

OVERTONES



VOL. XLV, NO. 2 | FALL 2022



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Media Game



DAVID SWANSON

Remembering Ned Rorem

Ned Rorem (Composition '44), pictured (above, right) with André Previn, died November 18 in New York City. He was 99. A faculty member from 1980 to 2001, Mr. Rorem was a prolific author and a composer of hundreds of art songs, along with numerous orchestral and chamber works. In 1993, Mr. Previn, Gary Graffman, and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere in Philadelphia of Mr. Rorem's Piano Concerto No. 4 (for left hand). The work was dedicated to Mr. Graffman, whose subsequent performance at Carnegie Hall was described by the *New York Times* as "electrifying."

Read a full tribute at Curtis.edu/in-memoriam.

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1726 Locust Street
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19103
(215) 893-5252

www.curtis.edu

Roberto Díaz
President and CEO

Brian Wise
Editor

Patricia K. Johnson
Vice President
of Communications

Ryan Lathan
Associate Director of
Communications

Editorial Advisory Group

Paul Bryan
Roberto Díaz
Nick DiBerardino
Philip J. Kass
Shea Scruggs

Contributors

Martina Adams
Vanessa Ague
Timothy Diovanni
Ryan Lathan
Kristen Manka-White
Jeremy Reynolds
Kristina Wilson

Art Direction

Michael Wilson/
Made Visible Studio

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by Jeremy Reynolds

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idea of what I wanted to do. I knew
I was interested in becoming
financially independent early on,
and I’ve always had an interest in
orchestral work.”

— Takumi Taguchi (Violin '22),
Boston Symphony Orchestra



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FROM THE
PROVOST

A New Role at Curtis



IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE to welcome you to this issue of *Overtones*. I am honored to have been appointed as the school's first provost, in addition to my role as the Gie and Lisa Liem Artistic Director. It is a privilege to serve as Curtis's chief academic officer, to guide the school's artistic vision, and to collaborate with President Díaz, deans, faculty, and administrative staff to further Curtis's core educational mission.

Although my role as provost is new, I have a long association with the school—first as a student (Viola '84), then as a faculty member, and now as artistic director and provost. I have been an avid reader of Curtis's magazine for many years now and am continually fascinated by the many important and interesting stories there are to tell about Curtis, our people, our historic impact, and our pioneering vision.

As Curtis approaches our centenary in 2024, we reflect on our storied history and take pride in our role in nurturing some of the world's finest musicians. But we are also looking ahead to the future, building on the momentum of our first hundred years to propel us towards our next century and beyond.

This combination of reflection and aspiration is echoed throughout this issue of *Overtones*. Our cover story ("The Art of the Commission," p. 18) explores the importance of new music at conservatories, and the role Curtis has played—and continues to play—in developing the future of music. We sit down with Curtis's newest, dynamic faculty member, marimbist Ji Su Jung ("The Q+A," p. 8) who is blazing a trail in percussion. We evaluate the job market new graduates face in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and celebrate the varied career achievements of our recent graduates ("Career Overtures," p. 22). We also share tactics for social media (p. 10), news about Curtis's expanding digital footprint (p. 5), and take a peek into a newly-discovered story behind an artwork gifted to Mary Louise Curtis Bok (p. 14).

On behalf of the school and the *Overtones* editorial team, I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the magazine. We'd love to hear from you! Please send your feedback, as well as any suggestions for future content to overtones@curtis.edu. You can also view this and prior issues of the magazine online at Curtis.edu/Overtones.

Ed Gazouleas

GIE AND LISA LIEM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND PROVOST



A TEMPO



Rare Violin Rescued From Demolition Site Arrives at Curtis

The Gasparo da Salò "Ex-Kux"
is praised for its dark, rich sound.

A RARE, 16TH-CENTURY ITALIAN violin entered Curtis's instrument collection last spring, following a tumultuous journey worthy of a Hollywood screenplay.

The Gasparo da Salò "Ex-Kux" violin is a rare specimen, built in 1575, and one of about 80 surviving instruments by the Brescian maker. In the 20th century, it was owned by Wilhelm Kux, a prominent Viennese banker, followed by Joseph Malfitano, a violinist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, who played it from the 1950s through the '70s.

The violin's most recent owner was Avron Maletzky, a Seattle pediatrician and amateur violinist who promised it as a gift to Curtis. But over the years, Dr. Maletzky had forgotten where he left the instrument, and it was last seen around 2016.



Dr. Maletzky died in January 2021 at age 82, and his former Seattle home was slated for demolition. As an excavator moved in, scooping out sheetrock and insulation, the operator noticed the metal handle and leather strap of a violin case. It became clear that Dr. Maletzky had secreted the violin in the wall of an upstairs bathroom, and it was now within inches of the machine's trowel. Demolition was paused.

In December 2021, the building contractor brought the violin to Seattle luthiers Rafael and Mercedes Carrabba, who identified it after reading about its disappearance in an online copy of Curtis's alumni newsletter. "It looked like many instruments that had just been sitting in a closet for ten years," said Mr. Carrabba, who restored it to playing shape. "The strings were loose, and the bridge had fallen down. But it was in great condition."

The Carrabbas contacted Austin Stewart, Curtis's director of planned and major gifts, who confirmed the school's interest. After consultations with lawyers, the instrument arrived at Curtis on March 19 and was welcomed into the school's stringed instrument collection. Two violin students—Matthew Hakkarainen (Violin '22) and Jinyoung Yoon (Violin '22)—played it at a small gathering of friends and donors the following month.

Philip J. Kass, the curator of string instruments at Curtis, considers the violin a top example of Gasparo's craftsmanship, with "a dark, rich, buttery sound." As for its future at Curtis, he said, "There are generations of young musicians who will enjoy the experience of playing on a great violin that has 450 years of history behind it."

Mr. Carrabba agreed. "So many instruments, through war, fire, and accidents, are gone," he said. "It was *that* close for this great violin."



Paul Bryan

New Leadership Structure Brings Curtis Its First-Ever Provost

Paul Bryan will lead the school's accreditation efforts.

This past summer brought leadership changes to Curtis, as Paul Bryan stepped down as dean for a varied new role, and three other faculty were promoted to expanded new positions.

Ed Gazouleas (Viola '84), a member of Curtis's viola faculty since 2017, was named the school's first-ever provost, and now oversees education-related activities at the school. He continues as the Gie and Lisa Liem Artistic Director, a position he assumed in 2021.

Nick DiBerardino (Composition '18) was appointed senior associate dean of performance studies, adding to his directorship of the composition studies department and Ensemble 20/21. And Amy Yang (Piano '06), who has served on the piano faculty since 2011, became associate dean of piano studies and artistic initiatives.

Mr. Bryan (Trombone '93), who joined the staff in 1993 as assistant orchestra librarian and worked his way up to dean in 2013, now has an expansive new title: director of assessment and accreditation; musician life cycle consultant. He will continue to lead Curtis's institutional accreditation efforts, which primarily involve reporting to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

"It should be something that someone devotes their time to in a very dedicated manner," Mr. Bryan told *Overtones*. "The goal of accreditation is really to continuously improve what we do at Curtis. We are reporting to the Commission, and they are assessing us and overseeing our progress."

Mr. Bryan will also focus on the two bookends of what has become known as the "musician life cycle" at Curtis: prospective student engagement and alumni activities. Additionally, he is returning to the classroom for the first time in several years, teaching the undergraduate Elements of Conducting course, and an elective pedagogy course in the career studies department.

"With these positions Curtis will deepen and strengthen the ways we serve our students, faculty, and our entire community," Curtis President Roberto Díaz said in a message to faculty and staff.

Mr. Bryan now begins his sixth role in nearly 30 years as a staff member at Curtis. "I'm so happy and so grateful to continue at Curtis and to re-envision and recreate what I do for the school," he said.



Left: The Curtis Symphony Orchestra with conductor Osmo Vänskä. Below: Vince Ford (right) with lighting designer Christopher Frey.



Curtis Starts Its Own Label

Curtis builds its digital presence worldwide.

→ **THE CONSERVATORY IN** November announced the launch of Curtis Studio, a new in-house label designed to expand its global reach and make it possible for Curtis alumni, faculty, and students to create and release high-quality digital recordings. The debut recording, released December 6, features Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in a performance by conductor Osmo Vänskä and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra.

Curtis Studio recordings will be available on all major streaming platforms (including Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music), the result of an affiliation with Platoon, a London-based distributor. Video releases are also planned, to be available in Dolby Atmos on

Apple Music. Overseeing the initiative is Vince Ford, Curtis's senior vice president of digital strategy and innovation.

Curtis President and CEO Roberto Díaz expects Curtis Studio will expand the school's digital presence while enabling students to learn about the recording process. "The three pillars of Curtis—teaching, touring, and technology—will each be propelled by this groundbreaking initiative," he said. "Curtis Studio presents an opportunity to share our internationally renowned musicianship globally in an accessible way."

Future releases include a solo piano recording by Michelle Cann (Piano '13) featuring the works of Florence Price (Sonata in E minor and *Fantasia Nègre* Nos. 1, 2, and 4) and Margaret Bonds's *Spiritual Suite*. Also planned is the recording debut of Trio Zimbalist, and recordings by the Dover Quartet, the Penelope P. Wakins Ensemble in Residence.

The *Scheherazade* performance was part of Curtis's 2022 multimedia installation, *Immersive Scheherazade*, which invited audiences to sit alongside live musicians performing the work while surrounded by 30-foot-high projections of the orchestra. Mr. Ford said the virtuoso score offered an ideal starting point for the label. "We are thrilled to share these vibrant performances through Curtis Studio," he said.

More details are available at Curtis.edu/studio.

Remembering Nina von Maltzahn

The philanthropist was behind the largest gift in Curtis's modern history.

NINA BARONESS VON MALTZAHN, an American-Swiss philanthropist who endowed a host of key programs and positions at Curtis, died on May 22 at her home in Uruguay. She was 81 years old.

