

OVERTONES



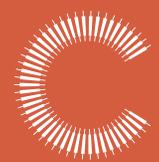
VOL. XLVII, NO. 1 | SPRING 2024



When Chamber Music
Went Mainstream

A Caribbean Voyage
with *Star Trek* Fans

How to Manage
Performance Anxiety



CURTIS
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

BE THE CHANGE

Many Curtis alumni and friends feel a personal calling to make a difference, to leave a lasting impact on our friends, family, and the world we inhabit. You can leave a lasting legacy at the Curtis Institute of Music by including the school in your estate plans and becoming a member of the Founder's Society.

The Founder's Society recognizes individuals who have included Curtis as a beneficiary in their wills, trusts, retirement plans, and other estate planning arrangements. Its name honors Mary Louise Curtis Bok, who founded the Curtis Institute of Music in 1924, and in doing so, created an enduring legacy in classical music.

By including Curtis in your estate plans, you can create your own legacy here—joining Mrs. Bok and other dedicated friends. Contact the Development Department at Curtis at **(215) 717-3131** or **Giving@Curtis.edu** to learn more.



Opera on the Edge

New and innovative operas have long been a part of Curtis's history. Here are six highlights.

→ A centerpiece of the Curtis Opera Theatre's centennial series is the East Coast premiere of *The Comet / Poppea*, featuring George Lewis's *The Comet* juxtaposed with Claudio Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Presented on a rotating stage at Philadelphia's 23rd Street Armory and alternating between scenes from each opera, the production is conceived and directed by Yuval Sharon and includes production by countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo. With that in mind, here are six other new and innovative productions that have drawn on Curtis talent over the decades.

Berg's *Wozzeck*

March 19, 1931

PHILADELPHIA METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE

Alban Berg's modernist landmark got its U.S. premiere thanks to a \$40,000 gift from Curtis's founder Mary Louise Curtis Bok. Leopold Stokowski conducted 116 members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, joined by 25 Curtis students as cast members and stage orchestra members. Stokowski demanded a whopping 88 rehearsals, but the effort paid off: *Time* magazine called it "the most important U.S. premiere of the season."



Efrem Zimbalist's *Landara*

April 6, 1956

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Efrem Zimbalist, Curtis's director from 1941–68, composed this fanciful opera set on a mythical tropical island as an 80th birthday gift for his wife, Mrs. Bok.



Menotti's *Amelia Goes to the Ball*

April 1, 1937

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Gian Carlo Menotti (Composition '33) was in his twenties when he composed this one-act comedy featuring his own Italian libretto. Dedicated to Mrs. Bok, it was conducted by Fritz Reiner and staged by Herbert Graf. It transferred to the Met a year later, effectively launching Menotti's career.

Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*

November 21, 1989

CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

Czech composer Viktor Ullmann wrote this thinly veiled satire of Hitler to a libretto by Peter Kien in 1943, when both were interned at the Terezin concentration camp. Rhoda Levine staged its Philadelphia premiere with a seven-member Curtis cast and chamber orchestra.

Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Naomi in the Living Room*

March 22, 1996

CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

This one-act opera for three singers and piano by current faculty member Jonathan Bailey Holland (Composition '96) is based on a play by Christopher Durang about a chronically dysfunctional family.



Rene Orth's *Empty the House*

January 21-24, 2016

CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

Rene Orth (Composition '16) and librettist Mark Campbell tell the story of a daughter who returns to her childhood home for a weekend with her mother and is confronted by painful memories. Opera Philadelphia revived it in 2019.

SPRING
2024

Contents

14

Musical Ambitions, Olympic Dreams

Classical music has played a role in the Olympics for more than a century.

by **Brian Wise**

16

Thinking Outside the Chamber

Chamber music was once considered an avocational sideline rather than a professional goal. No longer.

by **Heidi Waleson**

03

Message from the SVP of Digital Strategy and Innovation

A fresh look for the Curtis brand.

A Tempo

05 **BOLDLY GOING**

Curtis musicians cruise the Caribbean. All-School Project focuses on environmental justice.

08 **SOUND OFF: PERFORMANCE ANXIETY**

How to shake a case of the butterflies.

12 **THE Q+A: NOKUTHULA NGWENYAMA**

The composer and violist tackles big questions about human existence.

Notations

22 Alumni

24 **LEGAL EAGLES**
Alumni hone skills that transfer from the concert stage to the courtroom and beyond.

27 Students

27 Faculty

28 Those We've Lost

31 **COMMENCEMENT PHOTOS, THEN & NOW**

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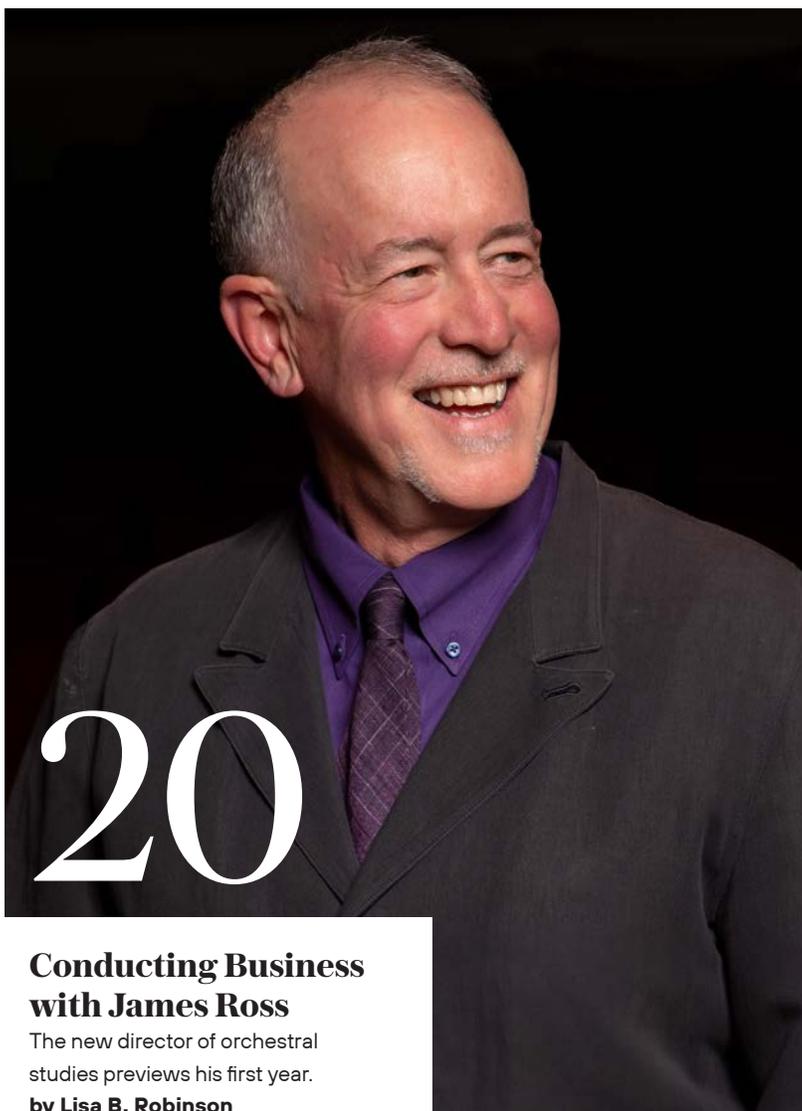
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CURTIS
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC



Conducting Business with James Ross

The new director of orchestral studies previews his first year.

by **Lisa B. Robinson**

ON THE COVER:
ILLUSTRATION BY BRYCE WYMER



FROM THE
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Curtis **Curtis** **Curtis**
Institute of Music



New Century, New Look



AS CURTIS'S CENTENNIAL season approached, my colleagues and I began to examine how the school communicates its place in the world, including through its brand, which involves our messaging and visual identity. Our last brand redesign occurred in 2009, a whole different era in media consumption. Students were getting their first smartphones. Social media was in its infancy. Streaming was still a novelty. Today, most people are introduced to Curtis through digital channels, with more than half of those newcomers arriving through mobile devices. To remain successful in a crowded and fractured media environment, we recognized that Curtis needed to modernize its brand identity.

Curtis began its brand refresh project in October 2022 with Sametz Blackstone Associates and Prescott & Associates, research agencies that work with leading arts and educational institutions. We conducted competitive research and engaged with some 1,300 people—alumni, parents, donors, faculty, students, staff, presenters, and audience members—to better understand how the school is valued and perceived today.

Our findings were clear: Curtis is beloved by those who know the school, but despite ongoing efforts in recent years to raise awareness of Curtis, significant opportunities remain. Further, the brand must not only reflect Curtis's creative energy and artistic excellence—with teaching and learning at its core—but also its many institutional components: Curtis on Tour, the Curtis Studio label, Curtis Artist Management, and community engagement. We also crafted a concise positioning statement for the school: **Curtis is where the world's great young musicians become the leading artists, creators, and innovators in classical music.**

As part of our rebranding process, we developed a new visual system with preeminent design firm Pentagram. After more than 18 months of research, development, and design, we are proud to share a new visual identity and messaging that communicates the artistic excellence of Curtis. Based on a custom font inspired by musical gestures and concepts, and featuring a bold, red-and-black color palette, the new system will be dynamic across digital and traditional media. You'll be seeing the new brand and campaign "Curtis sounds like this" on Curtis's website, in mailings, advertisements, and signage this summer, and in the Fall 2024 issue of *Overtones*.

As for the present issue, Heidi Waleson explores the growth of chamber music at Curtis over the decades (p. 16), Patricia K. Johnson introduces us to Curtis musicians on a recent *Star Trek* cruise (p. 5), and Brian Wise speaks with the science-minded composer Nokuthula Ngwenyama (p. 12). Also read how musicians manage stage fright, about Curtis alumni working in legal careers, and how classical music has inspired Olympic athletes.

