FROM THE CHAIR

As I begin writing my third “Greetings from the Chair” letter, I am astonished by how quickly the last two years have gone by. While I could never have imagined or predicted the multiple and unprecedented challenges that we would face during my tenure as chair, what has not surprised me is how remarkable and robust the UMass Amherst Department of Music and Dance has proven itself to be when faced with such extraordinary challenges. All of us—our students, our faculty, our staff, and our new dean, Barbara Krauthamer—confronted the new reality forced upon us by the pandemic with strength, resilience, and optimism.

We faced a deadly disease with courage and determination. That disease not only shut down our campus, but it obliged us to communicate through electronic media. As artists and scholars, we were forced to refrain from the practice of our art collectively, learning instead to create new musical and dance works in isolation and online. When we were allowed to perform in small groups, we did so in unusual settings using social distancing and even tents. Rather than continuing our scholarship in the “normal” face-to-face fashion, we held symposia and conferences via Zoom. We continued to learn, communicate, and create while being confronted, in a terribly real way, with our own mortality.

In addition, the growing awareness of racial and gender bias and inequality, which was made clear to us by the harrowing death of George Floyd, confronted us with our individual and collective responsibility in this continuing scourge of our community, challenging us to meet the urgent need to work on positive and immediate actions to resolve these problems.

This edition of Fanfare will detail and elaborate on these issues as well as celebrate the wonderful achievements of our students and our faculty and highlight the opening of our new classrooms on the fourth floor bridge of the FAC. For all the myriad difficulties this past year brought us, I believe we came through the deluge that was the pandemic as a stronger, healthier department. I thank all of you for your support, encouragement, and hard work during this remarkable time.

Salvatore Macchia
Chair, Department of Music & Dance

A Year of Resilience and Reinvention

In mid-July 2020, as the university’s reopening plans for the fall semester began to unfold, it became clear that a complete rethinking of virtually every area of the Department of Music and Dance would be required before welcoming our students back to campus.

The university’s guidelines stipulated that only those students with majors requiring studio or lab work (including our music and dance students) would be allowed on campus. The majority of music ensemble rehearsals and applied lessons would need to be held outdoors under large, industrial-sized tents provided by the university or online using Zoom videoconferencing. Dance rehearsals were permitted indoors on a limited basis with strict mask and social distancing protocols, or outside on the fields near Tottman. All academic courses would be held remotely, and performances strictly limited to online media only. As an added challenge, the fall semester was scheduled to commence a full two weeks earlier than usual.

Salvatore Macchia
Chair, Department of Music & Dance
The atmosphere around the largely empty campus was strangely silent; on many days, the only sound to be heard was the music emanating from the various outdoor rehearsal spaces.

A CASE STUDY IN INNOVATION: WIND PROGRAM

Our Wind Studies program served as a great example of innovation in the face of adversity during the past year. To adhere to COVID-19 protocols, Director Matthew Westgate restructured the Wind Ensemble into 14 separate chamber groups in the fall and primarily two groups in the spring semester. Westgate also reworked the ensemble’s repertoire so that at least half of the music studied was by women, non-white composers, and/or carried a social message. Examples included Omar Thomas’ Emma Catherine, Kimberly Archer’s Fanfare Politeia, and David Biedenbender’s Schism. In the fall, chamber groups based on campus came together to record pieces in the socially-distanced manner that students stood together during the performances and the unity shown by the entire department during the pandemic.

In his coursework for the Symphony Band, Westgate challenged his students to find ways to create a new paradigm for college wind bands. The group explored nontraditional repertoire from Africa, Asia, and South America, wrote their own studies for their instrument, and kept a detailed journal of their experiences. In the spring, Westgate arranged a unique cultural exchange project between Symphony Band and the Banda Metropolitana de Quito in Ecuador that took place entirely on Zoom. Westgate describes the collaboration: “I met Luis Castro, the conductor of the Banda Metropolitana, after being invited to guest conduct their group in fall of 2019, a connection facilitated by Jose Ignacia Blesa Lull, one of my former graduate students. The band in Quito was also stuck online due to COVID, and they happened to rehearse at the same exact time on Mondays, so Luis and I decided to work on a collaborative project. We met together weekly and shared music and stories about how the pandemic was affecting us and our families...the language barrier was a challenge in the beginning, but I was able to use my knowledge of Spanish to help facilitate the discussions.”

“Each week, after a brief group meeting, our students met with their Ecuadorian counterparts by instrument in small groups, and they eventually collaboratively to make small chamber music projects (with help from Google Translate). For example, UMass students Justin Vitale and Kyle Aubuchon collaborated with Benito Tayupanda and Diana Gallegos from the Quito Banda to record a clarinet quartet arrangement of ‘Muchachita Linda,” an example of an ‘Ubazo’ (a musical genre from the Ecuadorian highlands usually played by guitars or a small town band).”

“Despite all the challenges, our students bravely supported one another and learned how to make music with people on another continent. I am so proud of them all!”

On the positive side, the department had the full support of Barbara Krauthamer, the incoming dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, who provided critical resources, plus strong administrative leadership and a ready reservoir of creative problem solvers. To help coordinate the safe use of the indoor and outdoor spaces, Undergraduate Program Coordinator Angeline Peterson spearheaded the creation of new online systems for reserving practice rooms and classroom space, including new procedures for juries and auditions. Facilities and Scheduling Coordinator Ryan Dominik and Dance Coordinator Cathy Machitsky worked closely with campus safety officials to establish social distancing and cleaning protocols for both buildings. Machitsky also managed to secure stage cleaning materials used by professional dance companies. Since students could opt for either remote or on-campus study, Chief Undergraduate Advisor and Department Scheduling Representative Erica Drake had to create entirely new scheduling and advising protocols to accommodate both types of instruction as well as the twice-per-week COVID-19 tests required for each student.

For both faculty and students, a crash course in streaming technology was required for instruction to proceed. Every student received Zoom access and a high-quality USB microphone, allowing them to interact freely with their instructors and classmates using phones or laptops. Business Manager Collen Wetzel worked tirelessly to secure the hard-to-find mics, which were then shipped or, in many cases, driven directly to drop locations around the state by Peterson and Graduate Coordinator Maddy Benjamin.

With these accommodations in place, classes and rehearsals moved forward on August 24. An unusually mild fall and the university’s aggressive asymptomatic testing program enabled a large portion of our scheduled rehearsals to proceed relatively smoothly, despite the challenges presented by social distancing rules. The atmosphere around the largely empty campus was strangely silent; on many days, the only sound to be heard was the music emanating from the various outdoor rehearsal spaces.

Without the ability to present live concerts, the department’s YouTube channel quickly became the primary means through which our students could display their talents. Newly-expanded audio and video mixing equipment in Bezanson Recital Hall and Totman allowed a large percentage of student recitals to be livestreamed, thanks to the substantial efforts of Bezanson Stage Manager Sean Buenaventura and the faculty Technology Task Force led by Felix Salas.

The new technology also enabled the department to present a number of concerts in virtual form, including the annual Multi-band Pops concert directed by Jeffrey W. Holmes. The jazz and African-American Music program pieced together a number of virtual concerts by having students make individual recordings and then painstakingly editing them together into a cohesive whole. Some ensembles, including the Wind Ensemble and Chamber Choir, were able to record live performances from outdoor locations which were later shown on YouTube. The brass studios even managed to present livestreamed performances from the outdoor tents during both semesters.

Despite all of the supports put into place, students still found the “new normal” to be anything but, and advisors like Drake, Graduate Program Director Erinn Kyte, and the entire faculty worked tirelessly to manage the logistical and emotional challenges presented by the pandemic. To help counteract the prevailing sense of isolation, Department Chair Salvatore Macchia, convened monthly town hall-style meetings where all faculty, students, and staff could share their thoughts and concerns. Dance student Lili Greenberg also organized “community cyphers,” open gatherings hosted online that would convene monthly with the same users and share ideas on new projects.

Surprisingly, the new protocols caused by the pandemic resulted in a number of unexpected positive outcomes. For example, students gained a deep grasp of practical experience with audio and video production. The jazz area in particular encouraged students to develop these skills by requiring juniors and senior recitalists to edit and produce their own virtual recitals. The shift to remote learning also allowed our students access to a much wider and deeper pool of guest artists and lecturers than ever. For students taking part in various competitions, the ability to submit entries remotely rather than traveling to audition in person led to one of the strongest showings ever by our department. Some students, like pianist Julia Blacklock, even used their Zoom access to offer free after-school music lessons and mentoring to high school music students.

The 2020–21 school year ended with a few glimmers of hope—the biennial Bach Festival and Symposium took place successfully online, the Wind Ensemble performed before a live (socially-distanced) audience in downtown Amherst, and the Minuteman Marching Band helped welcome home the national champion UMass Men’s Ice Team. A late spring relaxing of protocols even allowed for an in-person graduation ceremony for our seniors, a hopeful sign for the future after one of the most challenging years in the department’s history.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—Taking Steps Forward

Last summer, when the death of George Floyd pushed issues of race and equity in the forefront of the national consciousness, Department Chair Salvatore Macchia posted an open letter on the department’s website and declared that a process of self-examination of the department’s policies and practices would commence immediately. In that call to action, Macchia invited students, faculty, and staff to unite “in a single cause and with a single purpose: to make the UMass Department of Music and Dance as open, inclusive, and welcoming an institution as possible.”

The first step in the process was the formation of a faculty Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, which took place following the start of the fall semester. The group was charged with developing strategies for ensuring a more equitable environment within the department in both the short and long term. Led by coordinators Jonathan Holting-Cohen and Lauren Cox, the group worked with university’s Office of Diversity and Recruitment on developing a formal statement for the department regarding DEI issues, and ways to make our recruitment process as inclusive as possible. That DEI vision statement, which is being finalized this summer, sets the clear goal to “work closely with our stakeholders to support students, faculty, and staff of multiple identities so that they are welcome, included, and valued in all spaces.”

At nearly the same time, students formed their own parallel committee, the Music Department Equity Group (MDEG), in a clear demonstration of their resolve to speak to these issues in their own collective voice. The group was organized around the principle of “uplifting and centering the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and all marginalized identities” within the department. Much like their faculty counterparts, the student activists also advocated for a strong statement on DEI matters by the department, in-depth examination of campus, repertoire, and hiring practices, as well as the establishment of a safe and judgment-free process where concerns could be put forth by students or others from within the department.

Echoing the chair’s call for unity in his open letter, the faculty and student groups worked with Macchia to hold town-hall style meetings involving the entire department. During those heart-felt discussions, students shared their experiences about feeling isolated or marginalized, and their hopes that the steps being taken by the department would help address those concerns. A number of music and dance faculty took further steps to spark dialogue and reflection around issues of race, privilege, class, and equity in their classrooms and studios. For example, presenters at the Beyond the Proscenium: Access conference, organized by Paul Dennis, explored ways that diversity and equity can be addressed through dance studies in higher education settings (see article on page 7).

The most noteworthy of these efforts was led by Professor of Viola Elizabeth Chang, who created a weekly series of online discussions with musicians, educators, and activists working to address equity through music. The 14-part series, titled “Music, Community Engagement & Social Action,” brought a range of viewpoints and experiences to our students, faculty, and the general public. A number of the presenters, including MacArthur fellow Sebastian Ruth from Providence Community MusicWorks, and Boston String Academy founders Marielisa and Mariather Alvarez, described their efforts to use music education and performance to impact underserved urban neighborhoods. Other speakers included Garrett McQueen, bassoonist and creator of the podcast series, ZRILLOQUY, plus Weston Sprott, dean of the pre-college division at Juilliard, and University of Iowa Professor Damani Phillips, author of the 2018 book, What Is This Thing Called Soul: Conversations on Black Culture and Jazz Education. All 14 of the discussions from the series can be viewed on the department’s YouTube channel, youtube.com/umassmusicdance.

All acknowledge that this year’s efforts mark only the beginning of what must be an ongoing process to address these critical issues. Planned steps for the coming months include sensitivity training for faculty, enhanced support for students with DEI-related concerns, and exploring ways to better address issues of diversity within our curriculum and faculty.

MUSIC, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, & SOCIAL ACTION PRESENTERS (listed in chronological order)

Sebastian Ruth
Community MusicWorks
Haven String Quartet
Music Haven
Javier Caballero
Project STEP
Alumni Focus: Michelle Painter 12MM, Hannah van der Swaagh 10MM (also Yokoe Tanaka)

Nancy Galluzzo
musicConnects
Vicki Clean
Musica Franklin
Jason Treuting
So Percussion
Ariana Falk
Neighborhood Strings, Worcester Chamber Music Society
Weston Sprott
Harvard School & Met Opera Orchestra
Damani Phillips
University of Iowa

NICODE WRIGHT
Garrett McQueen
Bassoonist/Studio host
Courtney Clark & Sean Elligers
Kids 4 Harmony
Marielisa & Mariather Alvarez
Boston String Academy

Elizabeth Chang
Nancy Galluzzo
musicConnects
Vicki Clean
Musica Franklin
Jason Treuting
So Percussion
Ariana Falk
Neighborhood Strings, Worcester Chamber Music Society
Weston Sprott
Harvard School & Met Opera Orchestra
Damani Phillips
University of Iowa

SEBASTIAN RUTH
Community MusicWorks
Haven String Quartet
Music Haven

Javier Caballero
Project STEP

Alumni Focus: Michelle Painter 12MM, Hannah van der Swaagh 10MM
(also Yokoe Tanaka)

Musicanima

Felipe Salles

Felipe Salles

Salles Receives Chancellor’s Medal, Performs on Kennedy Center Series

As part of its Arts Across America online series, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. presented a performance by Felipe Salles, professor of Jazz and African-American Music Studies, titled “Reviving The New Immigrant Experience” on Oct. 26, 2020. The series was developed to spotlight community arts leaders, unique regional arts styles, and organizations and artists focused on social justice. Salles reworked his multimedia orchestral jazz work, “The New Immigrant Experience,” into an intimate duo setting with pianist Nando Michelin. In addition to performing, the two reflected upon the inspiration for the piece, the 700,000 “Dreamers” currently protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (or DACA) program.

“The New Immigrant Experience,” which was created with support from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, combined music and interviews with nine Dreamers about growing up undocumented, encounters which inspired Salles’ musical vision for the piece. A recording of the work released in 2020 received 4.5 out of 5 stars from Downbeat magazine and was also featured on NPR’s Alt-Latino program.

In recognition of his accomplishments as a composer, educator, and performer, Salles was also selected to receive the Chancellor’s Medal, the highest award bestowed upon faculty by the university, and invited to present a Distinguished Professor Lecture on April 28 via Zoom videoconference. In his talk, titled, “The New Immigrant Experience: The Creation of a Multi-Media Jazz Work,” Salles discussed how he utilized speech patterns from interviews with individual Dreamers to develop the musical elements as well as the visual aspects of the work.