A global citizen who put down roots in Philadelphia, Uruguay and Berlin, Baroness von Maltzahn had a 15-year association with Curtis, in which she endowed faculty chairs in guitar and violin, the president's chair, and a student fellowship. Her support enabled the founding of the harp studio in Lenfest Hall, the string quartet program, and Curtis on Tour, and assisted alumni who were hit hard by the pandemic.

But most consequential was a \$55 million gift that she made in 2016—the largest since Curtis's founding—which endowed Curtis on Tour and the string quartet program, among other initiatives at the school.

Baroness von Maltzahn was introduced to Curtis in 2007 by trustee Robert Mundheim, a fellow patron of the American Academy of Berlin. That November, she pledged \$250,000 to create the Nina von Maltzahn Fellowship, held by one student annually. She joined Curtis's board of trustees in 2010, and was elected chair in 2014, serving in that capacity until 2016. Fellow board members knew her for her energy and passion for Curtis's mission. In 2021 she was named chair emerita.

"I was inspired to begin working with Curtis because it is crucial to me that my philanthropic efforts help children," the baroness told the newsletter of the American Academy of Berlin in 2012. In addition to her support of Curtis, she founded the Fundación Retoño,

a nonprofit organization that addresses educational inequities in Uruguay, and One Child, One World, a community-based organization in Athens.

Born Nina Maria Gorrissen on January 30, 1941, she was the daughter of a German banker and a journalist mother who emigrated to New York City on the eve of World War II. At age 15 she moved to Switzerland where she completed her education, and in 1970, married and relocated to Montevideo, Uruguay. She later divorced and worked in hotel marketing, before marrying Lothar von Maltzahn in 1990.

Baroness von Maltzahn was a polyglot, speaking seven languages. She studied piano as a child and became a lifelong opera lover after attending a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* with her grandmother.

"It is impossible to overstate Nina's impact on our school and our community," said President and CEO Roberto Díaz, who holds the Nina von Maltzahn President's Chair. "Although she will be hugely missed, she will never be forgotten—Nina is an indelible part of our school and our hearts."

Ms. von Maltzahn is survived by her husband, Lothar von Maltzahn, his three children and five grandchildren, and by her cousins Michael Kellen and Marina Kellen French and their adult children.



DAVID SWANSON

UPCOMING AT CURTIS

JANUARY

CURTIS PRESENTS TRIO ZIMBALIST

Wednesday, Jan 11 at 8 P.M.
Field Concert Hall

CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERRY, TCHAIKOVSKY, AND SHENG

Sunday, Jan 29 at 2 P.M.
Kimmel Cultural Campus, Verizon Hall

FEBRUARY

ENSEMBLE 20/21 MUSIC OF THE EARTH

Saturday, Feb 11 at 8 P.M.
Gould Rehearsal Hall

CURTIS PRESENTS ROSAMUNDE STRING QUARTET

Thursday, Feb 23 at 8 P.M.
Field Concert Hall



MARCH

CURTIS OPERA THEATRE THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Friday, March 10 at 7:30 P.M.
Sunday, March 12 at 2:30 P.M.
Philadelphia Film Center

CURTIS PRESENTS L'HISTOIRE DU SOLDAT

Tuesday, March 21 at 8 P.M.
Gould Rehearsal Hall

ENSEMBLE 20/21 PORTRAIT OF AARON JAY KERNIS

Saturday, March 25 at 8 P.M.
Gould Rehearsal Hall

APRIL

CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MAHLER, SCHUMANN, AND RA

Saturday, April 15 at 3 P.M.
Kimmel Cultural Campus, Verizon Hall

CURTIS PRESENTS MUSIC OF RICHARD DANIELPOUR

Wednesday, April 19 at 8 P.M.
Field Concert Hall

MAY

CURTIS OPERA THEATRE ARIODANTE

Thursday-Sunday, May 4-7 at 7:30 P.M.
Philadelphia Film Center

VISIT [CURTIS.EDU/CALENDAR](https://www.curtis.edu/calendar)

Alumni are entitled to complimentary tickets; email tickets@curtis.edu for details.

2022-23 SEASON MADE WITH LOVE



THE Q+A

Ji Su Jung

The newest member of Curtis's faculty aims to cultivate marimba fans.

BY
RYAN
LATHAN



PERCUSSIONISTS typically toil at the back of the orchestra stage, surrounded by a phalanx of instruments. But Ji Su Jung, a virtuoso of the marimba, is increasingly stepping out front and center, whether appearing as a soloist with the Baltimore and Houston Symphony Orchestras, presenting recitals of Bach, Debussy, and the Beatles, or tackling Steve Reich's intricate Sextet with the Percussion Collective, the renowned ensemble she joined in 2018. Ms. Jung is a winner of the 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant, the latest in a raft of notable prizes, and is a graduate of the Yale School of Music.



where she completed her graduate studies in 2020.

This fall, the entrepreneurial Ms. Jung joins the Curtis timpani and percussion faculty alongside her former Yale (and Peabody Institute) mentor, percussion luminary Robert Van Sice. "I never thought that could happen. It's a beautiful environment to be with him and all these students here," she tells *Overtones*. Ms. Jung shares her excitement about this new role, and discusses her Avery Fisher win, her rise in the male-dominated world of percussion, and her passion for bringing classical music to new audiences.

Ryan: We're thrilled to have you with us at Curtis. As you begin to work with these talented young students, are there any words of wisdom you wish to impart?

Ji Su: Music should be about sharing. The moment that it comes to be about yourself, the music becomes a soulless spirit. You should only make music if you want to be in a position to share. It can be kind of dangerous for us to lose the purpose of doing this. The whole point is to present the music to the audience and the listener and be connected with them.

You began your musical journey at age four, a rarity in the world of percussion. What drew you to the marimba as a child?

I think it was the weight the sound has. My mom is living proof that I was kind of "haunted" by the instrument. I was so captivated. It was my voice instead of my own sometimes, and it became my own language to use. I was playing piano, violin, flute, and marimba, so I had a choice to make, and I thought none of them was as interesting. That was my first love.

What does it personally mean to receive the Avery Fisher Career Grant, and what has the \$25,000 prize enabled you to do?

It means so much to me to be the

very first percussionist ever to receive this prestigious award, not only for myself but for the whole community, as both a percussionist and a female percussionist. There will be a lot of commissioning of solo marimba pieces soon. Currently, I'm working with a few female composers throughout the world, not only in America, but Europe, and part of Asia, so we can cover the whole world with female musicians. I'm currently working on something to bring out female musicians and new voices. Female composer power!

Women and people of color have made significant strides within the historically male-dominated field of percussion, but progress has been slow. As a solo artist and in your work with various ensembles, how have you faced implicit gender or racial bias?

It's certainly a very different world now. Even the Imma Hogg Competition that I won in 2018, and the Avery Fisher Grant that I received in 2022, are very hopeful for me. I went through a lot of situations where you could not be a percussionist or successful because you're a girl. I see that there is change, but I wouldn't say it's the easiest world to be in as a female and person of color. There is a lot of growth still needed, and there are fantastic people working toward that mission, so I'm more hopeful than ever before.

How do you aim to attract a wider audience but also evolve and challenge yourself as a musician?

In my case what's been successful is to deal with the repertoire. I always include in my concert repertoire not only contemporary marimba pieces but also arrangements of Bach, Debussy, Ravel, or Chopin. So, there's familiarity. The second thing might be collaborating with different instruments. Let's say playing Piazzolla with a violinist or Tōru Takemitsu with a flutist. There's

always a better way to approach your audience without scaring them off. I do think about the audience more than anything when I choose the repertoire for concerts. I want to connect with the people there.

How do you feel your performances can spark the imagination, interest, and appreciation of marimba and classical music with audiences?

I think giving as many live performances as possible. It's important for me to not only play concerts in bigger cities but also visit places where it might be challenging for them to have these kinds of concerts. The Internet and live streaming are obviously there, but I don't think that they're the same. One time I played Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* on marimba at a juvenile detention center in South Korea. There was this part in "Summer," and I was starting to listen to the audience because it was a quiet movement. The whole room was singing together. I'd never felt that before. It was this beautiful community feeling that classical music can connect with whomever in the world regardless of situations or circumstances.

Who were your musical role models growing up in the suburbs of Seoul?

For the longest time, it was my parents. There was always music when I was around my parents—literally, 24/7 music. I think the way they dedicated their lives to supporting me in that way is probably why I'm able to be doing whatever I'm doing these days. I was listening to a lot of Hillary Hahn (Violin '99), Sarah Chang, and Marin Alsop's recordings that I admired, thinking that I want to be one of them when I grew up.

Ryan Lathan is Curtis's associate director of communications and former director of marketing and communications at Fort Worth Opera.



Sound Off

How are you building a presence on social media? Five members of the Curtis community weigh in.

BY BRIAN WISE

J'Nai Bridges

(Opera '12), mezzo-soprano

→ J'Nai Bridges makes the most of Instagram's visual focus, posting photos of floor-sweeping gowns, European streetscapes, and the lavish opera productions in which she appears. There's also a clear, winning personality behind her feed. In a recent email exchange, Ms. Bridges said that her 17,000-plus IG followers turn to her account for updates on her career and dollops of inspiration.

“On platforms like Instagram and Facebook, people want to know that you are human, and they want to see who you are, what you do, and what your passion is. Adding to this point, I think people are looking for inspiration, so when I do post my professional news, it's inspiring for people. For me, that's what it's all about. That's what I'm looking for in other pages that I follow as well: ‘How can I be inspired?’ I also like to lift up the other people I'm collaborating with. I think it's imperative to not only share what you've been working so hard on but to also use social media to lift others to make people aware of other incredible artists and collaborators. I really enjoy that part about promotion; it's not just about me, and again, we need each other.”