Vince Ford

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF DIGITAL STRATEGY AND INNOVATION, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PERFORMANCE INNOVATION LAB, FIELD-MCFADDEN CHAIR IN DIGITAL STUDIES

Curtis100



**Celebrating a legacy of greatness.
Launching a new century of groundbreaking artists.
Curtis sounds like this.**

Curtis Institute of Music, founded in 1924 by Mary Louise Curtis Bok, has been a beacon of excellence in music education for a century. Join us as we celebrate 100 years of musical greatness with a historic performance season and milestone projects designed to inspire our community throughout the year.

curtis.edu/100

Oct 12: **PORTRAIT OF GABRIELA ORTIZ** | New Music Ensemble

Oct 25: **DOVER QUARTET** | Curtis Presents

Oct 27: **PROKOFIEV & TIME FOR THREE** | Orchestra

Nov 1-3: **THE COMET / POPPEA** | Opera

Nov 23: **DVOŘÁK & PRICE WITH YANNICK** | Orchestra

Dec 13: **RAY CHEN PLAYS BARBER** | Orchestra

Feb 15: **BOLD EXPERIMENT** | New Music Ensemble

Feb 27-Mar 2: **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO** | Opera

Mar 13: **ROSAMUNDE STRING QUARTET** | Curtis Presents

Mar 25: **GUITAR QUARTET** | Curtis Presents

Apr 11 & 13: **CANDIDE** | Opera

Apr 23: **MICHELLE CANN & IMANI WINDS** | Curtis Presents

Apr 26: **YUJA WANG PLAYS BERNSTEIN** | Orchestra

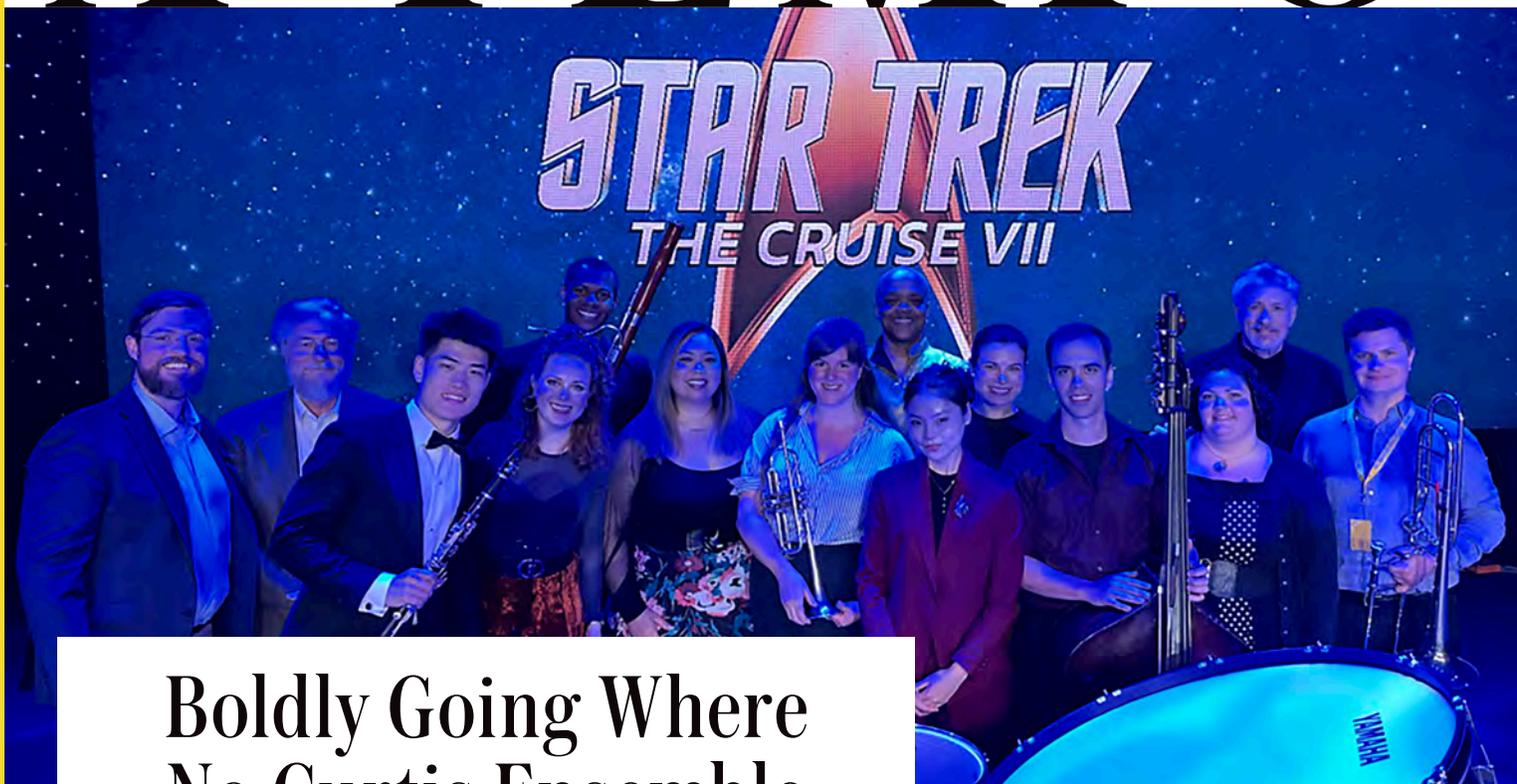
May 8: **J'NAI BRIDGES, AMANDA MAJESKI & KAREN SLACK** | Gala

May 10: **INFERNAL ANGEL & SAVIOR** | New Music Ensemble

2024-25 Season: Great to Groundbreaking

Curtis alumni are entitled to complimentary tickets for mainstage performances. Gala tickets are available at a special price for alumni; email tickets@curtis.edu for details.

A TEMPO



Boldly Going Where No Curtis Ensemble Has Gone Before

A *Star Trek* cruise offers an unusual performance opportunity for alumni and faculty.

BY PATRICIA K. JOHNSON

A CHAMBER ENSEMBLE of Curtis Institute of Music alumni performs for science fiction fans on a Caribbean cruise called *Star Trek: The Cruise VII*.

Is that sentence the result of a strangely-themed Mad Libs exercise? Nope, it actually happened this past February—thanks to actor John de Lancie.

Mr. de Lancie is well-known for his role as Q in the *Star Trek* franchise. He's

also the son (and namesake) of former Philadelphia Orchestra principal oboist John de Lancie ('40), who served on the Curtis faculty from 1954 to 1985 and as the school's director for the last eight of those years. John de Lancie, the son, was born in Philadelphia and told the *Inquirer* last year that "I sort of grew up with the Curtis. I think of it very fondly..." So, of course, when Curtis asked him if he

would take part in an eight-city tour in March 2023 narrating Stravinsky's *L'histoire du Soldat*, he readily agreed.

As it turns out, there was also a new work on that program, composed by Nick DiBerardino ('18), dean and chair of composition studies. Mr. DiBerardino just happens to be a longtime *Star Trek* fan, so naturally, his piece was inspired by the series. Entitled *Darmok & Jalad*, the work is "an unabashedly nerdy piece of music," Mr. DiBerardino says. The title is a reference to one of his favorite episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, where the crew encounters a spacefaring civilization called the Tamarians. The *Enterprise* crew is unable to understand the Tamarians' language, even with the ship's universal translator. Their computer can translate the Tamarian language into understandable (individual) words, but those words seem to have no connection, making the phrases entirely incomprehensible.

As a result, the *Enterprise* crew lacks the necessary context to understand the



meaning behind Tamarian words “darmok” and “jalad.” “For example,” Mr. DiBerardino says, “saying ‘Romeo and Juliet’ might mean something like ‘star-crossed love’ for you and me, but that’s only true if we’ve both read Shakespeare.”

Although most Trekkers (especially *TNG* fans) will likely immediately get the title reference, Mr. de Lancie admits that he didn’t. “I had no idea what he was talking about. None. I thought he said something about gelato!” he admits. But once he heard the piece in performance, he loved it.

The Tamarian language contains bits and pieces of familiar words used in a strange context. Similarly, *Darmok & Jalad* contains some of the underlying vocabulary of tonal composers, which may feel familiar, but rendered into something unique. It takes the standard grammar from Mozart and Beethoven and twists the once familiar patterns into something “slightly strange,” says Mr. DiBerardino.

But the 2023 tour was only the beginning of the Curtis/*Star Trek* performing relationship. During the tour, Mr. de Lancie invited Mr. DiBerardino and Curtis to participate in the February *Star Trek* cruise, performing Curtis/*Star Trek*-themed shows for passengers. Mr. DiBerardino and Curtis readily agreed.

Following months of planning and writing, Curtis set sail for *Star Trek: The Cruise VII* on February 22, 2024, from Port Canaveral, Fla. The trip included several days at sea and stops at Willemstad, Curaçao, and Oranjestad, Aruba, before returning to Port Canaveral on February 29. In addition to Mr. de Lancie and Mr. DiBerardino, the Curtis ensemble included Yan Liu (Clarinet ’20), Joshua Butcher (Bassoon ’16), Tessa Ellis (Trumpet ’17), János Sutyák (Trombone ’17), Sijia Huang (Timpani and Percussion ’20), Bella Hristova (Violin ’08), Robin Brawley

(Double Bass ’18), and Chelsea Komschlies (Composition ’18).

During the weeklong cruise, Curtis was the focus of three concerts. The opener was a preview of a work they’d perform later in the week: *Star Trek*-themed medleys arranged by Ms. Komschlies. Mr. DiBerardino says that was a galvanizing moment for him: as each song in the medley began, the audience would erupt in cheers. “They’d get it immediately—and they loved it,” he says.

On the third night of the cruise, the ensemble performed an hour-long show about Curtis, led by Mr. de Lancie, called “The Story of Curtis Through a Personal Lens.” For months leading up to the voyage, Mr. de Lancie researched the school’s history and drew upon his own childhood memories here to craft this moving and personal look at the school. Woven throughout were excerpts of standard classical music repertoire arranged by current master’s student Alistair Coleman (’22) for the musicians in the Curtis ensemble. Mr. de Lancie’s enthusiasm for the school throughout the cruise led to a packed house for this show, with audience members staying for a wide-ranging Q&A session following the performance.

Their final show featured three works, including *We Believe*, created by Mr. de Lancie and Mr. DiBerardino, and consisting of text from a 1971 speech by *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry. Mr. Roddenberry’s speech unfolds much like a credo, putting forth the ideals he wanted *Star Trek* to live up to: that it would serve to connect otherwise disparate people, underline their commonalities, and bolster mutual understanding and acceptance.

And given how enthusiastically the *Star Trek* cruise audiences and Curtis musicians embraced their experiences together on this cruise, maybe Roddenberry was really onto something.



Make Way for More Maestros

Conducting program will expand its training in opera and symphonic repertoire in 2024–25.

The podiums at Curtis are about to get a lot busier.

The school announced in April that it is expanding the scope of its conducting program, hiring pedagogues James Ross (Conducting ’89) as the director of orchestral studies and promoting current faculty member Yannick Nézet-Séguin to head of conducting. The number of conducting students will increase from two to three and the program’s duration will lengthen from two to three years.

The program expansion, which takes effect in the 2024–25 school year, is designed to deepen and enhance training in both orchestral and opera conducting—patterned on Mr. Nézet-Séguin’s own versatile career as music and artistic director of The Philadelphia Orchestra and music director of the Metropolitan Opera. In addition to studying opera conducting with Mr. Nézet-Séguin, students will work with the school’s voice and opera department under vocal studies chair and principal opera coach Miloš Repický. Among other conservatory conducting programs, the primary focus is typically on orchestral, choral, or wind conducting, but seldom opera.

Mr. Ross is the founding orchestra director of the National Youth Orchestra of the USA, run by Carnegie Hall, where he oversees all artistic and educational activities. He discusses plans for the program in an interview on page 20.

Environmental Justice a Key Theme in All-School Project

When talking about the future of the earth, that's not really a political problem.



WHEN MARY JAVIAN (Double Bass '99) set out to teach a mini-course on music and climate justice last fall, it was initially intended to be a modest, six-week elective. But as the topic came into focus—and as climate-driven disasters took their toll in 2023—Ms. Javian, the chair of career studies, expanded the course, rolling it into Social Entrepreneur, her semester-long undergraduate seminar. It became a cornerstone of

Curtis's All-School Project, focused this year on Music of the Earth.

The All-School Project is an annual initiative that brings together coursework, performance projects, and career studies on a given theme. This year's project included courses on landscape painting and nature journals, and an Ensemble 20/21 concert of environmentally focused pieces.

