

# E-Musicians Unite!



*As the challenge of creating a career in music grows, Eastman alumni become ever more entrepreneurial*

## ***Savvy-vous la musique?***

ACCORDING TO DAVID CUTLER (MM '96), MANY TALENTED young musicians start out their lives with a simple road map:

1. Attend music school
2. Become a “pro”

Well, as most anyone reading this magazine has learned by now, there are usually a few more stops on the road map to a satisfying musical career than this. David sets them out clearly in his book *The Savvy Musician*, a guide for aspiring professional musicians of all kinds (the “two-point plan” quoted above is from the book’s introduction).

David, who studied jazz composition, recalls that while he did take Ray Ricker’s “Business of Music” course at Eastman and learned a lot from it, he didn’t hear the word “entrepreneurship” during his music studies at all. “You graduate from music school as a highly, highly trained professional; you should know how to make money—and how you can use your art to make a difference in the world around you.”

Ricker, of course now directs Eastman’s famed Institute for Music Leadership, dedicated to musical entrepreneurship; and David now hears the word quite a lot: he’s Coordinator of Music Entrepreneurship Studies at Duquesne University. And he has a thriving career as a jazz and classical composer, performer, conductor, and author—and (as of September 1) mastermind of [www.savvymusician.com](http://www.savvymusician.com). David hopes the new site will become professionals’ first stop for music career-related issues and guidance through the thickets of a career. And if you’re interested in *The Savvy Musician*, you’ll be able to read excerpts from the book online as well as pre-order it.

“This argument of music for music’s sake versus learning the business of music was fought and won long ago,” says David. “I am so proud that Eastman took the first step—not just offering one class, but setting a model for other schools with the IML.”

**“Creativity should be at the core of higher education,”**  
says *Savvy Musician* David Cutler.



Last January, Eastman’s Institute for Music Leadership sponsored a very successful conference on Preparing the Generation E Musician: The Place of Entrepreneurship in the Higher Education Music School Curriculum. Guests included Heidi Neck of Babson College, who led two workshops designed to stimulate entrepreneurial creativity; and award-winning jazz composer Maria Schneider (MM ’83), shown here with IML director Ray Ricker, who exemplified it by renouncing conventional outlets and taking the creation and sale of her music directly to her fans via the ArtistShare website. IML will host its second conference, *The Entrepreneurial Music School in a Changing Economy*, this fall in San Diego, with keynote speaker Bob Johansen of the Institute of the Future.

## Facing “the new reality”



**Mark Volpe**

*In managing four major American orchestras, Mark Volpe (BM ’79) has had a remarkable and possibly unique career, which started with a degree in clarinet performance from Eastman. His ties to the Eastman School continue as a member of Eastman’s National Council. For his distinguished leadership in the many areas of modern orchestra marketing and management, Eastman presented Mark Volpe with its Alumni Achievement Award at the 2009 commencement ceremony. Excerpts from his address to the graduates are printed here.*

MANY OF YOUR PREDECESSORS FOCUSED ON THE CRAFT OF PERFORMING an instrument [and studying] Western art music. While those remain essential ingredients in becoming a musician, they are no longer enough. The need for advocacy, the need for long-term strategic positioning, the need to understand demographic trends as well as evolving technology—all necessitate musicians assuming much more responsibility for the future of classical music.

The world includes many, many musicians who can play well, but far fewer people who can really, in a compelling way, explain what they’re doing. More than ever before, the ability to communicate is going to be critical to your success. Some of you may assert that you communicate through your music. This and other nonverbal forms of communication are important, but in an age where an entire generation has gone without music education in school, you have to be able to talk about music in a way that can be understood.

Think about the major sports events on television. They’re preceded by several hours of talk and demonstrations, and followed by several more hours of talk. The Commissioners all understand that the more you understand the nuances, strategies, and tactics of the game, not to mention the personalities of the athletes, the more interest you’ll have in the sport. And this can very much be true in the world of music.

I’m going to share an experience from my days in Baltimore. We had committed with Yo-Yo Ma to record the Britten *Cello Symphony*, a pretty dense work, for Sony Classical. To prepare for that recording we did a series of performances: Thursday and Friday in conventional subscription concerts, and Saturday as a more casual concert—Britten in the first half, and Dvořák in the second half. On Thursday

and Friday, the audience was very polite during the Britten but they were all waiting for the Dvořák.

