

A TEMPO



Tyshawn Sorey conducts students from Curtis and Drexel University

From Street Corner to Storefront

Rehearsing Philadelphia Embraces the City

AS WINTER TURNED TO spring, Curtis students fanned out across Philadelphia as part of Rehearsing Philadelphia, a sprawling performance project that encompassed street corner vocal duets, gallery concerts, a multi-genre orchestra, and the talents of city employees. Produced and presented by Curtis and Drexel University's Westphal College of Media Arts and Design, the project spanned two weeks in late March and early April and carried an idealistic premise: to use music to unite everyday Philadelphians in an era of isolation and social upheaval.

Some 67 free performances were split among four components. For the Duet component, 25 students from the Curtis Opera Theatre joined members of two choirs—the Philadelphia Heritage Chorale and Singing City—around Clark Park, in Philadelphia's Spruce Hill neighborhood. Singers approached passersby with a simple question: "Would you like to sing with



me?” If answered “yes,” the singer taught the stranger *Duet*, a two-part score by Ari Benjamin Meyers, a Berlin-based American artist who is the creator of Rehearsing Philadelphia.

“The idea is to challenge how we perform, and [explore] what is rehearsal and what is performance,” says Mary Javian, chair of career studies who, together with Dean Paul Bryan, led the project at Curtis through her Social Entrepreneur course. “We’re challenging the idea that there is some perfect product that you put out into the world.”

Another component, Ensemble, brought together small groups of students from Curtis and Drexel to perform newly composed or adapted works by Tyshawn Sorey and Zoë Keating. Performances also featured the Dover Quartet (String Quartet '14 and current faculty) and took place at the Pearlstein Gallery at Drexel University.

The module known as Solo considered power structures by highlighting the talents of public servants, including a Philadelphia police officer, a City Hall employee, and an attorney at Community Legal Services. And the Orchestra component gathered 50 musicians representing what Ms. Javian called a “genre-agnostic” philosophy. Instrumentation spanned the tango bandoneon and lute-like oud to the horn and Korean percussion. Following rehearsals at Curtis, the event took place at Cherry Street Pier.

With a \$700,000 grant from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, the project was two years in the making. “It came out of this time of the virus and the racial reckoning,” Javian explained. “Curtis is a rich part of Philadelphia’s history, but it isn’t always known and doesn’t always reach out in such a deep way to connect.”

More information, including a map of project locations, is available at rehearsingphiladelphia.com.



Viano String Quartet

Curtis Musicians Raise Money, Awareness for Ukraine Relief

Fundraising concerts include a rare multi-conservatory venture.

→ **THE CURTIS COMMUNITY** gathered for multiple fundraising concerts this spring to support humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine.

Curtis was one of eight music conservatories and professional training programs that organized a virtual concert fundraiser on April 16, streamed on The Violin Channel and hosted by Curtis faculty member Midori. Viewers were invited to give to a selection of aid-related charities.

“Like many in the world, we, at music conservatories—teaching staff and students alike—are galvanized by the senseless, gruesome war happening in Ukraine,” said Midori in her opening remarks. “How can we stay uninvolved? To so many of us, that is simply not an option.”

The Viano String Quartet, Curtis’s string quartet in residence for the 2021-22 school year, presented a movement from Bartók’s String Quartet No. 5. The other contributing organizations were the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Colburn School, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, New World Symphony, Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and San Francisco Conservatory. The performances included a Schubert sonata, jazz, klezmer music, and a Ukrainian melody for string orchestra.

A month earlier, on March 14, a group of Curtis students, faculty, and alumni assembled at St. Mark’s Church in Philadelphia to raise funds for Ukrainian relief. The chamber music concert raised just over \$4,000 for the Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund at Global Giving, an organization that connects nonprofit groups with donors.

The concert was organized by bassoon faculty member Daniel Matsukawa, who, together with Ukrainian-born violinist Solomiya Ivakhiv (Violin '03), performed a duo by Ukrainian composer Julia Gomelskaya. The program also featured works by Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, and Poulenc.

Benjamin
Beilman



→ **TWO VIOLIN ALUMNI** are joining the Curtis faculty this fall: Benjamin Beilman (Violin '12) and Erin Keefe (Violin '03). Both will teach individual lessons and hold chamber and orchestral coachings, becoming part of a seven-member violin faculty that includes their former teacher, Ida Kavafian.

“They check every box,” said Ms. Kavafian, citing their “incredible musicianship, integrity, stellar violin playing, musical knowledge, and continuity of the great Curtis violin tradition.”