Ms. Javian co-taught her class with liberal arts faculty member Dr. Eva Swidler, delving into environmental science concepts and the history of protest movements. Partnering with the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), a magnet school in South Philadelphia, Curtis students mentored band, choir, and orchestra students on ecological-themed projects. They engaged a speaker from the Philadelphia chapter of the youth activist group Sunrise Movement and led a performance of "Won't Give Up," a climate-themed song recorded by Yo-Yo Ma, Pattie Gonia, and Quinn Christopherson.

The rubric of climate justice, with its emphasis on social inequality, encouraged students to examine their own values and outlook on the world. "I think there's a little bit of a reticence to make things political," says Ms. Javian. "But when you're talking about the future of the earth, that's not really a political problem. That's a human problem. Having the musical component moves people to do something and feel less hopeless about it."



Anniversaries

35 YEARS

Joan Patenaude-Yarnell

25 YEARS

Veronica McAuley

15 YEARS

Harvey Sachs
Andrew Lane

10 YEARS

Jon Guenther

5 YEARS

Patricia K. Johnson
Peter Williams

Trio Zimbalist Releases Debut Recording on Curtis House Label

Piano trios by Mieczysław Weinberg, Lera Auerbach, and Antonín Dvořák are the focus of the debut album by Trio Zimbalist, released in January on the Curtis Studio label. With the Slavic ballad known as a Dumka ("thought" in Ukrainian) as a framework, the album focuses on pieces composed in the shadows of political and social tumult. *Gramophone* magazine cited the album on its March Editor's Choice list. Founded in 2021 and named after former Curtis director violinist Efrem Zimbalist, the trio consists of Curtis alumni Josef Špaček (Violin '09), Timotheos Gavriilidis-Petrin (Cello '17), and George Xiaoyuan Fu (Piano '16).





Sound Off

How can musicians manage performance anxiety?

BY BRIAN WISE

Ellen L. Wright, Ph.D.

Psychologist, Curtis mental health team

→ **Ellen Wright recommends that students with performance anxiety seek help early on, and not waste time dabbling in untested methods.** “When I meet the first-year students, I say, ‘Listen, I know you want to solve everything by yourselves, but please do not struggle between September and February or March trying to solve this.’” Dr. Wright emphasizes a combination of techniques, some of which were developed by the noted sports psychologist Don Greene.

“Don Greene does two things: He uses a process called grounding, where he asks people to focus on their breath and locate an area, usually in their abdominal area, where they are breathing. What we find is that breathing can compete with anxiety. Then, he uses visualization. I ask them to go back to a performance where they felt they really played well, and I’ll say, ‘Your body has a memory of that performance, and the anxiety has just covered that over. So, I’d like you to think about a performance where you felt you played the way you want to play.’ And I have them describe it in exquisite detail using all their senses. Part of what I’m going to do is ask them to practice retrieving those [sensations].

Then, I say to them, ‘I’d like you to pick two words—process cues—that describe what playing that way is like.’ I ask them to go through bringing up that memory, feeling it in every possible way, then saying the process words and starting to play. Go through the process of breathing and grounding themselves physically and then say those words when they are warming up, before going on stage. The more they use that, the more accessible that positive experience will be. What you’re really doing is reminding them that in their past, they have successful performances, and all they must do is access them. And there’s a relationship between your past successes and your future successes.”

Daniel Matsukawa ('92)

Curtis bassoon faculty
Principal Bassoon,
Philadelphia Orchestra

→ **Bassoonist Daniel Matsukawa has sought out wisdom from other disciplines when it comes to performance anxiety**, whether it's the race car-driving protagonist in Garth Stein's novel *The Art of Racing in the Rain* (i.e., don't worry about that last turn you made), or an online video by actor Bryan Cranston, about focusing on one's character. Most of all, Mr. Matsukawa emphasizes constant, detailed preparation.

"You know how they always say

knowledge is power? It's all about preparation. And I know that sounds so simplistic but sometimes it's the simple things. I'm an over-thinker, and that's where we sometimes get into trouble. I feel prepared when I've done the studying; I've done the practicing. The voices of doubt always love to sneak in. I love saying to myself, 'Just trust it will be there, and whatever happens, happens. You've done the preparation so, in a way, you just let the chips fall.' But if I feel at all like I'm winging it, it's not going to happen.

I do like visualization. That's enormously powerful. As I

practice, I sometimes visualize myself walking out on that stage. And if it's an audition, I visualize a screen or a committee. I also do an Affirmantia meditation. You breathe in slowly for five seconds, pause for two seconds, and exhale slowly for five seconds. You're supposed to breathe in and say the words 'I am.' You pause and exhale slowly and say whatever you want. For example, 'I am... a great musician.' And I would repeat that a few times. I encourage my students to say, 'I can't wait... to get out there.' The worst would be, 'I can't wait... for it to be over!'" →



Ray Chen (10)

Violinist

→ **A charismatic presence on YouTube and social media, Ray Chen hardly seems like a poster child for stage fright.** But he also recognizes that many musicians spend considerable mental energy in “bulletproofing” themselves—that is, striving to tune out their audiences in a kind of self-preservation. This, he says, can get in the way of a free exchange between performers and listeners.

In 2023, Mr. Chen co-founded Tonic, an app that lets musicians livestream their practice sessions, receive feedback, and accumulate rewards on a personalized dashboard. The goal is to share your practicing and inspire others while getting used to playing before a (remote) audience. He talks about two common strategies for addressing nerves: beta blockers* and therapy.

“We often say, ‘Let’s make talking about beta blockers a thing. Let’s open it up for discussion.’ Sure, that’s okay. But then, that really sucks, doesn’t it? You’re a musician and you can’t even do the thing you love doing the most, which is sharing music. I don’t believe beta blockers lead to a true connection between yourself and the people listening. It’s creating a numbing effect so that you can play all the notes and you can imagine the feeling of it, but it will not be yourself living in the feeling itself.

Therapy, on the other hand, is the idea of addressing the core of it: Why are you nervous? I think therapy is getting a coach. Instead of a coach for bodybuilding, it’s a coach for mind-building, because it forces you to address yourself and find out why you are the person you are: your flaws, your strengths. The therapy sets you up to be able to undo the knots in your mind. But, practicing in front of people—before playing in front of a larger crowd—is what I feel has been missing.”



JOHN MAC



Nathan Cole ('00)

*Concertmaster,
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Faculty, Colburn School*

→ **Nathan Cole says that virtually every student who comes to him asks about eliminating performance anxiety.** “I think it’s a fruitless quest, unfortunately,” he says. Still, he firmly believes it can be managed, and his website, natesviolin.com, contains several articles and videos addressing the topic. He shares some of his findings.

“Understand, as much as possible, the situation you’re going into and then be as prepared as you can be for that situation. Try out repertoire in smaller performances. I’ve known people who have set up ten or 20 of those [informal performances] before they do a competition. Then, understand that some days are just going to feel different than others, and there may not

be a big explanation for it.

I do a basic centering process right before I play anything important. It comes from the world of sports. Once you’ve practiced it, you can center in ten or 15 seconds. The centering process is you know exactly what you are aiming to do. In the case of archery, it would be the arrow hitting the center of the bullseye. You pick a visual focal point, close your eyes, relax your muscles, do proper breathing, you hear and feel the thing you are about to do. Then you open your eyes, focus on that visual focal point, and then do it.

Beta blockers* have been useful for me in those first couple of minutes of a piece. For violinists, we hate it when our hands shake, because that affects intonation, vibrato, and bow control, which are all things you’d like to have. If I know that I’m going into an unfamiliar situation, maybe it’s the first time playing something, I might like to have that insurance.”

*Please consult your doctor before taking any medications discussed in this article.

Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.





THE Q+A

BY
BRIAN
WISE

Nokuthula Ngwenyama

The probing composer and violist tackles scientific phenomena and big questions about human existence.



SCIENCE AND RELIGION are topics that find a complementary home in the music of Nokuthula Ngwenyama (Viola '96). Her *Primal Message*, which has been performed by several leading orchestras, was inspired by the "Arecibo" message, a historic radio signal that was beamed into outer space in 1974 and carried basic information about humanity. *Sonoran Storm*, for solo viola, evokes the propulsive waves of a desert rainstorm. And her solo violin piece, *Miasma*, is based on the spike protein that formed the basis for the COVID-19 vaccines.

Ms. Ngwenyama says that she is drawn to the patterns that underpin all human existence, something that she cultivated while earning a master's degree in theological studies from the Harvard Divinity School. The daughter of a Zimbabwean father and a Japanese mother, Ms. Ngwenyama grew up in Southern California and now makes her home in Arizona, where she is the composer in residence at the Phoenix Chamber Music Society. For all her varied interests, Ms. Ngwenyama says she appreciates the camaraderie that the Curtis alumni network has brought her.

Your latest work, *Flow*, is being toured by the Takács Quartet this summer. It deals with nothing less than the dawn of the universe, starting with the lead-up to the Big Bang. How does a string quartet address something so vast?

The string quartet invites that kind of innovation. It almost begs for it. I thought, 'What if this is the only string quartet that I write? If this is it, like with Ravel or Debussy, it needs to be a big statement. You've got to explore whatever sound ideas might come to mind, or to heart. Treating it that seriously allowed me to go to the most serious, most basic, part of our existence: We are caught in this inescapable flow that was started at the initial moment of our universe, and we are just a byproduct of that initial energy outburst. Everything that I kept studying went back to that. It was system upon system, cause and effect through time and evolution. That is about as natural as I could be: to portray this flow that we are all inescapably a part of.

How do you reconcile your interest in scientific exploration with your studies of religion?

I think that they can exist in the same space. I've always been interested in science, and I've also been interested in religion and in theology and why certain systems make sense from the inside out. Science can provide us with patterns, just like religious texts can provide patterns. I'm interested in how things work, and why they're working. I'm asking the 'why,' both theologically but also scientifically. So, I think that the patterns that emerge are very interesting to translate into music. I'm not doing anything new here: Composers have been taking patterns from time in memoriam and putting them into sound. So, science is just another place where we can find patterns.

Your piece *Miasma*, written in 2021 for Bella Hristova (Violin '08), draws its themes from a specific pattern: the genetic material of the COVID-19 virus.

The protein sequence of the RNA for SARS-COV2 gave me a pattern for A, C, B, and U. The U's were used as 'wild.' Then, I used [the notes] A-C-B in the patterns in A minor. So, it was easy to jump around and give the virus a voice, based off its own patterns. That, in turn, allowed me to hear how playful this pattern was. It was kind of freaky when Bella first played it, and seeing how it came into itself.

Along with Ms. Hristova, you've worked with the Dover Quartet, Curtis's Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence, premiering the original quartet version of *Primal Message*. Were either of these collaborations built on your alumni connections?

It's always great when I get to work with people whom I know have gone through similar training, and we all have that connection to the same institution, to the same type of training, to similar memories, even if we were decades apart. There is that commonality, and it comes through when we work together. It just happens, and it's not a surprise when we all have a Curtis connection.

I understand you began composing as a teenager. But while studying at Curtis you seemed to be very much on a soloist trajectory and placed in major competitions. Was there a turning point in which you returned to composing?

