertise."

Kerchner and her colleagues honored Henke in 2002 with the conservatory's first Distinguished Music Education Alumni Award. "We have cherished and will now miss his friendship, collegiality, musical sensitivity, and calm wisdom that were his hallmarks," she says.

Henke grew up in the Cleveland suburb of Parma and earned three degrees from Oberlin Conservatory, followed by a PhD at the University of Southern California. Initially a teacher in the Cleveland public schools, he accepted his first faculty position at the University of Maryland, where he taught for four years before returning to Oberlin to teach in 1962. An accomplished singer who was active in the local community, Henke served multiple stints as music director of First Church and performed for years as a bass soloist in Oberlin and Cleveland. His well-rounded musicianship made him all the more beloved among those who knew and learned from him.

Henke died August 16, 2015, leaving his wife, Sabra Lee Chambers '53, whom he met at Oberlin and married the year they graduated; their daughter, Lia Lowrie; and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son, Kevin Henke '77, and daughter, Jeanine Neumann.

LOUIS LANE (1923-2016)



Grammy Award-winning conductor Louis Lane began a visiting professorship at Oberlin in the summer of 1995—at age 71—and by January of the following year was named director of Oberlin orchestras, a position he held through the 1997-98 academic year.

Lane enjoyed a long and distinguished career with the Cleveland Orchestra, serving as associate conductor under legendary conductor George Szell and later as resident conductor after Szell's death. Following a 25-year career in Cleveland, he was principal guest conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for five years and held the same role with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra from 1977 to 1988. From 1959 to 1983, he was music director for the Akron Symphony. For many years, he also conducted the National Symphony Orchestra of the South African Broadcasting Corporation in performances throughout South Africa.

At Oberlin, Lane led the Oberlin Orchestra and Oberlin Chamber Orchestra, and taught graduate students in the conservatory's instrumental conducting program.

Lane's creative programming and wide-ranging repertoire led to his earning the Mahler Medal, the Alice M. Ditson Award, and the Order of Arts and Letters of France. He was presented honorary degrees from Cleveland State University, Kent State University, the University of Akron, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he was a music advisor and

conductor. He also taught at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Texas.

In 1989, Lane won a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance for his role in a recording of works by Ned Rorem for the Atlanta Symphony. He also made recordings with the Cleveland Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, and the Polish Radio Orchestra.

Born on Christmas Day 1923 in Eagle Pass, Texas, Lane earned a bachelor of music degree from the University of Texas in 1943 and a master of music from the Eastman School of Music in 1947. During World War II, he served with an artillery unit for three years. Upon returning home, he won a national competition to be apprentice conductor under Szell.

Under the "hobbies and nonprofessional interests" question on his Oberlin faculty questionnaire, Lane offered the typewritten response: "wine, women & song" (not necessarily in that order). He was also known to be an avid swimmer and reader.

Lane died February 15, 2016.



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malice, or any of the other
things that we create in order
to separate ourselves one
from the other. Art makes
each of us whole by insisting
that we use all of our senses—
our heads and our hearts.”**

—JESSYE NORMAN, 2016 OBERLIN COMMENCEMENT