Ms. Keefe will commute to Philadelphia from Minneapolis, where she has been concertmaster of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2011. Mr. Beilman is based in New York and regularly performs as a recitalist and as a soloist with some of the world’s leading orchestras.

→ **COMPOSITION FACULTY GROWS BY FOUR**

Curtis’s composition faculty is also expanding. The school announced in May the addition of four composers to its ranks: Nick DiBerardino ('18), Jonathan Bailey Holland ('96), Amy Beth Kirsten, and Steven Mackey. They will work with Curtis students alongside current faculty member Richard Danielpour.

Mr. DiBerardino has served as Curtis’s director of composition studies and Ensemble 20/21 since July 2021. He holds a post-baccalaureate diploma from Curtis along with degrees from Princeton University, the University of Oxford, and the Yale School of Music.

A former composer in residence with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Holland holds a B.M. from Curtis and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is the incoming head of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music.

Dr. Kirsten is known for her multimedia theatrical collaborations. She holds degrees from Roosevelt University and the Peabody Institute, and is also director of the artist residency at the Longy School of Music of Bard College.

Dr. Mackey has been a professor of music at Princeton University for the past 35 years. An electric guitarist, his music has drawn on the gestures of rock music and improvisation.

New Faculty

Violin, Oboe,
and Composition

→ **KATHERINE NEEDLEMAN AND PHILIPPE TONDRE JOIN OBOE FACULTY**

In another two-pronged appointment, Curtis announced in April that two oboists will lead the oboe studio. Philippe Tondre and Katherine Needleman (Oboe '99), principal oboists of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, respectively, will jointly lead the department starting this fall.

Mr. Tondre and Ms. Needleman represent different, but complementary, schools of playing. The French-born Mr. Tondre comes from a European pedagogical tradition while Ms. Needleman, who studied at Curtis, represents an American style and training. Both artists will teach lessons as well as chamber music coachings.

Ms. Needleman joined the Baltimore Symphony in 2003; Mr. Tondre joined the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2020.



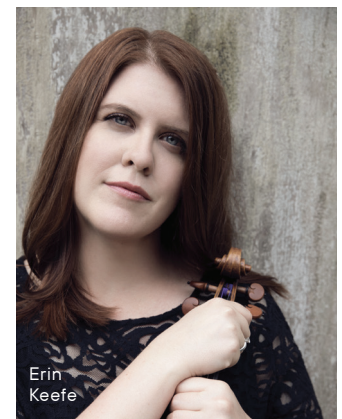
Steven Mackey, Nick DiBerardino,
Amy Beth Kirsten, Jonathan Bailey
Holland



Katherine
Needleman



Philippe
Tondre



Erin
Keefe



All-School Project Focuses on Civil Rights Era

A reflection from the chair of Curtis’s liberal arts department.

BY JEANNE M. MCGINN

→ **THE INVITATION** IN my mailbox was to meet with the new president of Curtis.

Curiosity? Trepidation?

As I gathered with others in President Díaz’s office one day in 2007, I never imagined that the conversation would launch a program that would animate curricular offerings for more than a decade.

Early all-school projects garnered *New York Times* attention for innovative approaches to holistic pedagogies. Whether in readings of Beethoven’s late quartets or by pouring over the composer’s letters, students found resonances between stage and classroom work.

That first question: “Can we collaborate?” has become the hallmark of multi-year investigations into artistic movements, cultural capitals, iconic literature, and explorations of biodiversity.

This year was no exception. Through *The Civil Rights Era and the Music of Change*, we examined and contextualized artistic outpourings between 1950 and 1975. In musical studies, liberal arts, and career studies classes, as well as in Curtis recitals, performances, and the citywide project (see page 3), we asked: How did the work of artists provide the impetus for a nation to reckon with injustice and to begin to change? Courses such as “The Age of Aquarius,” “Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement,” “Global Social Movements, Universal Music,” “Musical Improvisation in Theory and Practice,” and “Works of George Walker and Samuel Barber” provided rich resources for students to carry with them to performances that, in turn, become catalysts of change.

The all-school project that began with a question continues to challenge, excite, and invite faculty and students to examine their part in the music of change.