I feel like composing just found me again in 2014 when I got a call from Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, the largest Black church in Phoenix, to write a processional for their bishop's 35th anniversary with the congregation. That was my first official processional

(continued on page 30)

The opening ceremony of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.



Gold-Medal MUSIC

THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN PARIS ARE A
REMINDER OF CLASSICAL MUSIC'S
LONG-STANDING CEREMONIAL ROLE.

BY BRIAN WISE

WHEN THE PARIS Olympics open along the River Seine this July, classical music-minded viewers may be reminded of another opening ceremony, in 2008, when Lang Lang (Piano '02), sporting a glam-white suit, played amid a sea of green dancers in Beijing's Bird's Nest Stadium.

Others might flash back to Nagano 1998, when Seiji Ozawa conducted a sprawling performance of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, featuring choirs on five continents linked by satellite. Those with even longer memories might think of 1984 in Los Angeles, when Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was deliv-

ered by 84 pianists in turquoise tuxedos—shortly after a man flew into the arena on a jet pack.

While over-the-top orchestral grandeur has often been a staple of Olympic ceremonies—opening or closing—for decades, individual Olympic pieces seldom outlive the moment. Legions of TV viewers can hum along to John Williams' fanfares, but how many know Olympic anthems by Leonard Bernstein (Conducting '41), Richard Strauss, Philip Glass, or Michael Torke? The history is deeper and stranger than you might think.

Music as Olympic Contender

The father of the modern Olympics, a French aristocrat named Baron Pierre de Coubertin, envisioned art as the equal of sport in his Athenian ideal. At his insistence, there were arts competitions at the games, starting with the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, with prizes for music, painting, literature, sculpture, and architecture. Italy's now-forgotten Ricardo Barthelmy won the music gold that year with his *Triumphal Olympic March*. No silver or bronze medals were awarded.

In the era of musical avant-gardism, medal-winning pieces tended to be stylistically conservative, and prizes were not always handed out. At the 1924 Olympics in Paris, the 40-strong jury, which included Stravinsky and Ravel, decided that no one was worthy of a first prize. At the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, Czech composer Josef Suk clinched the top honor for his patriotic march, *Into a New Life*. Damning with faint praise, it won the silver medal.

The art competitions were dropped after 1948. But by then, music was becoming focal to the ceremonial events. The *Olympic Hymn* by Spiridion Samara (1863–1917) debuted at the inaugural games in Athens in 1896 and was made official in 1959. Richard

Strauss conducted 3,000 musicians in his *Olympische Hymne* for the notorious opening of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Though Strauss was no fan of either sports or the Nazis, he saw the event as an opportunity to raise his profile. The 1952 Olympics in Helsinki were bolstered by a re-arrangement of an early cantata by Jean Sibelius.

Bernstein, Glass, and Lots of Williams

Olympic commissions increasingly went to composers with lengthy film or theater music credits. Philip Glass composed *The Olympian* for the torch-lighting ceremony at the 1984 Los Angeles games, followed by *Orion* for the 2004 Athens Cultural Olympiad. Bernstein penned his *Olympic Hymn* not for the Olympic games, but for the 1981 meeting of the International Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden, Germany. The text, by German writer Günter Kunert, has the line, “fight as friends, not as foes,” a possible nod to the recently boycotted Moscow games of 1980.

In modern times, John Williams has defined the heroic Olympic aesthetic over four separate fanfares. Jun-Ching Lin

(Violin '85) and Christina Smith (Flute '91), both members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, recall the thrill of premiering Williams' *Summon the Heroes* at the opening ceremony of the 1996 Atlanta Games. “I was in my twenties and fairly new to the orchestra,” says Ms. Smith, who notes that the ASO musicians mimed the performance to their pre-recorded track, a standard practice for stadium events. “It was like my fifth season, and I was just totally starstruck. It was like being with a rock star.”

Mr. Lin recalls playing on cheap, rented instruments (it rained) and some frantic moments during Muhammed Ali's iconic torch lighting, when it seemed as if the cauldron wouldn't ignite. Most of all, he remembers the crowd reception. “You never experience 80 or 90,000 people cheering for you when you come out on stage,” he says. “I guess that's what Taylor Swift gets to experience all the time, but for classical musicians, that doesn't usually happen. And I remember the event took forever. It was like, three or four hours long!”

In 1996, the ASO also performed

Michael Torke's *Javelin*, which has since been recorded twice, and Jessye Norman soared in the *Olympic Anthem*, part of a growing diva tradition (Montserrat Caballé set the bar in her collaboration with Freddie Mercury on “Barcelona,” broadcast at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics).

By 2002 in Salt Lake City, production values were improving, classical crossover was in full swing (Yo-Yo Ma performed with Sting), and the Utah Symphony introduced a new Williams piece, *Call of the Champions*. Associate principal flute Lisa Byrnes (Flute '89) donned an official sweater over her down coat as February temperatures hovered at 10 degrees Fahrenheit. “It was so cold that the metal instruments were on the verge of sticking to our chins,” she recalls, noting that both the orchestra and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir mimed to pre-recorded tracks.

“People from all over the world were downtown. I remember showing up for rehearsal one morning, and there was a huge group of people doing tai chi in the courtyard in front of the hall. That was kind of a new thing for Salt Lake City to have people from all around the world there.”

Organizers in Paris have revealed few details on this summer's musical lineup, but they inherit a recent classical tradition that has veered towards the irreverent, be it the London 2012 Games, where the London Symphony Orchestra played the *Chariots of Fire* theme with Mr. Bean on keyboards, or the 2014 Sochi Olympics, which closed with pianist Denis Matsuev playing Rachmaninoff while performers pushed 62 grand pianos around the stadium floor in a ballet sequence.

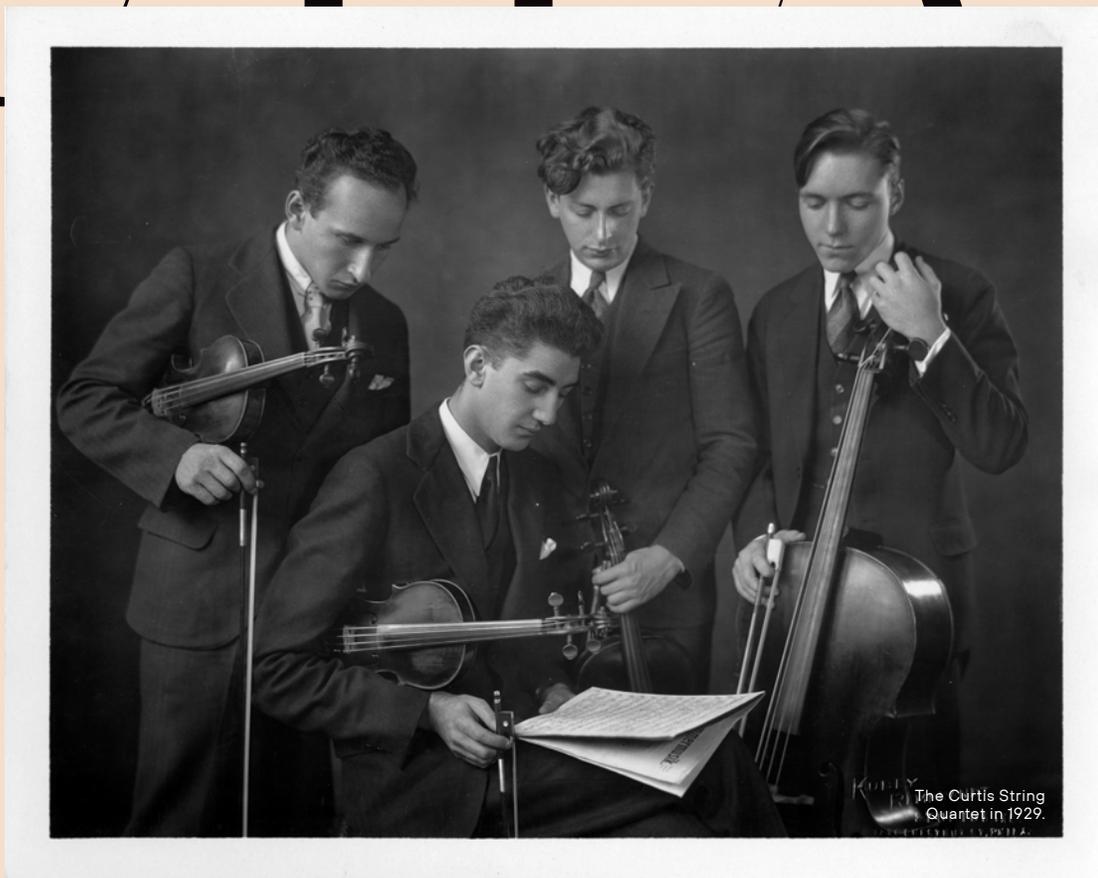
Though hosting nations may find receptive ears with homegrown pop or folk music sounds, classical music can still provide the requisite solemnity and spectacle while cutting across barriers—language and otherwise. Reflecting in late 2008 on his Olympic moment, Lang Lang told London's *Daily Telegraph*, “I was afraid my part would be cut out because [the ceremony] was so focused on Chinese instruments and Chinese culture. Thank God it was still in. I loved it. Especially the piano is in the middle of the Bird's Nest. Unbelievable. I still get excited just to talk about that.”

John Williams conducts the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at the 1996 Summer Olympics.



THINKING
OUTSIDE

THE CHAMBER



Once a quirky outsider pursuit, chamber music came to hold a central place in American classical music—and at Curtis—during the 20th century.

BY HEIDI WALESON

AMBER

In the Curtis Institute of Music's 100 years, the American musical landscape has undergone seismic changes. For example: When Curtis was founded, chamber music was considered an avocational sideline rather than a professional goal. Today, it is a vibrant part of the musical scene, and training at Curtis and elsewhere has embraced that evolution.

Although Curtis's initial focus was on training soloists and orchestra players, chamber music played a role early on. Louis Bailly, a French violist and former member of the Flonzaley Quartet, supervised the school's chamber music program, even initiating a series of well-attended concerts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A fixture of that series was the Curtis String Quartet, a student ensemble which soon launched a performing career, touring in major American cities, and playing for FDR at the White House.

In 1935, the Quartet visited London as part of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, for which several Curtis musicians were sent to represent American classical music. In addition to becoming the first

American-trained quartet to play in Europe, it also made a recording of Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach* with the composer ('34) singing. The quartet performed on historical instruments owned by Curtis—two Strad violins, an Amati viola, and a Montagnana cello. In 1939, the Curtis Quartet was named the official string quartet of the school.

Chamber music fell on hard times during the school's financial cutbacks of the 1930s and '40s. In 1942, the Quartet left Curtis though members would return as faculty in the mid-1950s. The idea that musicians who devoted themselves to chamber music would not be taken seriously as soloists by managers held sway; even violinist Efrem Zimbalist, who became Curtis's director in 1941, felt that chamber music was something that musicians did in retirement.

This attitude changed when pianist Rudolf Serkin became director of Curtis in 1968. Mr. Serkin was devoted to chamber music. He, along with Adolf and Herman Busch and Marcel Blanche and Louis Moyse, had founded the Marlboro Music Festival in 1951.



Conceived as a summer retreat where busy orchestral and solo musicians could delve into the chamber music repertoire for their own edification and pleasure, the festival had become a mecca, attracting advanced students and professionals on all instruments, who played together as equals in their ensembles rather than as coaches and students.