On Saturday, we took a very different approach. Before presenting the piece, [BSO music director] David Zinman and Yo-Yo got into a discussion—infused with some fun, but really about an interpretive dispute between them. We had a telephone on stage, and David Zinman ended up calling Benjamin Britten. Of course it was a long-distance call, because Britten had been dead for 14 years, but nevertheless, Britten did answer, the [interpretive] issue was resolved, we played the piece, and the audience went crazy.

Well, you might think, this is just shtick, and what does this have to do with music? But I want you to focus on how the audience reacted. We broke down some of those barriers that admittedly exist when you're playing a thorny piece, just with 15 minutes of talk.

While it's increasingly important for you to be able to talk about music in performances and master classes, it's also important that you develop skills that will allow you to become leaders and advocates in your respective communities. Conservatories other than Eastman have too frequently graduated musicians who are not prepared for the real world, with the consequence of bitter disappointment as expectations are not met. I believe more than any other school of music, Eastman understands that musicians are frankly going to have to re-orient themselves after years in the practice room, and adjust their perspective.

While introspection is of course important, we must become relevant to more and more groups within our communities if we are to remain viable. My sense is that Eastman, through its leadership programs, has done a better job than any of its peers in preparing its graduates for the new reality. Now, most orchestras [including the Boston Symphony] are asking their musicians to become much more involved in orchestra governance, in standing on board committees, and in raising money. That's certainly a little daunting, as power begets responsibility. But it can be very, very exciting.

A case in point is the Detroit Symphony, where I was for seven years. Twenty years ago, the orchestra was widely criticized for being racially insensitive, a pretty serious deal in a city in which people of color represent maybe 85 percent of the population. To address these concerns, the musicians, the management, and the board [partnered] with the Detroit Public Schools to create a Performing Arts School that is now connected with Detroit's Symphony Hall.

I will never forget a conversation I had when I was back there, talking with a cab driver who said, my great, great hope, my grandest aspiration, will be when my granddaughter goes to that high school ... I assumed his granddaughter was 14 or 15, but no—his granddaughter was three. So the Detroit Symphony is providing hope, and even more importantly, something to aspire to.

My feeling is now, more than ever, that places like the Eastman School of Music will play a crucial role in a musical world where the rate of change continues to accelerate. The ability to adapt to changing external factors, the ability to influence, and the ability to create strategic partnerships are all integral to achieving our collective mission: to further the cause of music.



Violinist, singer, composer: the multi-talented Caleb Burhans

## Getting it out there

*Caleb Burhans (BM '03) was recently described by the New York Times as "A man of many talents" for his work as a composer and a performing musician, and the Leonore Annenberg Scholarship and School Funds Program agrees; this spring Caleb was awarded a Leonore Annenberg arts fellowship, based on his artistic achievements and his potential to become a cultural and community leader. Caleb's musical loves are contemporary music, early music, and indie rock. Caleb composes and performs with (among others) Trinity Church Choir, Alarm Will Sound, and his own band, itsnotyouitsme.*

### Was this award a big surprise?

I did know that Eastman had nominated me, but the Annenberg grant is usually given to artists who are very focused on one thing. I thrive on the variety of aspects of composing, singing and playing.

### What will you use the grant money for?

I want to make a recording of larger works with chamber orchestra. I have previously recorded in my studio at home—now I can use decent equipment! I'm also considering hiring a PR firm or management.

### Are you keeping busy as a composer?

I have a commission for a string quartet for the Library of Congress, and another for a work for female choir, chamber orchestra, and electronic forces. I'm also working on a second album with itsnotyouitsme, and writing music for a documentary by Artemisia Dentellesky. I am producing a catalogue of compositions, little by little.

### Did you learn a lot about entrepreneurship at Eastman?

I didn't take IML courses at all, and I regret that. In fact, I think they should be required for composition students, so you learn not only how to write music but also how to get it out there.

### Any advice for current Eastman undergrads?

Do as much as you can when you're in music school; it's your only chance to try everything. I remember doing things like getting together with friends and singing through Bach's *B Minor Mass*. I thought I was just having a good time, but it was as important as any class I took.