Ray Chen

(Violin '10), violinist

→ Ray Chen has cultivated his fan base through an engaging mix of social media content: fiery performance clips, cute animals, and whimsical music humor. The personable violinist regularly holds meet-and-greets after his concerts as a way of strengthening the connections he has made online, where he has 340,000 followers on Instagram and over 265,000 subscribers on YouTube. Mr. Chen advises musicians to tailor their

content to the demographics of each platform.

“Many of my colleagues become (understandably) worried when terms like ‘brand building’ or ‘marketing’ appear, but it can be simplified to two things: knowing yourself and choosing which parts of yourself resonate with the audience you’re trying to reach. That’s basically content creation in a nutshell. After that, it’s like practicing your instrument: it requires discipline, consistency, and being willing to constantly put yourself out

there. Some people do choose to use their socials as pure marketing and there’s nothing wrong with that so long as you’re also giving back something in return. For example, if I were to market an upcoming concert, I would provide some form of exchange — like a performance or educational video — for that person’s time and attention. There’s ‘trust’ in the relationship between any product and the market that one must develop.” →





Karen Slack
(Opera '02), soprano

→ Describing herself as a “digital creator” on her Facebook profile, the versatile soprano Karen Slack presents a freewheeling mix of personal dispatches (wine tasting photos, cat antics), rehearsal clips, and nods to favorite entertainers and sports heroes (*Lizzo*, *Serena Williams*). On Instagram, where she has over 18,000 followers, she is a particular advocate of using hashtags that appear in popular search results.

“For me, sharing my life and performing are what resonates. People love it when I talk about traveling to a gig, or when I’m showing my family, my pets, and my husband, and the things that we do outside of my job. Facebook is where I am the most present and have the most engagement with my audience. I’m not really a Twitter person. I think it’s because my audience on Facebook is so vibrant. They comment. I’ll put a post out there and it will blow up because of the interaction between members of my audience. People are really verbal. They will engage with one another, they’ll tag me, and ask me questions about a certain post. You just have to be savvy, get your point across, and be able to police people who may offend. Particularly around race and sexuality issues, I feel a responsibility to protect my audience.”

KIA CALDWELL

Jasmine Choi

(Flute '04), flutist

→ Jasmine Choi says that she has gained most of her 260,000 Instagram followers after people first encountered her performance and instructional videos on YouTube. “They’re mostly flute fans or aspiring flutists who want to learn different pieces,” she notes. Sprinkled among her updates are a handful of posts that she has made for companies, including Lamborghini Seoul, Tiffany & Co., and Korean cosmetics firm O HUI. Such branded posts can offer a viable source of compensation, she says, provided that the partnerships feel authentic.

“One of the things that I find important is that social media is there for socializing. If you’re not into mingling with your fans, talking with them, and answering their questions, it loses its point. And I’m glad that, generally, I love people and meeting people, both online and offline. [Of course], I must be a little bit careful because I know that a lot of youngsters look up to me and follow me. So, I try to set a good example and share good advice, performance tips, practice tips—something more valuable than just showing off what I’m doing. I’ve also done several [branded posts]. I do get a lot of requests. But the important thing is to pick and choose so that it’s something you really support, and you really believe in.”



Patricia K. Johnson

Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs at Curtis

→ Patricia Johnson is responsible for managing Curtis’s public profile. She has worked in strategic communications and marketing for two decades, and before arriving at Curtis in 2019, served as director of marketing and communications at OPERA America. She stresses the importance of writing in a natural, conversational voice.

“You wouldn’t walk up to a group of people who know you, announce that you have a great concert coming up, and then walk away, right? Of course not! Same goes with social media—think of it more like a conversation, with natural give-and-take, not as a one-way announcement. It’s important to engage with your followers when you can, react to comments, and respond to good questions. Just be sure to be yourself and use your own voice when engaging—it’s easy to spot when publicists run an artist’s social feed! Think of how you might share your process and your journey in a way that feels comfortable and genuine for you. You may also consider sharing posts and content that you find interesting or helpful; that can help vary the rhythm and tone of your posts while also building rapport. And personally, I always pause for a second before I post or reply to anything—if I feel any hesitation about what I’m posting, I stop, because there’s probably a good reason for the feeling.”

Comments have been edited for clarity and length.



Mr. Smith—and Mrs. Bok—Go to Florida

Curtis founder Mary Louise Curtis Bok advanced culture well beyond the conservatory, helping to establish a center for visual art in the Florida swampland.

BY KRISTINA WILSON



Consider the Lilies

→ ON A TYPICAL DAY AT CURTIS, dozens of people walk through 1726 Locust Street without paying particular attention to the canvases and sculpture that line its walls and hallways. These magnificent works subtly add to the richness of the space, seamlessly blending lush landscapes by George Inness Jr., rocky seascapes by Frederick J. Waugh, and impressive portraits by Norman Rockwell and John Singer Sargent into the grand Victorian décor. Collected over decades by founder Mary Louise Curtis Bok, each piece has history and a tale to tell. However, there is one piece whose backstory—which only became known this past April—reveals a remarkable history of talent, courage, altruism, and, at its core, a convivial yet deep mutual friendship.

In the first-floor rear hallway of 1726 is an etching entitled *Consider the Lilies*. It is both small and unassuming in its presentation with no color, flourish-

ing signature, or ornate gilt frame, and the subject matter—an allegorical image portraying a hovering Christ in a highly industrialized landscape—is dreary at best. As the artist, Jules André Smith, dedicated the piece to “Mrs. Edward Bok,” we know this was a gift and not a purchase. But why is such a piece, so desolate in tone, part of an art collection that leans towards celebrating the beauty of nature, music, and humanity?

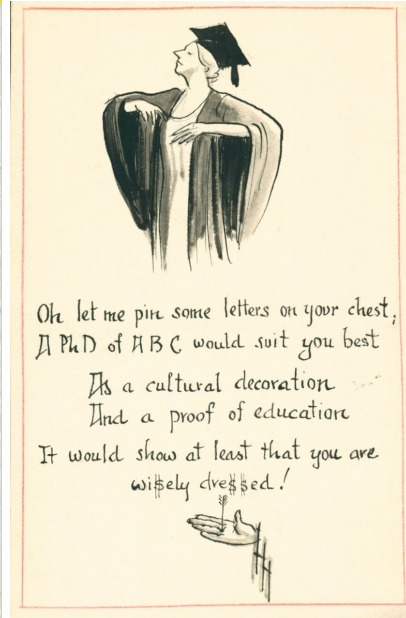
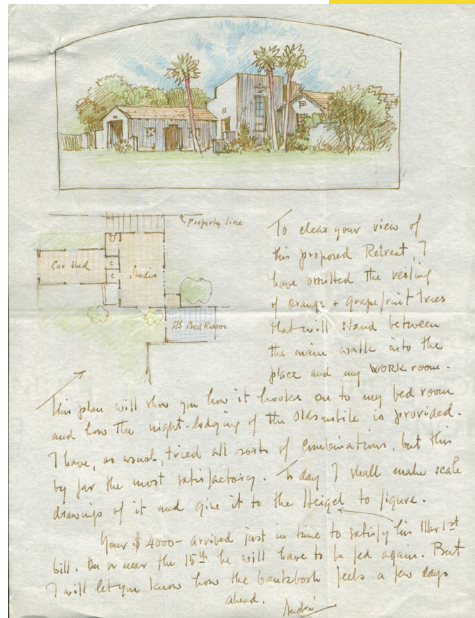
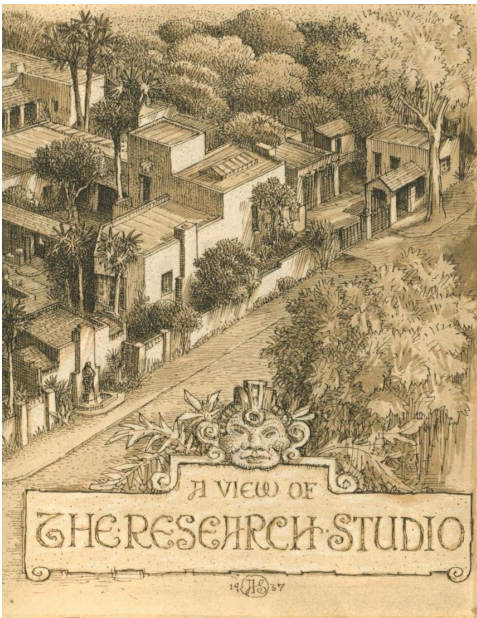
The answer to these questions came unexpectedly last April, when the Curtis Archives received an inquiry from Katie Benson, the Exhibitions Manager at the Maitland Art Center in Maitland, Fla., asking for copies of the correspondence “between our two founders.” Not being familiar with the Maitland Art Center nor with Smith, its founder, I searched Mary Louise Curtis Bok’s correspondence and found a treasure trove—six folders of letters spanning 16 years, from 1936 to 1952.

A Fortuitous Meeting

The story that emerged from these letters is fascinating. Jules André Smith (1880-1959), one of America’s first war artists and the founder of an artist’s colony and research center that today sits just outside of Orlando, Fla., was born to American parents in Hong Kong, but settled in Connecticut by age ten. He earned two degrees in architecture from Cornell University, and subsequently spent five years in a New York architectural firm. In 1911 he traveled to Europe to draw landscapes, which he pursued until America’s entry into the First World War in 1917.

Recognizing that his skills as an artist may be useful to the war effort, Smith enlisted in the Army Reserve, where he rose to the rank of captain and was assigned to accompany the American Expeditionary Force in France. As he documented their activities, he drew upon his architectural training to produce detailed pictures of buildings and places affected by





the conflict, in what he called “disquieting and somber images of the war.” Additionally, Smith designed the Distinguished Service Cross, the United States Army’s second highest military decoration for soldiers who display extraordinary heroism in combat.

After the war, Smith moved back to his childhood home in Connecticut. However, owing to health concerns and the severity of the New England winters (Smith’s right leg had been amputated due to a barbed wire injury that never successfully healed), he and his assistant Attilio J. Banca traveled to Florida in search of a site for a winter studio.