The chamber music gospel soon spread beyond the borders of Vermont. In 1964, three Curtis alumni—Arnold Steinhardt (Violin '59), John Dalley (Violin '57), and Michael Tree (Violin '55)—got together with cellist David Soyer at Marlboro and formed the Guarneri String Quartet. Steven Tenenbom (Viola '79), violist of the Orion String Quartet, sees the Guarneri as a key component of the chamber music explosion of the 1970s and 1980s. “All four of them were soloists, and when they came together, they elevated the technical polish of quartet playing—the quality of sound, ensemble, and unanimity—without losing their individuality,” he says. “They brought chamber music to an extremely high level of artistry. And they were playing 100 concerts a year, so everyone wanted to do it.”

A handful of string quartets, including the Juilliard String Quartet, which was founded in 1946, were already active. The Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet, comprised of principal players from the Philadelphia Orchestra, also had a vigorous recording presence in the 1950s and '60s. Yet the success of the Guarneri seemed to set off a chain reaction: the Cleveland and Vermeer Quartets were founded in 1969; the Tokyo Quartet in 1970; TASHI, with pianist Peter Serkin ('64), formed at Marlboro in 1973 to play Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*; the Emerson Quartet in 1976. Many more would follow.

A MIND-BENDING BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE

Though Mr. Steinhardt's student years at Curtis were about learning to be a virtuoso soloist, one experience offered a hint of something different: Mr. Dalley, a fellow student, asked him to work on the Beethoven Op. 130 quartet. “We worked on it all semester long and performed it in Curtis Hall,” Mr. Steinhardt recalls. “It was a mind-bending experience for me. It suddenly opened the doors in my mind to the power of that repertoire and also the comradely nature of playing chamber music, as opposed to standing in front of an orchestra playing a concerto.” An invitation to Marlboro in 1959 led him further in that direction, where he and the other musicians who would become the Guarneri “were like planets entering a gravitational field.”

Mr. Serkin brought the Guarneri Quartet, along with two Marlboro stalwarts—cellist Mischa Schneider and violinist Felix Galimir—to Curtis as chamber music faculty. “We were warmly received,” Mr. Steinhardt says. “Serkin's Marlboro proved that chamber music was no longer a second-class endeavor. Things really changed at Curtis.” For Mr. Steinhardt, it was not just the repertoire, but the process. “Chamber music is the great teacher of music,” says Mr. Steinhardt, who chronicles his time in the Guarneri in his book, *Indivisible by Four: A String Quartet in Pursuit of Harmony*. “Sometimes a friend will behave badly, and I'll say to my wife, that person could never play in a string quartet. You must have respect for a view that is not your own and then, to your surprise, it becomes one that you buy into.”

When touring and teaching schedules were complicated, he would trade off chamber music coaching duties with other faculty, which became a lesson in it-

LEFT TO RIGHT Mischa Schneider coaches Sara Johnson (Violin '80), Anne Williams (Cello '76), and Dorian Rence (Viola '76), and Steven De Groote (Piano '77) in 1974.; Arnold Steinhardt gives a violin lesson that same year; Toyin Spellman-Diaz of Imani Winds coaches a student ensemble in 2019. Photos by George Krauss, Pete Chetchia (Imani Winds).



launched in 1973; many more festivals followed.

Competitions helped boost chamber music's visibility. The Naumburg Competition made chamber music an annual feature in 1971. In 1973, the Fischhoff Competition was founded expressly to promote chamber music, and in 1983, the Banff Competition began. Competition/management operations also recognized that chamber music was on the upswing: Concert Artists Guild, founded in 1951, selected its first chamber group, the Mannes Trio, in 1967; in 1970, Young Concert Artists, in its 10th year, chose its first ensemble, the Tokyo String Quartet.

By 1992, when Chamber Music America published a comprehensive study of the field, the service organization counted 1,120 chamber ensembles and 1,400 presenters. Ninety percent of the ensembles and 50 percent of the presenters had been founded in the previous two decades. One of CMA's first grant programs funded residencies, which created additional employment for chamber musicians; the 1992 report found that 17 percent of presenters offered residencies. This combination of performing, teaching, residency work, and in some cases, recording, helped create a professional path for chamber music.

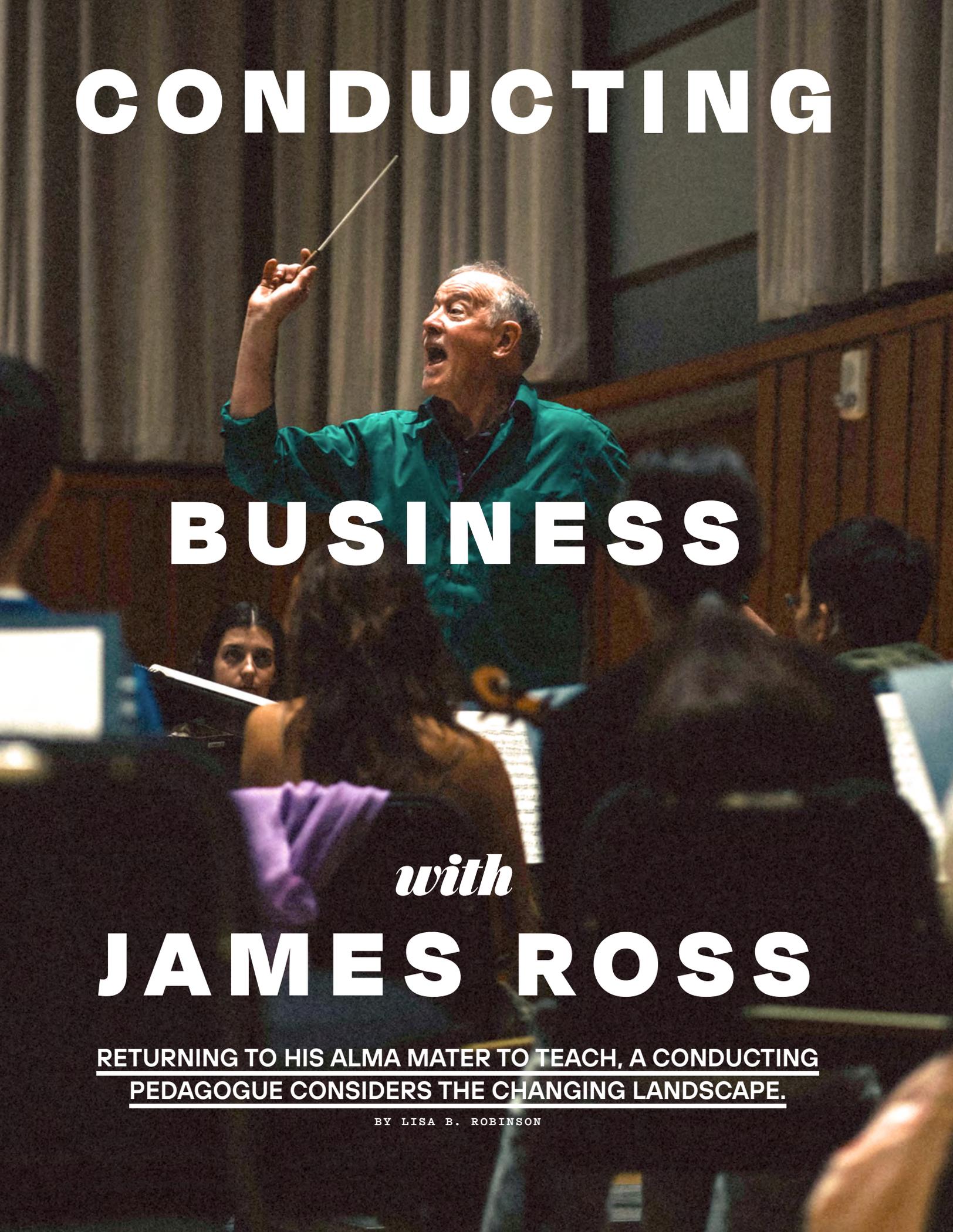
Mr. Tenenbom arrived at Curtis in 1975 already a "chamber music nut," and Curtis offered him plenty of opportunity to pursue it. Felix (continued on page 30)

self. "If I say that passage is blue, and in the next lesson, Peter Wiley says it's green, it's their job as musicians to choose whether it is blue or green." Mr. Steinhardt taught at Curtis until he retired in 2023. One of his many chamber music students was Roberto Díaz, now Curtis's president.

Along with the increased number of ensembles, the 1970s and '80s saw an expansion of U.S. concert presenters who felt that chamber music could attract an audience, as well as entities devoted to the form. Musicians from Marlboro had begun touring in 1964; in 1969, William Schuman, then president of Lincoln Center, established the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival was

LEFT TO RIGHT BELOW: Monica Ellis of Imani Winds coaches a student ensemble in 2019. Imani Winds performs with the Catalyst Quartet. Photos by Pete Checchia, Robert Torez/Celebrity Series.





CONDUCTING

BUSINESS

with

JAMES ROSS

RETURNING TO HIS ALMA MATER TO TEACH, A CONDUCTING
PEDAGOGUE CONSIDERS THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE.

BY LISA B. ROBINSON



WHEN JAMES ROSS (Conducting '89) joins the Curtis faculty as director of orchestral studies in 2024–25, the dynamic pedagogue will already be a familiar face around the school. His recent experience includes running a three-week team-building workshop to kick off the Curtis Symphony Orchestra's fall 2023 semester. And some may be familiar with him through his other roles: as orchestra director of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the USA (since its founding in 2013); as a professor and director of orchestral activities at the University of Maryland for 16 years; and as music director of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra since 2018.

A self-described improviser, horn-blower, questioner of concert rituals, and man who likes to move, Mr. Ross first began conducting while an undergraduate at Harvard. He later became the first American member of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, serving as principal horn from 1981 to 1984. In an email conversation, Mr. Ross spoke with *Overtones* about his new role and aspirations for Curtis's expanded conducting program.

Could you provide some insight into the specific responsibilities and functions of this role, and how it complements the existing structure at Curtis?

Now comes the hard part—and the fun part! I believe in the broadest sense that I've been invited to join the Curtis faculty to help take responsibility for the quality and energy of the educational experience for all members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. My job will be to serve as a guide for our players towards learning what playing in an orchestra joyously entails. This goal will be approached through our intensive [team building] start of each semester, orchestra reading sessions, Saturday conductors' labs (which I will lead in tandem with Yannick [Nézet-Séguin]), and by keeping a finger to the wind in seeing how the orchestra schedule affects the lives of our students.

How do you envision the coordination between your role and that of Miloš Repický, Hirsig Family Chair

in Vocal Studies, who will teach opera conducting?

The new component of our symphonic and operatic conducting program is indeed the committed work of our three [Rita E. Hauser Conducting] Fellows within the Curtis Opera program—learning all that goes into the preparation of an opera performance. Miloš will be our organizational partner for that component and my partner-in-crime in devising other ways, beyond the three Curtis Opera Theatre performances, that the world of opera can gently infect the lives of all our players year-round.

What are some hallmarks of your teaching philosophy and/or methods, and how did you arrive at them?

