

NOTATIONS



Composition/ Conducting

1980s

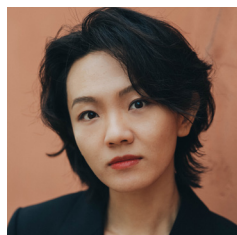
Paul Brantley (Composition '85) this October held his sixth residency at MacDowell, the artist colony in Peterborough, N.H. During his residency, he composed *Mystery Sonata* for cello and piano, a commission from the cellist Laura Metcalf. Mr. Brantley is also a recipient of a Curtis centennial commission, to be premiered in 2024.

2000s

Adam Glaser (Conducting '00) in August became music director and conductor of Long Island's South Shore Symphony. Additionally, he conducted the New Jersey Symphony last January in two subscription concerts featuring **Hilary Hahn** (Violin '99) in the Sibelius Violin Concerto.

Sebastian Chang (Composition '07) composed a film score for *Nosferatu* (1922), which premiered live with the movie in the Louisville Orchestra's Halloween concert, conducted by **Teddy Abrams** (Conducting '08).

2010s



Dai Wei's (Composition '19)

new orchestral work *Invisible Portals* received a West Coast premiere by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in October, conducted by Jaime Martín.



Strings

1980s

Alan Stepansky (Cello '81) was recently given the Peabody Conservatory's highest award for teaching, the Johns Hopkins University Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award for 2023. He is currently a professor of cello and chair of the strings department at Peabody.

1990s

Gloria Justen (Violin '90) in September launched String Sound Playground, an online learning platform and community for bowed-string players who are studying improvisation and composition.

Jenny Oaks Baker (Violin '97) and her children, comprising the musical group Family Four, are embarking on a 20-city U.S. tour this holiday season with their Christmas show, *Joy to the World! A Sacred Celebration*. Guest artists include Irish soprano Alex Sharpe, formerly of Celtic Woman.

The Formosa Quartet, of which **Jasmine Lin** (Violin '98) is a founding member, holds the title of McAndless Distinguished Professor at

Eastern Michigan University during the 2023–24 season. The quartet is also in residence at the University of Houston.

2000s

Efe Baltacigil (Cello '02) appeared with the Seattle Symphony, performing Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1 in October. Later that month, he performed with the Chamber Music Society of Philadelphia, joining Curtis president Roberto Díaz, pianist Natalie Zhu, and clarinetist Ricardo Morales.

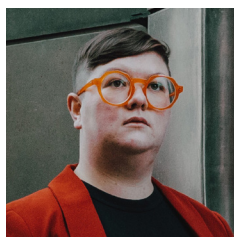
Former Eighth Blackbird sextet member **Yvonne Lam** (Violin '05) released her first solo album, *Watch Over Us*, in July, recorded on Blue Griffin. The album includes compositions for solo violin and electronics by women composers, including Anna Clyne, Missy Mazzoli, and Eve Beglarian.

Alexandra Osborne (Violin '06) was appointed associate concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in August. Previously, she was a violinist for the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., a post she held for 13 years.

2010s

Rachel Kuipers Yonan (Viola '11) is a visiting scholar at Jesus College, University of Cambridge, for 2023–24. In this position, she is researching "the role of classical music in human flourishing." She was also named the McDonald Agape Fellow in Music and Theology at Duke University, a position she will hold for three years.

In July **Katya Poplyansky** (Violin '14) was named first violinist of the Isabel String Quartet. The quartet is in residence at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston, Ontario.



Abi Fayette (Violin '17) has been appointed artistic director of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Ms. Fayette's older sister, Madeline Fayette, recently joined the Orpheus cello section.

2020s



Danny Yehun Jin (Violin '23) has been named assistant principal second violin of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.



Winds/Brass

1960s

John Russo (Clarinet '67) was featured as a composer

and clarinetist on two CDs released in June by the Contemporary Record Society. The first album, *The NYC & Philly Performance*, features three of his *Twenty Modern Studies*, as well as Weber's Clarinet Concerto No. 2 with Mr. Russo as soloist with the New York Chamber Players Orchestra. The second album, *Contemporary/Classic Chamber Music*, includes works by Mr. Russo and Max Reger.

1980s

Book of Birds, the second book by **Nadina Mackie** (Bassoon '81), was published in October by Friesen Press. The book features insights on the creative process, along with 60 paintings of birds by the author. The audio version of her first

book, *Solitary Refinement, Concepts for the Committed Bassoonist*, was published by Audible.