Earlier that same week, Salles and his 19-piece Interconnections Ensemble gave a full performance of “The New Immigrant Experience” that was streamed live from Northampton’s Academy of Music. The concert was part of a three-concert series titled, “We Are All Immigrants: Jazz Reflections on Today’s America,” produced by Laudable Productions in partnership with Stage Arts (Vermont) and Blues to Green (Springfield, Mass.), with funding provided by the National Endowment of the Arts and the New England Foundation for the Arts.
On April 20–25, the department hosted its biennial Bach Festival and Symposium in an entirely virtual format. UMass students and faculty were joined by internationally recognized performers and researchers in celebrating the music and legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach. This the fourth time that the department has hosted this multifaceted event, which was organized by faculty members Elizabeth Chang, William Hite, Erinn Knyt, and Tony Thornton, along with co-founders Amanda Stenroos '15MM and Professor Emeritus Ernest May.

This year's concert schedule featured a series of free pre-recorded performances by UMass students and faculty that were shown on YouTube from April 20–23. Featured performers were Edward Arron, Elizabeth Chang, Cobus du Toit, Ayano Kataoka, Kathryn Lockwood, Salvatore Macchia, Gregory Spiridopoulos, and the Opus One Chamber Orchestra. Guests included former UMass percussion professor Eduardo Leandro, electronic musician Jazer Giles '15MM, and harmonist/artist Gregory Hayes.

The performances included the world premiere of Macchia’s Grounds for Violin and Electronics, written to reflect the variations at work in the Chaconne from Bach’s Partita No. 2 in D minor. The faculty duo of cellist Jonathan Hulting-Cohen and dancer Lauren Cox also debuted their new collaborative piece titled Prelude featuring music and choreography inspired by the first movement of Bach’s Solo Cello Suite #1.

On April 25, the festival culminated with a special livestreamed concert, hosted by the UMass Fine Arts Center, by renowned cellist and former faculty member Matt Haimovitz. The program, titled “Bach Listening Room,” included Bach’s Partita No. 2 in D major (performed on violoncello piccolo) and the Prelude to Suite II in D minor, plus two world-premiere works; one by 2021 Grammy-nominee Luna Pearl Woolf and the other by David Sanford from Mount Holyoke College. In all, this year’s Bach Festival concerts received over 2,000 views on YouTube.

The day-long Bach Symposium, titled “Late Style and the Idea of the Summative Work in Bach and Beethoven” took place via Zoom videoconference on April 24. The event featured two keynote speeches: “Spätstil, que me veux-tu?” by Robert Marshall of Brandeis University, and “Late Style in Exile: Beethoven and the Missa Solennis” by Scott Burnham from Princeton University and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). Throughout the day, scholarly presentations were delivered by an international roster of music theorists and historians, led by Erinn Knyt and Ernest May representing UMass.

NEW BOOK BY BRENTE AUBERCH PUBLISHED BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Musical Motives: A Theory and Method for Analyzing Shape in Music by Associate Professor of Music Theory Brent Auerbach was published by Oxford University Press in May 2021. The book explores how motives tie “sound space” together and how their presence in a wide variety of musical styles (classical, pop/rock, Broadway, and beyond) provides a common ground for a deeper understanding of the listening experience.

This comprehensive theory and method book surveys the history of motive research, lays out a comprehensive theory and method to account for music’s structure and drama. The book provides definitions, a universal nomenclature, and rules for properly linking motives, as well as detailed, specific procedures for organizing, interpreting, and effectively communicating analytic findings. Numerous examples are provided, along with abbreviated and full analyses of a wide variety of works by Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Verdi, Chaminade, Hamilch, Radiohead, and many more. Additional content related to the book, including in-depth analyses and audio examples, can be found at brentauerbach.universitypress.org.

UMass Dance Conference Explores Topics “Beyond the Proscenium”

On March 13, 2021, the UMass Dance Program played host to a virtual conference titled “Beyond the Proscenium: Access” in partnership with Five College Dance. Organized by Associate Professor of Dance Paul Dennis, the conference sought to explore scholarly and creative research in collegiate-level dance programs from a variety of vantage points. The day-long event featured over a dozen presentations in a wide range of formats, from panels, webinars, and studio classes taught by renowned instructors to oral presentations, interest groups/discussions, and creative workshops. In all, some 120 individuals from nine campuses across New England plus representatives from the New York tri-state area and Great Britain, took part in the event.

According to Dennis, the idea was to host a series of sessions that highlighted unique approaches to dance studies in higher education, and careers in dance other than those with the traditional focus on performance. Topics explored at the conference included disability access to the arts, the body as a living archive, dance as a means to social change, and a special webinar on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in dance led by a collective of Five College Dance educators. Presenters at Beyond the Proscenium included UMass Dance faculty Lauren Cox and Molly Christie González, Five College Dance faculty Chris Aiken (Smith College), Shadia Barron, Barbie Diedwald (Mount Holyoke College), and Jenna Riegel (Amherst College), and guest speakers Gerald Casal, Cynthia Maquilin, Cathy Nicoll, Samantha Spis, and Meredith Aleigha Wells.

The conference culminated in a special film screening and discussions with two of America’s leading hip-hop dance artists, Rennie Harris and Jon Boogz. The event was part of an ongoing series hosted by the UMass Fine Arts Center titled “Bodies at Risk,” which featured creative conversations between performing artists, educators, and activists representing Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who are working to “shift America’s understanding of the racialized body and social justice.”
In February, The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced Laboratory for the Scientific Study of Dance (LAB:SYNC) based at the UMass Amherst as a recipient of a prestigious Research Lab Award. Led by Aston K. McCullough, director and assistant professor of dance science, LAB:SYNC is based in the university’s new purpose-built, motion-capture and physiological testing unit for research on dance and health. LAB:SYNC is one of only 20 NEA Research Labs across the country, and the first and only one that focuses specifically on the benefits that dance confers on health in adults.

Located in the Ruth J. Totman Building, LAB:SYNC extends across more than 1,400 square feet, with dedicated space for cardiopulmonary and integrative physiological testing, motion capture, algorithm and software development. As one of only a handful of dance science labs currently in existence, LAB:SYNC represents a major milestone for the Department of Music and Dance, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and the university.

Throughout the award, McCullough will design and evaluate sensor- and questionnaire-based methods for quantifying dance behavior in adults ages 18–85 with varying levels of dance training experience. Within the same cohort, McCullough and colleagues will also test associations between lifetime dance experience and multiple markers of physical and mental health.

“Through this partnership with the NEA, LAB:SYNC will calibrate and disseminate computer vision-, wearable sensor- and questionnaire-based tools for researchers and dance practitioners to accurately capture and characterize dance behavior in either the laboratory or studio,” said McCullough. “With updates to the tools especially designed and tested for quantifying dance behavior across a broad range of ages and experience levels, future studies on dance and health can evaluate and recommend, with ever-increasing accuracy, specific quantities of dance when targeting health outcomes.”

NEA Director of Research and Analysis Sunil Iyengar commented, “The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to welcome LAB:SYNC into the network of labs across the country that are doing important work in this very challenging year. UMass is among research institutions that have pledged to investigate the impact of the arts on greater society.”

During the summer of 2021, McCullough worked with a transdisciplinary cadre of researchers from UMass Amherst and the Five Colleges to make the NEA Research Lab fully operational. Team members from UMass include Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology Bruna Martins-Klein, Genomics Resource Laboratory Director Ravi Ranjan, and Director of Athletic Medicine Pierre Rouzier. They are joined by Five Colleges researchers Chris Aiken (Smith College), Barbie Diewald (Mount Holyoke College), Jenna M. Riegel (Amherst College), and Alexandra Ripp (Five College Dance director, Five Colleges, Inc.).

In March, McCullough and the UMass Dance Program hosted their second Dance Science Symposium, which had been rescheduled from 2020 due to the pandemic. The four-day event featured presentations via Zoom videoconference by Allison Stiefert (Central Connecticut State University), Arina Kornel (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance), Barry Parker and Jessica Sanzone (Shenandoah University), and Peggy Gould (Sarah Lawrence College). The symposium, which was viewed by an international audience, culminated in a panel discussion with all of the presenters led by McCullough.
Students

Saxophone student Zoe Stinson ’22 was one of only eight students to be recognized as a Rising Researcher by UMass Amherst this past spring. Launched in 2013, the Rising Researcher program recognizes undergraduate students who excel in research, challenge their intellect, and exercise their exceptional creativity in their chosen field. 

Stinson, a music performance and music education major, was selected for her extensive historical research into repertoire for the baritone saxophone, her primary instrument. In her Rising Researcher profile, Stinson described her project as “a multipart research plan to explore the colors that the baritone saxophone can produce through my own practice and performance, to build a database of music and links to scores already written...and to begin a commissioning program for works for the instrument.” She posits that her research will extend well beyond her graduation from UMass, adding, “it could be a life’s work.”

Stinson was also this year’s recipient of the Theodore Presser Scholarship, the department’s highest award, and one of the winners of the 2020 Concerto Competition for soloists. She studies with Professor Jonathan Hulting-Cohen, who called Stinson “an exceptional saxophonist whose artistry and concern for the field are exemplary.”

Ensembles & Studios

During the past year, students and recent graduates of the UMass Voice Studios had unprecedented success in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competitions held in Boston, the New England region, and nationally. Ryan Nash ’21, who studies with Jamie-Rose Guarino, won first place at the NATS Boston level in February. The following month, UMass vocal students claimed eight out of a possible 28 awards in their respective divisions at the New England Regional: Sean Campbell ’23, Natalie Lewis ’21, and Lachlan Miller ’21 finished first in their divisions; Sasha Moseley ’23, Ryan Nash, and recent graduate Yinghui He ’20 earned second place honors; Kayla Gayton ’22MM and Sarah Van Ellis ’21 were finalists. From that group, Lewis and He were selected to advance to the national semifinals in June, with He claiming second place from among hundreds of singers nationwide.

Voice students and alumni also had a banner year with respect to graduate school auditions. Natalie Lewis, a student of William Hite, received a full scholarship to attend Juilliard (see article on page 12), and Lachlan Miller has been accepted to study at the Peabody Conservatory. In addition, three 2020 graduates, who elected to wait a year due to the pandemic, were accepted to prestigious institutions. Yinghui He, who studied with Marjorie Melnick, has been accepted to the University of Michigan; Olivia Heinrich ’20 will also attend Peabody; and Caroline Lee ’20, who studied with both Melnick and Guarino, will be attending Baylor University with a fully-funded teaching assistantship.

Commenting on these accomplishments, William Hite, coordinator of the Voice Studios, said, “The fact that these successes happened during the pandemic is a true testament to the tenacity and resilience of our excellent students. We wish all of them the very best as they move on.”

Yinghui He as Tamino in the UMass Opera production of The Magic Flute.

Late last year, the UMass Wind Ensemble’s newest CD, Quicksilver, was released on MSR Classics. The CD featured the premieres of works by Stacy Garrop (with Jonathan Hutling-Cohen as soloist), David Maslanka, and David Bie- denbender (with the late Nadine Shank, soloist).

Students from the UMass Jazz and African American Music Studies program once again were multiple winners of Student Music Awards (SMA’s) from DownBeat magazine, one of the top publications devoted to “Jazz, Blues, and Beyond,” as published in its June issue. This continues an amazing run by the JAMS program, which has garnered close to 60 awards in multiple categories over the past four decades. The Graduate Jazz Composers Ensemble, led by Felipe Salles, was selected as the top Asynchronous Latin Group. Jazz pianist Jordan Kinder ’22, who studied under Felipe Salles, was selected as the top Asynchronous Latin Group. Jazz pianist Jordan Kinder ’22, who studied under Felipe Salles, was selected as the top Asynchronous Latin Group. Jazz pianist Jordan Kinder ’22, who studied under Felipe Salles, was selected as the top Asynchronous Latin Group. Jazz pianist Jordan Kinder ’22, who studied under Felipe Salles, was selected as the top Asynchronous Latin Group. 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Juilliard Awards Full Scholarship to Voice Student Natalie Lewis

Kovner Fellowship will cover all tuition, living expenses for Lewis’ graduate studies

When Natalie Lewis ’21 sent out applications to graduate programs, her voice teacher, William Hite, encouraged her to apply to The Juilliard School. Lewis admits that she tried to remain realistic about her chances, and was unsure whether she could afford to attend even if she were accepted. Therefore, Lewis was understandably elated to learn that she had been accepted and also awarded the prized Kovner Fellowship, the only scholarship program at Juilliard that provides full tuition and living expenses for the recipients’ entire course of study. The Kovner Fellowship Program selects outstanding undergraduate and graduate musicians from around the world based primarily on their artistic merit; other factors include “a realistic about her chances, and was unsure whether she could afford to attend even if she were accepted. Therefore, Lewis was understandably elated to learn that she had been accepted and also awarded the prized Kovner Fellowship, the only scholarship program at Juilliard that provides full tuition and living expenses for the recipients’ entire course of study. The Kovner Fellowship Program selects outstanding undergraduate and graduate musicians from around the world based primarily on their artistic merit; other factors include “a

Eastman Selects Britney Alcine for Prestigious Leadership Academy

Britney Alcine ’22MM, a graduate student in the department’s orchestral conducting program, received a full scholarship to attend the annual Eastman Leadership Academy in June 2021. The Academy selects promising young musicians to take part in immersive learning activities and conferences, as well as recording and performance opportunities.

Alcine commented that she was “overjoyed” about her acceptance to Juilliard and cannot wait to move to New York City this fall. She credits Hite with helping to develop her talents and guiding her through the serious audition process to attend Juilliard. Hite hailed Lewis’ exceptional determination and resilience as a student and an artist, and noted that her “innate ability to tap into an instinctive connection to the musical material” will serve her well in what promises to be a bright future.

A graduate of Bedford (Mass.) High School, Lewis was primarily interested in studying jazz and musical theater, but developed an interest in classical music after taking private instruction with Katherine Parker from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. During her time at UMass, Lewis has distinguished herself through her participation in the Chamber Choir, Vocal Jazz Ensemble, and in the UMass Opera production of Mozart’s The Magic Flute. In the summer of 2019, Lewis was selected to participate in the American Institute for Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria where she performed with the Festival Orchestra (pictured) and Spiritual Ensemble.

Earlier this year, Natalie took first place in the Regional Student Auditions competition of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (Upper College Treble category). This summer, she is attending Houston Grand Opera’s Young Artists Vocal Academy and will perform the role of Marcellina in Opera NEO’s production of Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro.

Department Chair Salvatore Accardo described Lewis’ receipt of the Kovner Fellowship as “a significant marker of a superb young talent, one which speaks to the bright future that Natalie has ahead of her. Natalie’s achievements are of course her own, but they also reflect the splendid work being done by our voice faculty.”

Exciting Changes, New Opportunities

NEW STEINWAY FOR BEZANSON

With the generous assistance of the Provost’s Office and Julie Hayes, former dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, the department has purchased a stellar new Steinway D concert grand piano for Bezanson Recital Hall. Giles Vonsattel, professor of piano, volunteered to help acquire the Steinway, and shared the following: “I was thrilled to have the opportunity to pick our department’s new piano from the Steinway factory in Queens, N.Y. With help from Eric Huebner, my good friend and colleague from the New York Philharmonic, we identified this particular instrument among 10 concert D’s made available to us.

“While the Steinway brand does stand for a certain overall high standard of quality, each instrument is quite different, and possesses individual characteristics that attract opportunities and challenges for pianists. This particular piano has the major qualities we look for: a singing treble, a clear middle register, a powerful, warm bass, and a wonderful overall tone. This piano is one of the finest New York ‘D’s’ I have played in recent memory, and we are fortunate to have acquired such a world-class instrument. Our students and faculty will all benefit from the musical possibilities that this instrument will offer.”

NEW RECORDING, STREAMING EQUIPMENT

Bezanson Recital Hall and dance performance spaces in Totman Building are now outfitted with multiple cameras and enhanced video/audio recording equipment, allowing a portion of our spring recitals to be livestreamed for the very first time. The ability to capture high-quality video and sound is also a major boon for instruction, equipping faculty with valuable new tools with which to analyze technique and provide feedback. In addition, the video content can be used by students for audits and by the department for creating recruitment materials and content for social media. Discussion is currently underway with the Fine Arts Center to outfit the Concert Hall and Bowker Auditorium in similar fashion, opening up the possibility of streaming concerts by our large ensembles in the future.

EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR BA CANDIDATES

The department has recently expanded our bachelor of arts (BA) concentrations in classical performance, BA degrees are now offered in Jazz and African American Music Studies (JAAMS), music history, and music theory. Traditionally, the BA degree structure allows greater flexibility for students interested in double majoring or those who are beginning a music degree later in their undergraduate studies. The JAAMS degree focuses on jazz performance within a liberal arts degree structure, while the new BA degrees in music history and music theory shift the curricular emphasis from applied performance to more in-depth academic study, while also providing a wide variety of ensemble experiences.

NEW AND ENHANCED SPACES

In addition to the newly-established Dance Science lab in Totman (see article on page 8), the department now has access to newly renovated spaces in the Fine Arts Center’s fourth floor “bridge” area. Over the past two years, voice professor William Hite and other representatives from the department have worked closely with the project designers to ensure that students and faculty would enjoy the maximum benefit from the new spaces, which include two natural light-filled classrooms, study areas, and a recording studio. The classrooms will be outfitted with up-to-date digital technology and plenty of room for movement and rhythm activities, all of which will be of particular use in music education instruction. The new recording studio will have multi-track recording capabilities and space to accommodate chamber-size ensembles and combos.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

BEZANSON
Alumni

Wendy Wood Barletta ‘86BFA produced the 17th Annual Dance Works Fundraiser Showcase in March, featuring the world-renowned troupe PILO-BOULUS, along with 125 dancers from studio performing companies, to raise funds for breast cancer and domestic violence. Barletta is the Dance Works founder, executive and artistic director, choreographer and instructor since 1999, and has performed, taught and choreographed for all ages and levels in the U.S. and abroad. Over the years, Dance Works has supported organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, the Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation, March of Dimes, Make-A-Wish, the American Red Cross and others, and has raised over $80,000 to help save and improve lives.

Karen Scanlon Brown ‘81BFA is director and choreographer at North Central Youth Ballet Company (Mass.); choreographer for theatre at The Mount in Gardner, Mass.; master ballet instructor at Sterling Dance; and ballroom dance instructor (and professional ski patroller) at Crotch Mountain, Bennington, N.H. She hopes her grandchildren, Charlotte, might one day be a third generation UMass dance major.

Yolanda Daelmans-Greaves ‘85BFA has stage-managed the holiday presentations of the Nutcracker at the Norwood Theater (Mass.) for four years with the Dancing Arts Center. She looks forward to resuming these performances this December after last year’s cancellations due to the pandemic. (The Dancing Arts Center, Holliston, Mass., was founded by Karyn Edison ‘79BFA) Daelmans-Greaves is also enjoying her volunteer work, including a fourth term on the Ashland Select Board and her newly-elected position on the MetroWest YMCA Board.

Donna Davenport ‘84BFA studied both dance and psychology at UMass, yet her memories are solely about the Dance Program. Due to her UMass training and experience with the University Dancers, she became a professional dancer, choreographer, and professor. She teaches in the dance department of Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, N.Y., specializing in composition, performance, dance pedagogy, and the integration of dance and social justice studies.

Brendan Drake ‘09BFA is a Brooklyn-based dance artist, writer, “Communi-ty Exercises for Sanctuary Spaces,” premiered last year at the Brick Theater and received a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) nomination for Outstanding Performer. He is currently an artist in residence at Ohe Bushwick and was a recent guest speaker at Columbia University and Muhlenberg College. This fall, he will begin pursuing his MFA in choreographic inquiry at UCLA.

Erika Johnson-Narbonne ‘04 lives in Massachusetts with her husband, Kevin Nar- bonne (’04 Forestry), and two children. She is a physical therapist specializing in pelvic floor disorders, dance medicine and sports medicine. She retired from BosSoma Dance Company about four years ago and hopes to return to the studio to take classes again soon.

Beth Liebowitz ‘50BFA is a board-certified dance/movement therapist and licensed creative arts therapist in New York. She brings dance to those living with dementia and Alzheimer’s to better their quality of life and address communication through nonverbal expression. With her dance and music company, Tiny Trips, she recently co-created a virtual performance as part of an arts residency at The Center at West Park on NYC’s Upper West Side.

Kristen Duffy Young ‘80 was co-director of the Colleges of the Fenway (COF) Center for Performing Arts in Boston. Mass. Kristen founded the COF Dance program in 2006 and has worked to develop inclusive programming and increase participation to over 150 students per year. In this new role, she will oversee the dance, theater, and music programs and seek collaborative opportunities across member institutions: Simmons University, Emmanuel College, Mass Art, Mass College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Wentworth Institute.

Donna Davenport

Kristen Duffy Young

Current Dance Student News

As part of her senior thesis project, dance major Rachel Marchica ‘21 co-founded a weekly podcast series titled, “Movement for Change,” designed to give dance students the chance to hear from professionals in the field on topics like injury prevention, mental health, fueling for performance, increasing accessibility in the arts, and more. Marchica and co-host Nicole Testa from Boston Univer-sity are planning to continue to post interviews to the podcast, which has been downloaded close to 800 times so far.

Departure

Associate Professor Paul A. Dennis, a Dance Program faculty member for 14 years, is leaving to become chair of the dance depart-ment at Hunter College in New York City. During his tenure at UMass, Dennis taught modern dance and served as director of the University Dancers ensemble, as well as the New York Professional Outreach Program (NYPOP).

A graduate of The Juilliard School (BFA) and Purchase College Conservatory of Dance (MFA), he was also Festival Director of the White Mountain Summer Dance Festival and a former member of the José Limón Dance Company. Most recently, Dennis performed Daniel Nagrin’s seminal Indeterminate Figure in Dogtown Dance Theater’s first limited capacity in-person performance in April/May 2021. He has served as master teacher for the American College Dance Association, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Limón Dance Company, and Teatro Cantiere Florida, Florence, Italy.

Dennis has choreographed for various fes-tivals and concerts as well as musical theater; he has reconstructed and restaged seminal masterpieces by Pearl Primus (Michael Row Your Boat and Negro Speaks of Rivers), José Limón (A Choreographic Offering, The Trai-tor, and The Tragedy) as well as works by Ted Shawn and Doris Humphrey.

In recent years, Dennis has been deeply involved with the organization Movement Intervention for Neurodegenerative Disease (MIND), working directly with Huntington’s Disease patients. He has given presentations at conferences and training programs, and provided dance therapy sessions at Tewksbury Hospital and Western Massachusetts Hospital in Westfield, Mass.

The UMass Department of Music and Dance wishes to express its gratitude to Paul Dennis for his contributions to the Dance Program, his dedication, creativity, energy and spirit. We wish him all the best in his new position.

Dance Faculty News

Jazz Dance lecturer Lauren Cox continued her work as co-creator and choreographer of SPACES by Kamera Productions, an international, immersive storytelling and dance project that started in Harlem, N.Y., and expanded to Oakland, Cali., and St. Denis, France. SPACES merges contempo-rary performance with the ancient art of storytelling, where audience members embark on a journey through music, dance and multimedia imagery, led by charismatic dancers who double as silent guides. In June, SPACES had sold-out per-formances in Oakland; the project moves on to St. Denis later this year.

Lauren Cox

Erik Johnson-Narbonne

Dance Faculty

On December 12, the UMass Dance Pro-gram held a virtual “MVP 85th Birthday Gala Celebration” to pay tribute to its founder, Marilyn V. Patton. A longtime resident of Amherst, Patton served as the program’s first director from 1965 through 1992, having built the program from a handful of classes originally based within the physical education department. She was also the first director of the Five College Dance Program. Last year, the university honored her with the establish-ment of the Marilyn V. Patton University Dancers Endowment (see page 24 for information).
In February, Daniel Albert gave presentations at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) biennial conference (combined preK–12 music research and teacher education), including a research paper, “Influential Structural Components of an Education Program” and a practitioner session, “Creating, Responding, and Connecting in the Ensemble Setting.” Albert also presented at the NAfME Eastern Division Conference in April, and had a research study printed in the prestigious International Journal of Music Education in August of 2020.

Eric Berlin performed as guest principal trumpet with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in June under famed conductor Leonard Slatkin. Berlin played in performances of Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi and William Grant Still’s Highway 1, USA, after being called in at the last minute to play without any rehearsals. Berlin is also a member of the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, which recently received a Grammy nomination for Best Opera Recording for Norman Dello Joio’s Perspectives 13.

Cobus du Toit released a set of three CDs in 2019–20 on Naos Records featuring performances of Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi and Bach-Busoni Goldberg Variations, with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Bach-Busoni Goldberg Variations Reimagined. On October 8, 2020, Professor of Piano Nadine Shank passed away at age 65. Her importance to the department is difficult to put into words. During her more than 40 years at UMass, Shank established a thriving Collaborative Piano studio and helped to institute the master’s in collaborative piano degree program. She also performed and recorded with a wide range of artists and ensembles, and served for 35 years as principal pianist with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. She released 18 recordings on a variety of labels, including numerous “Play-Along” CDs of saxophone and clarinet literature for Open Loop. Her joyful “Nadine and Friends” recitals were a mainstay of spring semesters at UMass.

Salvatore Macchia, department chair, wrote, “She was beloved by her students, admired and respected by her colleagues, and dedicated to her role as teacher, mentor, and performer. Nadine was generous in every way to her students, her colleagues, and the department. She played numerous concerts with our undergraduate and graduate wind players; for many of them, this experience was the high point of their UMass career.”

In July of 2020, while she was still able to play at a high level, Shank organized a series of recording sessions in Bezanson Hall, which took place under strict COVID-19 protocols. With her typical mixture of courage, determination and grace, she recorded with longtime performing partners Lynn Klock (saxophone), Estela Olevsky (piano), current faculty colleagues Edward Arron (cello) and Gilles Vonsat (piano), as well as with eleven-year-old Cynthia Tian (violin) and former students Hannah Berube (clarinet) and Roxanne Welch (soprano). Four months after Shank’s passing, the department aired a video of the recordings, titled “Celestial Graces: A Remembrance of Nadine Shank,” on YouTube. The recordings, many of which can still be viewed on the department’s YouTube channel, stand as a fitting tribute to Shank’s legacy as a performer, educator, and mentor.

Gary S. Karpinski’s influential book, Aural Skills Acquisition, was the subject of a special session celebrating the 20th anniversary of its release at the Society for Music Theory’s annual meeting in November. The session was chaired by Texas State University’s Cynthia J. Gonzales, who also presented along with Timothy Chenette (Utah State University) and Leigh Van-Handel (University of British Columbia). Published by Oxford University Press, the book has become one of the standard texts in ear training classes. In February, Karpinski was also a subject of an hour-long episode of the Note Doctors podcast, which highlights innovative practices with regard to teaching music theory in higher education.

Erinn Knyt had two articles published in prestigious musicology journals: “The Bach-Busoni Goldberg Variations” in Bach Perspectives 13 and “Ferruccio Busoni, the 20th Century French Composer Jacques Castérède.” The first of the CDs received a Critic’s Choice Award from American Record Guide, the nation’s oldest classical music review magazine. Reviewer Todd Gorman wrote of du Toit, “He has a pure sound and plays fantastically well. These performances seem well thought out and would be difficult to surpass.”

In November, Jeffrey W. Holmes successfully produced the department’s 46th annual Multiband Pops in an entirely virtual format. Holmes was also quoted in DownBeat magazine’s article about remote learning during the pandemic. In discussing the approach of the UMass JAAMS program, he commented on how online learning has actually served to help to foster a supportive and equitable environment in which to work and practice, adding that both faculty and students have in fact been “all helping one another” through the process.

Gary S. Karpinski was also invited to present at many virtual conferences, including Birmingham Baroque, Teaching Music History Day, Music and the Moving Image, Nineteenth Century Studies Association, and the American Musicological Society, New England Chapter. In April, she coordinated the department’s biennial Bach Symposium and gave a talk titled “J.S. Bach’s Goldberg Variations Reimagined.” Lisa Lehmborg served as a guest speaker for the 2021 International Fine Arts Education Symposium, which originated at Cumhuriyet University in Sivas, Turkey. Lehmborg’s research presentation, given via Zoom, was titled “Music Making and Connection in Older Adulthood.” During the 2020–21 academic year, Lehmborg participated in the TIDE (Teaching for Inclusiveness, Diversity and Equity) Ambassador Fellowship program, working with the other 11 faculty fellows to catalyze change through intensive professional development. The fellows explored ways to enhance students’ learning and academic success across cultural, social, and learning differences.

Evan MacCarthy has been elected president of the New England Chapter of the American Musicological Society (AMS) for a two-year term. The AMS is the nation’s foremost organization dedicated to musicology; the New England Chapter has 150 active members. In May, MacCarthy presided over chapter’s spring meeting, which was hosted online by the Department of Music & Dance. MacCarthy also serves as the Discipline Representa
tive for Music for the Renaissance Society of America and on the Advisory Board of the Sewanee Medieval Colloquium.

Brian Holmes was also the subject of an hour-long presentation in the online workshop series entitled “Chicago Footworkology Music Edition” to UMass Amherst. Chicago Footwork is a music and dance style that was created by AfricanAmerican artist in Chicago during the 1990s. Piilonen writes, “As a music theorist, learning Chicago Footwork and
giving back to the artists who created this uniquely emotional and highly technical form of music and dance has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. Sharing that gift with my students and peers is a top priority for my work at UMass.”

Emiliano Ricciardi had two books accepted for publication in Brepols Publishers’ Epitome Musical series devoted to early music. One is his monograph, Singing Lyric Poetry in the Late Cinquecento: The Musical Legacy of Torquato Tasso’s Rime; the other is a collection of essays (of which he is editor and contributor) entitled Quel musicò gentil?: New Perspectives on Torquato Tasso and Early Modern Music. Ricciardi’s Tasso in Music Project received honorable mention for the Digital Innovation Award of the Renaissance Society of America. In May, Ricciardi organized a final performance related to the Panathenäenzug conducted by Mario Venzago (Strauss’ Don Giovanni) with those with the Bern Symphony Orchestra for the Left Hand Piano Concerto K. 467, Spoleto USA, and the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach. Vonsattel also appeared live as soloist with the Augusta and Huntsville Symphony Orchestras and performed frequently in recital with artists and friends. To view, please visit fineartcenter.com/yuseflateef100.

In April, the Library of Congress presented a virtual performance of Frederick C. Tillis’ Song for Sister Hokkaido in a recording from the previous fall. On April 30, the department marked the one-year anniversary of Tillis’ passing with a video tribute aired on YouTube prior to the broadcast of the 40th Annual Jazz Showcase. Created in cooperation with Tillis’ daughter, Pamela Tillis, the video featured performance footage from a February 2020 concert at which Tillis was honored in person on his 90th birthday. The department is planning a multi-day musical and scholarly remembrance of Tillis in February 2020 concert at which Tillis was honored in person on his 90th birthday.

Departure

Robertta Montemorra Marvin, department chair from 2016–2019, officially retired from the university in January. During her tenure, Marvin spearheaded a complete review of the department’s curriculum, an effort which led to the establishment of new bachelor of arts degrees and an expansion of certificate program offerings, including a new professional performance certificate for graduate students. Last year, Marvin edited the new book, Music in World War II: Coping with Wartime in Europe and the United States, along with Pamela M. Potter and Christina L. Baade, and also wrote the book’s preface.

This spring, David Sporny received the 2021 Neill Humfeld Award from the International Trombone Association. The award recognizes outstanding trombone teaching while honoring the late Neill Humfeld. Professor Sporny was on the faculty at UMass from 1982–2010, leading the trombone studio, directing the Chapel Jazz Ensemble and Trombone Choir, and performing frequently in recital with the Faculty Brass Quintet and the Ancora Chamber Ensemble. As a performer, he has collaborated with such musicians as Yo-Yo Ma, Nancy Wilson, Aretha Franklin, Dave Brubeck, Max Roach, and Billy Taylor, and has recorded 12 albums and 15 CDs.

In October, renowned composer, instrumentalist and teacher Yusef Lateef (1930–2013) was honored in memoriam on his 100th birthday by the Department of Music and Dance and the Fine Arts Center. A member of the department for 15 years, Lateef was a prolific, Grammy-winning musician who also explored artistic realms such as writing, philosophy, and painting. His many honors included his selection as a jazz master by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2010. The department posted a special page about Lateef to their website, which included remembrances from former colleagues Salvatore Macchia and Jeffrey W. Holmes, and also featured his music on the 40th Annual Jazz Showcase. The Fine Arts Center presented “Yusef Lateef: A Centenary Celebration,” featuring an array of performances, discussions, readings, and art exhibitions, along with video tributes by artists and friends. To view, please visit fineartcenter.com/yuseflateef100.

Congratulations to Ayano Kataoka, Lisa Lehmburg, and Gilles Vonsattel on their promotion to full professor, and to Jonathan Hulting-Cohen, Jamie-Rose Guarrine, and Josh Michal on being named associate professors with tenure!

Nikki Stoia, who has loyalty served the department in numerous capacities for the past 30 years, announced her retirement this past spring. Stoia’s contributions to our students and our programs are legion. In 1989, she enrolled as a graduate student at UMass at the suggestion of then-chair Ernest May. She studied piano with Estela Olevsky and took classes with Nadine Shank, and in 1991 became one of the first graduates from Shank’s newly established Collaborative Piano master’s program. By then, Stoia was accompanying the Springfield (Mass.) Symphony Chorus, she was eventually named the ensemble’s director in 2006, a position which she still holds.

Stoia began working for the department immediately after earning her master’s degree, accompanying students and faculty from a variety of studios in countless recitals. Her natural skills as a pianist and her talent for languages quickly made her an indispensable part of our music pro- gram. Trombone Professor Gregory Spiridopoulos, a longtime collabora- tor, commented, “Nikki is so many things to so many people at UMass, but first and foremost to me she is a musician of the highest caliber.” Her role with the department soon expanded to include teaching music appreciation, sophomore theory, and vocal repertoire as a senior lecturer, and also co-directing the Opera Workshop for several years. Among her many contributions to the department and the UMass community, it is her work as an advisor that stands out. Stoia began volunteering at the former College of Arts and Sciences advising center in the early 1990s, and immediately found parallels between that work and her role in mentoring and inspiring students in preparation for their recitals. She later went on to become the department’s chief undergradu- ate advisor, bringing structure and focus to those efforts. Her success as an advisor eventually led her to being named associ- ate dean of undergraduate education for the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (HFA), while continuing to serve as the department’s prima- ry advisor, the music honors program director, and also teaching and accompanying faculty and student recitals. Her dedication to her role as a mentor often meant scheduling advising sessions during evenings and weekends to accommodate students’ dense schedules. In 2006, the uni- versity presented Stoia with the Outstanding Academic Advisor Award in recognition of her efforts.

Despite this workload, Stoia’s trademark enthusiasm and positivity never wavered, even as she continued to work full time while undergoing seven months of cancer treatment; she commented at the time that she felt fortunate to continue doing such meaningful and creative work.

Department Chair Salvatore Macchia has who has worked alongside Stoia for decades both at UMass and at the Springfield Symphony, called her a “force of nature,” a description that would ring true to anyone who has come into contact with her. “She has contributed mightily to the success of generations of talented students—the department is deeply indebted to Nikki for her many years of selfless dedication.”

Stoia is looking forward to returning to campus periodically to work on various HFA projects, perform in recitals, and continue as music director of the UMass Unions United Labor Chorus. She is especially happy to be donating a piano to the department’s new recording studio on the fourth-floor of the Fine Arts Center.

Stoia was accompanying the Springfield (Mass.) Symphony Chorus, she was eventually named the ensemble’s director in 2006, a position which she still holds.

Nikki Stoia

A Most Notable Contributor to the Department and College Retires

Former Faculty

Gilles Vonsattel managed to maintain an active performance schedule despite the pandemic. Live appearances included those with the Bern Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mario Venzago (Strauss’ Panathenäenzug for the Left Hand), as well as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Kent Nagano (Mozart Piano Concerto K. 467), Spoleto USA, and the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach. Vonsattel also appeared live as soloist with the Augusta and Huntsville Symphonies, and created virtual content and livestreamed performances for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Music@Menlo, Camerata Pacifica, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and more.

David Sporny

Robertta Montemorra Marvin, department chair from 2016–2019, officially retired from the university in January. During her tenure, Marvin spearheaded a complete review of the department’s curriculum, an effort which led to the establishment of new bachelor of arts degrees and an expansion of certificate program offerings, including a new professional performance certificate for graduate students. Last year, Marvin edited the new book, Music in World War II: Coping with Wartime in Europe and the United States, along with Pamela M. Potter and Christina L. Baade, and also wrote the book’s preface.

This spring, David Sporny received the 2021 Neill Humfeld Award from the International Trombone Association. The award recognizes outstanding trombone teaching while honoring the late Neill Humfeld. Professor Sporny was on the faculty at UMass from 1982–2010, leading the trombone studio, directing the Chapel Jazz Ensemble and Trombone Choir, and performing frequently in recital with the Faculty Brass Quintet and the Ancora Chamber Ensemble. As a performer, he has collaborated with such musicians as Yo-Yo Ma, Nancy Wilson, Aretha Franklin, Dave Brubeck, Max Roach, and Billy Taylor, and has recorded 12 albums and 15 CDs.

In April, the Library of Congress presented a virtual performance of Frederick C. Tillis’ Song for Sister Hokkaido in a recording from the previous fall. On April 30, the department marked the one-year anniversary of Tillis’ passing with a video tribute aired on YouTube prior to the broadcast of the 40th Annual Jazz Showcase. Created in cooperation with Tillis’ daughter, Pamela Tillis, the video featured performance footage from a February 2020 concert at which Tillis was honored in person on his 90th birthday. The department is planning a multi-day musical and scholarly remembrance of Tillis in February 2020 concert at which Tillis was honored in person on his 90th birthday.

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Stoia was accompanying the Springfield (Mass.) Symphony Chorus, she was eventually named the ensemble’s director in 2006, a position which she still holds.
Provides scholarships for up to 12 young singers interested in gaining valuable experience and contacts within the industry. Although her work with the ensemble was done largely remotely, Huetteman is “ecstatic” to be joining the program’s soprano section for in-person workshops and performances in the fall. Huetteman lives in Providence, R.I., where she teaches voice at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School, sings with the professional choir Collegium Ancora, and directs the choir at Bell Street Chapel UU. Her forthcoming yoga teacher certification will enable her to further her practice of incorporating yoga and trauma-informed voice care into her teaching.

Kailimi (Shelley) Li ’18PhD recently published an article in the peer-reviewed journal Frontiers in Psychology, with co-authors Limman Wong and Xueqiang Wang. The article is titled “The State of Music Therapy Studies in the Past 20 Years: A Bibliometric Analysis.” Li is on the faculty at Shanghai University of Sport in China.

Vidulist Joanna Ruth Livioso-Tumpalan ’17MM recently opened the Play It Forward School of Music, a new community school with her husband, percussionist Cyd Tumpalan ’15MM along with her sisters and brother-in-law. While the school began virtually, it now has a physical location in Pompton Plains, N.J., and its founders are excited to see their students in person in the fall. Alongside teaching, Cyd and Ruth also play as a violin-percussion duo and have the privilege to perform at a holiday gathering at the White House last December.

As director of strings at New Jersey City University, Martha Mooke ’88MM has developed the first of its kind MultiStyle Strings Program, an approach which “embraces all styles of music, technology and improvisation” to assist 21st century string players to develop their potential. Mooke also recently appeared with Phoebe Bridges in the Virtual Tibet House Benefit Concert produced by Philip Glass, released the album, "Buzz: Music in Harmony with Nature," by Philip Glass, released the album, "Buzz: Music in Harmony with Nature," and presented numerous workshops and livestreamed performances, including a virtual tour of Latin America presented by the Audio Engineering Society in collaboration with Eventide Audio. She recently published a collection of her unique string sounds on the Sonic Collective series of Splice Sounds.

Haneef N. Nelson ’20MM is the instructor for Music Composition, Levels 1 and 2, offered by the Springfield (Mass.) Symphony Orchestra to members of their Youth Orchestras, and other 6-12th graders. A trumpeter, composer, arranger, and educator, Nelson has taught at Community Music School of Springfield, Hartt School of Music, Amherst College, Keene State College, and currently serves as professor of jazz history at the University of Rhode Island. He also teaches privately, offers masterclasses and workshops, and records and performs with many gospel and jazz artists.

Joanna Ruth Livioso-Tumpalan and Cyd Tumpalan at the White House.

Heidi Sarver with Fighting’ Blue Hen drum majors.

Alyssia Bree Walls ’15MM published an article based on her master’s thesis research at UMass. The article, published in the Danish Yearbook of Musicology 44 (2020–21) is titled “An Educational Example: Hanns Eisler’s Das Vorbild Revisited.” She is currently completing a PhD in musicology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
New Recordings by Music Faculty in 2020–21

Last year, instrumental jazz faculty members Jeff Holmes (pianotrompet), Tom Giampietro (drums), Fumi Tomita (double bass) and Felipe Salles (saxophones) released a new CD of their original music on Summit Records, their first recording as a group. The CD’s title, “HGT5,” which is an acronym of their last names. The CD includes nine original tunes written by the four artists: “Not at All,” “... and then they played...,” and “Thombush” by Holmes, “Again Says Julia” and “Faith Rewarded” by Giampietro; “Rowley Street” and “Minnesota in Montana” by Tomita and “Unintentional Higness” and “Arrival” by Salles. Legendary jazz trumpeter and composer Randy Brecker wrote that the recording “is just a first-class endeavor, with wonderfully melodic yet some complex original compositions in different ‘bags’ by all, and great playing no matter what ‘bag’ they are in!”

In August 2020, hornist Joshua Michael released his first solo CD, titled Exphrasis, on MSR Classics. The CD’s title is taken from a work of the same name by Department Chair Salvatore Macchia. That piece and the four others on the CD are all premiere recordings of works for horn and electronics composed by Giampietro, all of which are autobiographical in nature. “The album as a whole represents a broad picture timeline of my life as I see it now,” commented Giampietro in the CD’s liner notes. He added, “The magnitude of our successes, failures, joys, sorrows, challenges and triumphs inevitably change as we gain perspective—sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.” Grammy-winning saxophonist Jeff Coffin described the CD as “astellar, stand-out recording with some of the finest improvisors on today’s scene.”

In January, cellist Edward Arron and pianist Jeevon Park released a recording of Beethoven’s complete works for cello and piano on the Aeolian Classics label. The two-disc CD was recorded, engineered and mastered by Adam Abashouse; a Grammy Award winner (Classical Producer of the Year, 2000). Arron describes Beethoven’s five sonatas and three sets of variations for cello and piano as “arguably the most significant contributions to the cello/ piano duo repertoire by a single composer,” adding that the CD stands as the culmination of his and Park’s first 20 years of work together on these pieces. The CD, which was funded in part by the Faculty Research Grant and the university’s Office of the Vice Chancellor for Faculty Research Grant and the university’s Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, received the Sam Houston Collaborative Artists’ Award from the Classical Recording Foundation.

Violinist Elizabeth Chang released her new CD, Transformations, on Albany Records in April 2021. Like Arron’s new CD, Chang’s release was produced, engineered and mastered by Adam Abashouse; pianist Steven Beck and cellist Alberto Pansini are featured performers. The CD features Leon Kirchner’s Duo No. 2 for Violin and Piano, Roger Sessions’ Sonata for Violin and Duo for Violin and Cello, and Arnold Schoenberg’s Phantasy for Violin with Piano Accompaniment. The recording is rooted in cross-generational connections; at Harvard, Chang studied under Kirchner, who in turn studied with both Sessions and Schoenberg. Chang describes Kirchner as having had a “profound artistic and pedagogical influence” on her. Classical music reviewer Remy Franck lauded Chang’s for her “virtuosity and brilliant” playing on Sessions’ solo sonata, and her interpretation of his Adagio as “gorgously tender, like a modern lullaby.”

Also in April, saxophonist Jonathan Hulting-Cohen released a new solo recording, titled Second Flight on Innova Recordings. The CD is titled after a work of the same name by Joan Tower, who was inspired by the parallels between the limitless nature of flight and the saxophone’s wide range and flexibility. Hulting-Cohen describes how he worked with each commissioned composer and later with sound engineers “to illuminate the edges of timbre, genre, and aesthetic” to reflect the concepts of movement and soaring in flight. Other featured composers are Salvatore Macchia, Felipe Salles, Ingrid Arauco, Rodrux Mahanathappa, Stephen Rush, Annaïk Socolowsky, and Eric Wubbels. Joining Hulting-Cohen on the release are Nicholas Shaneyfelt (11MM (piano), Rodrux Mahanathappa (saxophone) and Dennis Sullivan (drums).
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The Fine Arts Center fourth floor bridge now features natural light-filled classrooms, study areas, and a recording studio. (See article on page 13.)