As a teacher, before I arrive at saying anything that needs to change, I am first asking myself, 'What would my body or mind be doing to produce this result? What would it feel like?' I live with that empathetic response...and then, if moved to do so, I let my own body/mind improvise a commentary

or coaching in some direction. You can only change people by first being with them where they are. Of the many important influences in the grab bag of my life, I'd especially want to credit the Feldenkrais method, gymnastics, books about horseback riding, and having been involved with the Quakers during my time in Philadelphia as all having shaped me.

How has the training of conductors evolved since your time as a student at Curtis?

I believe conductors today need to be advocates for wider swaths of musical styles and diverse repertoire, to be vivid storytellers, and to be psychologically astute leaders of the great collection of humans arrayed before them. Although we stand in front of (and slightly above) them, our support of orchestral players is actually from underneath—we are lifting them, and the music, up. We are looking more for amicable, inspiring partnerships these days than for challenging power-based confrontations. The perceived divide between player and conductor has dwindled over time, thank goodness.

Are there ways that your work at Curtis could benefit non-orchestral students?

I believe conducting is a tremendously helpful potential gateway in the music-making of pianists, composers, and singers. Anything that pulls pianists out of the isolated sound world of the practice room is a boon. This year already we were able to pull Curtis pianists into the world of conducting in a few ways, such as Friday "piano labs," in which conductors lead piano quintets, and a January lab devoted to conducting from

the keyboard.

Composers also work in isolation, imagining and inscribing sounds, but then are suddenly confronted with the challenge of leading others in their works in jarringly public settings. I believe composers make the most interesting conductors! And opera singers need to be innately responsive to the physical language of conducting since they live with its influence all the time. Singers who conduct often get a great sound out of the orchestra since they are used to letting their bodies "be" the sound. This aligns with the principle that all good conducting is based on inner singing.

Many conductors are pianists or violinists. Do you feel that being a horn player gives you a unique perspective?

As horn players, we learn to transpose very early on, which is a vital help in score-reading. We also develop a strong "inner hearing" of the note to be played. Otherwise, chances are, we won't find it. We are a fulfillment of the strengths or weakness of our expectations! I would also say that we are especially sensitive to the psychology of the groups we play in and the conductors we play for. It has been of great help to me as a conductor to have sat on the receiving end of bad leading when I'm about to do something hard on my instrument. I believe and hope that has made me a better supporter of others when they are facing their own Waterloos.

Lisa B. Robinson, Ph.D., is a music theorist and freelance writer based in East Brunswick, N.J.

Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.

NOTATIONS



Composition/ Conducting

1970s

Tonu Kalam (Conducting '73) has retired from the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he served as music director and conductor of the UNC Symphony Orchestra for 36 years. He has conducted over 160 performances with the ensemble, including collaborations with chorus, opera, faculty, student soloists, and guest artists.

1980s

Robert Spano (Conducting '85) has been appointed music director of the Washington National Opera, beginning in 2025. He is currently the music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and the Aspen Music Festival and School.

2010s



Chelsea Komschlies (Composition '13) is one of six recipients of the Virginia B. Toulmin Orchestral Commissions Program from the League of American Orchestras. Ms. Komschlies has been paired with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and four

other consortium orchestras to compose a new orchestral work to be premiered in 2025.



In March **Daniel Temkin** (Composition '13) released his debut album, *COLORS*, on Orchid Classics. It features the composer's music played by a lineup of chamber musicians including **Stanislav Chernyshev** (Clarinet '14) and **Ayane Kozasa** (Viola '12).

Carlos Ágreda (Conducting '18) was named a Dudamel Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the 2023–24 season.

2020s

Elise Arancio (Composition '23) has been awarded a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is one of 20 established and emerging composers receiving awards totaling \$465,000 this year from the Academy.



Strings

1960s

Marcia Peck (Cello '68) won a Literary Titan Book Award for *Water Music: A Cape Cod Story*, her debut novel about a young girl's experiences

during a summer with her family on Cape Cod.

1970s

Lucy Chapman (Violin '74) received the Marylou Speaker Churchill Award from the New England Conservatory. The award recognizes a teacher and orchestral figure who reflects Churchill's musical and humanistic qualities. Churchill served on NEC's faculty for 28 years and was the principal second violinist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

1980s

Michael Ludwig (Violin '82) released his recording of Samuel Jones's Violin Concerto with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project in October. Also on the album are Jones's flute and trombone concertos, featuring Curtis flute faculty member **Jeffrey Khaner** and **Joseph Alessi** (Trombone '81). *BBC Music Magazine* gave the album a five-star review.

Mitchell Newman (Violin '85) recently retired from the Los Angeles Philharmonic after 34 years of service. He now teaches at the Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth and the Settlement Music School, conducts the Chamber Players Orchestra at Temple Music Preparatory, and was named concertmaster of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. He performed a violin concerto by music director Lucas Richman in April.

1990s



In January **Judith Ingolfsson** (Violin '92) and pianist Vladimir Stoupeľ released an album of violin and viola sonatas by the 20th century British composer Rebecca Clarke.

Joey Amini (Cello '97) returned to the concert stage in October after a four-year hiatus. He performed a program of Bach and Cassadó cello suites at Our Lady of Malibu Church as a fundraiser for Our Lady of Malibu School, where his daughter is a student.



Hilary Hahn (Violin '99) won the Avery Fisher Prize, worth \$100,000. The announcement was made in January by Deborah Borda, chair of the Avery Fisher Artist Program, from the stage of David Geffen Hall following Ms. Hahn's performance of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the New York Philharmonic.

2000s

Tina Qu (Violin '00) performed Bach's *Brandenburg* Concertos in March with the Traverse Symphony Orchestra. She is currently on the faculty at Interlochen Arts Academy.

Solomiya Ivakhiv (Violin '07) in February released her album *Ukrainian Masters: Sonatas for Violin and Piano* featuring works by Kosenko, Skoryk, and Bortkiewicz on the Naxos label. She recorded it with the pianist Steven Beck.

Angela Park (Cello '07) joined the faculty of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music in September. She and her family recently relocated from Berlin.



Melissa White (Violin '07) is the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's Joyce C. Willis Artist in Residence for the 2023–24 season. She has performed as a soloist with the orchestra in two masterworks concerts and in a solo recital at the Hartt School.

Josef Špaček (Violin '09) made his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in March performing Martinů's once-lost Violin Concerto No. 1. On the podium was his Czech countryman, Jakub Hruša.

2010s

Ayane Kozasa (Viola '12 and String Quartet '16) will join the Kronos Quartet this summer. A former member of the Aizuri Quartet, she succeeds Hank Dutt, a longtime member who is retiring along with violinist John Sherba.



John-Henry Crawford (Cello '14) made his Carnegie Hall debut in October alongside pianist Victor Santiago Asun-

ción as the recipient of the inaugural American Recital Debut Award, which was created to promote an emerging classical artist.

2020s

Anna Im (Violin '20) won first prize at the Stuttgart International Violin Competition in February.

A Star For Lang Lang



Lang Lang (Piano '02) was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on April 10, making him the first Asian pianist to receive a star on the celebrated sidewalk.

The City of Los Angeles and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce presented the star, located at 7044 Hollywood Boulevard, in recognition of Mr. Lang's contributions to the world of classical music.

He becomes one of a handful of Curtis alumni or former faculty to receive a Hollywood star. Others include **Leonard Bernstein** (Composition '41), pianist and former Curtis director **Rudolf Serkin**, and former faculty members **William Primrose** and **Leopold Stokowski**, all inducted in 1960.

At the dedication event, Mr. Lang played two pieces: Manuel De Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance* and the Chinese folk song *Jasmine*.



Carole Crosby



Emily Cooley



Laura Park

Alumni Highlight

From Virtuoso to Verdict

Curtis alumni develop the skills and experience that transfer from the concert stage to the courtroom and beyond. **BY RYAN LATHAN**



Marsha Hunter



→ **Many celebrated composers** tried their hand at a career in law to varying degrees of success, but all became famous for their music instead: George Frideric Handel, Georg Philip Telemann, Robert Schumann, Leopold Mozart, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Igor Stravinsky. Conversely, what inspires musicians to become lawyers?

While numerous Curtis alumni have achieved renown on stages across the globe, some have pursued entirely different paths. Self-discipline, motivation, intense focus, analytical thinking, and mental acuity are all shared attributes of

musicians and lawyers, along with the experience of being trained to respond positively to criticism and being detail and ensemble/team-oriented in high-stress circumstances. Four alumni—**Emily Cooley, Laura Park, Marsha Hunter, and Carole Crosby**—told *Overtones* how Curtis impacted their lives and ultimately led them to careers in law and law-adjacent professions.

Emily Cooley (Composition '17), a student at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, received music degrees from Yale University and the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music

before attending Curtis for graduate studies in composition. She credits the school's Community Artist program for inspiring her current path: "I had teachers and mentors at Curtis who recognized that my identity as a musician was deeply tied to my interest in social justice and my desire to have an impact on systemic inequities in Philadelphia," she says, referring to chair of career studies Mary Javian (Double Bass '99), among other faculty. Cooley is now president of the Custody and Support Assistance Clinic.

"One of my projects [at Curtis] was to design and teach composing

and songwriting programming at a Pennsylvania State Prison called SCI Graterford. Meeting and getting to know incarcerated people made me want to reevaluate my career. I decided law school would be the best way to pivot into doing social justice work, [and] I'll be working in civil legal aid, providing legal services to low-income people, [including] legal issues related to housing, public benefits, family law, disability law, and more."

Laura Park (Violin '16), currently a J.D. candidate at Harvard Law School and a former first violin of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, the Washington National Opera Orchestra, and the Grant Park Orchestra, shifted her focus to a career in law when performances came to a halt during the COVID-19 lockdowns. "As the orchestras I played in entered emergency negotiations around force majeure clauses, and the uncertainty around pay, benefits, and protections was at an all-time high, I realized that lawyers were moving the conversation forward and getting tangible results for the musicians. I wanted to be on that side of the table and started to look into what it might take to get there." Since entering Harvard, Ms. Park "discovered new interests in trial litigation and criminal law" and will join a law firm in New York City as an associate, focusing on white-collar defense and investigations. Expressing an interest in becoming a trial attorney in the future, she notes the parallels between performing and trial advocacy. "At their core, both are about taking a series of notes or facts or legal doctrines and shaping them into something one then communicates, clearly, honestly, and convincingly, to a group of people that are listening and critiquing."

Longtime alumni trustee **Marsha Hunter** (Opera '77) spent 25 years as a renowned opera, theater, and

chamber music performer before forging a new career as the CEO and co-founder of Johnson and Hunter, Inc. As specialists in legal communication, Ms. Hunter and her husband, Brian K. Johnson, traveled the globe training attorneys to convey their thoughts and arguments confidently and persuasively in various settings. In three bestselling books—*The Articulate Advocate*, *The Articulate Attorney*, and *The Articulate Witness*—she has taught lawyers how to sharpen their advocacy skills, transactional attorneys how to deliver polished, articulate presentations, and advised witnesses on how to testify under oath effectively.

Though not a lawyer, Ms. Hunter brings a performer's eye to legal presentation: the parameters of volume when speaking, the fact that "everybody talks with their hands," yet "in law, people don't often do that," and even the basics of helping lawyers use a lectern, store their papers, and present a case in a smooth and compelling manner. Noting the parallels between music performance, persuasive speaking, and law, she says it all comes down to "practice and taking a hard look at it—asking, 'Was it good enough?'"