2000s

Tim Sawyier (Oboe '08), now a psychoanalyst, appeared as a guest on *The Conscious Artist* podcast, hosted by former classmate **Pallavi Mahidara** (Piano '10), in which they discussed psychoanalysis and musicians' mental health.

Achilles Liarmakopoulos

(Trombone '08) joined the trombone section of the Athens State Orchestra in May. He will continue touring as a member of the Canadian Brass and with the band Pink Martini.

Bavarian Blast

Two recent Curtis alumni—Hae Sue Lee (Viola '21) and Gabriel Polinsky (Double Bass '22)—won the top prizes at the 72nd ARD International Music Competition in Munich in August. The Curtis ties also included alumnus Andrew Grams ('03), who conducted the viola, double bass, and harp competition finals, as well as the first prize winner's concert.

Ms. Lee, who studied viola at Curtis with president and CEO Roberto Díaz, was awarded first prize in the viola category, valued at €10,000. She also received the €7,500 Osnabrück Music Prize, and the €1,000 Audience Prize. During the final round, she performed William Walton's Viola Concerto.

Mr. Polinsky won the €10,000 first prize in the bass category by performing the finale of Koussevitzky's Double Bass Concerto Op. 3. Currently the associate principal double bass in The Philadelphia Orchestra, he studied with Harold Hall Robinson and Edgar Meyer at Curtis.

"When I entered Hae Sue's and Gabe's dressing rooms, I was so pleased to see familiar faces from the times I had worked with the Curtis Symphony from before," said Mr. Grams, who conducted the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with the contestants. "I was even more happy to hear them play with those qualities that I identify with Curtis."

Curtis alumni clinch top prizes in Munich Competition.



Hae Sue Lee, Andrew Grams, and Gabriel Polinsky

Milestones

→ Faculty member **Benjamin Beilman** (Violin '12) married Tracy Vo on September 9 in a ceremony at Lundy Farm in Wawarsing, N.Y. Ms. Vo is a director in the private equity group at Elliott Investment Management.

→ **Timothy Dilenschneider** (Double Bass '14) announces the birth of his son, Alexander Azezi Dilenschneider, on June 29.



→ In July **Meredith LaBouff Piper** (Voice '13) and Dr. Walter Piper were married in Ramsey, N.J. Dr. Piper is a neuroscientist and research engineer at Neurable. In August Ms. Piper was promoted to assistant director of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera.

→ Yoori Kim Williams and **Patrick Williams** (Flute '14) announce the birth of their daughter, Leona, on September 29.

2010s

Austin Larson (Horn '14) joined the Singapore Symphony Orchestra as its principal horn in July.

In October **Alexander Lane** (Horn '19) became artistic administrator at the Brevard Music Center, overseeing all artistic operations, guest artist planning, and performances in the region.



Guangwei Fan (Trombone '19) has joined the Louisville Orchestra as second trombone. Additionally, he served as the guest bass trumpet player for the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra's performances of *Das Rheingold* and served as a guest principal trombonist for the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra's summer season.

2020s

James Vaughen (Trumpet '23) this fall joined the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra for a one-year position as acting principal trumpet. Mr. Vaughen also serves as assistant principal trumpet of the Grant Park Orchestra.



Percussion

This fall **Raul Vergara-Montoya** (Percussion '02) became a

member of the advisory board of the Conservatory of Music of Fundacion Misericordia. His responsibilities include enhancing the musical quality and organizational structure of eight youth orchestras in southern Chile. He also became the executive producer of the Deutsche Schule La Serena and an international coordinator at the Festival Musical Bioceánico in Chile's Atacama Desert region.



Piano/ Accompanying

1970s

Beth Levin (Piano '71) is slated to tour Europe in March 2024, performing in Montreux, Munich, and Vienna.

Aglaia Koras (Piano '79) will perform an all-Beethoven concert at Carnegie Hall on December 15. This concert was originally scheduled for December 2020 to honor Beethoven's 250th birthday but was postponed due to the pandemic.

1980s

Folk-based chamber music compositions by **Ketty Nez** (Piano '83) are featured on the album *far sight sun light*, released in July by Albany Records. Along with Ms. Nez on piano, performers include Boston University alumni and members of the Denver-based Playground Ensemble.

In August **Audrey Axinn** (Accompanying '88) was

appointed interim director of chamber music at the Juilliard School, where she also teaches graduate studies courses.

2000s

FaceArt Institute of Music, a school founded in Shanghai by **Jenny Q Chai** (Piano '04), has successfully sent students to Stanford, Princeton, UC Berkeley, NYU, Tufts, Juilliard, and the Manhattan School of Music.

2010s

This year **Yue Chu** (Piano '13) was appointed to the piano faculty of the Music Middle School, an affiliate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

George Fu (Piano '16) is part of an ongoing documentary film project called *Solitude with Schubert*, in partnership with the Platoon record label (and supported by the Young Alumni Fund at Curtis). The film tracks his performances of Schubert with soprano Lotte Betts-Dean during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, the duo will record an album of music from the documentary.



Organ

James Vail (Organ '51), who turned 94 in March, retired the previous month as organist and choirmaster at St. Mary of the Angels Anglican Church in Los Angeles. He is a professor emeritus of choral and sacred music at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.



Harp

In September **Abigail Kent** (Harp '17) became a harp fellow at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Fla. The position comes months after she graduated with a doctorate from the Juilliard School.



Voice/Opera

1960s
Fall 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of **Mary Lou Falcone's** (Voice '66) company, M.L. Falcone, Public Relations. In October her memoir, *I Didn't See It Coming: Scenes of Love, Loss, and Lewy Body Dementia*, was published by East End Press (see A Tempo, p. 5).

1970s
Sylvia Villarreal Bryson (Voice '72) composed and recorded two Christmas carols, "Christmas Symbols" and "St. Nicholas," both available online.

2010s

This fall **Sean Michael Plumb**

(Voice '15, Opera '16) returned to the Metropolitan Opera for performances of *La bohème* and to the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich as the title character in *The Barber of Seville*.

Johnathan McCullough (Opera '17) has been named executive director of Fourth Wall NYC, a vocal ensemble dedicated to creative programming and supporting its artists with equitable pay, childcare, and healthcare support.

Emily Pogorelc (Voice '18) is scheduled to make her Metropolitan Opera debut next March as Lisette in *La Rondine*.

2020s
Surechul Charles Kim (Opera '22) recently performed in the 30th anniversary concert of the Wagner Society in Seoul, South Korea. Mr. Kim sang a variety of Wagner tenor roles.

Olivia Smith (Voice '23) is one of 11 recipients of the 2024 San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowship. A native of Kelowna, British Columbia, Ms. Smith is currently a first-year Adler Fellow, where last season, she made her main stage debut as the Voice of the Falcon in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

Students

Micah Gleason (Conducting) is one of four 2023–24 participants in the Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women

Conductors at the Dallas Opera. She will conduct a showcase concert on January 28.

Oliver Talukder (Oboe) recently won the audition for second/assistant principal oboe in the Opera Philadelphia Orchestra.

Judah Taylor (Voice) took part in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, which won a 2023 GRAMMY. Mr. Taylor will return to the Met this April for another series of performances.

In May **Tobias Vigneau** (Double Bass) was awarded first prize in the senior division of the first annual Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus Concerto Competition. His placement earned him \$2,500 and the opportunity to perform a concerto with the orchestra this December in Santa Fe, N.M.

Faculty/Staff

In June **Matt Hagastuen** directed a documentary-style film featuring conductor Carl St. Clair, composer James MacMillan, and California poet laureate Dana Gioia, celebrating their collaboration with the Pacific Symphony and Pacific Chorale on the premiere of their choral work, *Fiat Lux*. The piece was composed to mark the consecration of Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif., and was also performed at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

Senior associate dean and Ruth W. and A. Morris Williams Jr. Chair of Liberal Arts **Jeanne Minahan McGinn** received a Lyric Fest commission for seven poems that have been set by composer Benjamin Wenzelberg. Titled *Any of Those Decembers*, the winter cantata for four voices, string quartet, flute, and piano premieres in December in Philadelphia.



Alan Morrison (Organ '91, Accompanying '93) performed a recital in June with soprano **Karen Slack** (Opera '02) at the CalPoly Performing Arts Center in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Along with works by Richard Strauss, Verdi, Cilea, and others, they performed Adolphus Hailstork's *Kamishi Seashore Song*, which was written for them and premiered two years ago.

In August **Emily Waters** and **Pete Williams** authored an article, "Forensic Cataloging: Managing Institutional Recordings through Changes in Professional and Technical Standards," which was published by the Music Library Association in the edited volume, *Managing Institutional Recordings*. The article discusses the history of Curtis's collection of recital recordings.

Those We Have Lost



Vincent W. Barbee (Horn '77), a horn player and member of

the National Ballet of Canada for 40 years, died on July 28. He was 71 years old. Mr. Barbee was born on May 19, 1952, in Raleigh, N.C. and attended the North Carolina School of the Arts before attending Curtis. After graduating in 1977, Canada's National Ballet hired him for a national tour, which led to a permanent position. He moved to Toronto, where he

was also active as a freelancer. Described by his colleagues as kind and ready with a joke, he enjoyed dining out, cycling, and hiking. Mr. Barbee is survived by his brother, sister-in-law, and extended family.



Frederick Orville Lewis Jr. (Composition '63, '65), a pianist,

composer, and music teacher who was a tireless presence in Philadelphia musical life, died on October 7 at the age of 90.

Born in Philadelphia on September 16, 1933, Mr. Lewis received both his bachelor's and master's degrees at Curtis and later joined its board of directors. He taught music for four years at the Granoff School of Music, followed by eight years in the Philadelphia School District. His longest affiliation was with the Community College of Philadelphia, where he taught piano, composition, music history, theory, and other courses until retiring in 2009.

In his teens, Mr. Lewis was a gifted baseball player whose pitching won him a spot on the farm team of the Philadelphia Athletics (now the Oakland Athletics). But music was his first

calling, and while serving in the U.S. Air Force in the 1950s, he played in a band that accompanied Bob Hope and other visiting entertainers (he later played keyboards in the Monarchs, a Philadelphia band). After his discharge in 1957, Mr. Lewis married Despina Chletcos, who was his first adult piano teacher (and who taught piano from their Upper Darby, Penn. home). She died in 2016. Mr. Lewis is survived by their three children and six grandchildren.

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.

(continued from page 11)

of Chicago, Black—and then connecting with this music of a composer who is trying to fight for the rights of his people and the children of Syria, is really powerful. I don't have to be a scholar of everything Syrian to try and play the music in a way that feels genuine.

We're talking on the one-year anniversary of the re-opening of David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. How does the renovated hall feel now? Has it changed the way that you do your job?

Yes. I really love the new hall. One easy thing to pinpoint is we can play with a soft touch and still be heard by the audience. The audience feels very intimate and very close to us. That has been a real pleasure for me, and to explore different rep-

ertoire, especially some of the concerti that we play. To be able to feel like I'm connected with everyone around us. And this is very important to remember: It's not supposed to be Carnegie Hall. Everyone uses that as the [benchmark]: 'Oh, it doesn't sound like Carnegie Hall!' But I don't think that was exactly the goal. We were trying to build a space where the audience can enjoy the music a lot better.

You have a full-time orchestra job, you teach at Curtis and at Juilliard, you play chamber music, and do many solo projects. How do you balance and prioritize all of this?

It's an interesting thing for my students to witness me doing. They see my tired eyes and I tell them I got off a plane from

wherever for our lessons. So, they can kind of talk to me about how stressed and tired they are as students. And then we can talk about strategies for coping with things, and for managing the physical and mental challenges of being so busy. So, we actually talk a lot about how we all manage to live our lives, hopefully with a good attitude, and by trying to make things better. Basically, they get to learn that you're practicing all the time. Everything you do, you are learning. It doesn't stop just because you've accomplished a certain goal. I try to be very honest about what it's like out there.

We've found a photo of you and your brother, Demarre McGill (Flute '96), and Alan Morrison (Organ '91, Accom-

panying '93) together on "Mister Rodgers' Neighborhood" in 1994. What do you remember about this?

Oh yes, that's one of the highlights of my career! He asked us to be on an episode about the uniforms that people wear when they perform. So, we have this storyline that there was a concert coming up, and we were wearing bow ties. We were rehearsing in this church and Fred [Rogers] happened to be in the neighborhood. He came by and listened to us rehearsing a dress rehearsal. There was a little bit of acting involved. I was 14 or 15. We did Saint-Saëns's *Tarantella*, which we've had in our repertoire for all these years.

Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.