Faculty and Staff Anniversaries

50 YEARS

Paul Krzywicki

35 YEARS

Susan Nowicki
Keiko Sato

25 YEARS

Roberto Díaz
David Bilger
Blair Bollinger

Richard Danielpour
Ida Kavafian

20 YEARS

Alan Morrison
Daniel Matsukawa

15 YEARS

Shmuel Ashkenasi
Gordana–Dana Grozdanic
Robert McDonald

Jennifer Montone

10 YEARS

Barbara Benedett
Mia Chung
Jeffrey Lang
Reese Revak
Michael Rusinek
Leon Schelhase
Matthew Vaughn

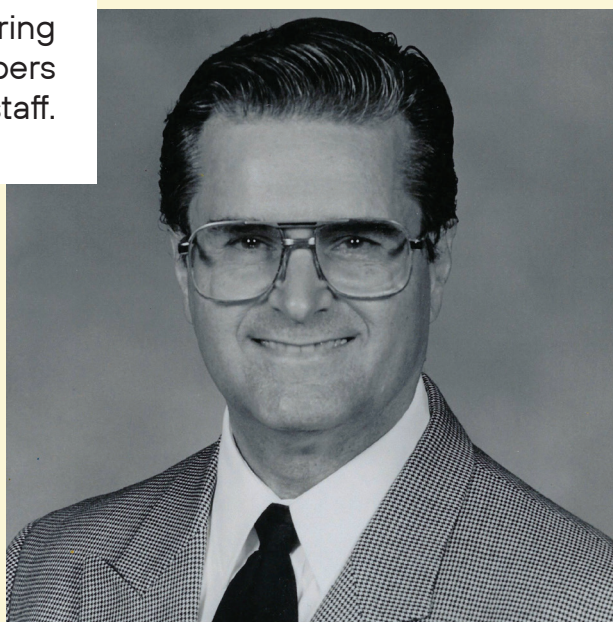
5 YEARS

Stefano Baldasseroni
Ed Gazouleas
Elaine Li
Belmary Lorcas
Matt Morgan
Bill Schuman
Manuel Sosa
Ting Ting Wong

In Memoriam

Remembering longtime members of the Curtis staff.

Top photo:
Charles
Sterne III;
Bottom photo:
Richard Crittenden



→ **CURTIS MOURNS THE** loss of friend and former longtime staff member Charles “Chuck” Sterne III, who passed away on January 9, at age 74, from cancer.

Mr. Sterne was a dedicated member of Curtis’s development and advancement departments for 27 years, from February 1993 until his retirement as director of principal gifts and planned giving in December 2020. In those nearly three decades, Mr. Sterne led important fundraising initiatives at the school, including the campaign to develop Lenfest Hall and the creation of The Founder’s Society. His work helped transform the school and contributed significantly to its long-term financial stability.

Upon Mr. Sterne’s retirement, Curtis announced that the first floor reading room of the library would be renamed in his honor. Mr. Sterne had always loved that room—he found it to be a place of solace and of inspiration for writing many important proposals. Curtis hopes that its community will also find both solace and inspiration in the Sterne Reading Room for years to come.

Mr. Sterne’s dedication to Curtis extended far beyond his daily job functions. He genuinely cared about the school and the Curtis community and was truly devoted to its students, alumni, faculty, staff, trustees, and donors.

He was generous with his time, resources, knowledge, and words of encouragement. But most importantly, Chuck was a friend and a much-valued member of the Curtis family.

Curtis extends its heartfelt sympathies to his wife, Eileen, and to his daughters, as well as to all his friends, family, and colleagues. He will be greatly missed.

→ **OPERA DIRECTOR AND** baritone Richard Crittenden, who served as a stage director at Curtis from 1976 to 1987, died on November 19 at age 83. The cause was prostate cancer, his daughter, Carol Crittenden, said.

A passionate educator, Mr. Crittenden taught voice and directed Curtis productions of operas by composers from Mozart to Poulenc. Among his credits was a 1984 staging of Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah* in the auditorium at Wanamaker’s department store. He also taught at the Yale University School of Music, Mannes School of Music, and New York University. For more than 50 years he ran a series of summer workshops known as the Crittenden Opera Studio, taking place in Boston and Washington, D.C. and drawing up to 40 singers at a time.

Mr. Crittenden’s other directorial credits included operas at New York City Opera Theatre, Washington Civic Opera, the Utah Opera Theatre, and numerous regional companies in the New York City area.

Born in San Diego, Calif., Mr. Crittenden attended Occidental College in Los Angeles. He sang with the U.S. Army Chorus in the early 1960s and studied voice with the late baritone Todd Duncan. He was a longtime resident of Teaneck, N.J. Curtis extends its deepest condolences to Mr. Crittenden’s family and friends.