Carole Crosby (Harp '64) has had a remarkable career in the performing arts, law, and philanthropy. Following her studies at Curtis, she

joined the Atlanta Symphony, then served as the principal harpist for the Detroit Symphony, where she moonlighted as a Motown session musician, even performing harp on Marvin Gaye's 1971 classic album, *What's Going On?*

"When I was in my junior year of high school, I took a business law class, and that really sparked something in me," she says. "Years later, I was in the Detroit Symphony and had a friend who was applying to law school. She gave me her LSAT book, and I said, I want to do that, too."

Ms. Crosby enrolled in night classes at Detroit College of Law and was valedictorian of her class before becoming a partner at Butzel Long in downtown Detroit, Michigan, eventually moving to Florida with her husband. She remains deeply involved in the arts as the president of the board of trustees of the Hermitage Artist Retreat, a multi-disciplinary national arts incubator, and immediate past president of the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota. Still working remotely as an arbitrator (via Zoom), with around 35 cases a year, she thinks back fondly on her time at Curtis: "I loved it: the music, the discipline instilled, the interaction with the other kids—it was like the dawning of a person. All of that can translate into so many other things. It was a wonderful experience."

The Musicality of Law

Music is inherently lawful. Even as early as 800 B.C., the disciplines of music and law have been inextricably linked. Ancient Greek city-states espoused the importance of music in forming laws and institutions. The word "nomos," or law, inversely refers to a song, and laws were often preserved in the meter of songs. Even the philosopher Plato noted, "Any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole state, for when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state always change." During the Middle Ages, when every student of law was required to study the *Quadrivium* (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music) as part of the *artes liberales*, lawyers were often musicians.



Matthew Hakkarainen (Violin '22) won second prize, audience prize, and special prize for the best interpretation of the contemporary piece at the Mirecourt International Violin Competition in November. He won third prize at the Stuttgart International Violin Competition in February.



Winds/Brass

1990s

Jack Sutte (Trumpet '95) and his group the Factory Seconds Brass Trio with Jesse McCormick, horn, and **Richard Stout** (Trombone '87) released their Christmas album, *Regifted*, in December. These holiday favorites were arranged especially for the trio by Mr. Sutte.

Mimi Stillman (Flute '99) recorded Zhou Tian's (Composition '05) Flute Concerto for an album with "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Chamber Orchestra. The work was composed for Ms. Stillman.

2000s

Victoria Luperi (Clarinet '02) has joined the faculty of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music as an artist lecturer. This summer she will

be on the faculty at the Buffet Crampon Summer Clarinet Academy and will perform at the Grand Teton Music Festival. Over the last couple of seasons, she has helped to organize three benefit concerts in Pittsburgh, raising \$60,000 for humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

2010s

In November **Tianyi Shen** (Clarinet '19) and **Tianxu An** (Piano '22) released an album on NCPA Classics featuring works for clarinet and piano by Poulenc, Weber, Widor, Saint-Saëns, and Schumann.



Percussion



In August **Denis Petrunin** (Timpani and Percussion '06) was named a percussion instructor at Augusta University. He has overseen the school's percussion department since fall of 2023.



Piano/ Accompanying

1960s

Lambert Orkis (Piano '65)

joined violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter for a nine-concert recital tour this spring which included performances in South Korea, Taiwan, and China.

1970s

Beth Levin (Piano '71) released her album *Phantasmata* on Aldilá Records in February. The album features Liszt's Sonata in B Minor and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

1980s

Following her July 2023 album, *far sight sun light* (Albany Records), **Ketty Nez** (Piano '83) recently appeared as a collaborative pianist with members of the Playground Ensemble of Colorado, performed with Ensemble BiND of Boston, and collaborated with cellist Lawrence Stomberg and pianist Victor Cayres.

1990s

Amy Gates (Accompanying '91) is presiding over the second season of Chamber Music at the Drake, a chamber music series that she founded in Amherst, Mass.

2000s

Jonathan Biss (Piano '01) completed a commissioning project that pairs Schubert sonatas with premieres of new works by Tyson Gholston Davis, Tyshawn Sorey, and Alvin Singleton. The project culminated in three-concert cycles at San Francisco Performances in January and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in February.

Yuja Wang (Piano '08) won a GRAMMY for Best Classical

Instrumental Solo in February for *The American Project*. It features **Teddy Abrams** (Conducting '08) conducting the Louisville Orchestra in his own Piano Concerto as well as Tilson Thomas's *You Come Here Often?*, with both pieces dedicated to Ms. Wang.



Harp

Abigail Kent (Harp '17) was one of three concerto competition winners at the New World Symphony. As part of her winnings, she performed the Ginastera Harp Concerto in April at New World Center in Miami Beach, Fla.



Voice/Opera

2000s



Elizabeth DeShong (Voice '02) made her La Scala debut in February singing the role of Bradamante in a concert version of Handel's *Alcina* with Les Musiciens du Louvre, conducted by Marc Minkowski. The debut coincided with her appearance on a new recording of the opera, released

Young Alumni Fund Awards \$75,000 in New Grants

Curtis announced in March some \$75,000 in grants to recent graduates through the third annual **Daniel W. Dietrich II Young Alumni Fund**. Twelve alumni received project support grants while another nine received career support funding, to be used towards instruments, lessons, and travel expenses for auditions and competitions.

Multiple grants will support commissioned pieces, including an opera by **Gregory Hall** ('86) starring grantee **Merissa Beddows** (Voice '22), a piece for double bass and electronics by **Andrew Moses** (Composition '20), and a work focused on climate justice and performed by cellist **Zachary Mowitz** ('19, CAF '23). Other grants will support recordings, including the

debut album by the Amp Quintet with percussionist **Ted Babcock** (Timpani and Percussion '15), an album of György Kurtág's music featuring **Will Langlie-Miletich** (Double Bass '19), and a series of instructional videos by **Sung Jin Lee** (Viola '16). Concert-based projects include **Gergana Haralampieva's** (Violin '16) Long Island Chamber Music series, and a chamber ballet version of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, spearheaded by ensemble132, whose members include **Maria Ioudenitch** (Violin '18).

Grantees were chosen through a competitive review process, and proposals were evaluated by an anonymous panel of Curtis alumni. To read more about the recipients and how to apply or support, visit Curtis.edu/YAF.

on the Pentatone label and featuring that same ensemble.

2010s

Jonathan McCullough (Opera '17), executive director of the Fourth Wall Ensemble, will oversee its Carnegie Hall debut in June, followed by performances on the Death of Classical series and at New York's Kauffman Center.

Dennis Chmelensky (Voice '19) made his Oper Frankfurt mainstage debut in March as Don Polidoro in Cimarosa's *L'Italiana in Londra* after a December debut at the Tiroler Festspiele in Austria as Marquis de Corcy in *Le Postillon de Lonjumeau* by Adolphe Adam.

2020s

Bass-baritone **Andrew Moore** (Opera '20) made his role debut as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*

at the Zürich Opera House in September.

Students

Conductor **Micah Gleason** was named one of four recipients of a Taki Alsop Conducting Award, a mentorship program that supports women conductors. She recently signed with the management agency Intermusica.

Violist **Dillon Scott** directed a project celebrating the chamber music of Black composers. The two-hour program, involving 14 Curtis students, was performed at Field Concert Hall, at All Hallows Church, and at local Philadelphia high schools as a series of interactive presentations.

Himari Yoshimura signed to the management roster of KD SCHMID in February. The 12-year-old violinist has been studying with Ida Kavafian at Curtis since 2022.

Faculty/Staff

Matt Hagestuen directed the premiere of an unpublished Prelude and Fugue by Shostakovich in collaboration with pianist Seoyon MacDonald from the University of Southern California, Polish composer Krzysztof Meyer, and the Shostakovich Foundation in Moscow. They recorded the audio in Los Angeles and the music video in Philadelphia. The short film is now being considered for several film festivals.

Steven Mackey's *Ratcatcher* was premiered by saxophonist Valentin Kovalev and Curtis faculty member Amy Yang (Piano '06) at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in March. Days earlier, Mr. Mackey was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the honor society of artists, architects, composers, and writers.

Curtis double bass faculty member **Edgar Meyer** won two GRAMMYS in February for his album *As We Speak*, recorded with Béla Fleck (banjo), Zakir Hussain (tabla), and Rakesh Chaurasia (bansuri). The awards were for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album and Best Global Music Performance (for the track *Pashto*).

The album *Blanchard: Champion* won the GRAMMY for Best Opera Recording. It features the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus, led by Curtis mentor conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** alongside **Eric Owens** ('95), director of vocal studies and Curtis Opera Theatre. Produced by David Frost, the album also stars bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green and soprano Latonia Moore.

The album *Passion for Bach and Coltrane* won the GRAMMY for Best Classical Compendium. It features faculty wind quintet the **Imani Winds**, among other artists. Faculty member **Mark Dover** co-produced the album with Silas Brown.

Those We Have Lost



Geoffrey Michaels
(Violin '60)

Geoffrey Michaels, a violinist and pedagogue who was a member of the latter-day Curtis String Quartet, died on February 17 from complications of Parkinson's disease. He was 79 and living in Voorhees, N.J.

Born in 1944 in Perth, Australia, Mr. Michaels became, at age 14, the youngest winner of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's concerto competition, bringing him tours throughout the country. He entered Curtis at age 16, studying violin with then-director Efreim Zimbalist, and violin and viola with Oscar Shumsky. While still a student in the 1960s he was appointed second violinist of the Curtis String Quartet.

Mr. Michaels was a prizewinner at several major competitions including the Queen Elisabeth Competition and the Tchaikovsky Competition, where he played Mr. Zimbalist's *Coq d'Or Fantasy*. He later gave the U.S. premiere of Alfred Schnittke's *Concerto Grosso*, broadcast over Voice of America. A co-founder of the Philadelphia-based Liebesfreud Quartet, he taught violin and chamber music at Princeton, Temple, and Florida State Universities; Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges; and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.



Elizabeth Yockey Ilku
(Harp '53)

Elizabeth Yockey Ilku, who played with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for 30 years and led a career that spanned jazz, chamber music, and Motown classics, died on August 21, 2023, of natural causes. She was 95 years old.

Ms. Ilku began harp studies in Webster City, Iowa, then went on to study with Carlos Salzedo at Curtis, where she joined the Angelairens, a harp quintet that toured extensively under Columbia Artists Management and appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, among other TV programs. After posts in the New Orleans and Halifax Symphony Orchestras, Ms. Ilku became principal harp of the Detroit Symphony from 1958 to 1988, during which time she moonlighted as a Motown session musician. Her harp can be heard on albums by the Temptations, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, and Smokey Robinson. She taught harp for many years at the University of Michigan and Detroit-area colleges.

At Curtis Ms. Ilku met her husband, Julius Ilku (Double Bass '54), and the two performed jazz together, including as members of the Swing Easy Quartet in the 1950s. She is survived by her children, Carol and David Ilku.