While staying in Winter Park, Fla., Smith became friends with Broadway actor Annie Russell, a professor of theater arts at nearby Rollins College, who, in turn, introduced Smith to her friend Mary Louise Curtis Bok. This proved to be a fortuitous meeting, leading to a friendship built, in part, on a shared passion for the controversial “modern art” that was developing at that time. With this sense of cultural advocacy, the two collaborated on Smith’s vision of an artist’s sanctuary, taking it from a lofty idea to a reality in brick and stone.

A Modern Mayan Paradise

In 1936 Mrs. Bok purchased six acres of land in Lake Maitland, Fla., and funded the initial construction of what would become the Research Studio, a center for classes and exhibits for Smith and select visiting artists. Early in the difficult planning stages, when Smith’s spirits were low, she firmly reiterated her support for his vision, writing in a November 24, 1936 letter that “you are bringing to birth something worth being born and for which enough souls to make it worthwhile are waiting.” Smith responded four months later: “Your idea of giving artists a chance to work without restriction, under agreeable conditions and, if possible, under pleasant relationship with a few other artists is pure gold. Out of that something is certain to come...”

And indeed, something marvelous did. Designed by Smith in a fantastic Mayan Revival style, the Research Studio and its surrounding compound comprised art studios, living quarters, a gallery with a courtyard, a garden, and a roofless chapel. Smith had wanted to name it “The Mary Louise Bok Gallery of Research in Art,” but Mrs. Bok wouldn’t hear of it. “If you ever again refer to the studio,

From left: Plans for the Maitland Art Center Campus by Jules André Smith. Letters from Jules André Smith to Mary Louise Curtis Bok.

the tower, or what have you, as a Bok affair,” she reproved, “you are off my social list from that moment! Our studio is all so simple, and it’s André Smith, not Bok!” Smith capitulated, and Mrs. Bok’s involvement remained a muted part of the center’s legacy.

While the philanthropy of Mrs. Bok is well known in musical circles, her support of another sort of artistry—that of the pencil, the brush, and the chisel—is less so. Though one need to look no further than the extraordinary American art collection that lines the walls of Curtis to see that Mrs. Bok’s interests extended into the larger artistic world, it took a simple email from Florida to show her beneficence extended past simply purchasing art to supporting the artist. The letters exchanged between Mrs. Bok and Smith over a 16-year period not only reveal her steadfast belief in Smith and his vision, but a lively friendship replete with playful banter, deep respect, and the unwavering love that Mary Louise Curtis Bok bestowed on all those fortunate enough to call her a friend.

Kristina Wilson is the former archivist at Curtis.



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The Founder's Society

Named to honor Mary Louise Curtis Bok, the Founder's Society invites you to include the Curtis Institute of Music in your estate plans. Legacy gifts are a meaningful way to honor the indelible impact Curtis had on your life and, like Mrs. Bok, you too can make a difference in the lives of future Curtis students.

“Music, beginning where speech leaves off, tells more of things human and divine, of nature, life and love, than we can stammer in words, and tells it in a language that is universal and understandable to every human heart.”

*Mary Louise Curtis Bok
Founder, Curtis Institute of Music*

For information on how to include Curtis in your estate plans, or to learn more about creative philanthropic tools, please contact the Development Office at (215) 717-3131 or giving@curtis.edu.

[Curtis.edu/Support](https://curtis.edu/Support)

The



Samuel Barber

ART



Randall Thompson

by Vanessa Ague

of the



Dai Wei

COMMUNITY

CONSERVATORIES HAVE OFTEN PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN COMMISSIONING NEW MUSIC, ONE FREE FROM THE PRESSURES OF THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD.

W

hen composers Dai Wei and James Ra were Curtis Institute of Music students, Curtis Symphony Orchestra rehearsals and performances felt life changing. Mr. Ra (Composition '04) remembers soaking in the culture of the ensemble and learning from conductor Otto-Werner Mueller. Ms. Dai (Composition '19), too, recalls learning from the orchestra, especially relishing the opportunities she had to practice writing for the ensemble. "Once [I got] to write for orchestra and to have the experience of hearing it played live," she said, "it helped me understand sound differently."

During the 2022–23 season, Ms. Dai and Mr. Ra will again write music for the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, to be toured to the West Coast as part of the Curtis on Tour program. And as Curtis looks to its centenary in 2024, the institution hopes to continue to build on its mission of commissioning works from leading international composers working in different styles.

"We've built our careers on the music of past great composers—the canon, if you will—but I think that it's part of our responsibility as artists to promote the music of our time," said Curtis President and CEO Roberto Díaz.

Conservatories occupy a distinct place in the commissioning landscape: Largely untethered from box office pressures, weekly subscription formats, and the regimented rehearsal schedules of professional orchestras, they can offer composers the luxury of workshoping new pieces over the course of several days or even weeks. There is time to critique, revise, prune, and sometimes record works long before they are heard by the public. And by jointly commissioning pieces with other arts organizations, conservatories can help to alleviate the problem of orphaned works—pieces that receive a premiere but don't have a life beyond it—since these works are presented in different places to different audiences.

At Curtis, giving composers the opportunity to write for the symphony orchestra has been a longstanding



Julius Eastman



Efreim Zimbalist

Jeanne Behrend

MISSION



James Ra

and evolving part of its focus since its founding by Mary Louise Curtis Bok in 1924. Works like Samuel Barber's *Toccata Festiva* (1960) and Jennifer Higdon's *blue cathedral* (1999) and Pulitzer Prize-winning Violin Concerto (2008) have been made possible, at least in part, by Curtis commissions.

ACCESS TO TOP COMPOSERS

At times, conservatories can benefit from working with the most established composers of our day. In January the Curtis Symphony Orchestra will give the world premiere of *Of Time and Love*, a viola concerto by Bright Sheng. By commissioning a veteran composer whose music has been performed by virtually every leading orchestra in the U.S., Curtis plans to give students access to Mr. Sheng through workshops, seminars, and rehearsals. "It's not every conservatory that can commission Bright Sheng and have him on-site to work on a premiere with the orchestra," says Nick DiBerardino (Composition '18 and Community Artist Fellow '19), Curtis's



Leonard
Bernstein



Gian Carlo Menotti

Lee
Hoiby

chair of composition studies and senior associate dean of performance studies. "That's a fantastic opportunity for our students. And we view commissioning as a way that the school can impact the field."

In early discussions about a commission, Mr. Sheng voiced a desire to write a piece expressly for Mr. Díaz, a violist he describes as a "virtuoso player with splendid technique" and a "very passionate musical re-creator." The piece highlights Mr. Díaz's skill and draws on the shared feelings of uncertainty that colored pandemic lockdowns in 2020 (its premiere was originally scheduled for 2020 but was pushed back as education went remote).

Spearheaded with the Suzhou Symphony Orchestra of China, *Of Time and Love* is one of several co-commissions that Curtis will introduce in the next couple of years. "Curtis is the one ponying up at the beginning of the process, and then reaching out to partner institutions to make it happen," Mr. DiBerardino explained. "Commissions are obviously a risk for an arts organization. They're not necessarily money-makers, nor is it automatically easier to sell tickets to a concert with a premiere on it, however much audiences value those new works. Curtis is well-positioned to begin the process of commissioning, inviting others on board to bring new music to the world."

Other planned co-commissions will highlight the newest members of Curtis's composition faculty: Steven Mackey, Amy Beth Kirsten, Jonathan Bailey Holland (Composition '96), and Mr. DiBerardino. These pieces are expected to highlight each composer's signature style: Mr. Mackey writes for electric guitar while Ms. Kirsten writes a large-scale theatrical work, for example.

TAKING NEW WORKS ON THE ROAD

Curtis also has a longstanding history of commissioning alumni to write music for its Curtis on Tour programs. While Ms. Dai and Mr. Ra are at different stages in their careers, both stand to benefit from the exposure. "It's very difficult for com-



Jonathan
Bailey
Holland

George
Rochberg

posers to gain traction in the orchestra world," says Mr. DiBerardino. "Orchestral commissions are rare, and until you become known, it's difficult to get things off the ground."

Ms. Dai and Mr. Ra will write openers for orchestral programs, each focusing on an angle or theme of their choice.

TIMELINE Premieres and Commissions at Curtis

May 5, 1930

A remarkable multi-student recital features the premieres of **Samuel Barber's** ('34) *Serenade* for String Quartet, Op. 1, **Gian Carlo Menotti's** ('33) *Eleven Variations for Piano on a Theme of Robert Schumann*, and works by **Jeanne Behrend** (Piano '34) **Alice Noonan** ('35), **Edith Evans Braun** (Piano '33), **Berenice Robinson** ('35), and **Eleanor Meredith** ('33).

Apr. 1, 1937

Menotti's *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, his first mature opera and first critical success, premieres at the Academy of Music. The Curtis production is conducted by Fritz Reiner and features the soprano Margaret Daum in the title role.

1940

While studying at Curtis, **Leonard Bernstein** (Conducting '41) writes his Violin Sonata. He dedicates the piece to Raphael Hillyer (Violin '32).

Sept. 30, 1960

Barber's *Toccata Festiva* for organ, strings, trumpet, and timpani, op. 36a receives its premiere at the Academy of Music. The piece was a commission from Mary Louise Curtis Bok to inaugurate the hall's new pipe organ.

Feb. 27, 1963

The graduation recital by **Julius Eastman** (Composition and Piano '63) features works for voice and solo piano, and *The Blood*, for clarinet, piano, and nine singers.

Ms. Dai's piece will explore the "Awaken Lion" dance, which is presented during Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations to bring luck and prosperity. The dance features two people who move together underneath a lion costume; the southern style of the dance, which inspired her, often features strenuous martial



Nick DiBerardino

Randall Thompson

arts-influenced moves. It's also a display of artistry and strength of the mind and body—much like playing in an orchestra.

In Philadelphia, Mr. Ra's piece will be presented on a program alongside two major works of the classical repertoire: Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1 and Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto in A Minor. In writing music to go with these tremendous works, Mr. Ra hopes to explore the immensities both composers inhabited. "Composers like Mahler and Schumann...were both looking for a way to [aim] higher, a way forward to a better and more hopeful place. For them, the most promising path ran through music," Mr. Ra said in an email. He added that when he considered the capabilities of the Curtis musicians, he was "moved to compose for larger forces."

"These kinds of commissions can be

career-changing opportunities," says Mr. DiBerardino. "It's a big audience. It's a big commission. It's a big performance. And that can be leveraged into future opportunities."

As Curtis plans for its 100th anniversary, more celebratory commissions are in the works. Several dozen alumni have been approached to write pieces for a solo instrument of their choice; these will be given online premieres in 2024 and 2025. Nearly 60 graduates have already confirmed their participation, including David Krane (Composition '74), whose piece, *Rittenhouse Square*, evokes his memories of walking around Rittenhouse Square, soaking in the brownstones and trees that line the park. He conceived it as a "mood piece, where I would go from dawn to dusk and do little vignettes... from the light to people going to school to drunk people at night," he said. It will be performed by pianist Cynthia Raim (Piano '77), who played a piano work that



George Walker

Steven Mackey



Amy Beth Kirsten

Nino Rota

Krane wrote while they were students decades ago.

For Mr. Díaz, each of these programs shows the importance of commissioning: They offer Curtis the ability to showcase the scope of today's music, and to express not only how we think about our current moment, but how we look towards the future. "Art is a running commentary on the world we live in," Mr. Díaz said. "Ultimately, it's what we leave behind."

Vanessa Ague is a violinist and writer who runs the experimental music blog, The Road to Sound, and writes for publications including The Wire, Pitchfork, and Bandcamp Daily. She is a recent graduate of the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY.

Feb. 9, 1977

Former faculty member **George Rochberg's** ('49) Quintet for piano and string quartet is premiered by the Concord String Quartet and pianist **Vladimir Sokoloff** (Accompanying '38).

Feb. 4, 1993

Gary Graffman (Piano '46) premieres the Piano Concerto No. 4 for Left Hand and Orchestra by **Ned Rorem** ('44). A Curtis commission, the concerto is introduced by André Previn conducting the Curtis Symphony Orchestra.

1999-2000

Curtis commissions a series of works to commemorate its 75th anniversary. They include Jennifer Higdon's *blue cathedral* and **Daron Hagen's** ('84) *Much Ado*, both for orchestra, and **Daniel Kellogg's** ('99) *Sound for the Century*, for brass quintet.

Feb. 2009

Hilary Hahn (Violin '99) gives the premiere of Jennifer Higdon's Violin Concerto with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mario Venzano. **David Serkin Ludwig's** ('01) *From the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is introduced in a student recital.

2017-18

Curtis's Ensemble 20/21 commissions a dozen works by **Elise Arancio**, **Aiyana Tedi Braun** ('20), **Viet Cuong** ('19), **Nick DiBerardino** ('18), **Andrew Moses** ('20), **Chelsea Komschlies** ('18), **Jie Wang** ('09), **Dai Wei** ('19), and **Elizabeth Younan** ('21).

Apr. 19, 2023

Faculty member **Richard Danielpour** will introduce a new piano piece, *Song Without Words*, as part of a recital honoring his 25 years on Curtis's faculty.

*RECENT CURTIS
GRADUATES TAKE
THEIR FIRST
PROFESSIONAL
STEPS.*

**C A R E E R
O V E R T U R E S**

by Jeremy Reynolds



AS THE WORLD continues its halting recovery from the economic devastation of COVID-19, the long-term impacts on the arts sector continue to play out in surprising ways. Consider: while it's true that freelancing musicians have taken it on the chin for a couple of years now, a majority of players in larger orchestras kept most of their salaries and benefits, often thanks to federal and state money. Still, many chose to retire, leaving behind an unusually high number of open seats at a time when orchestras couldn't safely conduct auditions.

**THERE'S A BACKLOG OF OPENINGS
THAT NEED TO BE FILLED.**

Recent graduates are aware of this. Whether they're pursuing traditional orchestral positions or building a career with a variety of ensembles and other work, the shadow of the pandemic is still present in the minds of many Curtis Institute of Music alumni as they face this brave new world. Below are examples of several class of 2022 graduates taking the music world by storm.

LISA MARIE MAZZUCCO



ORCHESTRAL STABILITY

Take Gabriel (Gabe) Polinsky (Double Bass '22). Mr. Polinsky, a native of Lynbrook, N.Y., in December 2021 won a job with The Philadelphia Orchestra. He began playing with the ensemble in January. Still, the orchestral path wasn't always the plan. "The two careers that I envisioned myself in were either orchestral life or freelancing," he said. "Honestly, a freelance career may be more of what I really want." Freelancing offers more opportunities for variety and travel, as such players tend to work with a mix of large ensembles and chamber groups, and special projects. Mr. Polinsky was also considering additional schooling in historical performance.

What tipped him toward the orchestral life? Due to the pandemic, Mr. Polinsky elected to stay at Curtis for a fifth year of undergraduate work, to take stock after a year of trying to stay busy and exploring different kinds of playing—an opportunity he described as "extremely important." Ultimately, "I decided I wanted an orchestral job out of school to save some money and get experience in a more stable environment."

Another recent Curtis graduate, violinist Takumi Taguchi (Violin '22), recalled being sent home in March of his sophomore year in 2020 and attending FaceTime lessons. "I was really lucky to still be in school when the whole thing went down," he said. Instead of in-person orchestra rehearsals, Mr. Taguchi spent more time in orchestral excerpt classes over Zoom during the pandemic, focusing more on the very material that would win him a job in the Boston Symphony Orchestra in his very first orchestral audition. Such a feat is rare for a young player. He started in September with the orchestra.

"The pandemic accelerated my idea of what I wanted to do," Mr. Taguchi said. "I knew I was interested in becoming financially independent early on, and I've always had an interest in orchestral work." At the time of his audition, Boston was looking to fill four section violin jobs due to pandemic retirements. Mr. Taguchi, a Seattle native who had never even heard the Boston Symphony live, waltzed in and claimed a seat. "I practiced seriously, but my expectations weren't high," he said. "But most of the music industry is all freelancing

From left: Seraph Brass and Takumi Taguchi



and teaching. After the pandemic, I knew I was drawn to a major orchestra due to stability.” Like most orchestras, the BSO requires a probationary year of playing before awarding a new player tenure.

THE FREELANCE LIFE

Orchestras may boast good income and stability, but for some graduates, that isn’t the highest priority. Grace Takeda (Viola ’21, CAF ’22) chose to remain in Philadelphia after graduation and is building a life as a performer, educator, and advocate. She’s now the associate director of institutional partnerships for a New York City-based non-profit, Musical Mentors Collaborative, and she performs as a guest musician with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. “Honestly, I’m still figuring out how to balance it all, but I love everything that I’m doing right now,” she said.

Ms. Takeda is a graduate of Curtis’s Community Artist Fellowship program, which partners students with schools, hospitals, or prisons to foster community development. She worked with an elementary school in north Philadelphia for a year on a music and literacy project of her own creation she calls MUSEical Tales, which combines lessons about storytelling through music and books. “For an eight-week session, we focused on a book called *Anita and the Dragons*,” she explained, adding that she brings in guest musicians to work with the kids on understanding different aspects of storytelling.

Ms. Takeda also performs in a string quartet, the Vera Quartet, and is trying to “kick things up” on that side of her career. “I had a lot of time to tune into myself and what I’m really passionate about during the last couple years,” she said. “One of the best things about my time at Curtis was teachers and professors advising me to try other things and take orchestra auditions later if I want to. That really reassured me.”

Cristina Cutts Dougherty (Tuba ’22) is another young musician building a career based on multiple interests and talents. A tubist who often moved as a child, she earned her undergraduate degree at the Colburn School in Los Angeles before moving to Philadelphia to pursue a postgraduate certificate at Curtis. Like Mr. Polinsky, she extended her program by a year—from two years to three—during the pandemic. “Curtis is a really special place to be a tuba player, as there’s only one tuba player at any given time,” she said. “It was just me—I got tons of individual attention.”

She’s taken several orchestral auditions but has yet to win a job, and that remains the ultimate goal due to the security of such positions. In the meantime, she won a job performing with Seraph Brass, an all-female brass ensemble that takes Ms. Dougherty on the road every other week across the country. “The biggest COVID change for me is I’m a little more flexible about

“THE PANDEMIC ACCELERATED MY IDEA OF WHAT I WANTED TO DO.”

—TAKUMI TAGUCHI

what I want as a musician,” she said. “During my whole undergraduate program, I knew I wanted an orchestra job.” Now, she’s in a gap familiar to many young instrumentalists, that space between school and winning a full-time job. She’s finding purpose in teaching and performing and is currently working on a book about the history of female brass players in American orchestras. She kicked off the project early in the pandemic with a grant and an advisor at Penguin Random House and is hoping to finish and find a publisher within a year, all the while continuing to take auditions as positions become available.

OPERA RESIDENCY

There are a few young artist programs in the orchestra field, but in the world of opera, there are numerous such programs designed to continue a young singer’s training as their voice continues to develop. Lindsey Reynolds (Opera ’22), a soprano who graduated from Curtis in May with her master’s degree, has just entered such a program at the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center. Originally from New Orleans, Ms. Reynolds spent the summer in Chicago preparing for the current season. “As a young artist, we cover lead roles and sing smaller roles,” she said. “It’s a program with lots of learning by doing, typically for about two years though some people stay longer.”

Before graduating, she was considering an additional year at Curtis or a young artist program to start the next stage of her singing career. “I hope to make a lot of connections with companies and managers in the next couple years,” she said.

Ms. Reynolds added that the pandemic highlighted the risks of such a career, with “performances getting canceled left and right,” but, like her fellow recent graduates, she remains undeterred and optimistic about a career in opera. “I never really thought about changing professions,” she said. “The residency program route worked out—the audition was exciting but nerve wracking, and I’m so happy it turned out this way and for what comes next.”

Clockwise from top left: Lindsey Reynolds, Gabriel Polinsky, Cristina Cutts Dougherty, and Grace Takeda

Jeremy Reynolds is the classical music critic at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, where he is also an editorial writer. Reynolds also writes about music for Symphony Magazine, Opera Magazine, San Francisco Classical Voice, and other outlets.



CURTIS
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NOTATIONS



Strings

1960s

Robert Martin (Cello '62) this season established a chamber music residency program at Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, a retirement community where he lives near Philadelphia. The program will feature residencies by three young ensembles.

The String Quartet No. 3 by **Lloyd Smith** (Cello '65), who is formerly known as Russell H. C. Smith, received its premiere in October by the Wister Quartet at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia.

David Kadarau (Cello '68) has retired as principal cellist of the San Francisco Opera, a position he held for 47 years.

Zina Schiff (Violin '69) is featured on *Summerland*, a new Naxos recording of William Grant Still's music with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by her daughter, Avlana Eisenberg.

1990s

Joey Amini (Cello '97) has begun a new career as a realtor at Pinnacle Estate Properties in Malibu, Calif., following a 20-year career in music.

Hilary Hahn (Violin '99) has been named *Musical America's* Artist of the Year for 2023. In October Deutsche Grammophon released *Eclipse*, featuring Ms. Hahn's

performances of Dvořák and Ginastera's violin concertos with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada.

2000s

Daniel Chong (Violin '00) was recently named professor of the practice at Harvard University. Mr. Chong is a member of the Parker Quartet, which this year marks its 20th anniversary with the Beethoven Project, featuring performances of Beethoven's complete quartets, along with commissioned works and outreach performances.

In August **Melissa Reardon** (Viola '00) joined the Borromeo String Quartet, succeeding Mai Motobuchi.



Time for Three, featuring **Nick Kendall** (Violin '01) and **Ranaan Meyer** (Double Bass '03), in November received two Grammy nominations for the album *Letters for the Future*, with The Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor Xian Zhang for Deutsche Grammophon. Featuring world premiere recordings of Jennifer Higdon's *Concerto 4-3* and Kevin Puts's *Contact*, the album has been nominated for Best Classical Instrumental Solo and, for Puts's piece, Best Contemporary Classical Composition.



Jennifer Koh (Violin '02) made her debut in October with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, joining music director Andris Nelsons in Bernstein's *Serenade* (after Plato's *Symposium*).

Earl Lee (Cello '05) began his first season as music director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra in September.

The Pacifica Quartet, with violist **Mark Holloway** (Viola '05), in November released an album of works by James Lee III, Ben Shirley, Valerie Coleman, and Curtis faculty member Richard Danielpour.

Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu (Violin '08) in September was named artistic director of Chamber Music Monterey Bay in Carmel, Calif.

2010s

Ray Chen (Violin '10) in September acquired the "Dolphin" Stradivarius, a violin from 1714 that once belonged to Jascha Heifetz. It is on loan to Mr. Chen from Japan's Nippon Music Foundation.

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt (Viola '11) in August left the Dover Quartet, Curtis's Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence, to pursue other musical interests. Violist Hezekiah Leung has joined the ensemble

for a year-long appointment which started in September. Mr. Leung is a founding member of the Rolston String Quartet.

Junping Qian (Viola '13) won third prize in the Princess Astrid Conducting Competition, held in August in Trondheim, Norway.

In May **Lifan Zhu** (Violin '14) won the principal second violin position in the Staatsoper Berlin.

In June Orchid Classics released **John-Henry Crawford's** (Cello '14) *Corazón: The Music of Latin America*, featuring works by Villa-Lobos, Ponce, Piazzolla, and other composers.

Michael Casimir (Viola '18) was appointed principal viola of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in September. He was previously a member of the St. Louis Symphony's viola section.

2020s

Anna Im (Violin '20) has released *Amabile*, an album of works for violin and piano by Johannes Brahms, Edvard Grieg, and Clara Schumann, among other composers. Recorded with pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy, the album formed part of the prize package of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition, which Ms. Im won in 2019.

Sydney Lee (Cello '20) is the inaugural recipient of the Meadowmount School of Music's Gurrena Fellowship. The fellowship is valued at \$50,000

and includes continued training with Meadowmount faculty in the summer of 2023.

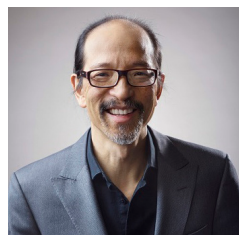
In September **Beatrice Chen** (Viola '22) joined the viola section of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

In May **Ming-Yu Hsu** (Viola '22) became the principal viola of the Kansas City Symphony.



Winds/Brass

1980s



Michael Hope (Bassoon '81) in June completed his 40th season as assistant principal bassoon of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

1990s

In June **Chris Clark** (Trombone '95) recorded an album of works for trumpet and piano with **Jack Sutte** (Trumpet '95) serving as producer. In August, Mr. Clark and Mr. Sutte engineered another album of American trumpet sonatas with Mr. Sutte as the soloist, and Craig Ketter as the pianist.

2000s

Victoria Luperi (Clarinet '02) served on the clarinet jury panel for the 2022 Carl Nielsen International Competition.

2010s

George Goad (Trumpet '13) this fall became the third/utility trumpet in the Kansas City Symphony.

Catherine van Handel (Bassoon '15), formerly Catherine Chen, is scheduled to premiere David Serkin Ludwig's bassoon concerto, *Pictures of the Floating World*, with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra on February 3 and 4, 2023. Ms. Van Handel was a recipient of a 2022 Daniel W. Dietrich II Young Alumni Fund grant from Curtis.

Jahleel Smith (Bass Trombone '18) has been named bass trombone of the Kansas City Symphony starting in the 2022-23 season. Mr. Smith was an inaugural recipient of Curtis's Young Alumni Fund grants and used the funding to help purchase a new instrument, which he used in his audition for the orchestra.



Percussion

Patricia Brennan (Timpani and Percussion '08), formerly Patricia Franceschy, was named a rising star of the vibraphone in the 70th annual *DownBeat* Critics Poll. Ms. Brennan's second album as a group leader, *More Touch*, was released in November on Pyroclastic Records.



Composition/ Conducting

1950s

Warner Classics in August reissued a seven-CD box set of Dvořák's complete symphonies performed by **José Serebrier** (Composition '58) and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Serebrier is scheduled to tour the United States with the English Chamber Orchestra in February 2023.

1980s

James Helgeson (Composition '86) has been appointed professor of musicology and composition at the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin. Previously, he held positions as a Renaissance scholar at Columbia University, Cambridge University, and other institutions.

Stuart Malina (Conducting '89) has been named music director of the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra in Connecticut, starting with its 2022-23 season.

1990s

Hidden River by **Eric Sessler** (Composition '93), a commission from the Philadelphia Flute Quartet, was awarded an honorable mention at the Flute New Music Consortium's 2022 composition competition.

2010s

Rene Orth (Composition '16) will compose an opera

Milestones

- **SangHyun Mary Yong** (Viola '10) welcomed her third child, Mason Jaeah Han, on September 28.
- **Tessa Ellis** (Trumpet '17, Community Artist Fellow '18) and her partner Ben Rivello welcomed their second child, Massimo Kai Rivello, in May. He joins big brother Luigi James Rivello, age 3.

for Opera San José after the company received a commissioning grant from OPERA America's Opera Grants for Women Composers program. It is scheduled to premiere in June 2023.

In September **TJ Cole** (Composition '16, ArtistYear '17) was named one of three inaugural members of Creator Corps, a residency program from Louisville Orchestra that includes an active community engagement component. The orchestra will perform the composer's concerto for synthesizer and orchestra next March.



Conner Gray Covington (Conducting '17) conducted two operas this fall: Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* at the New England Conservatory, and Tod Machover's *VALIS* as part of MIT's Opera of the Future project.



Guitar/Harp

2010s
Jiji Kim (Guitar '15) will join the faculty at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music in August 2023. She will be a visiting artist and adjunct faculty member until then.

This season **Abigail Kent** (Harp '17) joins the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra as its principal harp.



Organ

1980s
 In June **Richard Elliott** (Organ '80) was one of several individuals to receive Utah's 2022 Governor's Mansion Artist Award. The award was presented by Utah governor Spencer Cox and first lady Abby Cox at the governor's mansion, where Mr. Elliott also performed for the invited guests.

2000s
Nathan Laube (Organ '09) played a solo recital at London's Royal Albert Hall in August as part of the BBC Proms. It featured music by Franck, Wagner, Alkan, and Mr. Laube's own organ transcription of Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor.

2010s
 In February **Bryan Dunnewald** (Organ '18) joined Schoenstein & Co. pipe organ builders as assistant to tonal director Jack Bethards, where his work focuses on voicing, tonal design, and client relations. Mr. Dunnewald came to Schoenstein from Saint Mark's Church in Philadelphia, where he served as assistant organist and choirmaster.



Piano/ Accompanying

1980s
Paul Anthony Romero (Accompanying '86) marked the fifth anniversary of the Heroes Orchestra and Choir, which he founded to perform music from his computer game soundtracks, with two live-broadcast concerts in September in Warsaw, Poland.

2000s
 In October **Roman Rabonovich** (Piano '08) performed at Carnegie Hall with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, stepping in on a days' notice in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat Major.

2020s
 In May **Zitong Wang** (Piano '22) won first prize at the 33rd Ferrol International Piano Competition, as well as the Nelson Freire Prize for the best performance of a piece by Chopin.



Voice/Opera

1990s
Ian DeNolfo (Opera '93) in July became executive director of the Voice Foundation, a Philadelphia-based organization dedicated to voice research and medicine.

In April **Nikola Mijailović** (Opera '96) sang the role of Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca* at the National Theatre in Belgrade.



2000s
 This past summer **Rhoslyn Jones** (Voice '06) joined the faculty of the Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera. In October she appeared in a company production of Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites* covering the role of Madame Lidoine. Next summer Ms. Jones will return to the Chautauqua Institute as a member of the opera faculty.

Those We Have Lost



Robert Carwithen
(Organ '58), an organist who led a

wide-ranging career as a choral conductor, carillonneur, and teacher, died on May 12 at the age of 89. Mr. Carwithen was born in Philadelphia and raised in Florida. After Virgil Fox heard him play in 1954, the legendary organist recommended him to Alexander McCurdy, then head of the organ department at Curtis, who took him on as a student. Mr. Carwithen earned a Bachelor of Music degree at Curtis before receiving a master's in conducting from Westminster Choir College in 1960. From there, his career took multiple directions: He served on the faculty of Westminster for more than 45 years and, from 1966–71, was conductor of its Symphonic Choir. He directed music at several churches in the northeast, notably the First Presbyterian church in Germantown, Pa. Mr. Carwithen is survived by his brother and close friends.



Bruce Eicher
(Organ '58), who for nearly six decades was the

organist and music director of Grace United Methodist Church in Baltimore, died on June 28 at age 90. The cause was congestive heart failure. Mr. Eicher was on faculty at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and maintained an active solo career. A native of Wayland, Iowa, he studied at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, before

transferring to Curtis in 1952, where he studied under Alexander McCurdy. In 1954, during his studies, he was drafted into the Army, but later returned to Philadelphia and earned a bachelor's degree in 1958. He secured the post at Grace that autumn, and soon began to expand the church's music activities, with choirs for children and adults, a Sunday afternoon concert series, and 15 annual French organ marathons. Mr. Eicher later earned a master's degree at Peabody, having taught music theory there since 1969. He retired from Grace in 2013. He is survived by his husband, two children, and extended family.



John "Jeff" Freeman (Trombone '91), who built on a passion

for music and science to work as an audio engineer for Dolby Laboratories, died on September 12. He was 53. A native of Raleigh, N.C., Mr. Freeman earned a Bachelor of Music degree at Curtis, followed by a Bachelor of Science in physics from North Carolina State University in 1996. He worked briefly as a research assistant at NASA, focusing on lasers and electro-optics, before bringing his love of physics and music to multiple roles at Dolby Laboratories. For the past 22 years he held roles ranging from licensing engineer to, most recently, director of applications engineering and testing. He is survived by his wife, his two children, and extended family.



Donald McDonald
(Organ '50), an organist, teacher,

church musician, and dedicated mentor to many, died peacefully in Dallas, Tex. on August 5, at the age of 97. Dr. McDonald started his career as a pre-med student at Southern Methodist University before immediately getting drafted to fight in World War II. Upon his return, he auditioned for Alexander McCurdy, who accepted him as an organ student at Curtis. After graduation, he continued his studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he obtained a master's degree and a doctorate, in 1952 and 1964, respectively. Dr. McDonald served as professor of organ at Westminster Choir College (1952–94) and also taught organ at Union Theological Seminary (1958–66). An active recitalist, Dr. McDonald was the first American to play at the annual Organ Week in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1963. Dr. McDonald served as the organist and minister of music at Christ Church, United Methodist, in New York City for 30 years.



David Niwa
(Violin '87), a former assistant concertmaster

of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and a fixture on the Columbus, Ohio music scene, died on September 1. He was 58 and had been battling a rare form of appendix cancer. Mr. Niwa was the artistic director of Sunday at Central, a long-running concert series that brought chamber music to venues throughout the Columbus region, and he taught

at Ohio Wesleyan University and Denison University. Born in Chicago, Mr. Niwa received a bachelor's degree from Curtis before studying at the Juilliard School. He moved to Columbus in 1995 to join the symphony. He is survived by his wife and many other relatives.



Jan Mark Sloman (Violin '72), a longtime violinist of the

Dallas Symphony Orchestra and a revered pedagogue, died on September 27 at age 73. Born in 1949, Mr. Sloman was a university scholar at Princeton University before studying at Curtis with Jaime Laredo, Paul Makanowitzky, and Ivan Galamian. In 1977 he joined the Dallas Symphony as principal associate concertmaster, a post he held until his retirement in 2015. In addition to his position in Dallas, Mr. Sloman also served as guest concertmaster with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and performed with orchestras in Florence, Italy; Lugano and Geneva, Switzerland; and Melbourne, Australia. He leaves an enduring legacy as a teacher, holding posts at Southern Methodist University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, while maintaining a large private studio in Dallas. Mr. Sloman founded the Dallas-based Institute for Strings, an intensive music program with solo and chamber music performance opportunities. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

For more obituaries, please visit Curtis.edu/in-memoriam. We welcome your news and updates for possible inclusion in a future issue. Please email us at overtones@curtis.edu.

2010s

Soprano **Elena Perroni** (Opera '18) in August performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in Britten's *War Requiem*. In April she sang the title role in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* with West Australian Opera.

Faculty/Staff
STRINGS

Midori is celebrating the 40th anniversary of her profes-

sional debut (at age 11) with a new recording of the complete Beethoven violin sonatas with pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, released in November.

Mary Javian (Double Bass '99) has been appointed artistic and strategic advisor for the new Iris Collective, based in Memphis and previously known as the Iris Orchestra, beginning with its 2022-23 season.

ORGAN

Alan Morrison (Organ '91,

Accompanying '93) performed in April with Chanticleer at the Kimmel Center, where they premiered Nico Muhly's *Beauty of the Day*. Mr. Morrison was also honored by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists with the 2022 Distinguished Achievement Award. The ceremony was held in June in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall.

GUITAR

This fall **Jason Vieaux** recorded Avner Dorman's *How to Love*, a concerto for guitar

and string orchestra. It follows two recordings released last spring: of Michael Fine's *Concerto di Luna* on the album *Finding Home* (with flutist Alexa Still, conductor Philip Mann, and Ensemble Bravura), and a collaboration with violinist Anne Akiko Meyers on the album *Shining Night*.

CONDUCTING

In September **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** was named an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by France's Ministry of Culture.

Curtis Opera Student Brings Impersonations to America's Got Talent



Merissa Beddows (Voice '22), a first-year master's student in opera, added an unlikely competition credit to her résumé this past summer: a spot in the semi-final round of *America's Got Talent*, where she impressed the talent show's judges with a routine that featured her impersonations of pop stars and cartoon characters.

In her audition for the NBC show, the 23-year-old soprano delivered her impressions of Ariana Grande, Stevie Nicks, Celine Dion, Snow White, and Siri. She went on to compete in one of five qualifying rounds, singing a medley that included Puccini's *O Mio Babbino Caro*, as well as impersonations of Cher and Evanescence.

Ms. Beddows's voice teacher, Julia Faulkner, lauded her distinctive talents. "I knew that she could hear things and reproduce them vocally in our lessons," she said. "It's a very useful skill to have. It just added to my esteem of her because she is just an incredible mimic."

Ms. Faulkner said that she listened to her student's audition before NBC heard it. "We talked about her delivery, the order in which she did things, and the energy of it," she said. "But make no mistake, that's all her brilliance and extraordinary talent."

A native of Yonkers, N.Y., Ms. Beddows has been singing since the age of three. In 2014, she was one of 12 finalists nationwide for the

Great American Songbook High School Vocal Academy and Competition, founded by Michael Feinstein. She regularly posts videos of her impersonations on TikTok, where she has more than 750,000 followers. At Curtis, she has earned a bachelor's degree in voice and now holds the Eula Mae Pharis Fellowship.

"Gone are the days when singers are told to do only one thing," said Ms. Faulkner, "and if you have some sideline or freakish talent, you just do it for parties, and you don't try to make it part of your life. But I encouraged her to do [AGT] and see where it went. It was an opportunity that recognized her talent. We as musicians are crazy if we don't take those opportunities."



Correction: In the Notations section of the Spring 2022 issue, a photo was incorrectly identified as Dai Wei (Composition '19). The photo was of Wei Luo (Piano '22) instead. We sincerely regret the error.

COMPOSITION

In August **Jonathan Bailey Holland** (Composition '96) joined Carnegie Mellon University as the Jack G. Buncher Chair and as the new head of the School of Music.

LIBERAL ARTS

Routledge in August published **Uddipana Goswami's** *Gendering Peace in Violent Peripheries: Marginality, Masculinity, and Feminist Agency*. This book studies operations of gendered power in multi-ethnic, conflict-habituated geopolitical peripheries globally.

STAFF

In Summer 2022, **Matt Hages-tuen** celebrated five years of operatic collaborations in Germany as the head of film for the Berlin Opera Academy, working alongside colleagues from opera houses in Berlin, and teaching film and media apprentices.

Students

Himari Yoshimura (Violin) will make her NHK Symphony Orchestra subscription debut in March 2023 as a soloist with Keri-Lynn Wilson conducting.

Emily Dawn Amos (Organ) was elected this past summer to the National Council of the American Guild of Organists. As the councillor for young organists, she addresses the concerns of members of the guild who are 30 years old and under while encouraging future generations of organists.

In September **Michael Shaham** (Violin) placed second at the tenth annual Fritz Kreisler International Violin Competition in Vienna.



Donor Highlight

Music as High-Impact Investment

Arts patrons Allen and Judy Freedman invest in works with contemporary relevance.

BY TIM DIOVANNI

tion. The conversation eventually turned to Mr. Díaz's viola, an Amati, and the Stradivarius on which he will perform the world premiere of Bright Sheng's viola concerto, *Of Time and Love*, in January. The concerto is co-commissioned by the Allen R. & Judy Brick Freedman Venture Fund for Music.

"For us, that was nirvana," Allen says, "to be able to see this whole

→ **ALLEN AND JUDY Freedman**, who have donated to arts organizations for decades, were in Santa Fe this past summer when an alumnus of the Curtis Institute of Music asked them to bring an early 18th century violin back to Philadelphia for donation to Curtis.

The Freedmans agreed, and, after a few cancelled flights, handed it to Roberto Díaz, a violist, and the president and CEO of Curtis, at their home in Philadelphia. The violin was added to Curtis's collection of instruments available for students to play.

Mr. Díaz then talked with the Freedmans about the value of the instruments to students' educa-



thing come full circle and, not being professional musicians, to get a sense of the enthusiasm that someone has for an instrument and to distinguish between the sounds of an Amati and a Stradivarius.”

For the Freedman fund, conservatory faculty members—particularly chair of composition studies Nick Di-Berardino (Composition ’18), and artistic director and provost Ed Gazouleas (Viola ’84)—work together to decide who will be commissioned. Guest conductors are sometimes consulted as well for orchestral commissions. The Freedmans then attend workshops and, of course, the premiere performance.

At Curtis, the couple has funded projects ranging from a revival of Leonard Bernstein’s opera *A Quiet Place* and a production of Puccini’s *La rondine*, to a piece for solo violin by Alvin Singleton, Curtis’s 2020-21 composer in residence, and a series of pieces for solo harp by Curtis alumni.

Thought-Provoking Works

Whether they’re supporting a new opera, orchestral work, or ballet, the couple sees their philanthropy as an investment, like venture capital. Allen has worked for decades in finance, having founded the insurance provider Assurant, and serving as director of the software firm Systems & Computer Technology Inc. (later SunGard). More recently he was principal of A. R. Freedman & Co., which provides corporate strategy and leadership development consulting.

In his early days of investing, Allen used to say that “the best investments were those



where the creators create a jewel that is really beautiful.” At a time when donors are increasingly considering social and health-related issues, what do the Freedmans prioritize when looking for artistic jewels? It’s important that a work has contemporary relevance. But they tend to avoid what Allen describes as the polemic of the current political landscape.

“We’re not interested in propaganda,” Judy explains. “We’re interested in art that is convincing.”

An example that met their criteria was Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves*, about a woman’s attempt to satisfy her paralyzed husband’s desires by having sex with other men. Judy was on the board of Beth Morrison Projects, which co-commissioned the opera, and helped fund its creation. “In my view, it’s the number-one opera of the 21st century,” Allen says.

Another recent success was *In a Grove*, which premiered at the Pittsburgh Opera and was underwritten by the Freedmans. Composed

by Christopher Cerrone, with a libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann, it centers on a man’s mysterious death, telling the story from different perspectives. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* called it “an insightful, thought-provoking exploration of the nature of truth.”

Commissions also build off relationships with composers. After previously supporting a work by David T. Little, for example, the Freedmans knew his style and had a sense of what is important to him. So, it was easy to say yes to another commission.

The Freedmans’s support of classical music grew out of a search to honor Judy’s father, whose passion was opera. After he died, Judy, family, and friends decided to fund a scholarship in his name for voice students at the Juilliard School.

The Freedmans have also endowed the young artist program at the Glimmerglass Festival, where Judy served on the board for years and Allen served as interim

executive director. At Hartwick College, they established the annual Freedman Prize for Experiential Research, which has benefited over 300 undergraduate students since its founding in 2002.

Relationship Building

Allen and Judy often travel to see new works and to build relationships.

“We say we’re going to Santa Fe to hear the operas,” Judy says. “But the truth of it is, we’re going to Santa Fe because that’s where there are so many people we know who are passionate about the same art forms as us, all in the same place at the same time. So, the music acts as a sort of a surfboard to get us to be with all those people.”

The couple applauds the efforts of the development department at Curtis, which has facilitated their access to faculty and students.

“A caring and knowledgeable development person elicits from the donor a sense of what is important to the donor,” Judy says, “and can help the donor through the bureaucracy of the particular school or organization.”

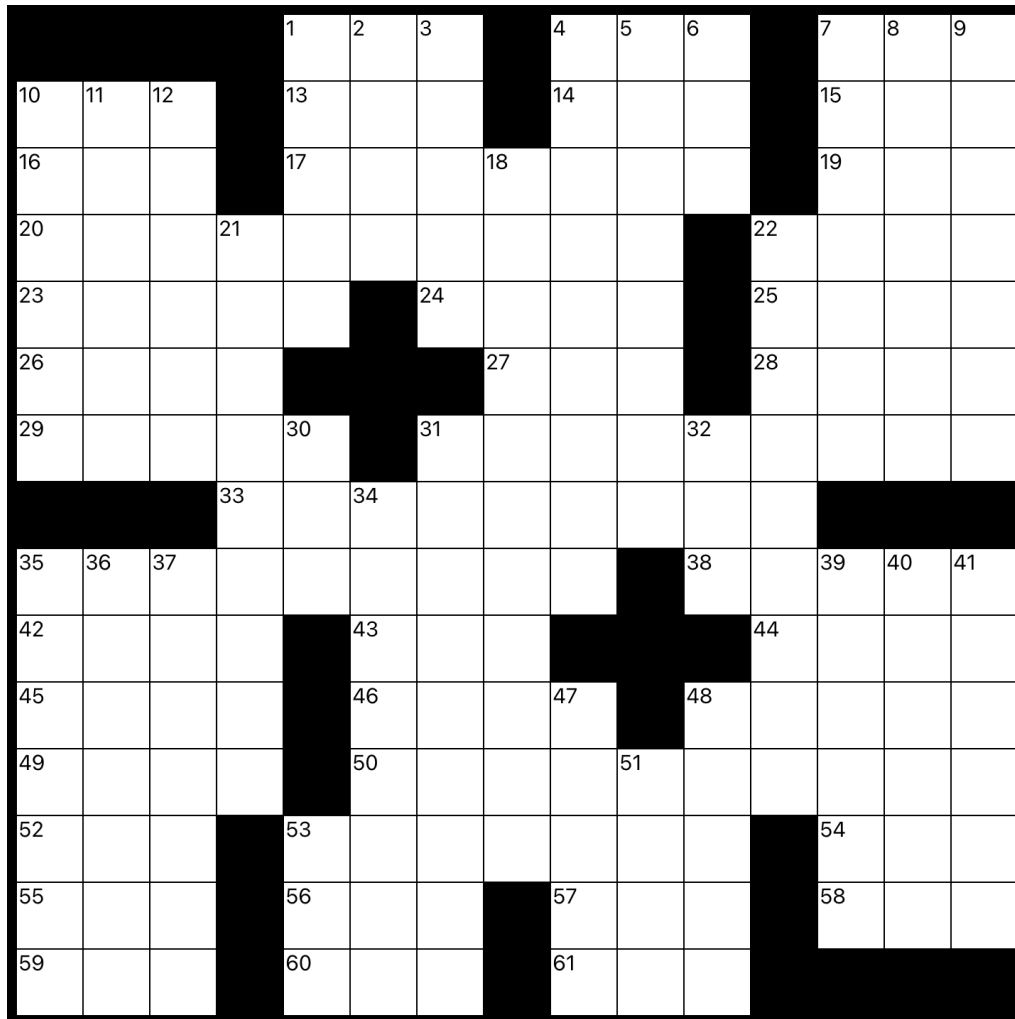
Partly because of Curtis, the Freedmans committed to Philadelphia as their home in 2016, after many years in New York City.

“We wanted to move to where there was a lot of music,” Judy says, “not just the orchestra, not just the opera, but young students. And we felt that Philadelphia certainly had a lot of it.”

Tim Diovanni is a classical music critic and reporter at The Dallas Morning News.

The Curtis Crossword

BY LEAH AMORY



ACROSS

1. “_ gratia artis”
4. Mimic
7. Mary Louise Curtis_ who founded Curtis
10. Free ad, for short
13. Prefix with “classic”
14. Political statute
15. “Vous êtes _”
16. The Raven author, briefly
17. “I’m finished!”
19. Official lang. of Berlin
20. Number of years faculty member Meng-Chieh Liu has taught at Curtis
22. Flight postings
23. Violinist Zimbalist who directed Curtis
24. Assist (a criminal)
25. Long, angry complaint
26. Risotto base
27. A summer in France?
28. “This isn’t the truth.”
29. Examine
31. Many a Tamil speaker
33. Scarred or stained
35. Bane of one’s existence
38. Lavish meal
42. Unit test
43. Aged
44. This, in Spain
45. Rittenhouse Square cafe “Res_”
46. Slipped along
48. Frequently
49. Claim on property
50. Like most staircases
52. Blemish
53. Five-act drama on which Puccini based a three-act opera
54. Internet slang abbreviation meaning “okay”
55. Dined
56. Inventor Whitney
57. Personal vehicle
58. Alkaline solution
59. _ Montgomery, vice chair of the Curtis board of trustees
60. Computer key next to the space bar
61. Good name for a cook?

DOWN

1. What one might enter a bodega to utilize
2. Depend (on)
3. Municipality in Sweden
4. Introverts need a lot of this
5. Slender cigar
6. Farm female
7. Exaggeration
8. Polynesia’s place
9. Amy Beth _, who joined Curtis’s composition faculty in 2022
10. Classical music publisher founded in 1800
11. Deigned
12. Brief entertaining observation
18. Nick _, Curtis’s Senior Associate Dean
21. Katherine _, who joined Curtis’s oboe faculty in 2022
22. Concertmaster of the Minnesota Orchestra who joined Curtis’s violin faculty in 2022
30. Craving
31. Actively continuing
32. Puppy noise
34. Table game based on soccer
35. Benjamin _, who joined Curtis’s violin faculty in 2022
36. Atone for
37. Zapped, as with a stun gun
39. Relating to stars
40. Cold and determined, as a glare
41. Philippe _, who joined Curtis’s oboe faculty in 2022
47. Frisbees, eg.
48. Port city in Hokkaido
51. Improvise vocally
53. Pasture

For answer key go to Curtis.edu/crossword.



CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
1726 LOCUST ST.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

“Commissions are obviously a big risk for an arts organization. It’s not like they’re money-makers.” However, “these kinds of commissions can be career-changing opportunities.”

NICK DIBERARDINO, PAGE 20.