Vitalij Kuprij
(Piano '00)

Vitalij Kuprij, a keyboardist, composer, and member of the progressive rock band Trans-Siberian Orchestra (TSO), died on February 20 at age 49. Mr. Kuprij was a member of the TSO from 2009–19 and rejoined the group in 2021, recently performing on their November/December 2023 tour. The TSO's shows are a holiday season staple, known for their rock opera theatrics and dazzling light shows.

Born in 1974 in Volodarka, Ukraine, Mr. Kuprij showed early promise on the piano, taking top honors at the All-Union Chopin Competition in the Republic of Kazan and the Geneva Duo Violin and Piano Competition. He began his studies at the Kyiv State Music Lyceum with Nina Najditsch, before studying with Rudolph Buchbinder at the Basel Conservatoire in Switzerland.

In 1995, Mr. Kuprij moved to Philadelphia to study at Curtis with Gary Graffman (Piano '46). Meanwhile, he cultivated interests in both classical and rock music. He formed his first progressive metal band in 1993, Atlantis Rising (later renamed Artension) and played with other prog-rock acts. He also toured as a recitalist throughout the U.S. and abroad. He was recently composing a piano concerto, which he planned to dedicate to the memory of his late father, a trombonist. In addition to his musical talents, Mr. Vitalij was, according to the TSO, "an accomplished chess player, an avid fisherman, and simply a fun-loving soul."



Charles Edmund Callahan Jr.
(Organ '75)

Charles Edmund Callahan Jr., an organist, teacher, and authority on American organ-building, died on December 25, 2023, at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington. He was 72 years old. Mr. Callahan's books, *The American Classic Organ* and *Aeolian-Skinner Remembered*, are standard reference works on 20th-century American organ history. Born in 1951

in Cambridge, Mass., Mr. Callahan studied at Curtis and at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. In 1988, he settled in Orwell, Conn. and taught at Middlebury College, Catholic University, and Baylor University. Among his original works were commissions for Papal visits from the Archdioceses of St. Louis and New York. Mr. Callahan was often consulted on organ design and restoration, and in 2014, he was honored with the Distinguished Artist Award of the American Guild of Organists, which cited "his illustrious career as composer, performer, teacher, and consultant, and his lifelong service to the sacred music profession."



William Yeats
(Voice '60)

William Yeats, a singer and educator in Philadelphia, died on February 18 at age 93. For 35 years he served as vocal director at South Philadelphia High School where he conducted multiple choirs and ensembles and staged over 20 Broadway musicals. He also served as director of the All-Philly High School Opera Workshop where he led productions of Ravel's *L'Enfant et Les Sortilege*, Hindemith's *Hin und Zuruck*, and Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

Born in Durant, Okla. in 1930, Mr. Yeats served from 1950–52 in the U.S. Army's 45th Infantry Division in Japan and Korea. He earned music education degrees from Oklahoma State and Indiana Universities before receiving his Artist Diploma from Curtis. A regular tenor soloist in the Philadelphia area, Mr. Yeats performed at Congregation Rodeph Shalom for 43 years. He also appeared with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, Reading Symphony Orchestra, and the University of Pennsylvania and Swarthmore College.

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 13)

commission. Being a mom and having two kids, it's hard to perform and be on the road while they're at school. But it's easier to be able to compose, record, and teach at home than it is to travel. One can still grow artistically even if not performing all the time on the road.

As a violist, does having the instrument's sound in your head shape your musical aesthetic?

Yes, I always have the viola in my head. I tend to write from the inside out because it's about the texture and the voicing and

balance from the midrange. It's like in yoga or Pilates: It takes a strong core. It can be harmonic or totally dissonant, but whatever the effect, it must be coming from the core. Then outer ranges are the filigree that gives emphasis or more detail to what's happening in the core. I'm always aware of that core sound, even if it's a sound that doesn't have a core.

You've re-arranged many of your scores for different groups. Is versatility a key part of success in 2024?

I think that there's a demand for it. For example, people kept asking, 'Do you have

anything orchestral?' I didn't, but *Primal Message* would be good orchestrally, and I could have fun with some textures. Composing in 2024 means being flexible and writing into what we have. What I can recommend or wish for is that composers not just have a machine to write into [such as AI], but to collaborate with artists they respect and enjoy working with. That's the extra sauce that pushes composers to do better, and to do more than they could do on their own with a machine. It is my great honor to be writing for people.

Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.

(continued from page 19)

Galimir was an enormous influence—"the greatest chamber music mind I've encountered in my life." When Mr. Tenenbom joined the faculty in 1996 and took over the strings chamber music program, he made sure that all the students were involved in chamber music. "We'd have a chamber music sightreading party early in the year, like in summer camp, so students young and old could get to know each other and form groups," he says. Today, all instrumentalists, except for organists and percussionists, are required to be a part of an active, registered chamber music group each semester, with access to the wide range of Curtis faculty.

Faculty member Amy Yang sees chamber music training as more than a career path. "The students begin to sharpen their sensibility for symbiotic relationships to their partners," she says, adding that chamber music makes students more alert to the give and take of artistic leadership. "They learn ways to modulate their own voices to yield the greatest artistic flourish for all."

RESIDENCIES ANCHOR CAREERS

Curtis graduates have been flowing into the chamber music field for decades. One recent notable example is the Dover Quartet, founded at Curtis in 2008, which swept the prizes at the 2013 Banff

Competition and has enjoyed a meteoric rise. In 2020, the Dover was appointed to the Curtis faculty as the Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble in Residence, carrying on the teaching tradition of their own mentors in the Guarneri; their name is a nod to Barber's *Dover Beach*, and a link to their illustrious quartet predecessor of a century ago.

In 2021, Imani Winds became the first-ever wind quintet appointed to the faculty to teach chamber music. Formed in 1997, the renowned ensemble, which is devoted to expanding the wind quintet repertoire, has demonstrated that wind players can also make a living playing chamber music.

Toyin Spellman-Diaz, the Imani's founding oboist, says that the Imani's mission at Curtis is expansion in many areas. "We coach wind quintets, but we also have a chamber music studio class where students play for each other and brainstorm ideas—like how to put together a concert—to open neural pathways they had not thought about before.

"We're getting student composers to write for wind quintets; we coach contemporary music; we teach a mini entrepreneurship class that's open to everybody. We're also bringing students our knowledge of composers outside the classical realm; how important it is to have different voices—of color, jazz, music from around the world—come into

chamber music."

A major part of Imani's mission at Curtis is to prepare students for a professional landscape that has changed once again, offering space for musical careers that combine many kinds of activities as well as unconventionally structured groups.

Students are looking for ways to take charge of their careers now," Ms. Spellman-Diaz says. "People are coming up with new ensemble ideas, new programs, new places to perform, new audiences to reach. The money is shrinking, but it's still out there, and musicians are figuring out how to tap into it and use their creative potential. Presenters are looking for flexible ensembles who will work with their communities and do more than just mainstage concerts."

Ms. Spellman-Diaz adds, "We are not looking to make a cadre of chamber musicians. We are trying to open up their ideas of what they do in their lives, to realize there is music—and there are ways of playing—outside the traditional orchestra. If they incorporate that into their playing, we've done our job."

Heidi Waleson is the opera critic of the Wall Street Journal and the author of Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America (Metropolitan/Picador).

Then and Now

Class Photos

As we salute the Class of 2024, *Overtones* also looks back to some class photos from the past, starting with the very first commencement ceremony in 1934.

1934



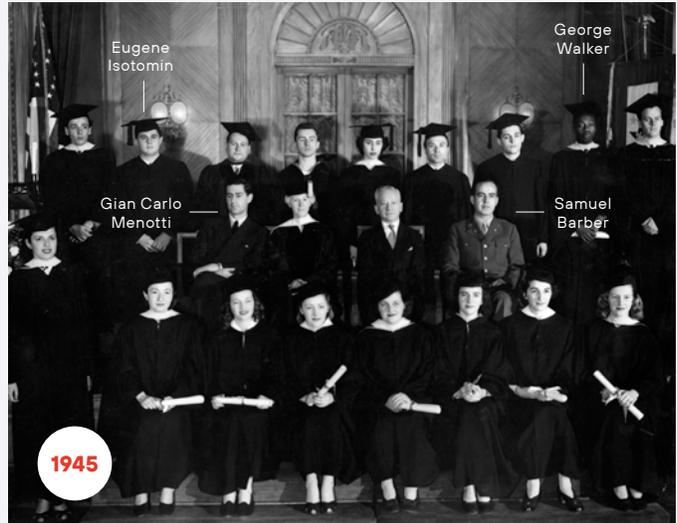
*First commencement exercises
and conferring of degrees at the
Curtis Institute of Music,
May 22, 1934.*



Leonard Bernstein

Mary Louise Curtis Bok

Randall Thompson



Eugene Isotomin

George Walker

Gian Carlo Menotti

Samuel Barber



Peter Serkin

Richard Goode

Charles Avsharian



Wendy Sutter

James Ross

Matthew Herskowitz

Pamela Frank



2008

Yuja Wang

Teddy Abrams

Elena Urioste

Bella Hristova

Saluting the Class of 2024

Elias Ackerley, piano
 Yejin Ahn, clarinet
 Leigha Amick, composition
 Justin Bernardi, trumpet
 Chih-Ta Chen, viola
 Soyoung Cho, viola
 Matthew Christakos, cello
 Lingyu Dong, violin
 Diogo Fernandes, trombone
 Avery Gagliano, piano
 Sofia Gilchenok, viola
 Micah Gleason, conducting
 Derek Gullett, trombone
 Jason Henery, double bass
 Maya Miro Johnson, composition
 Gawon Kim, violin
 Morgan-Andrew King, opera
 Asha Kline, bassoon
 Yesong Sophie Lee, violin
 Alexander Leonardi, organ
 Ethan Marmolejos, tuba
 William McGregor, double bass
 Tae McLoughlin, timpani and percussion
 Anton Mejias, piano
 Raúl Orellana, trumpet
 Haneul Park, viola
 Michael Shaham, violin
 Dongyoung Jake Shim, violin
 Cameron Slaton, oboe
 Oliver Talukder, oboe
 Claire Thai, harp
 Erik Tofte, opera
 Tobias Vigneau, double bass
 Nygel Witherspoon, cello
 Adrian Wong, composition
 Kahlan Yenney, bassoon



Maya Miro Johnson and Nick DiBerardino



Roberto Díaz



George Lewis



The class of 2024 graduates await their diplomas



Avery Gagliano, Oliver Talukder, Adrian Wong



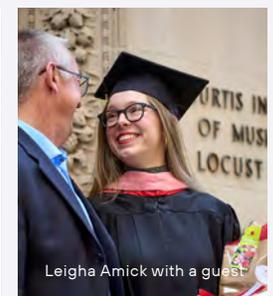
Roberto Díaz, Anthony B. Creamer III, George Lewis, Edward Gazouleas, Nick DiBerardino



Avery Gagliano



Class of 2024 graduates



Leigha Amick with a guest



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

“I’m going to leave you with a concept that builds from a saying of the great John Lewis...Dr. Lewis exhorted us all to get into trouble, good trouble, necessary trouble. So, I’d like you all to get out there. You know what to do. Make some noise—some good noise—because good trouble and good noise are really the same thing, the forceful assertion of alternatives in the face of oppression.”

—GEORGE LEWIS, 2023-24
COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE,
SPEAKING AT THE 2024 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY