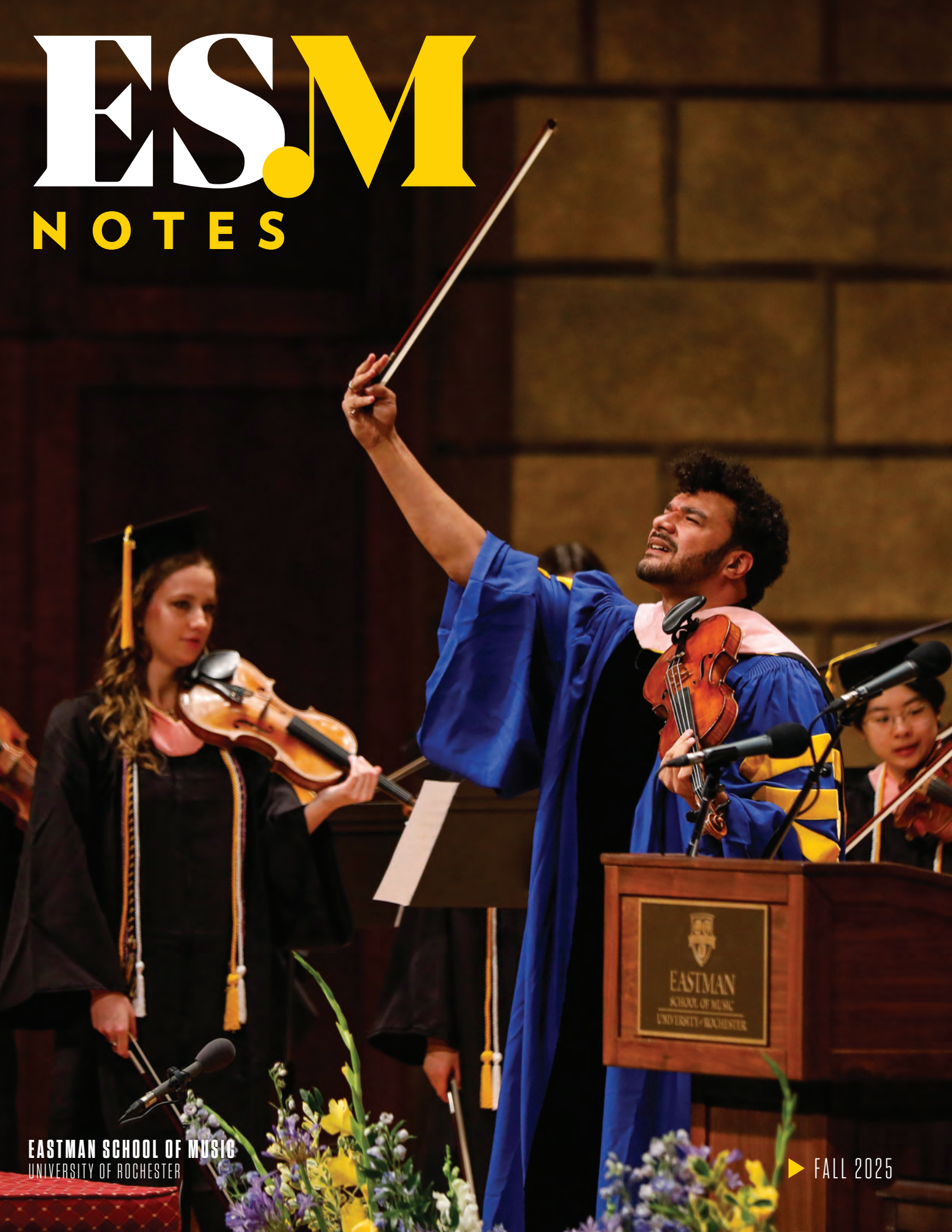


# ESM

NOTES



EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

▶ FALL 2025



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## ▶ FROM THE COMMUNITY



### Dear Fellow Eastman Alumni,

As you will recall from the Spring edition of *Eastman NOTES*, Eastman Dean Kate Sheeran suggested that the opening letter of the magazine should be penned by various members of the Eastman community. I am proud to follow Timothy Long '92E (MM) in contributing to this space.

I first saw the Eastman School of Music in June 1955, following the end of my junior year in high school. My family was visiting friends who lived in Rochester, and they suggested that I might enjoy seeing Eastman. Upon entering the school, I had a chance encounter with Edward Easley '43E, '48E (MM), who was the director of admissions at the time. He invited me upstairs to a fourth-floor classroom where I played some Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin for him. Unbeknownst to me at the time, that rather informal performance would serve as my audition. I was immediately entranced with the idea of coming to Eastman for my undergraduate studies and dutifully filled out an application in the fall. In early December I was notified of my acceptance, and I happily arrived in Rochester in September 1956, not knowing that almost 70 years later I would still be a member of the Eastman community. After completing my bachelor's degree, I remained for my master's. In the fall of 1962, I was then afforded the opportunity of some part-time teaching in what was then known as the preparatory department, and this was quickly followed by an invitation to join the faculty full-time in 1963 as a member of the piano department. Little did I imagine that I would remain a member of the Eastman faculty for 57 years before retiring as professor emeritus in 2020. The end of this

improbable journey was not quite over, since I continued to teach part-time for four more years.

Whenever I find myself wandering through the Cominsky Promenade, I look at the many portraits and realize that I knew most of these people. For me, it's almost like a family portrait gallery. Some of them were my teachers, some my friends and colleagues, others simply a source of profound inspiration. These many portraits are an appropriate reminder of the reason why our school has taken its place among the great music schools of the world. Publishing a three-volume history of Eastman presented me with the honor and responsibility of detailing the many contributions made by these distinguished former members of our school community.

This edition of *NOTES*, as in previous editions, affords our alumni the opportunity of seeing how Eastman is adapting to changes in our profession while continuing to offer the core values which were essential to our own education as students and to the professional life that we have enjoyed since graduating. And we can also read about the professional activities of you, our esteemed alumni, as we continue to find new ways to highlight the stories, achievements, and varied paths you have taken since graduation. This is, after all, your alumni magazine—so let us take the opportunity to celebrate all that you have accomplished.

My very best personal regards to all of you.

### VINCENT LENTI '60E, '62E (MA)

Professor Emeritus of Piano,  
Eastman School Historian



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Curtis Stewart '08E, '08 performed alongside students during the 2025 commencement in May. *Photo by Matt Wittmeyer.*





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# Four Paths ONE SHARED FOUNDATION

EASTMAN ALUMNI JASON TREUTING '99E, KELLY HALL-TOMPKINS '93E, VINCENT LENTI '60E, '62E (MA), AND MELISSA NGAN '02E REFLECT ON THEIR CAREERS—AND HOW EASTMAN HAS STAYED WITH THEM.

BY JONATHAN HEATH

▼ What do a Grammy-winning percussionist, a classical violin soloist, a historian and author, and a musical entrepreneur have in common? Each launched their career at Eastman. Though their professional lives now span genres and disciplines, the thread connecting them is unmistakable. These four alumni have carved out singular careers—some by tradition, others by invention—but each credits Eastman with shaping their sensibilities and cultivating a lifelong creative community. Whether onstage or behind the scenes, they exemplify the many ways an Eastman education becomes more than a degree—it's a launchpad, a toolkit, and a blank page to start writing your own story on.



MATT WITTMAYER



## JASON TREUTING '99E

For Jason Treuting of Sō Percussion—the boundary-pushing chamber quartet known for its adventurous collaborations and genre-blurring performances—Eastman in the late 1990s was a place of transformation.

A self-described “late bloomer,” Treuting began classical percussion relatively late, having started on drum set in high school. His teacher gave him a list of music schools to consider, but emphasized, “If you get into Eastman, you have to go to Eastman.” For a kid from the suburbs of Southern California, the idea of Rochester—particularly in the snow—felt worlds away. But once on campus, Treuting was swept into a whirlwind of musical discovery: jazz gigs at Java’s, hip-hop bands, experimental ensembles, and classical marimba studies. “Music was happening everywhere!” he recalls with a grin.

That expansive musical environment was fed by a forward-thinking faculty, including legendary percussion professor John Beck ’55E, ’62E (MM), and a reenergized jazz department. Treuting especially remembers Beck’s openness, which allowed students to shape their own experiences—exploring everything from jazz and gamelan to contemporary chamber works. The result was a creatively rich and deeply self-directed education.

More than any one genre or skill, what resonated most with Treuting was Eastman’s progressive mindset. Beyond preparing students to perform—it taught them how to build

a life in music. “What struck me was the realization that musicians have to learn how to make their own career paths,” he says. “There used to be this idea of a pipeline to an orchestra job, a teaching job, a soloist career—but if that was ever a thing, it wasn’t going to last. You had to be more entrepreneurial.”

That mindset shaped Treuting’s post-Eastman career. He’s built a reputation not just as a performer, but as a musical thinker, collaborator, and creator. And he remains deeply connected to the Eastman community—not just out of nostalgia, but because, as he puts it, “Eastman webs are thick. You can’t walk around New York without bumping into someone from Eastman.”

Treuting and his partner, violist Beth Myers ’00E, ’00, ’02E (MM), live in Brooklyn, where Sō Percussion is based and where many of his Eastman-era collaborators continue to shape his artistic life. For them, staying connected isn’t about tradition—it’s about sustaining a creative ecosystem.

Now celebrating Sō Percussion’s 25th anniversary, Treuting reflects on the group’s unorthodox beginnings. What started as a scrappy, self-organized ensemble has grown into a force of contemporary music. The group’s name—suggested by Treuting’s sister, a translator living in Japan—comes from a Japanese word meaning “to offer sound.” That ethos has carried through their work, which ranges from concert halls to collaborations with pop artists.

In 2025, Sō Percussion earned its first Grammy for *Rectangles and Circumstance*, a collaborative album with American com-

**[1] Kelly Hall-Tompkins performed at Eastman during Black History Month in 2023.**

**[2] Jason Treuting of Sō Percussion returns to Eastman on March 25, 2026.**


poser Caroline Shaw. On March 25, 2026, the group returns to Kilbourn Hall with Shaw and Danni Lee Parpan, the other half of Shaw’s electronic-pop duo Ringdown, to perform songs from the album.

“The show is pretty theatrical,” Treuting explains. “There’s some simple staging, video, and lighting, all approached with a DIY sensibility. The performance grows over 75 minutes—from just one person on stage, to all of us on stage; from no lights, to big video projections on the walls.”

Treuting was especially eager to bring the project to his alma mater. “We thought it would be so cool to see what’s happening at Eastman right now—and to bring this show with us.”

## KELLY HALL-TOMPKINS '93E

As Treuting gears up for his return to Eastman, violinist Kelly Hall-Tompkins is still savoring the afterglow of her own recent appearance, where she performed the Rochester premiere of *Body in Motion*, a violin concerto written for her by composer Jeff Beal ’85E. The project began during Eastman’s centennial celebration, where Hall-Tompkins met Beal and his wife, Joan ’84E. The two had been quiet admirers of her work for years—Beal first noticed her during a performance that followed her being named a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient in 2021.

Before the weekend was over, the seeds of collaboration had already taken root. Beal offered to compose a concerto; Hall-Tompkins agreed on the spot. When they realized they both had worked with conductor Leonard Slatkin, they invited him to complete the trio. Just fifteen months later, the three premiered *Body in Motion* with the St. Louis Symphony. “We are not ‘someday-people,’” Hall-Tompkins quips. “We’re ‘make-it-happen-people.’”

Performing the piece again in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre this past March marked her first time playing as a soloist at her alma mater. “It was wonderful to bring that whole process full circle,” she says, noting the deeper resonance of returning to the stage where her artistic identity began.



[3] Vincent Lenti signs copies of *Nurturing the Love of Music*, the third book in his history of the Eastman School of Music, in 2022.  
[4] Melissa Ngan performing with Fifth House Ensemble at the Studebaker Theater in Chicago.

Hall-Tompkins is the first professional musician in her family. A native of Greenville, SC, she sought a rigorous musical experience and visited nine schools before choosing Eastman. Her instincts proved right. “There’s something different about Eastman,” she says. “It’s a marriage of a very high level of academic education combined with a penetrating sense of artistry.”

She still sees that unique Eastman spark in her peers today, especially in New York City, where she lives and works. “I not only run into them, but I have occasion to seek them out,” she adds. Her professional orbit continues to include Eastman alumni—not just on stage, but behind the scenes as well.

Hall-Tompkins founded *Music Kitchen: Food for the Soul* to bring live classical music to people experiencing homelessness. Now in its 20th season, the initiative has featured more than 200 musicians. For the 15th anniversary, she conceived and premiered *Forgotten Voices*, a song cycle based on comments from shelter guests, performed first in shelters and later at Carnegie Hall. Several Eastman alumni helped bring the project to life, including Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts ’94E, ’99E (DMA); soprano Adrienne Danrich ’93E; and Chris Carbone ’93E, an Eastman tuba major turned arts attorney.

Her connection to Eastman runs even deeper—her husband Joseph Tompkins ’92E is also a fellow alum. “I was only looking for Eastman alums for that role,” she jokes.

Though Hall-Tompkins initially imagined an orchestral career, her path shifted. “There’s nothing that’s a given about a music career,” she reflects. She credits a pivotal moment of self-discovery, as well as a quote she once heard from Oprah Winfrey: “You can’t wait for the parachute to appear and

then jump. You have to jump first and then the parachute will appear.”

Since that leap, her solo work has flourished. She created an album born from her time as the featured violinist in Broadway’s *Fiddler on the Roof* and, more recently, has performed the Wynton Marsalis Violin Concerto nearly twenty times, including the Lucerne Festival premiere and an upcoming Netherlands debut. Her performances draw on a life immersed in everything from Bach to American roots music. “I’m like a kid in a candy store,” she says. “I thrive on creating projects, wonderful collaborations, doing new things, and playing great music in great spaces.”

Hall-Tompkins has returned to Eastman continuously in the three decades since her graduation and is thankful for that fact. “I’m glad to have had a reason to visit regularly,” she says. “To see how the place has stayed the same, but also how it has grown and changed. It has kept all the things that I think are so unique and special, keeping the soul of the place while also adapting and expanding.”

## VINCENT LENTI ’60E, ’62E (MA)

One Eastman alumnus who has never left is Vincent Lenti. “When I look at my involvement at the school, which has been a continuous one since 1956, I never really left,” he says. “It’s probably the most improbable journey of anybody who ever graduated from the Eastman School of Music.”

Lenti taught at Eastman for more than six decades, including 57 years as a full-time member of the piano faculty—a remarkable milestone, especially considering that he wasn’t a piano major (both his undergraduate and graduate degrees were in music theory). But Lenti wouldn’t change a thing, say-

ing, “The student body here has always been a source of inspiration and joy to me.”

During his time at Eastman—as student, professor, and now historian—Lenti has witnessed sweeping changes. When he began his undergraduate studies, Howard Hanson was still the school’s director, and Lenti would later become one of the final faculty members hired during Hanson’s tenure. He studied German with Eastman graduate Jessie Kneisel, Class of 1928 and 1930 (MA), and recalls icons like Emory Remington and Oscar Zimmerman not as names on plaques but as colleagues in the halls. “You didn’t have to go up to the Cominsky Promenade to look at portraits and wonder who these people were,” he says. “They walked the corridors of Eastman!”

Over the years, he has celebrated appointments and retirements, mourned the loss of beloved faculty, and watched the school evolve to meet the needs of each new generation. And as the campus changed, so did his role—eventually becoming Eastman’s official historian in 2002. His interest had begun informally, sparked by the storied list of artists who had performed at Eastman, from Fritz Kreisler to Rachmaninoff. That curiosity led to his authorship of a three-volume history of the school; the final installment published in 2022 to coincide with Eastman’s centennial.

Lenti has also witnessed change in the broader musical landscape. “It was a very different world when I graduated in 1960,” he reflects. “The job market was wide open. I don’t know of anybody I graduated with who didn’t walk into a job right away.” Orchestras were expanding, colleges were hiring, and a general sense of optimism pervaded the profession. Today’s challenges, he notes, are more complex—but Eastman has evolved in step. He credits the school’s strong humanities offerings, innovative curriculum, and emphasis on leadership and entrepreneurship as key to preparing graduates for a more varied and dynamic career path.

Approaching his 87th birthday, Lenti continues to write and reflect, a lifelong passion made even more poignant by his early strug-



gles. “When I was in third grade, they told my parents I would never learn to read,” he recalls. “Well, I obviously learned to read—and to write.”

His most recent project, *A Romantic Symphony: The Autobiography of Howard Hanson*, adds another improbable chapter to his legacy. Hanson began writing his memoir shortly after retiring in 1964 but abandoned it when publishers lost interest. More than 40 unedited chapters went into hibernation, collecting dust until they arrived at the Sibley Music Library, where Lenti encountered them while conducting his own research. Archivist David Peter Coppen urged Lenti to consider preparing the manuscript for publication. After reconciling various drafts and annotating the text with characteristic precision, Lenti produced three bound copies—one for the Dean’s office, one for the library, and one for his own archive.

He thought that might be the end of it—until Coppen shared that researchers were regularly requesting access to the manuscript. Encouraged by the interest, Lenti approached Meliora Press at the University of Rochester. The result was the official publication of *A Romantic Symphony*, a long-overdue window into one of Eastman’s most defining figures.

## MELISSA NGAN ’02E

Lenti’s legacy is one of stewardship—of stories, traditions, and the human connections that form Eastman’s heart. While his path remained anchored in Rochester, other alumni have taken the Eastman spirit far beyond its walls. One such voice belongs to Melissa Ngan.

Her Eastman story began, quite literally, in the mail. “I remember someone sent me an article about Eastman’s arts leadership program with the note, ‘Have you seen this?’” she says. That newspaper clipping moved the school to the top of her list. Though her family feared a music career meant “a lifetime of pasta from a box in a leaky basement,” Ngan auditioned for Professor of Flute Bonita Boyd ’71E and left feeling deeply seen as a musician. When she first stepped into Kodak Hall, the decision was sealed.

She arrived intending to pursue a dual degree in flute performance and economics. But the pull of the arts leadership program—then in its early years—quickly became the main attraction. “I loved that it opened up an endless curiosity,” Ngan recalls. She enrolled in everything from entertainment law and mu-

sic production to writing and public relations, driven by a hunger to understand what it really meant to live a life in music.

What she found at Eastman wasn’t just world-class training on her instrument—it was a community that encouraged experimentation. “I knew I was getting a very broad view of the field and what my place in it could be,” she says. Ngan filled her time with extra chamber ensembles and side projects, including managing PR for friends’ performances. She began applying the lessons she was learning in real time and discovered a growing entrepreneurial drive.

That drive launched her into her first professional role with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. There, in addition to performing, she worked through a program called Musicorps (now Civic Fellows) that brought concerts to parks and public spaces. “It was the first time I was playing for people who weren’t there to judge me or hire me,” she says. “Those were some of the most meaningful musical experiences of my life—and they changed my trajectory.”

In 2005, she founded Fifth House Ensemble, a Chicago-based chamber group that has spent 20 years pushing the boundaries of artistic collaboration. Musicians joined forces with dancers, actors, graphic novelists, video game designers, bluegrass bands, and more, to explore what music could do—and who it could reach.

Today, Ngan is four years into her role as president and CEO of the American Composers Orchestra (ACO), where she’s leading a national movement to connect composers,

orchestras, and communities in deeper, more transformational ways, while asking how creative practices can advance societal goals. Under her leadership, ACO is reimagining orchestral music as a space not just for listening, but for public dialogue and creativity.

“Artists are witnesses to our time,” she says, “but they are also an incredible source of invitation for the public to express themselves and to see and hear one another in new and meaningful ways.”

Through it all, Eastman remains a constant thread. From performing in a concert honoring Bonita Boyd’s 40th anniversary in 2017 to mentoring students and helping launch the Institute for Music Leadership’s (IML) online master’s in music leadership, her involvement has come full circle. “When [IML Director and 2003 Eastman alum] Rachel Roberts called me,” Ngan says. “It was such a great opportunity to come back on faculty and create a class that was all about imagination and new ideas and making those ideas real in the world.”

This thinking has helped Ngan reframe the idea of success. No longer worried about eating pasta every day, she, like many alumni before and after, has written a story that reflects an ethos that values artistic excellence alongside a spirit of experimentation.

Eastman alumni around the world continue to challenge the idea that success can only be found behind a music stand or in an audition room. Their paths—and the spirit behind it—is a reminder that music, when embraced fully, can lead just about anywhere.





# BUILDING THE FUTURE, FLOOR BY FLOOR

WHAT'S UNFOLDING IS A TECH-FORWARD TRANSFORMATION DESIGNED WITH STUDENTS IN MIND, BRIDGING A CENTURY OF ARCHITECTURE WITH THE DEMANDS OF A 21ST-CENTURY EDUCATION.

BY JONATHAN HEATH

Step into Eastman's campus today and you'll find more than echoes of musical greatness reverberating through its historic halls. Behind walk-up counters, beneath freshly painted ceilings, and inside whisper-quiet recording rooms, a quiet revolution is underway—built on gigabit speeds, 4K clarity, and a deep commitment to student-centered spaces and experiences. From practice rooms with Wi-Fi strong enough to stream symphonies and stay connected, to new courses, studios, and a reimagined help desk where students support students, the upgrades stretch from the basement to the top of the Annex. Across Miller Center and beyond, new tech infrastructure is

making sure Eastman students, faculty, and staff have the tools—and the bandwidth—to match their artistry.

“We’ve outgrown many of our spaces—not just physically, but in terms of how our students learn, create, and collaborate,” says Dean Kate Sheeran. “This transformation is about meeting those evolving needs. We are looking carefully at how students, faculty, and staff use every corner of this campus, and asking: What’s missing? What could serve them better? From the basement to the upper floors, we’re finding new ways to make Eastman more accessible, connected, and equipped for the future.”

LAUREN SAGEER





## Soundspace

Earlier this year, the University of Rochester announced one of the largest and most ambitious new ventures to date, intended to unite the creative and technical arms of the institution: Soundspace. This cross-campus interdisciplinary collaboration between Eastman and the Audio and Music Engineering (AME) program at the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences aims to create a shared hub for research, education, performance, and public engagement at the intersection of music, science, and engineering. Spearheading the effort is Mark Bocko, distinguished professor of electrical and computer engineering and director of the AME program, working in close partnership with Eastman composer and professor Mikel Kuehn. Backed by 11 additional faculty members from both campuses, Soundspace is envisioned as a collaborative ecosystem where innovation thrives across disciplines.

As part of this initiative, Eastman also announced the appointment of Dennis DeSantis '05E (DMA) as associate professor of music and technology. DeSantis is a composer, percussionist, sound designer, author, and educator, and was previously head of music learning at Ableton in Berlin, Germany. In addition to teaching, he will play a leading role in developing new programs and curricular innovations within Soundspace. "The partnership between Hajim and Eastman is very exciting," he says. "It allows for levels of technical expertise around things like creative coding or electrical engineering and software design at Hajim to be combined with the deep levels of musicianship that Eastman provides."

By blending exemplary musicianship with superior engineering and design, Soundspace

offers students from both campuses access to a truly interdisciplinary education—one that acknowledges how central technology has become to music in all its forms. "Programs like the ones we're building now can help everyone—from those who want to explore creative coding to those who simply want to capture high-quality performances of themselves acoustically," DeSantis says. "Technology is not just a tool for documenting music—it's a tool for creating it."

## EMuSE

At the bottom of Eastman's grand staircase, the new EMuSE Studio—short for Electroacoustic Music Studios @ Eastman—is evolving into one of the school's most forward-looking creative spaces. Since its founding in the early 1980s, EMuSE has grown into a central junction for electroacoustic experimentation, live electronics, and immersive sonic experiences.

Today, under the leadership of Professor of Composition Mikel Kuehn '93E (MA),

'95E (PhD), EMuSE is not only continuing its legacy but reimagining it for a new generation. Kuehn, who joined Eastman in 2023, has overseen a dramatic upgrade to the studio's physical footprint, its technology, and its educational reach. What was once a small, under-resourced set of rooms has



[1] A new 4K camera system and studio have greatly improved Eastman's livestreaming capabilities and picture quality. [2] Dennis DeSantis. [3] Mikel Kuehn presents an EMuSE student performance in Hatch Recital Hall [4].

become a fully outfitted, cross-disciplinary space where composers, performers, musicologists, and even River Campus students collaborate on cutting-edge projects. “I really wanted to have studios where we could involve more than just our composition students,” Kuehn explains. “There’s great potential here, and now we’re building a space that reflects that.”

One of the most transformative updates to the studio is the creation of a new, sound-isolated room with a Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating of 60—near the upper limit for airborne sound attenuation. “It’s about as soundproof as we’re going to be able to get in an older building like ours,” says Paul Spaulding, director of facilities and auxiliary operations.

To bring the new spaces to life, Kuehn provided a carefully curated “shopping list” to Mark Wazowicz, director of Eastman’s Technology and Media Production (T&MP) Department, whose team handled the installation of both classroom and studio technology. The result: a fully immersive environment outfitted with a wall of 25 speakers arranged in a dome-like configuration, an 85-inch display, MIDI controllers, custom furniture, and a professional sound booth for recording. “When people see a lot of speakers, they tend to get really excited,” Kuehn jokes.

But beyond the visual impact, Kuehn hopes students recognize what the new space makes possible. “When you think about what existed before, the spaces were small, it was hard to see what we had, and nothing functioned properly,” he says. “There was only one computer in the whole computer music studio—and it was from 2013. In computer years, that’s a lifetime.”

Through open studio time, listening sessions, and TA-supported concerts and student recitals, Kuehn is positioning the EMuSE Studio not just as a space for sonic experimentation, but as a vibrant, inclusive hub for creative tech at Eastman.

## Miller Center

Across Gibbs Street, the Miller Center—home to the Sibley Music Library, the Institute for Music Leadership, the Office of Admissions, the Dean’s Office, and numerous department hubs—has undergone numerous strategic upgrades of its own.

Renovations throughout include new, flexible-use spaces for students. A newly finished 25-seat classroom adds to Eastman’s teaching

capacity and provides much-needed flexibility for small seminars and visiting artist workshops. A dedicated graduate student lounge and expanded seminar and study spaces give students more resources between commitments. “Having a welcoming space for graduate students to use throughout the day to relax, study, eat, and socialize is incredibly important in creating a sense of community and preventing burnout in the library and practice room,” said doctoral student Lauren Ganger ’21 (MA). “I hope our graduate student body enjoys it for years to come.”

With more administrative teams consolidating on the newly refurbished fourth floor, the need for additional hardware and infrastructure continues to grow. A new computer equipment room, built on that same floor, now serves all five stories of the building. This behind-the-scenes upgrade enables easier wiring and significantly boosts the building’s connectivity but, isn’t a one-off—it reflects a long-term commitment to enabling scalable, modular improvements in the future, without the need for disruptive construction each time something changes. “It’s one of those invisible upgrades,” says Spaulding. “But it makes everything else possible—more teaching, more access, and better support for the people doing the work.”

## Help Desk and The Cave

One of the most notable changes for students is the creation of a new, walk-up help desk and behind that, a refurbished office for the T&MP team—affectionately known as “The Cave” or “Fingal’s Cave” to students. This initiative is just one piece of a broader project led by Wazowicz. After serving in a similar role on the University of Rochester’s River Campus, Wazowicz joined Eastman three years ago to help reimagine the student technology experience. That meant reassessing spaces, upgrading equipment, and building systems from the ground up. “We’re literally building a technology foundation in the basement and expanding that across all of Eastman,” he says.

The help desk is now staffed by student workers as of the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. Here, students, faculty, and staff can ask questions, troubleshoot tech issues, and get hands-on support. They can even borrow equipment. Through a library-like checkout experience, loans are managed using a barcode system ensuring every piece of equipment is tracked and returned on time.



The gear includes laptops, audio and video recorders, microphones, speakers, tripods, cables, and a sundry collection of helpful gadgetry. One significant addition to the list is upgraded 4K cameras for self-recorded projects.

Behind the desk, what was once a rarely-used computer lounge (and even earlier, a smoking room) has been transformed into a functional and inviting support hub. Although a 100-year-old building offers no shortage of challenges, paint, new carpeting, furniture, and improved lighting were essential updates—modest changes, perhaps, but transformative in making the space functional and welcoming. The newly renovated suite now houses T&MP’s full-time staff in one convenient location for the first time. “There are 14 spots for audio engineers, AV professionals, computer staff, website developers,” Wazowicz says. “They’re all working in that room and available to help and collaborate if there’s a special project or question that comes up.”

## Wi-Fi in the Annex

The Annex, built in 1927, poses one of the biggest challenges to Wazowicz’s campus-wide overhaul: unreliable internet. Accessed by one of two bridges from Lowry Hall, the Annex is 10 floors housing practice rooms, faculty studios, classrooms, a black box theatre for opera, and a large ensemble rehearsal space. Designed with acoustics in mind, the building’s thick masonry—12 to 14 inches thick in places—became a natural enemy to modern wireless connectivity. “In the Annex,



Wi-Fi used to vanish the deeper you went—by the time you hit the basement, you were basically off the grid,” Wazowicz says.

To solve the issue, a centrally located practice room on the fifth floor was repurposed into a computer equipment room—now the “main brain” of the network. From there, over 170 access points are being installed throughout the building, with nearly every other room receiving its own dedicated signal. “In the end, that entire building from top to bottom will have high-powered internet with brand new hardware, meaning state-of-the-art Wi-Fi,” Wazowicz says. “Anybody can be in there and connect easily.”

Health and safety were top priorities. In an age of digital sheet music and remote collaboration, a reliable signal isn’t just convenient, it’s essential. “We have students in those practice rooms all day, every day,” Wazowicz says. “Just being able to send a text and say, ‘Hey, I’m over here if you need me,’ or be able to reach out if they need help, is crucial.” Spaulding echoes the practical benefit. “More and more students are downloading music these days,” he says. “They’re not using sheet music in paper form, they’re using a tablet.” Faster, more accessible internet not only mean students feel safe, but also al-

lows them to download what they need, when they need it. These upgrades are paving the way for “smart classrooms” equipped with 21st-century listening and sound technology, ensuring students have the tools they need to succeed.

With improvements to the Annex underway, Eastman’s Wi-Fi revolution continues to ripple across campus. As students increasingly rely on three to five devices each—smartwatches, phones, tablets, and laptops—the demand on network infrastructure has grown exponentially. Upgrading hardware isn’t just important; it’s essential. Enhanced connectivity in Lowry Hall, Eastman Theatre, Howard Hanson Hall, Kilbourn Hall, and the Ray Wright Room benefits not only students, faculty, and staff, but also the many guests who rely on seamless access.

Years in the making, Eastman’s recent wave of upgrades isn’t just about faster internet, sharper video, or shinier equipment—it’s about reaffirming the school’s commitment to students and their evolving needs as artists, collaborators, and creators. Each update signals a shift toward a more integrated, accessible, and future-ready Eastman. “I think it’s fair to say that we’ve heard from

colleagues and people who’ve been here a long time,” Paul Spaulding concludes, “and they’ve seen more progress in these areas in the last three years than they’ve seen in the previous 20.”

For Mark Wazowicz and the teams behind the scenes, that momentum is only just beginning. “Nothing like this level of update has ever happened before,” he says. “That cannot be understated.” If Eastman has long been known for honoring its past, it’s now equally invested in building what comes next—floor by floor, speaker by speaker, and student by student.

“There’s still more work to do, and more opportunities ahead,” Dean Kate Sheeran affirms. “These upgrades represent a significant investment—but they’re also just the beginning. As we continue to grow and invite new partnerships and support, we’re committed to building an Eastman education where students’ only limit is their imagination.”

[5] Inside the soundproof studio at EMuSE.

[6] Students can use the graduate lounge to both study and relax with friends.



# JAZZ DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

THIS FALL, THE JAZZ STUDIES & CONTEMPORARY MEDIA DEPARTMENT WELCOMES TWO NEW FACULTY MEMBERS WHOSE CAREERS SPAN GRAMMY NOMINATIONS, INTERNATIONAL TOURS, AND DEEP ROOTS IN JAZZ EDUCATION.

▼  
Otis Brown III, a native of Hackensack, NJ, assumes the role of Assistant Professor of Jazz Drum Set, while Marshall Gilkes, originally from Camp Springs, MD, joins as Associate Professor of Jazz Trombone. Though they both hail from the east coast, Brown and Gilkes share more than geography. Each was raised in a musical household, absorbing the sounds, values, and discipline of the craft from an early age. That legacy, paired with their years on the circuit and in the studio, now informs their teaching philosophies at Eastman. We caught up with both new faculty members to talk about early influences, musical mentorship, and what students can expect in the years ahead.

## **Marshall, what sparked your passion for music, and how has that evolved throughout your career?**

“Music has always been a part of my life. Both of my parents were musicians—my father studied trombone at Eastman in the 60s and later became a conductor in the Air Force Band, while my mother was a singer and taught piano and voice lessons from home. I grew up attending my dad’s concerts, which eventually led me to discover jazz through the big band that was part of his group. From the beginning, I was drawn to the excitement and unpredictability of improvisation. That thrill is still with me today, and I remain just as passionate about music and the endless possibilities of creative expression. I’m always seeking new ideas and concepts to explore.”

## **Can you share a highlight from your career that shaped your perspective as a musician?**

“That’s a tough question because there have been so many meaningful moments. However, I’d say my recent work with the WDR Big Band in Germany stands out. Over the past 10 years, I’ve had the privilege of being a composer, arranger, soloist, and conductor with the band, and that experience has significantly shaped my current perspective as a musician. The three albums I’ve



made with them have given me the opportunity to explore all the aspects of music I love—playing, writing, recording, and conducting.”

## **How would you describe your teaching style, and what do you hope students take away from their time in your classroom?**

“I’d describe my teaching style as straightforward and engaging. I’ve always appreciated teachers who are direct and honest, so I aim to be the same. At the same time, I try to make the learning experience fun and inject humor into my lessons. I want students

to leave feeling motivated and inspired, so I spend a lot of time playing during lessons—whether it’s trading choruses over a standard or playing a duet together. I also bring in music I’m preparing for my outside performances, giving students a real-world glimpse into the life of a professional musician. My goal is to show them what they need to develop to play the same gigs and work in the industry. While we primarily focus on jazz and improvisation, I want my students to graduate with the skills needed to excel in any musical setting they may encounter.”





## Otis, what sparked your passion for music and how has that evolved throughout your career?

"I think my passion for music was sparked by my parents—they were both music educators. My dad's a drummer, and my mom played piano, taught, and led choirs. The church I grew up in, back in Hackensack, NJ, was also hugely influential. Hearing music there was formative, and it's the same church I still attend and play at today. I was involved in school bands starting in elementary school, and while I always knew I wanted to do something in music, I originally thought I'd become a music educator. But once I discovered performance as a path, it really piqued my interest. I wanted to be on stage playing shows, connecting with people. Music has this ability to move people, and I love being part of that. That connection, that emotional spark, is what drew me in, and it's also how my relationship with music has grown. But education has always been at the heart of it—because of my parents—and coming here to Eastman feels like a continuation of what I've always been meant to do."

## Can you share a highlight from your career that shaped your perspective as a musician?

"I've had a lot of incredible experiences—like playing with Herbie Hancock, Terence Blanchard, and Wayne Shorter—but one that truly shaped my career was meeting jazz trumpeter Donald Byrd. During my last two years at Delaware State University,

he came on as artist-in-residence, and everything changed. Byrd opened my mind to new possibilities. I didn't really know what I was going to do after college until he suggested that I had the talent and ability to pursue music as a career—performing, recording, making it my life. He planted that idea in me. Just being near him was a turning point. He became a mentor. Even after I graduated, I'd call him for advice, go visit. Donald Byrd was such an icon, a true legend in jazz and beyond. I was incredibly fortunate to be around him. I always tell people: he changed my life. Hearing someone of his caliber say I could do this too—that gave me the confidence to go for it."

## How would you describe your teaching style? And what do you hope that students will take away from their time in your classroom?

"My teaching philosophy is rooted in meeting students where they are. I want them to understand that the possibilities are endless—especially in jazz. While there are foundational skills that absolutely need to be learned, this genre is a melting pot. If something is used musically and with intention, it's acceptable to me. I often tell students that the level of your mastery is directly tied to the depth of your study. There's no shortcut, but there is always a path. I want them to leave my classroom believing that whatever direction they want to pursue—and whatever level they're aiming for—is within reach, as long as they're willing to put in the work."

# BASSOON FACULTY UPDATE FOR 2025-2026 YEAR

Eastman's Professor of Bassoon George Sakakeeny will serve as principal bassoonist for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra's 2025-26 season. This exciting opportunity allows Sakakeeny to appear as a soloist with the orchestra, while taking a sabbatical from Eastman this academic year. He will return full-time to the Eastman faculty in fall 2026, bringing valuable insights into current orchestra repertoire and practices.

In his place, Kim Laskowski, who recently retired as associate principal bassoon of the New York Philharmonic, will serve as visiting professor of bassoon. On the faculty at both The Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music, Laskowski will teach Eastman's bassoon students for the academic year beginning in fall 2025. "I am so pleased to have the opportunity to teach for a full academic year at the Eastman School of Music," Laskowski said. "I look forward to working with bassoon students and building upon the lessons taught by Professor Sakakeeny."

"We are thrilled that George will have the opportunity to bring his wonderful musicianship to the Fort Worth Symphony's 2025-2026 season," said Joan and Martin Messinger Dean Kate Sheeran. "We look forward to welcoming him back in the fall of 2026, and we are very fortunate to have the renowned performer and educator Kim Laskowski joining us while he is away. Bassoon students, both current and incoming, will be lucky indeed to be able to learn from two of the country's top bassoonists."



[1] George Sakakeeny. [2] Kim Laskowski.

# SOUNDTRAX FILM MUSIC FESTIVAL

## BRINGING GEORGE EASTMAN'S VISION TO LIFE

BY LAUREN SAGEER

▼ In 2017, six-time Emmy award-winning composer and conductor Mark Watters moved from Los Angeles, CA, to Rochester, NY. He had just been hired by the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music to lead its newly formed Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media, a master's degree program founded by his friend, famed composer and Eastman alumnus Jeff Beal '85E. One of Watters's earliest aspirations for the program—and the school—was to host the first film-music festival in North America, and this October that goal will become a reality.



At the start of his tenure, Watters expressed that “There isn’t a film-music festival in this country, and there really should be.” While several take place in Europe and Asia—often featuring American composers—no one in North America had hosted a festival of this kind. “And there’s no better place to hold one than Rochester, where there is such a love for film, music, and the arts.” Little did we know that by speaking those words, Watters was planting the seed for what would become the Soundtrax Film Music Festival, a university-wide collaboration between the Eastman School of Music and Hajim School of Engineering, taking place October 16–18, 2025, on Eastman’s campus.

To make this dream a reality, Watters joined forces with Soundtrax co-director Mark Bocko, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the Hajim School. When Watters first met Bocko in 2017, he had been invited to speak at UR and the Rochester Institute of Technology’s Light and Sound Interactive conference and expo—a precursor to Soundtrax that was geared more toward sound technology than music. After the success of the audio-focused conference, Bocko turned to Watters over lunch one day and said, “Gosh, we really should see if we can do a film-music festival.” And the rest, as they say, is history.

With roots in photography, film, and sound, it’s no coincidence that this inaugural festival is taking place in Rochester—the home of industrialist and philanthropist George Eastman. As the founder of Eastman Kodak, whose inventions made modern cinema possible, and the man responsible for establishing the Eastman School of Music in 1921, East-





man dreamt of events like this taking place in the halls that bear his name. Interestingly, his original intent for Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre was to name it the “National Academy of Motion Pictures,” further supporting his desire to marry music and film. In 1922, when Edwin S. Gordon, the school’s architect, was designing Kodak Hall, he visited more movie theatres than concert halls or music schools for inspiration.

“This isn’t just a festival or conference—it’s a celebration for film lovers,” says Watters, whose career has spanned from conducting at the Olympics to performing with Beyoncé and Barry Manilow. “It’s a multi-sensory experience to inspire, connect, and elevate those passionate about the power of music and sound in visual media.”

Beyond co-directing Soundtrax, Mark Watters will lead a session on “The Art & Craft of Music for Animation,” inviting attendees to learn about his work and relationships in the industry, together with longtime friend, collaborator, and former Disney executive, Bambi Moé. A turning point in Watters’s career was getting hired to compose for Disney during Moé’s tenure as the VP of music for Walt Disney Television Animation. “It was a wonderful time [at Disney] because they were expanding their footprint in TV animation,” recalls Watters. “I was fortunate enough to get in on the ground floor of that, and I wound up doing an enormous amount of work there.” Moé shares that she is honored to take part in North America’s first film-music festival and is particularly excited to join Watters on stage. “Ours is a decades long collaboration in the field of animation music and I’m thrilled to



Co-directors [1] Mark Watters and [5] Mark Bocko, “The Marks” behind Soundtrax. [2] Eastman Philharmonia will perform *The Red Violin* in Concert featuring [4] Assistant Professor of Violin YooJin Jang as soloist. [3] Eastman Theatre under construction in 1921, bearing George Eastman’s proposed name: “National Academy of Motion Pictures.”



shine a light on Mark's extraordinary talent as we delve into our shared musical legacy."

Keep in mind that Soundtrax isn't only about music composition and film, it's also a deep dive into the future of sound. That's where the Hajim School comes in. With technology playing a growing role in music production and consumption, Mark Bocko notes, "Rochester has the perfect combination of cultural significance and technological innovation to host a unique experience like Soundtrax." He continues, "This event presents a fun and fascinating way to explore how the artistry, science, and technology of sound and music shape visual media."

Backed by a major matching grant from the New York State Division of Tourism, Soundtrax is equal parts celebration and exploration. As a University of Rochester sponsored festival, President Sarah C. Mangelsdorf sees this as more than just a concert series or conference—it's a cultural touchstone.

"The festival brings together the University of Rochester's signature strengths in music performance and production with our leadership in optics, acoustics, visual science, and engineering," says Mangelsdorf. "This is an extraordinary way to share our incredible story as leaders in music and visual media."

As a Billboard Top Music Business School and Hollywood Reporter Top Music School



JEFF BEAL, FRITZ MYERS, GATEWAYS, MATT WITTMAYER



for Film Composition, Eastman continues to honor George Eastman's cinematic legacy by ushering distinguished film-music composers into the world each year. From *Star Trek*, *PBS NewsHour*, and *The Miracle Worker* to *House of Cards* and *Blackfish*, Eastman's alumni are celebrated in this field—and many will return to participate in Soundtrax this fall, including Jeff Beal, who will conduct the Eastman Philharmonia's performance of John Corigliano's Oscar-winning score to *The Red Violin*, featuring assistant professor of violin YooJin Jang as the soloist.

By blending artistry, technology, and history in a city uniquely equipped to honor all three, Watters and Bock believe the premiere Soundtrax Film Music Festival “provides an opportunity to bring unique work, typically reserved for places like New York City and Los Angeles, to our Rochester home.” The festival features events that aren't programmed in a normal concert season. “Terence Blanchard, who has only performed his *Film Scores Live!* program a handful of times, is doing so here alongside the illustrious Gateways Festival Orchestra and E-Collective. We're also presenting the American premiere of chamber reinterpretations of music by the legendary John Williams—who, by the way, holds an honorary doctorate from Eastman,” Watters elaborates. Other unique events include a conversation with award-winning composer Guy Whitmore on the impact of music in video games, violin expert Bruno Price will explore the legacy of the Stradivarius violin, and author and journalist Jon Burlingame will bring his expertise to the stage.

“We're very excited to invite film-music lovers and audiophiles from all over the country to join us for a remarkable three days.”

To learn more about the Soundtrax Film Music Festival, purchase concert tickets, and register for free daytime speaker sessions, please visit [Eastmantheatre.org](http://Eastmantheatre.org).



Alumni are invited to attend Soundtrax with 25% off all tickets and passes by using the code **STXAlums25!**

[6] Jeff Beal '85E will conduct *The Red Violin* and speak alongside John Corigliano.

[7] Former Disney Executive Bambi Moé.

[8] Gateways Festival Orchestra will perform with the E-Collective and acclaimed trumpeter and composer [9] Terence Blanchard.

# EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC at the UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER presents **SOUNDTRAX** FILM MUSIC FESTIVAL

**TO EXPLORE THE INTERSECTION OF FILM-MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY, THE FOLLOWING TICKETED CONCERTS AND FREE SPEAKER SESSIONS ARE SET TO TAKE PLACE OVER THE COURSE OF THREE DAYS:**

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

**“Music for Video Games”** | Award-winning composer Guy Whitmore leads a panel with Garry Schyman and Seth Wright on how music enhances gameplay, narrative, and emotion in video games. Featuring examples from titles like *Halo*, *BioShock*, and *Batman: Arkham Shadow*, moderated by Andrew Borman of the World Video Game Hall of Fame.

**Carter Burwell: Composer Conversations** | Three-time Oscar nominee Carter Burwell (*Fargo*, *Carol*, *Twilight*) discusses his career and approach to film scoring in an in-depth conversation with author and journalist Jon Burlingame.

**“The Art & Craft of Music for Animation”** | Composer Mark Watters and music executive Bambi Moé explore the creative process behind scoring for animation, sharing insights from decades of shaping beloved cartoon soundtracks for Disney.

**Film Scores Live! Terence Blanchard** | A live concert of Terence Blanchard's acclaimed film-music (*Malcolm X*, *BlacKkKlansman*) performed by Gateways Festival Orchestra and The E-Collective, with Blanchard himself on trumpet. †

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

**“The Mystique of Stradivarius”** | Violin expert Bruno Price and Eastman Assistant Professor of Violin YooJin Jang explore the legacy of the Stradivarius violin, featuring a live performance and an interactive challenge to identify the historic instrument.

**John Corigliano & Jeff Beal: Composer Conversations** | Pulitzer and Oscar-winning composer John Corigliano (*The Red Violin*) discusses his storied career with Jeff Beal, moderated by Jon Burlingame.

**“Immersive Sound”** | Industry experts from Apple and Dolby explore next-generation audio formats like Dolby Atmos and spatial sound in immersive media experiences.

***Interstellar* in Concert** | Roger Sayer, organist on the original *Interstellar* score, shares behind-the-scenes stories about working with Christopher Nolan and Hans Zimmer, and performs excerpts from *Interstellar* on the Sanctuary Organ of Rochester's Third Presbyterian Church. †

***The Red Violin* in Concert** | The Eastman Philharmonia performs John Corigliano's Oscar-winning score for *The Red Violin* live to picture, joined by violinist YooJin Jang, conductor Jeff Beal, and Corigliano himself. †

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

**“AI in Music Production”** | Leaders from SONY, Yamaha, and Adobe discuss the transformative role of artificial intelligence in modern music creation.

**John Williams Reimagined** | The U.S. premiere of chamber reinterpretations of John Williams' iconic film scores, performed by musicians personally invited by Williams himself. †

**Conrad Pope & Nan Schwartz: Composer Conversations** | Top orchestrators Conrad Pope and Nan Schwartz—whose work spans *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, and more—discuss their essential but often unsung role in film-music, hosted by Jon Burlingame.

***Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* – In Concert** | The grand finale of the *Harry Potter* film series with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra performing Alexandre Desplat's score live with full film screening. †

**Visit [Eastmantheatre.org](http://Eastmantheatre.org) to purchase concert tickets and register for free daytime speaker sessions.**

† Indicates ticketed events.



## Eastman Establishes *The Ray Conniff Jazz Ensemble Series*

Thanks to a significant gift from the Ray and Vera Conniff Foundation, Eastman has established *The Ray Conniff Jazz Ensemble Series*, officially naming the student ensemble concert season in the Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media Department. In addition, the series will support guest artist visits and the commissioning of new works.

The Ray and Vera Conniff Foundation, established in 2015, honors Grammy-winning trombonist and arranger Ray Conniff, who passed away in 2002. The foundation contin-

ues Conniff's legacy by supporting future generations of musicians through scholarships and financial support. "I can think of no better way to honor my father than the creation of *The Ray Conniff Jazz Ensemble Series*," says Tamara Conniff, trustee of the foundation. "Establishing this gift continues his distinguished legacy, while simultaneously supporting the incredible work of the students and faculty in Eastman's jazz department."

In April, the series presented a double bill featuring the Eastman Jazz Ensemble and

the Eastman New Jazz Ensemble in concert with bassist John Clayton, who conducted and performed alongside the student musicians. On May 1, the series continued with the final concert of retiring professor Rich Thompson '84E (MM), who conducted the Eastman Jazz Lab Band with special guest pianist and longtime friend Bobby Floyd.

Starting in the 2025–26 season, both the Eastman Jazz and New Jazz Ensembles will be known as the Eastman Jazz Orchestra and Eastman New Jazz Orchestra.

## Curtis Stewart Speaks at Commencement

Curtis Stewart '08E, '08 took to the stage in May for Eastman's 100th graduation ceremony as guest speaker and performer. In addition, Stewart was honored by Dean Kate Sheeran with Eastman's Distinguished Alumni Award. His appearance at commencement came soon after his virtuosic performance at Gateways Music Festival where he premiered his work *Seasons of Change*, a re-composition of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, that garnered high praise from audiences in Rochester and New York City. At the University of Rochester,

Stewart earned his bachelor's in violin from Eastman and a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics from the College of Arts and Sciences. A six-time Grammy nominee, including two in 2025, Stewart is a violinist and composer who serves as artistic director of the American Composers Orchestra, is a faculty member at The Juilliard School, and part of the award-winning ensembles PUBLIQuartet and The Mighty Third Rail.

"I gained so much inspiration, structure, and hope from the Eastman School of Mu-



sic—through my teachers, my colleagues, and the artists who came before me," Stewart said. "It is an absolute honor to speak at my alma mater and to pay that creative energy forward to the next wave of changemakers."



# Leonard Slatkin and Kelly Hall-Tompkins Joined Eastman Philharmonia with Jeff Beal

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre welcomed a star-studded lineup when internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin, violin soloist Kelly Hall-Tompkins '93E, and composer Jeff Beal '85E joined the Eastman Philharmonia for a special performance this spring. The three combined for the Rochester premier of *Body in Motion*, a concerto Beal composed for Hall-Tompkins after they met for the first time during Meliora Weekend in 2022. "I could not be more thrilled to return with Jeff to our beloved alma mater, alongside Maestro Slatkin, to perform this incredible piece at the landmark Eastman Theatre," Hall-Tompkins said.

Slatkin—recipient of six Grammy awards and 35 additional nominations—also conducted Charles Ives' *Variations on "America,"* and Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 11, The Year 1905.*



[1] John Clayton conducts the Eastman Jazz Orchestra in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre on April 15, 2025. [2] Curtis Stewart speaks passionately during Eastman's commencement ceremony on May 17, 2025. [3] From left to right, Jeff Beal with Kelly Hall-Tompkins and Leonard Slatkin. [4] Laurence Rosenthal and Mark Watters took questions from the stage during a public event in Kilbourn Hall.



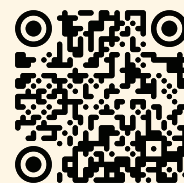
## Eastman Artist Award Goes to Laurence Rosenthal

In January, the Eastman School of Music and the Beal Institute of Film Music and Contemporary Media honored the career and compositions of esteemed alumnus Laurence Rosenthal '47E, '51E (MM) with a special event in Kilbourn Hall. A celebrated composer for film, television, and stage, Rosenthal has received two Oscar nominations, two Golden Globe nominations, and seven Emmy Award wins, along with six additional Emmy nominations. His most acclaimed film scores include *Becket*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *Clash of the Titans*. He also composed music for several Broadway musicals, including *The Music Man*.

Rosenthal attended the concert, which featured the world premiere of his composition *Vienna: Sweet and Sour*, a 30-minute piece for strings and harp conducted by Brett Miller '24E. Following the performance, he received the Eastman Artist Award—presented to individuals who have achieved distinction in their field and demonstrated exceptional commitment to the Eastman School of Music.

While on campus, Rosenthal—who turned 98 last November—met with students and faculty in small gatherings and participated in a public conversation that explored his early life, education, and career highlights, including his most celebrated film scores. The event concluded with a lively Q&A led by Mark Watters.

Follow the QR code to watch highlights from Rosenthal's discussion.



Dean Kate Sheeran caught up with Phish frontman Trey Anastasio backstage before his concert on March 12, 2025.

# Music For All Returns in Celebration of 30 Years

Throughout March and April, one of Eastman's most celebrated community initiatives, Music For All, led by Assistant Professor of Chamber Music Dr. Sylvie Beaudette '93E (DMA), returned in full force.

Since its founding in 1985, Music For All has sent student chamber groups into non-traditional performance spaces—including schools, libraries, community centers, and senior residences—to reach diverse audiences. In its early days, Eastman stood out as the only collegiate music school requiring chamber music students to engage in community outreach as part of their curriculum.

This year, 63 student ensembles (including brass, woodwind, saxophone and reeds, strings and piano, and jazz among others) performed at 82 venues across the Rochester area. More than 250 students crafted

and presented programs tailored to audiences of all ages. One student reflected: "I think community outreach is a critical skill for musicians to have. It is crucial that musicians know how to make an effective presentation for different age groups and demographics as this will play a large part in our professional lives."

Audiences warmly received the performances and Dr. Beaudette received widespread praise for the students' musicality and professionalism. "The experience was deeply inspiring for our students, and I am so grateful for our wonderful collaboration," wrote Jonathan Allentoff of Hillel Community Day School. "The musical program was fabulous, and our students enjoyed asking questions and seeing the instruments up close."



## Augusta Read Thomas Featured in Spring Residency at Eastman

Grammy Award-winning composer Augusta Read Thomas returned to Eastman in early April 2025 as the Howard Hanson visiting professor of composition, offering master classes and performances. A 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her work *Astral Canticle*, Thomas is one of today's most prolific and celebrated composers. She serves as university professor of composition at The University of Chicago and sits on the boards of numerous national arts organizations. From 1994 to 2001, Thomas was appointed to Eastman's composition faculty—marking the beginning of a distinguished and ongoing relationship with the school.

"I'm extremely moved by the generosity, artistry, care, vision, and expertise of the team at Eastman. I will continue to be on 'ESM-cloud-nine' for a very long time," Thomas said shortly after completing her residency. "Being the 2025 Howard Hanson visiting professor will always remain a highlight in my life. To the entire composition faculty present and past: thank you for music and grace. I have learned from all of you. Your musicality, creativity, teaching, and productiveness have generated a luminous body of new compositions that are nourishing."


- [1] The Musai Quintet performed at Meadow Reserve, a senior living location in Irondequoit.
- [2] Augusta Read Thomas with many members of Eastman's composition faculty. L to R: Elizabeth Ogonek, Daniel Pesca, Read Thomas, Evis Sammouris, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Robert Morris, and Mikel Kuehn.
- [3] The Eastman Opera Theatre takes to the stage in stunning dress for *Ainadamar*.
- [4] From left to right, Professors Rich Thompson, Kathleen Bride, and Jonathan Baldo beside their retirement portraits on the Cominsky Promenade. [5] Pilar Boucher joins as Eastman Summer Program Manager.





## Operatic *Ainadamar* Turns Tragedy into Triumph

Concluding the 2024–25 opera season, Eastman Opera Theatre (EOT) presented *Ainadamar*, a tragic one-act opera composed by Osvaldo Golijov with libretto by David Henry Hwang, inspired by the poetry and legacy of famed Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca. Directed by Assistant Professor of Opera Octavio Cardenas and conducted by Associate Music Director of EOT Wilson Southerland, the opera was sung in Spanish with English supertitles.

*Ainadamar* (meaning “Fountain of Tears”)

is a work that deeply resonates with our contemporary era, where art continues to play a pivotal role in times of struggle. The mythical story is set during times of political unrest in 1969 Uruguay and 1936 Spain, ultimately stressing the importance of leaning on courage and humanity to maneuver conflict. “Even in the deepest sorrow, the spirit of art remains unbroken,” Cardenas said. “As García Lorca’s voice continues to echo through time, he passes the torch and teaches those who listen.”



## Retiring Faculty Announcements

At the close of the 2024–2025 academic year, three longtime faculty members celebrated their retirements.

Jonathan Baldo, who joined the Eastman faculty in 1983 as professor of English, anchored the Humanities Department for more than four decades. He shared his passion for storytelling and brought a commanding depth of knowledge to the works of William Shakespeare. Kathleen Bride, who became only the third professor of harp in Eastman’s history when she arrived in 1989, guided generations

of young harpists in discovering their artistic voice. Her legacy will resonate through the students she mentored and the standards she set. Rich Thompson ’84E (MM) joined the faculty in 1996, marking two firsts: he became the first jazz drummer to earn a master’s degree in performance at Eastman and, 12 years later, its first professor of jazz drum set.

Dean Kate Sheeran presented retirement portraits by photographer Kurt Brownell to each honoree during a ceremony held on the Cominsky Promenade in May.

## A Successful Eastman Summer

The newly named Eastman Summer (formerly Summer@Eastman) has been an integral part of the Eastman School of Music’s curriculum since its inception. Each July, it offers an immersive experience for instrumentalists, conductors, educators, and Eastman students through a diverse array of week-long institutes and collegiate-level courses. Participants engage in world-class, individualized instruction that captures the excitement and rigor of a conservatory environment, with offerings in instrumental performance, conducting, music education, history, leadership, and theory.

In 2025, Eastman Summer entered a new chapter under the leadership of Pilar Boucher. As a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University with her master’s in bassoon performance, she has performed with various orchestras, wind ensembles, and chamber groups. As Eastman Summer Program Manager, Boucher’s vision is to revitalize Eastman Summer in ways that both complement and enrich Eastman’s academic offerings. The program’s updates signify a new direction, aligning with admissions and acting as an introduction and recruitment initiative for high school students hoping to pursue and be more prepared for collegiate music school such as Eastman.

“Forging new opportunities for high-level music students to join us on campus and learn from Eastman’s world-class faculty will not only strengthen future classes of matriculated Eastman students, but aspiring musicians in general,” Boucher said.

This year, Eastman Summer offered nearly 30 programs and courses, including favorites such as Choral Masterworks, Vocal Pedagogy, and Summer Jazz Studies as well as one-week institutes for flute, organ, saxophone, horn, trombone, trumpet, and tuba/euphonium. Students can also participate in the Institute for Music Leadership courses as part of the MA in Music Leadership.

Offering students a unique way to experience a day in the life at the Eastman School of Music, Eastman Summer brings people together to pursue their passions through education in performance and musicianship.



## Eastman Announces New Associate Dean for Artistic Planning

On June 9, 2025, Katharine Schimmer joined Eastman's leadership team as associate dean for artistic planning. In this position, Schimmer will work with faculty, staff, guest artists, and students at Eastman, and throughout the University of Rochester, to implement a wholistic and strategic approach to Eastman's concert season and related events. Her work will include festivals, conferences, and collaborative endeavors that span interdisciplinary or cross-departmental initiatives, while also building capacity for local and national performances.

"I am delighted that Katharine is joining Eastman at an exciting time for the school," said Dean Kate Sheeran. "This new role will help to seamlessly tie together our educa-



tional mission, performance season, and key partnerships. Our students' experience will be all the richer, and we are looking forward to bringing music from Eastman to even more people in Rochester and beyond."

Prior to her appointment at Eastman, Schimmer was the director of strategic initiatives at The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts, and previously held positions with the San Francisco Symphony, the Boston Symphony, singer-songwriter James Taylor, and the Berkshire Theatre Group. She holds a master's degree from the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania and is a magna cum laude graduate of Tufts University and the New England Conservatory.

## Edoardo Bellotti Remembered

Eastman's Associate Professor of Harpsichord Edoardo Bellotti died on February 27, 2025, after a battle with an aggressive brain tumor. He was 67. Surrounded by loved ones, including his longtime partner and Eastman musicology alumna Naomi Gregory '14E (DMA), '20E (PhD), Bellotti passed away in his hometown of Pavia, Italy.

A renowned organist and harpsichordist, Bellotti stood among the foremost experts in Renaissance and Baroque keyboard music. He taught at institutions across Europe, Japan, South Korea, Canada, and the United States. He first taught at Eastman from 2013 to 2018 and returned in 2023 to teach historical keyboards and continuo. In addition to his teaching, Bellotti was a prolific performer and musicologist, publishing over 30 albums and contributing extensively to music scholarship. Students and colleagues alike remember

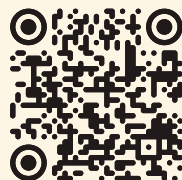


Bellotti for his virtuosic performances, inspiring instruction, and warm, approachable nature. As Department Chair David Higgs noted, "Our lives were all made richer for having known and worked with him."

"Edoardo was a great musician and an exceptional personality. No matter how dreary the weather, or vexing the moment, he always had a smile," recalls Eastman Professor of French Timothy Scheie.

Eastman honored Bellotti's life and legacy with a concert in April at Christ Church in Rochester, featuring tributes and performances by faculty and guest artists.

Follow the QR code to watch the full memorial concert at Christ Church.



## Clarinet Students Visit Cuba for Woodwind Week

Associate Professor of Clarinet Michael Wayne and four of his students accepted an invitation from the Cuban American Youth Orchestra (CAYO) to travel to Cuba for Woodwind Week in May. CAYO is a nonprofit that fosters cultural exchange and musical collaboration between young musicians in the United States and Cuba. Through workshops and performances, the program's mission is to support, educate, and empower students, teachers, and audiences alike. CAYO's founder and executive director Dr. Rena Kraut said of the Eastman entourage, "The talent, curiosity, and work ethic of Eastman was on full display for a week in Havana. Under the leadership of Professor Wayne, these student musicians were exemplary ambassadors for their school, state, and country."

"My week in Cuba with CAYO was the most eye-opening and life-changing experience I have ever had," said student Kevin Jin. "I learned so much about how much of an impact CAYO has on thousands of young people and musicians."

[1] Katharine Schimmer joined on June 9, 2025. [2] Edoardo Bellotti, born September 17, 1957—died February 27, 2025. [3] Professor Michael Wayne with his students Eric Butler, Kevin Jin, Audrey Bray, and Adam Kolers in Cuba.



# Upcoming Fall Highlights

Eastman's fall season brings an exciting roster of guest artists to the stage and podium.

## CELEBRATION OF WOMEN IN JAZZ

"Celebration of Women in Jazz" weekend returns for its second year.

- ▶ Grammy Award-winning American jazz drummer and composer Terri Lyne Carrington headlines Kilbourn Hall on October 3. Carrington leads a bold re-imagining of Max Roach's seminal 1961 album, *We Insist!*
- ▶ The weekend continues with Saturday workshops featuring Eastman Associate Professor of Jazz Voice Sara Gazarek and Assistant Professor of Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media Christine Jensen.

## GUEST CONDUCTORS

Throughout the fall, a distinguished lineup of guest conductors will lead the Eastman Wind Ensemble (EWE).

- ▶ Kevin Holzman '16E (DMA), now director of wind studies and division head of ensembles and conducting at the University of Cincinnati, takes the podium October 8 and 10.
- ▶ Mary Schneider, professor of conducting and director of bands at Eastern Michigan University, conducts EWE on November 5 and 10.
- ▶ Rodney Dorsey, professor of music at Florida State University, joins Eastman on December 3 to lead both EWE and the Eastman Wind Orchestra.

## CONTEXT CONFERENCE

Context Conference 2025: *Resonate*, November 6–8.

- ▶ On November 8, Eastman partners with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and a powerful community gospel choir to present *A Soul Symphony: Where Gospel Meets Orchestra*. Conducted by Jherrard Hardeman and featuring Eastman Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion Crystal Sellers Battle as choir director, this inspiring concert honors the legacy and future of African American musical traditions through works by both legendary and contemporary composers.

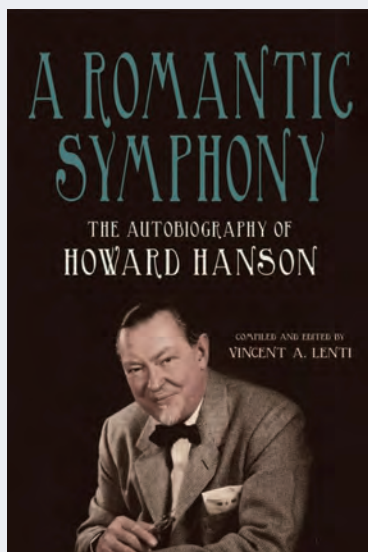
## EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE

The Eastman Opera Theatre (EOT) fall season promises to enthrall and delight. From October 30 to November 2, EOT presents four nights of compelling storytelling featuring two distinct works.

- ▶ First, the world premiere of *CLICK!* by Eastman alumnus Steve Bramson '83E (MM), a musical portrait of internationally acclaimed Hungarian photographer André Kertész. October 30 and November 1.
- ▶ The second, *In a Grove* by composer Christopher Cerrone, adapts Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's classic short story *Rashōmon*, delving into themes of truth, memory, and perception. October 31 and November 2.



The Eastman Wind Ensemble perform in Kodak Hall, 2024.



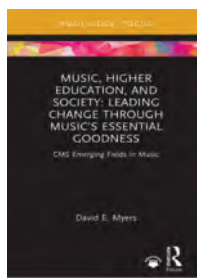
## VINCENT LENTI '60E, '62E (MA)

### A ROMANTIC SYMPHONY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HOWARD HANSON

*Meliora Press*

The University of Rochester Press presents Howard Hanson's previously unpublished autobiography. Compiled and edited by Eastman School Historian and Professor Emeritus of Piano Vincent Lenti from manuscript sources, the book provides insight into the life and work of an important American composer, conductor, and educator. Following his retirement as director of the

Eastman School of Music after 40 years (1924–1964), Hanson worked intermittently for six years on an autobiography before abandoning the project. *A Romantic Symphony* serves as a significant reference on a figure of considerable influence in the musical world of his era. "I think it's an important thing to have in print," Lenti said. "I'm pleased that we have finally arrived at that point."



## DAVID MYERS '73E (MM) MUSIC, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND SOCIETY: LEADING CHANGE THROUGH MUSIC'S ESSENTIAL GOODNESS

*Routledge*

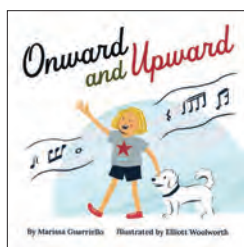
Myers asserts that institutional teaching, study, administration, and performance of music should stem from 'essential goodness.' Contextualizing music higher education within wider ecosystems of teaching and practice, he addresses how leaders can embrace strategic change as a positive opportunity and offers new models for addressing contemporary challenges, including preparing musicians for careers and engaging communities.



## WARWICK LISTER '63E (MM) TEMPO RUBATO: MEMOIRS OF A RANK-AND-FILE MUSICIAN

*WWL Publications*

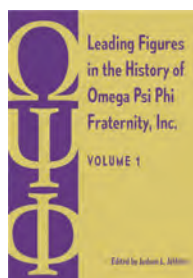
Lister looks back on a long career of orchestral, string quartet, and academic positions on both sides of the Atlantic, before settling in Florence, Italy, where he played in the orchestra of the Maggio Musicale for 18 years, and, among other projects, wrote an acclaimed biography of the great violinist-composer G. B. Viotti (1755–1824). But Lister is not reticent about the regrets, disappointments, or failures in his life and career, not least his obsessive attempts ('tempo rubato') to become a good tennis player.



## MARISSA GUARRIELLO '19E (MA) ONWARD AND UPWARD

*F-Flat Books*

*Onward and Upward* is a children's book designed to introduce young students to the concept and practice of community music-making. Through engaging narratives and vibrant illustrations, the book aims to inspire young readers to explore music as a communal and collaborative activity through alternative and non-traditional ways. A teaching guide is also being released alongside the book to help support teachers who might wish to incorporate it into their classrooms.



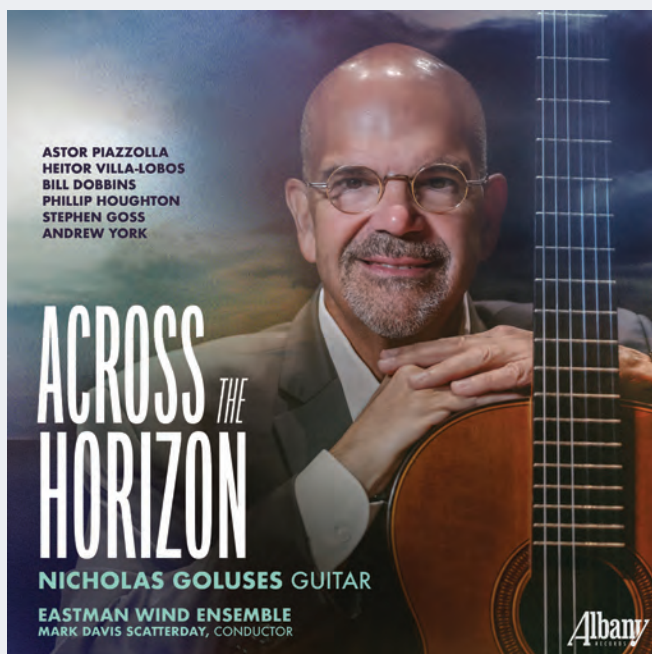
## KEVIN McDONALD '10E, '10 LEADING FIGURES IN THE HISTORY OF OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY, INC. VOLUME 1

*University Press of Florida*

Edited by Judson L. Jeffries, *Leading Figures* highlights 21 members of the historically Black fraternity Omega Psi Phi. Written by a diverse group of scholars, these profiles highlight the national significance of each individual in their respective fields of endeavor, as well as the enormous impact of the fraternity itself. Included in this volume are musicians Count Basie, **Max Roach '90E (Honorary)**, and Roland Hayes.



## ► RECORDINGS



### NICHOLAS GOLUSES ACROSS THE HORIZON

*PARMA Records*

Eastman's Professor of Guitar Nicholas Goluses released his tenth album, *Across the Horizon*, earlier this year. The recording features a rich collection of mostly solo works by 20th- and 21st-century composers from around the globe—including Argentina, Australia, and the United States. Among the featured composers are Astor Piazzolla, Eastman's own **Bill Dobbins** (professor emeritus of jazz studies and contemporary media), and others whose works explore the guitar as a vehicle for sonic storytelling.

The album offers a musical journey across continents, unified by each composer's vision of creating immersive soundscapes through the guitar. Among the album's highlights is "A Concerto of Colours" by English composer Stephen Goss, which pairs Goluses with the **Eastman Wind Ensemble** under the baton of his colleague **Mark Davis Scatterday '89E (DMA)**, professor of conducting.

The release of *Across the Horizon* coincides with Goluses's solo recital in Hatch Recital Hall on September 29, 2025.



### JEFF MYERS '03E (MA) GOODNIGHT *Neuma Records*

New York-based composer Myers's sophomore album *Goodnight* is a collection of electroacoustic compositions born from long, quiet nights, perfect for deep listening or drifting into sleep. Drawing from piano harmonics, Myers layers and stretches them into vast 'drones-capes'—atmospheric and spectral, with moments of warmth, anticipation, and intensity.



### MICHAEL COYLE '79E THE MEMORY PALACE *Cantaloupe Music*

Featuring works by composer Jeffrey Brooks, *The Memory Palace* is the latest recording from the Bang on a Can All-Stars with Michael Coyle on piano. The performance was originally presented as part of LOUD Weekend, the conclusion of the 2023 Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA. A studio recording of the work was released in August 2025.



### ALARM WILL SOUND LAND OF WINTER *Nonesuch Records*

Alarm Will Sound is an ensemble with deep roots at the Eastman School of Music—many of its current members, including **Mike Clayville '00E**; **Alan Pierson '06E (DMA)**; **Christa Robinson '00E**; **Bill Kalinkos '03E**;

**Elisabeth Stimpert '99E (MM)**, **'01E (MM)**; **Michael Harley '11E (DMA)**; **John Orfe '99E, '99**; **Courtney Orlando '01E (MA)**, **'03E (DMA)**; **Stefan Freund '99E (MM)**, **'02E (DMA)**; **Miles Brown '00E, '12E (DMA)**; **Gavin Chuck '96E (MA)**, **'04E (PhD)**; and **Peter Ferry '13E** are Eastman alumni. Their latest album *Land of Winter*, composed by Irish musician Donnacha Dennehy, is a 12-movement work that captures the essence of Ireland's light and seasonal shifts in an immersive, interconnected soundscape. *The Wire* said, "The brilliantly resourceful New York-based ensemble Alarm Will Sound, conducted by Alan Pierson, nurture those rhythmic and harmonic subtleties required for such a dynamic evocation of place, as perceived dramatically through time. [An] engrossing composition."



**CYNTHIA JOHNSTON TURNER '04E (DMA)**  
**AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL BARRY, FROM SHOWSTOPPER TO ENCORE**  
*Acis*

Internationally acclaimed conductor Cynthia Johnston Turner announced an exciting collaboration with award-winning composer Michael Barry for a new album of premiere recordings. Recorded by the Budapest Winds in 2024, *An Evening with Michael Barry* showcases the talent of the Budapest Winds under Johnston Turner, as she vividly brings the composer's demands to life.



**LANCE HULME '89E (MM)**  
**LEAPS AND BOUNDS: THE MUSIC OF LANCE HULME**  
*Métier*

With 110 minutes of Hulme's original compositions, *Leaps and Bounds* is an essential addition to the repertoire of contemporary classical music, inviting scholars, performers, and listeners to explore the intersections of tradition, innovation, and cultural dialogue in his work. Hulme's album offers a vivid portrait of a composer who traverses disciplinary boundaries with intellectual acuity and artistic finesse. Hulme is joined by **Clara O'Brien '86E (MM)** (1961–2023) and Eastman Professor of Music Theory **John Covach**.



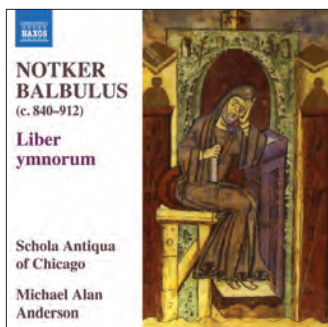
**MATTHEW SLOTKIN '98E, '99E (MM), '01E (DMA)**  
**RECOVERED GEMS: MUSIC FROM THE ANDRÉS SEGOVIA ARCHIVE**  
*Summit Records*

Containing solo works from the Andrés Segovia Archive, *Recovered Gems* features a series of compositions written for the great Spanish guitarist that went unperformed during his lifetime. These lesser-known works represent a significant contribution to the solo guitar literature of the 20th Century, as well as an enrichment of Segovia's legacy. The CD also includes an essay about the music on the recording by Slotkin.



**BENJAMIN WEBER '08E (MM)**  
**ALL MADE OF STORIES**  
*MSR Classics*

Kontras Quartet explores the role of chamber music in the new millennium, at once keeping classic tradition and style alive while embracing new opportunities and fusing genres to expand the art form and include a more diverse audience. The Chicago-based quartet, currently consisting of violinists Eleanor Bartsch and Sherri Zhang, violist Benjamin Weber, and cellist Jean Hatmaker, has released their fifth studio album. *All Made of Stories* features a wide array of works spanning genres, centuries, and continents including three premiere studio recordings and two Kontras Quartet commissions.



**MICHAEL ALAN ANDERSON**  
**NOTKER BALBULUS**  
*Naxos*

Professor and Chair of Musicology **Michael Alan Anderson** directs the Chicago-based early music collective Schola Antiqua in a newly released recording on Naxos, the world's largest independent classical label. The recording, titled

*Notker Balbulus: Liber ymnorum*, features 19 poems by a ninth-century Benedictine monk at the Abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland. Known as Notker the Stammerer because of a severe speech disability from birth, the poet ingeniously devised texts that could be fitted to very long sacred melodies, which were notoriously difficult to remember. The recording is a tribute to Anderson's mentor, Calvin M. Bower, professor emeritus at the University of Notre Dame and author of the 2017 edition of Notker's *Liber ymnorum*.

**MICHAEL NOBLE '10E, '10**  
**SILVER SCREEN**  
*Avant-Garde*

Pianist Michael Noble released his third solo album, *Silver Screen*, in September 2024. It features iconic music for film by composers including Ólafur Arnalds, Philip Glass, Jóhann Jóhannsson, and Max Richter, alongside a selection of non-film works, including five of Glass's *Études*.

**CHING-SHAN CHANG '17E**  
**LAWS OF MAN: ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK**  
*Records DK*

Los Angeles-based composer Ching-Shan Chang has released a soundtrack album for the 2024 crime thriller *Laws of Man*. The film, directed by Phil Blattenberger and starring Harvey Keitel and Dermot Mulroney, is Chang's feature scoring debut. Chang has previously contributed additional music to titles such as *Sonic the Hedgehog 2 and 3*, *Rebel Moon*, and *Teen Wolf: The Movie*.





## DANIEL PESCA '05E, '16E (DMA)

### WALK WITH ME, MY JOY

*New Focus Recordings*

Eastman Assistant Professor of Composition Daniel Pesca has released a portrait album of his chamber music, featuring flutist **Sarah Frisof '04E**, cellist Christine Lamprea, guitarist **Dieter Hennings '05E (MM)**, '15E (DMA), percussionist Ian Rosenbaum, and Pesca himself on piano. His compositional style is characterized by lyricism, clearly delineated character areas, and transparent architecture. The album's title piece is a set of variations and reflections on an Irish folksong, "Shule Agra." Pesca's mother sang this lullaby to him as a child, and it has stayed with him as a musical landmark of his childhood experience. Several tracks were recorded at Eastman's Hatch Recital Hall and the album artwork was designed by Eastman Graphic Design Specialist **Kerry Lubman**.


Percussionist **Ingrid Gordon '92E** regrets that in the announcement for her group Percussia's album release *Plucked and Struck* in the Spring 2025 edition of *NOTES*, she neglected to mention a very important collaborator and fellow Eastman alum: soprano **Melissa Fogarty '91E**, who appears on the album as guest artist on two tracks. Not only is Fogarty a long-time and valued artistic collaborator, but a valued friend and President of Percussia's Board of Directors. Gordon wishes to express her respect and affection for Fogarty and extend a sincere apology for this omission.



## MICHAEL PATTERSON '80E (MM)

### LOVE'S LONG, LONG SEASON

This five-track EP is Grammy and Emmy Award-winning composer Michael Patterson's settings of ancient Japanese poems, in the original Japanese. These poems explore multiple themes, including unreachable love, falling snow, the death of rulers, clandestine meetings, and the moon in its many phases. Featuring the expressive voice of Japanese mezzo-soprano Yuwan Zhang, pianist Michael Chertock, alto flutist Jennifer King, and harpist Rachel Miller.



## DAMON ZICK '97E

### JAZZ ROAD SUITE

Damon Zick and Quarteto Nuevo were awarded a Jazz Road Creative Residency grant from South Arts to compose an album exploring the connection of jazz to geographical and cultural locations. They composed new works for each state visited during the 2023-24 touring season. The result is a 10-movement work entitled *Jazz Road Suite*. Each composer found connections to their chosen states through geography, culture, and personal experience. The complete suite was recorded live in concert in March 2024 at ASU Kerr Cultural Center in Scottsdale, AZ.



## FIVEBYFIVE

### ECLIPSE

*Bright Shiny Things*

Rochester's award-winning chamber music ensemble fivebyfive released its fourth album since forming in 2015. *Eclipse*—which debuted at No. 2 on the *Billboard* Traditional Classical chart—features four tracks inspired by the total solar

eclipse that passed over Western New York in April 2024. The ensemble includes flutist Laura Lentz; clarinetist **Marcy Bacon '08E (DMA)**, an instructor at the Eastman Community Music School; electric guitarist **Ken Luk '11E, '13E (MA)**, '13E (MM), '18E (DMA), a faculty member at both Eastman and the Eastman Community Music School; double bassist **Eric Polenik '06E (MM)**; pianist **Haeyeun Jeun '08E (MM)**, '16E (DMA); and Marc Webster, the group's executive director and audio/video artist.

## ► ALUMNI NOTES

### 1960s

The Singapore Council of Women's Organizations inducted six women into their Women's Hall of Fame, including **Vivien Goh '69E**. The Singapore Women's Hall of Fame celebrates progress in gender equality and recognizes inductees' contributions to Singapore's history, society, and progress. Goh is a pioneer music educator, founding the Singapore National Youth Orchestra in 1980—now regarded as one of the best youth orchestras in Asia. "It feels good that my work is recognized, and I hope my story will inspire young musicians to greater heights," Goh told *Channel News Asia Women*.

### 1970s

Eastman studio mates **Steve Hemphill '77E, '79E (MM)** and **Richard Albagli '79E (MM)** received the 2024 Percussive Arts Society's Lifetime Achievement Award in Education. Hemphill is professor emeritus at Northern Arizona University, retiring in 2022 having served as longtime director of percussion studies and former coordinator of winds and percussion. Albagli is principal percussionist with the Albany Symphony Orchestra, co-founder of the Adirondack Percussion Ensemble, and a member of the music faculties of the University at Albany and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

During Women's History Month in March, Eastman Professor Emerita of Music Theory **Marie Rolf '77E (PhD)** shared the remarkable story of the discovery of a long-lost piano sonata by Fanny Hensel—older sister of Felix Mendelssohn—at a screening of *Fanny: The Other Mendelssohn* at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York, NY. Concert pianist Lydia Artymiw performed Hensel's *Ostersonate (Easter Sonata)*, us-

ing Rolf's recently published critical edition which won the Presto Music Award for Sheet Music Publication of the Year 2024. Presto Music called the work a "must-have for pianists."

**Barbara Thomson '72E (MM)** has been appointed university organist and artist-instructor of organ at Moravian University in Bethlehem, PA. She is also the organ instructor at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA.

### 1980s

**Angel M. Lezak '89E, '89** has been appointed co-chair of Polsinelli's Electrical Engineering & Computer Science Patent Prosecution practice group. Her path to becoming an attorney is anything but traditional—shaped by a background in music composition, a leap into law, and a deep commitment to mentoring women in tech.

**Madeleine Mitchell '81E (MM)** received the Stuart Burrows Award by the Welsh Music Guild for her "significant promotion of Welsh music" in 2024. Mitchell is a violin professor at London's Royal College of Music, which was recently ranked the Global No. 1 institution for Music and Performing Arts in the QS World University Rankings by Subject for the fourth consecutive year.



Chamber Music America awarded **Thomas Rosenberg '80E (MM)** their 2025 Arts Advocate of the Year award. As artistic director of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Association since 1981, Rosenberg has exemplified consummate leadership and a commitment to advancing the arts on a national scale. A dynamic teacher, performer, and chamber coach, Rosenberg teaches cello and chamber music at Carleton and Macalester Colleges and maintains an award-winning pre-college home studio.

**Paul Welcomer '83E** was awarded the Sarlo Family Foundation Award for Excellence in Teaching at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) convocation last September. Welcomer has been playing in the San Francisco Symphony and teaching at SFCM for over 30 years, teaching trombone and directing the Brass Choir, and is a founding member of The Bay Brass. The award is given annually, and honors educators who demonstrate exceptional teaching, mentorship, and lasting impact in the lives of students.

### 1990s

**Jennie Oh Brown '93E (MM), '97E (DMA)** was awarded Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Humanities by Illinois State Treas-

urer Michael Frerichs. Brown is the executive director of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (CYSO), inspiring personal excellence through music by identifying new educational and performance opportunities for young musicians, expanding community partnerships to provide musical training and access in under-served communities throughout Chicago, and growing CYSO's profile as one of the nation's cultural and musical gems.

Congratulations to **Elizabeth Freimuth '96E** on her appointment as professor of horn at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Freimuth received bachelor's degrees from Eastman in applied music (French horn) and music education. She was formerly the principal horn and Mary M. & Charles F. Yeiser chair of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Mostly Modern Projects is a non-profit founded by composer **Robert Paterson '95E** and violinist Victoria Paterson '93, bringing joyful music and business to Saratoga Springs, NY, and the region with public concerts since 2018. Mostly Modern Festival returned for its 6th season June 5-20 at the Arthur Zankel Music Center on the campus of Skidmore College. The festival celebrates modern music paired with outstanding classics from the 20th and 21st century.



**3 Chad Smith '98E (MM)** is celebrating his 18th year at the hit Broadway musical, *Wicked* in New York City. Smith is an adjunct professor of saxophone at Montclair State University and founder/director of the Masters in Woodwind specialization program. His recent TV and film credits include *Family Guy*, *American Dad*, *Ted*, *Lilo and Stitch*, and *West Side Story*.



Composer and guitarist **D. J. Sparr '97E** served as the artistic coordinator of the Memphis Composers Institute, leading a collaboration between the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, The Walden School, and the University of Memphis to support emerging composers. As part of the Institute, his viola concerto, *Extended Play* premiered February 9, 2025, featuring Kimberly Sparr with the Memphis Symphony. Alongside faculty from the other institutions, Sparr mentored selected composers as they refined their orchestral works for performance.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) presented the world premiere of *Indigo Heaven*, a clarinet concerto by **Christopher Theofanidis '92E (MM)** during a set of concerts in early March, featuring soloist and CSO principal clarinet **Stephen Williamson '91E**. Theofanidis reflected on how the composition came to be, having known Williamson since they were Eastman students: "[Stephen] had always said, 'One of these days, I'm going to ask you to write me a piece,' I said, 'Sign me up any time.' His playing is exquisite, and he is also just amazing to work with."

## 2000s

**Mary Box '09E** recently founded the Montrose Project, a 501(c)3 nonprofit performing and recording opera arias by women composers. Box also made her opera conducting debut in January 2025 at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, conducting 125 instrumentalists and sing-

ers in a performance of *Suor Angelica* by Puccini. Additionally, Box was awarded a grant to conduct and produce a concert of arias by African-American composers for Juneteenth with GRAMMY and Emmy-winning baritone Reginald Smith, Jr.

In May, **Henry Cheng '07E** was named music director of Johns Creek Symphony Orchestra signaling a new era of growth and innovation. Cheng's appointment concludes a yearlong international search that attracted more than 100 applicants. Cheng will officially assume the role in September 2025, just in time to launch the orchestra's 19th season.

The run of *The Magic Flute* this past December and January marked the 20th anniversary of the Julie Taymor production at the Metropolitan Opera. This production included three exceptional Eastman alumni—**Kathryn Lewek**

The December issue of *Music Theory Online* (Volume 30, Number 4) highlights the scholarship of several Eastman alumni, students, and faculty. Featured articles were authored by **Alyssa Barna '19E (PhD)**; **James Sullivan '69E (MA)**, **'82E (PhD)**; **Stephanie Venturino '17E**, **'19E (MA)**, **'22E (PhD)**, **'21W (AC)**; and doctoral candidate **Evan Martschenko**. The issue also includes a review of a book written by **Michael Buchler '98E (PhD)**.

This edition features a special issue titled *Music Theory in the Plural*, co-edited by **Chris Stover '02E (MA)**, with translations by Stover and **Joon Park '07E**, **'09E (MA)**. Assistant Professor of Music Theory Nathan Lam contributed to the open peer review process that shaped the special issue.

*Music Theory Online* 30/4 was edited by **Brent Auerbach '00E (MA)**, **'05E (PhD)**, and Martschenko, with editorial assistance from doctoral candidates **Lauren Irschick '20E (MA)** and **Andrew Blake**.

"All in all, *MTO* 30/4 is an incredible testament to the historic—and continued—strength of our program. Congratulations to all involved!" says Zack Bernstein, Associate Professor and Chair of the Music Theory Department.

**'06E**, **'08E (MM)**, reprising her role as the Queen of the Night (now having sung this role for approximately 350 performances in more than 30 productions); **Terresa Perotta '17E** making her Met debut as First Lady; and **Maire Therese Carmack '18E (MM)**, an alum of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, as Second Lady.

**4 Dean Kate Sheeran '02E** was married this summer to Paul Hale. Many staff and alumni from Eastman joined them for festivities at their home, including, from left to right: **Andrew Joseph (Joe) Soucy '05E**; **James Hirschfeld '03E**; **John Pickford Richards**

**'02E**, **'04E (MM)**; Reinhold Steingrover, associate dean of faculty affairs at Eastman; Rick McRae, catalog/reference librarian at the Sibley Music Library; Doug Perkins; **Elizabeth Brown '02E**, **'04E (MM)**; **Michael Gurfield '02E**, **'08E (MM)**; Kate Sheeran and her husband Paul Hale; **Emily Rostetter Madsen '01E**; **Brent Madsen '01E**; **Caia LaCour '02E**; **Lisa Seischab '90E**; **Yuki Numata Resnick '03E**; **Kelli Kathman '02E**; **Katherine (Kate) White '05E (MM)**; Cathy Hain, former assistant vice president of advancement at Eastman; and **John Hain '02E (MM)**, **'07E (DMA)**, senior associate dean of academic and student affairs at Eastman.



## ▶ ALUMNI NOTES

**Jennifer (Jenny) Snyder '01E**, faculty pianist-vocal coach at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, has been named music director of the Frost Opera Theater.

### 2010s

**Eugene Bisdikian '17E, '20E (MM)** recently joined the faculty at Nazareth University's School of Music, teaching upright and electric bass with a focus on jazz and contemporary styles, succeeding **Kyle Vock '10E (MM)**, who is now teaching at Rochester Institute of Technology as the director of RIT jazz ensembles and popular music collective. Bisdikian also teaches electric and jazz upright bass and is a world campus instructor for the Eastman Community Music School.

**Tanya Chanphanitpornkit '15E** and **Marissa Guarriello '19E (MA)** have been named to the 2025 Yamaha "40 Under 40"—Music Education Excellence. Yamaha launched this advocacy program to honor educators who are making a difference in growing and strengthening their music programs. The selected educators showcase the following characteristics: action, courage, creativity, and growth. Chanphanitpornkit was also recently named a quarterfinalist for the 2026 GRAMMY Music Educator Award.

**Gabrielle Cornish '13, '16E (MA), '20E (PhD)** has been awarded a 2025 fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on her project "Socialist Noise: Sound and Soviet Identity after Stalin," which argues that the Soviet government strategically deployed sound and music within a broader politics of socialist modernity during the Cold War.

**Stylianos Dimou '13E (MA)** was appointed as associate professor of composition in the Grieg Academy Department of Music, at the University of Bergen in Norway. "I am deeply grateful for the exceptional education and inspiration I received at Eastman, which played a pivotal role in shaping my career."

**Tommy Dougherty '13E** was selected as a 2025 Copland House CULTIVATE Composer Fellow. Since 2012, the CULTIVATE emerging composers' institute has been an important destination each year for gifted composers of all backgrounds and identities on the threshold of their professional careers.

**Wendy Eisenberg '14E** was among 14 musicians and writers asked by *The New York Times* to name the tunes they would play to help a newcomer fall in love with the sound of jazz guitar. "I suspect that most jazz guitarists begin playing music that isn't strictly jazz," Eisenberg writes. "Instead, they move toward it, seduced by the complex mystery of the genre's harmonic and rhythmic languages. In that spirit, I chose to highlight two Telecaster players: Danny Gatton and Ted Greene."

Upon completing its third season, Off The Dock Chamber Festival (OTD) is thrilled to celebrate its remarkable growth as a music festival. OTD began in Skaneateles, NY, as a grassroots initiative created by **Joe Hagen '19E, '21E (MM)**; **Collin Holloway '19E; Natalie Pang '20E, '23E (MA), '23E (MM)**; and former Eastman student, **Luke Benedict**. The festival has blossomed into an annual series of classical and jazz concerts. This year's festival featured more musicians and ensembles than previous years, including Hats + Heels Duo (**Blaire Koerner '15E (MM), '19E (DMA)**

and **Rosanna Moore '14E (MM), '19E (DMA)**), The Muse Duo (Luke Benedict and Collin Holloway), and the Composers' Concert: Metamorphosis featuring **Brian Gadbow '21E, Holden Turner '25E**, Natalie Pang, and Joe Hagen.

The final round of the 2025 Lotte Lenya Competition took place on May 3 in Kilbourn Hall. There were 11 finalists representing seven countries and four continents vying for the top prize of \$25,000, with Eastman alumni represented on both sides of the footlights: **Jonathan Heller '17E**, a competing finalist, and **Alison Moritz '12E (MM)**, judging. Another featured Eastman alum is **Lyndon Meyer '10E (MM)**, who has played as a piano accompanist for the competition since his time as a student.

**Colin Mann '18E (MM), '25E (DMA)** has been appointed as associate director of choral activities and assistant professor of music at the University of Georgia. He will join three Eastman choral conducting alumni teaching in Georgia universities.

Congratulations to **John Upton '12E** and **Peter Davies '23E**, both students of Professor Richard Killmer, for their joint appointment as principal oboe of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

### 2020s

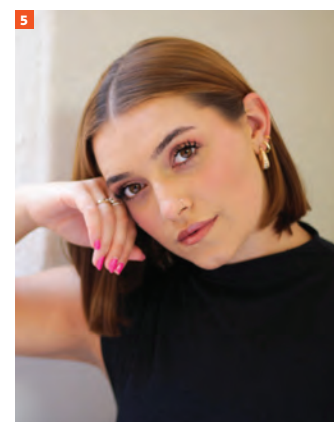
Alumna **Maeve Berry '21 (MM), '24 (DMA)** began season 2 of her podcast "Between the Barlines," aiming to provide an aural resource for studying for DMA comprehensive and MM/DMA entrance exams. Episodes are available on Spotify and Amazon Music. Following the successful launch of season 1, which discussed music in the antiquity and medieval times,

season 2's topics include music from the Renaissance.

**Ethan Blake '25E (MM)**, while in the studio of David Ying '92E (DMA), won the assistant principal cello position in the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. It is the third chair in the section and his responsibilities will vary from blending appropriately to leading the cello section when needed. Blake will join the orchestra at the beginning of their 2025-26 season.

Mezzo-soprano **Meg Brilleslyper '23E**, a former student of Katherine Ciesinski, will join the Bayerischer Staatsoper (Bavarian State Opera) in Munich this fall. Additionally, she won first prize in the Houston, TX, district of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in February and was a finalist in the Houston Grand Opera's 38th annual Eleanor McCollum Competition, the youngest of the seven singers selected for this public concert of arias.

Senior horn performance major **Morgan Chalmers '25E** won a position with the horn section of The United States Army Field Band, the touring ensemble of the Army music program. She began her appointment following her graduation in May 2025. Chalmers is from the studio of Peter Kura '74E.







**Timothy Coene '25E (MM)**, a student of Chien-Kwan Lin '07E (DMA), recently won the Tenor Saxophone position at the West Point Band. He enlisted in August.

In August 2024, **Gwen Goodman '22E** won the audition for second oboe for the Orquesta Sinfónica de Xalapa at Veracruz University in Veracruz, Mexico.

Congratulations to **Alexandra Rose Hotz '20E (MM), '23E (DMA)** for winning the Joy In Singing's 60th International Art Song Competition. She received a cash prize and sang in a debut performance at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in February. Hotz is formerly from the studio of Professor Anthony Dean Griffey '01E (MM).

**Connor Landers '22E** won the audition for associate principal/utility horn with the Naples Philharmonic. The Naples Philharmonic was founded in 1982 and now performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber concerts, as well as opera, ballet, education, community, and special event concerts between September and June each year.

Congratulations to **Evyn Levy '24E (MM)**, from the studio of Michael Wayne, for securing the position of second/Eb clarinet with The Louisville Orchestra. Levy completed her first year as a clarinet fellow with the New World Symphony in Miami before joining the Louisville Orchestra this year.

**Rayvon T. J. Moore '20E (DMA)** was awarded The American Prize Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music, 2024, in the college/university division conductors/ensembles (smaller programs), for performances of music by Nance, Walker, Furman, Whitacre, with the Friends University Singing Quakers. Second place in the same award category went to **Brock Tjosvold '22E (DMA)**, Eastman assistant professor of vocal coaching, for the musical *Ame-lie* with SUNY Potsdam Department of Theater & Dance and Crane Opera.

Congratulations to doctoral student **Luke Poeppel '24E (MM)** for being named a David T. Beals III assistant conductor of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra for their 2024/2025 season.

A group of Eastman Collegium Musicum alumni performed as the Meliora Collegium in "Breaking the Mold: A Potpourri of Unusual Baroque Chamber Music" at the Boston Early Music Fringe Festival in June. The ensemble includes **Rachel Smith '24E; Juliana Kilcoyne '21E, '23E (MM); Emma Milian '23E, James Marshall '21E (MM), doctoral candidate; Ariel Watson '22E; Federico Ercoli '24E (DMA);** and Grace Mockus. These alumni last participated in this festival in 2023, performing under the direction of their faculty mentors Christel Thielmann and Paul O'Dette. With their concert, the ensemble hopes to challenge expectations and celebrate the expressive power of period performance.

**Dylan Tucker '24E** won a position in the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps. The Corps is the only unit of its kind in the armed forces and is part of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). As an official representative of the U.S. Army, the Corps averages approximately 500 performances annually, entertain-

ing millions of people in major parades, pageants, and historical celebrations throughout the United States.

Tenor **Travon D. Walker '21E** has joined IMG Artists' roster for general management, where he will be represented by Associate Artist Manager **Noah Sesling '22E**. Walker is currently a second-year young artist at the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center with Lyric Opera of Chicago. During the 2024-2025 season at Lyric Opera of Chicago, he appeared as Borsa in *Rigoletto*, 1st Prisoner in *Fidelio*, the Son in Blue, and Parpignol in *La Bohème*.

Congratulations to **Ke'er Wang '20E (MM), '25E (DMA)**,

a student of Joseph Rackers '01E (MM), '05E (DMA) and Marina Lomazov '93E, '00E (DMA), who recently accepted a full-time position at Colby College in Maine as visiting assistant professor of piano beginning in August 2025.



Many of Eastman's esteemed graduates go on to perform in various military ensembles. In January, four alumni participated in President Jimmy Carter's funerals: **Michaela Swan '18E** with the Navy Sea Chanters, **Michael Aiello '22E (DMA)** with the Air Force Singing Sergeants, **Caroline Nielson '17E (MM)** with the US Army Chorus, and **Greg Hammond '12E** with the US Army Pershing's Own Band Brass Quintet. Ten alumni also performed at the Presidential Inauguration as members of "The President's Own" Marine Band: **Darren Lin '16E (MM); Michael Miller '22E (MM); Emma Shaw '21E; Matthew Gregoire '15E; Rachel Perry '13E (MM); Trevor Mowry '11E; Lucia Disano '11E; William Bernier '98E; Matthew Harding '96E;** and **Michelle Urzynecok '94E**. Founded in 1798, the band has performed for every U.S. President since John Adams.



**Eight of the Eastman musicians in the "President's Own" Marine Band.**

## ▶ ALUMNI NOTES IN MEMORIAM



### 1 CHARLES L. STROUSE

Charles Strouse '47E, the Tony Award-winning Broadway composer, passed away on May 15, 2025, at the age of 96. The creator of the hit musicals *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Applause*, and *Annie* died at his home in New York City. The news was confirmed by his four children. Strouse was predeceased by his wife, actress and choreographer Barbara Siman, in 2023, after sixty years of marriage.

A native New Yorker, Strouse launched his Broadway career with his first musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*, in 1960. The production achieved immediate success, later inspiring a popular film and yielding enduring songs such as "Put on a Happy Face." With a rising star cast that included Dick Van Dyke, the show earned Strouse his first Tony Award in 1961 and made him a household name.

In 1977, Strouse cemented his legacy with the perennial favorite *Annie*, another Broadway-to-film success featuring songs like "Tomorrow" and "It's the Hard-Knock Life."

His other notable works include "Those Were the Days," the theme for the sitcom *All in the Family*; and the film scores for *Bonnie and Clyde* and the animated *All Dogs Go to Heaven*.

Over his career, Strouse

earned seven Tony nominations and won three. He also received three Drama Desk nominations, along with an Emmy and a Grammy Award.

Strouse received the University of Rochester's Hutchison Medal in 1980, Eastman Alumni Achievement Award in 2003, and Eastman Centennial Award in 2022.

### 2 JOHN PERRY

John Perry '56E, '58E (MM), a celebrated pianist and revered pedagogue, passed away on May 22, 2025. He was 90. At Eastman, Perry earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees under the tutelage of Mrs. Cécile Genhart and once performed as soloist with the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra, conducted at the time by Eastman Director Howard Hanson.

After completing his graduate studies, Perry continued his training in Europe, and went on to win numerous awards, including the highest prizes in both the Busoni and the Viotti international piano competitions in Italy. His ensuing performance career spanned Europe and North America, garnering widespread critical acclaim.

Equally respected as an educator, Perry built an international reputation as one of the most sought-after piano

teachers in the United States. Perry was a faculty member of The Glenn Gould School in Toronto, Canada, and for 37 years, taught at the USC Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles, CA.

In 1980, Perry returned to Rochester for a recital in the Kilbourn Concert Series. Prior to the performance, he held a master class in Howard Hanson Hall, where he coached several piano majors before an audience that included his former mentor, Cécile Genhart.

"The music world is feeling an immense loss in the passing of John Perry," said Alan Chow, department chair and professor of piano at Eastman. "His insightful, brilliant, and deeply committed teaching inspired generations of piano students around the world."

### 3 LEWIS E. ROWELL

Lewis Rowell '55E, '58E (PhD), who passed away on May 15, 2025, at the age of 91, was a noted music theorist and scholar. A native of Fairport, NY, Rowell often described his years at Eastman as among the most formative of his life. He earned both his bachelor's degree and PhD in music theory, with a minor in trombone, initially focusing on the traditional Western canon. Over time, his intellectual curiosity led him toward other musical traditions, prompting studies in Attic Greek, Sanskrit, and South Indian singing.

After leaving Rochester, Rowell held academic appointments at the University of Oklahoma, Indiana University, the University of Cincinnati—where he served as associate dean of the College-Conservatory of Music—and the University of Hawaii. While in Honolulu, he traveled to India



on sabbatical, a journey that shaped much of his research.

In addition to his academic work, Rowell remained active as a performer. He served as organist and choirmaster in Protestant churches throughout his career, including in his hometown. He gave solo organ recitals, performed harpsichord works with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, and appeared in singing roles in opera productions at the University of Hawaii. In 1979, Rowell returned to Indiana University, where he taught music theory, ethnomusicology, and Indian studies until his retirement in 2005.

Rowell is the author of books and articles on time and rhythm, the music of India, and the philosophy of music, including *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*, for which he received the Otto Kinkeldey Award from the American Musicological Society in 1993.

In 1999, Rowell briefly returned to his alma mater during the University of Rochester's commencement ceremony and was honored with the Rochester Distinguished Scholar Medal.

### 4 DIANE (DEUTSCH) THOME

Dr. Diane Thome '63E, composer and professor emerita at the University of Washington,





died at her home in Seattle on January 12, 2025. She was 83.

Thome reportedly declared her intent to become a composer at the age of eight. By 12, she had begun studying composition with Robert Strassburg. At Eastman, she mastered demanding piano works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Mussorgsky—an achievement that earned her the Performer's Certificate in Piano and sparked a lifelong fascination with challenging repertoire.

After graduating from Eastman, Thome earned a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and, in 1973, completed a PhD in composition at Princeton University. In 1977, she joined the University of Washington School of Music faculty, where she taught music theory and composition and later chaired the composition program until her retirement in 2006.

Thome's compositions were performed throughout the United States, Europe, China, Australia, Israel, and Canada.

In 2016, Thome published her memoir, *Palaces of Memory: American Composer Diane Thome on Her Life and Music*, a deeply personal reflection on her life in music. A pioneer in multiple respects, she was the first woman to earn a PhD in music from Princeton and the first woman to compose computer-synthesized music.



## ► ALUMNI NOTES DEATHS

*As of May 31, 2025*

### 1940s

**Mozelle (Sawyer) Bell**  
'47E\*; March 2025

**Ruby (Morgan) Canning**  
'42E\*; May 2025

**Elizabeth A. (Culp) Luteri**  
'47E; August 2019

**Ruth (West) Spalding**  
'44E; December 2024

**Charles L. Strouse**  
'47E; May 2025

### 1950s

**James J. Barber**  
'58E, '59E (MM), '64E (DMA);  
January 2025

**Marilyn (Roesser) Bradley**  
'55E; February 2025

**Jay W. Burchak**  
'54E (MA); January 2025

**Clarice (Holmes) Burgwardt**  
'54E; April 2022

**Betty (Remy) Burns**  
'58E (MM); January 2025

**Judith (Clark) Esch**  
'56E; March 2025

**Ruth (Krug) Fischer**  
'53E; August 2018

**Jessica R. (Kramer) Friedlander**  
'57E; March 2025

**Ingrid (Hultgren) Harrison**  
'56E; February 2025

**Avis (Seymour) Hart**  
'50E (MM); December 2024

**Paul D. Hartley**  
'57E, '60E (MA); November 2012

**Willa D. Howells**  
'53E; October 2021

**Natalie M. Jones**  
'51E; February 2019

**Margaret K. Krinsky**  
'59E; March 2025

**Beatrice D. (Zeidler) Langer**  
'52E; December 2024

**John Perry**  
'56E, '58E (MM); May 2025

**Nona (Reed) Porter**  
'55E; February 2025

**Mary Margaret (Weeks) Redcay**  
'57E; January 2025

**Lewis E. Rowell**  
'55E, '58E (PhD); May 2025

**Sylvia Stone**  
'58E, '59E (MM); May 2025

### 1960s

**Antoinette (Fraase) Babcock**  
'66E; February 2025

**Halimah (Maurey) Brugger**  
'64E, '66E (MM); February 2025

**A. Damian Bursill-Hall**  
'69E; February 2025

**Larry B. Campbell**  
'62E; December 2024

**George A. Cavanagh**  
'60E; October 2024

**Lucyette T. (Hall) Eckert**  
'62E; July 2020

**Cecilia J. Hervas**  
'60E (MM); April 2025

**Julie R. (Cichon) Hill**  
'60E; February 2025

**Irene E. Liden**  
'62E; January 2025

**Catherine (Gabel) Nasgowitz**  
'63E (MM); January 2025

**Rodney J. Rothlisberger**  
'67E (MA); December 2024

**Thomas S. Stierwalt**  
'67E, '69E (MM); March 2025

**Roy E. Stillwell**  
'63E (MA), '69E (DMA);  
November 2024

**Diane (Deutsch) Thome**  
'63E; January 2025

**Hannah L. (Wilkins) Voigt**  
'62E (MM); March 2025

**Gloria Y. Wong**  
'60E (MM); March 2023

### 1970s

**John T. Alfieri**  
'78E (MM); January 2025

**Helen E. Baumgartner**  
'71E; March 2021

**John A. Ferguson**  
'76E (DMA); January 2025

**Thomas A. Forson**  
'72E; December 2023

**Joseph A. Greis**  
'70E; December 2024

**J. Thomas Hannon**  
'71E; February 2025

**Margaret (Proctor) Saetveit**  
'76E (MM); January 2020

### 1980s

**Bruce Courtenay Bodden**  
'86E; March 2022

**Jonathan English**  
'82E, '84E (MM); January 2025

**Wayne D. Jeffrey**  
'89E (DMA); November 2024

**Judith Klinger**  
'80E (DMA); June 2023

**Francisca C. Mendoza**  
'86E (MM); January 2023

### 1990s

**Karine K. Stone**  
'95E, '02E (MM); March 2025

### 2010s

**Patricia Gingras**  
'13E (PhD); November 2024

**Geoffrey P. Penar**  
'11E; January 2025

\* degree not conferred


## STUDENT NOTES

**Haniel Anugerah '25E (MM)** was selected as a Piano Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center for Summer 2025. Anugerah is a student of Marina Lomazov '93E, '00E (DMA) and Joseph Rackers '01E (MM), '05E (DMA). **Jarrett (JR) Jean Jaques** is also working at Tanglewood this summer, as student life office coordinator.

**Nicholas (Zehao) Bai '20E (MM), '25E (DMA)**, student of Marina Lomazov and Joseph Rackers, won Third Prize in the Heida Hermanns International Piano Competition. Bai was also Winner of the Global Outstanding Chinese Artists Association piano competition and will be presented in a tour of China in 2025.

**Jerome Bell**, a PhD candidate in Music Theory, was awarded the University of Rochester 2025 Edward Peck Curtis Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Graduate Student. Additionally, Bell has been named a recipient of the Ball Dissertation Fellowship.

Musicology PhD student **Bethany Brinson '24E (MA)** presented at the McGill Graduate Student Symposium in Montreal, Canada, in March.

**1** The 43rd annual Jessie Kneisel Lieder Competition took place in Kilbourn Hall in May. The winners were: Honorable Mention—**Caleb Borick '25E** (pianist), 3rd place pianist—**William Shi '25E (MM), '25E (DMA)**, 3rd place singer—**Emily Kondrat '25E**, 2nd place pianist—**Chaeun Lee**, 2nd place singer—**S Joshua Sheppard '25E (DMA)**, 1st place pianist (Ann C. Fehn Memorial Prize)—**Hyunmin (Gina) Lee '25E (DMA)**, and 1st place singer—**Luke Honeck**.

Saxophonist **Estel Vivó Casanovas**, 2nd year DMA student from the studio of Chien-Kwan Lin '07E (DMA), was named a semi-final-



ist at the 11th Andorra International Saxophone Competition, one of the most competitive saxophone events in the world.

From the studio of Christine Jensen, **Sam Chandler** and **Juan Saus Ruiz** attended Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, IL, over the summer. Chandler took part in and won the Ravinia Bridges Composition Contest, while Saus Ruiz attended as a Ravinia Fellow.

Congratulations to **Isabel Chen '25E** for winning the Fenimore Chamber Orchestra's first-ever nationally advertised Young Persons Concerto Competition. Chen is studying Violin Performance with Professor Robin Scott and is also one of the founding members of The Maple Quartet.

**Zachary Costello**, from the studio of Chien-Kwan Lin, was awarded the Grand Prize at the 2025 Naftzger Young Artist Competition, Winner of the 2025 Yamaha Young Performing Artist Competition, as well as 2nd Prize Winner of the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition.

**Shangru Du '25E (DMA)** and **Jonathan Mamora '25E (DMA)**, students of Professor Douglas Humphery's '95E (DMA), made it as far as the semifinal round of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, TX.

**Jacob Eichhorn**, a PhD candidate in Music Theory, is the winner of the 2025 Dorothy Payne Award. This award, named for alumna and legendary former Eastman professor Dorothy Payne '56E, '67E (MM), '74E (DMA), is given annually to the best student paper delivered at the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic annual conference.

Congratulations to **Sam Falotico**, a Music Theory PhD student, for being awarded Honorable Mention in the Society for Music Theory's 2024 Student Presentation Award.

Musicology PhD candidate **Paul David Flood** presented at the joint annual meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music's US Branch (IASPM-US) and the Pop Conference in Los Angeles, CA, in March.

**Andrew Foster**, who is pursuing a dual degree at the University of Rochester, was one of five undergraduate students chosen nationally for the IRES CRYSTAL Dynamics program. As part of this prestigious summer internship through the University's Chemistry Department, Foster traveled to Italy for 12 weeks, from May through August 2025.

**Ruixue Hu**, a Theory PhD student, received Honorable Mention for the Society for Music Theory's Diversity in Course Design Award. His

award-winning syllabus, "Engaging with Timbre," explores timbre in a wide range of global musical genres. Hu also received a Roland Jackson Memorial Grant from the American Musicological Society.

Jazz Studies student **Sarah Jerrom** was nominated for a JUNO award for her album *Maggie* in the Vocal Jazz Album of the Year category. Sarah has been a student of Christine Jensen throughout the making of the album.

**Katherine Jolliff '25E**, from the studio of David Higgs, won First Prize and Audience Prize at the National Undergraduate Organ Competition in Ottumwa, IA, in March.

**Hanisha Kulothparan '25E (PhD)** published a chapter entitled "Storytelling and Meter in clipping, 'story 2'" in *Modeling Musical Analysis* (Oxford University Press). Kulothparan has also accepted the position of assistant professor of music theory in the Arthur Satz Department of Music of the University of Rochester. The job comes with a secondary appointment in the Eastman Music Theory department.

Two students of Dr. Justin Benavidez—senior **Nathanael Kumar** and **Logan Wadley '23E, '25E (MM)**—advanced to the semi-final round of this year's Leonard Falcone Festival Competition in the Euphonium Artist and Tuba Artist divisions, respectively. This August, they participated in the 2025 Falcone Festival, held annually in Blue Lake, MI, where they competed in the next rounds of the contest for up to \$2,800 in awards.

In May, the annual Tal Perkes Prize was won by flutist **Alexander Lehmann '25E**. Lehmann played the Prokofiev Sonata first movement for his solo piece. Established in memory of Tallon Sterling Perkes '84E, the prize is awarded



to students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the study of flute.

Master's student **Jiaxi Li** won Second Prize at the Arlington Philharmonic Peter E. Tannenwald Concerto Competition. Li is a student of Joseph Rackers and Marina Lomazov.

**Alina Liebschner '25E**, '25 has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Brazil next year. She will focus her studies on Brazilian folk music.

**Alexander Little**, DMA and Artist Certificate candidate, a student of David Higgs, won First Prize and Audience Prize at the Arthur Poister National Organ Competition in Syracuse, NY, in April.

In March, the **Locus Trio** (**Leona Liu '25E**, '25, violin; **Harrison Kim**, clarinet; **Chris Yao '25E**, piano), coached by Elinor Freer, and the **Vantage Trio** (**Ciara McGuire '25E** (MM), violin; **Aaron Lieberman**, cello; and **Gregory Smith**, piano), coached by David Bowlin, competed as semi-finalists in the Plowman National Chamber Music competition held in Columbia, MO. The Vantage Trio were honored with a special recognition from the judges.

**Ash Mach**, a second-year PhD student, has been awarded a Mentorship Grant from the Institute for Music Leadership. The project this will support, "Sounding the Philip-

pinus: A Digital Exhibit," will be an interactive website of recordings, sheet music, and contextual information about twentieth-century Filipino composers.

In March, **Jonathan Mamora '25E** (DMA), a student in the Piano Department, won first prize and the gold medal at the Hilton Head International Piano Competition. The prize includes a \$20,000 cash award, another Carnegie Hall concert, and a second recording contract on the Steinway and Sons label. He will also receive selected concert engagements for the next three years. He studies with Professor Douglas Humpherys.

In March, **The Maple Quartet**, recipients of Eastman's inaugural Celentano String Quartet Award, traveled to Austin, TX, to perform in the 2025 Coltman Chamber Music Competition at the Butler School of Music. The Quartet members include violinists **Isabel Chen '25E** and **Magali Pelletay**, violist **John Crowley '25E**, and cellist **Gabriel Hennebury '25E**.

PhD Theory student **Evan Martschenko** has published an article in *Music Theory Online*, one of the discipline's top peer-reviewed journals. Martschenko's article, "‘Feel the Emptiness’: Micro-Schemata in the Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki," demonstrates that a few key threads define Górecki's compositional language even as his style ranged from Polish sonorism to repetitive tonality.



Join us in congratulating our Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media Department for being recognized in *DownBeat* Magazine's 48th Annual Student Awards!

#### **Eastman Jazz Voice Ensemble**

Sara Gazarek, faculty  
Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble • Outstanding Performances • Undergraduate College

#### **Kiersten Conway on "Round Midnight"**

Outstanding Soloist

#### **Jack Snelling '25E** (MM), "Under a Willow Tree"

Christine Jensen, faculty  
Original Composition • Large Ensemble • Graduate College

#### **Steven Hardy '25E** (DMA), "The Module Approach"

Dave Rivello '89E (MM), faculty  
Outstanding Compositions • Graduate College

#### **Juan Saus Ruiz, "Lost"**

Christine Jensen, faculty  
Jazz Arrangement • Big Band • Outstanding Arrangements • Graduate College

Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media students **Garnet Muller**, trombone, and **Sam Schaefer**, drums, were selected for Jazz Aspen Snowmass JAS Academy under the direction of Christian McBride. The Big Band Session took place June 16-30, 2025.

Second-year undergraduate soprano **Yunxin (Dorothy) Nie** won the Neva Stevens Pilgrim Award at the Civic Morning Musicals 48th Annual Competition for Singers, taking home a \$500 prize. The competition was held in February in Syracuse, NY. Nie is from the studio of Professor Kathryn Cowdrick.

**Xiaoliang Qian**, a DMA piano candidate in the studio of Marina Lomazov, has won the first prize and Audience Choice Award at the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition. In addition to a cash award, Qian will perform with the orchestra in the 2025-26 season.

Congratulations to doctoral student **Angela Rubin '22E** (MM) on winning the first AMP Up Grant awarded by Eastman's Institute for Music Leadership in November 2024. Rubin received fund-

ing to support her efforts in developing an audience for her DMA recital. Vocalist **Ashley Schlusberg '25E**, '25 followed Rubin by winning the AMP Up Grant in Spring 2025.

In March, several Eastman students placed at the Music Teachers National Association Competitions in Minneapolis, MN. **Austin Shilling '25E**, saxophone, student of Professor Chien-Kwan Lin, won the Young Artist Woodwind competition and **Vivienne Lucier**, viola, student of Professor Masumi Rostad, won second place in the Young Artist Strings competition. Additionally, the **Locus Trio** won second place in the Young Artist Chamber Music String Competition.

Congratulations to **Yiran Zhao**, a DMA conducting student, who is the winner of the American Prize in Composition in the college/university division for shorter works for chorus. Additionally, Zhao was selected as a Conducting Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center for Summer 2025. Zhao is scheduled to make her conducting debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Boston Symphony Hall on April 3, 2026.

## ► FACULTY NOTES

In March, **Michael Alan Anderson**, professor and chair of musicology and founder and program director of ENCORE Chorus, had the opportunity to discuss the therapeutic choral arts program through the Eastman Community Music School with Public Health Grand Rounds. The presentation, “Encore, Encore: Giving Voice to People Living with Dementia,” provided an overview of the ENCORE Chorus as a nonpharmacological benefit to people living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. It situates the program in the context of social prescription and engagement with the arts, culture, and nature as social drivers of health.

Eastman Professor **David Bowlin**, violin, and Assistant Professor **Tony Cho**, piano, performed music by Joseph Bologne, Debussy, and Sarasate at First Universalist Church of Rochester in February.

Professor of Percussion and Paul J. Burgett Distinguished Professor **Michael Burritt ’84E, ’86E (MM)** undertook a tour of Sweden where he performed and held master classes at the Malmo Academy of Music with students from the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen, Odense Music Academy, and Malmo Academy. In March, he performed at the Days of Percussion Festival at Orebro University. Burritt has also been featured in a chapter of the new book, *Passing on a Passion for Percussion*, celebrating the master classes from the Jan Pustjens festival in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Additionally, Burritt’s work, *Ontario, Concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra*, was recently published by Edition Svitzer. The work was commissioned by the publisher and is to be premiered in 2025.

Voice, Opera, and Vocal Coaching faculty members **Nicole Cabell ’01E** and **Joshua Conyers** performed with Opera Lafayette

and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in the world premiere of Edmond Dédé’s *Morgiane* (1887), presented January 23 in New Orleans and February 3–7 in New York City and Maryland. *Morgiane* is believed to be the first complete opera composed by a Black American.

**Anne Harrow ’81E, ’96E (MM)**, associate professor of flute and piccolo, was the guest artist at Youngstown University’s Dana School of Music Flute Day in Youngstown, OH, where she presented a recital, masterclass, and workshop.

**1 Christine Jensen**, assistant professor of jazz studies and contemporary media, was nominated for a JUNO award at this year’s ceremony in March. Her album *Harbour* was in the category for Jazz Album of the Year: Group. Jensen is a three-time JUNO award-winner—most recently, her album *Day Moon* won Solo Jazz Album of the Year in 2024.

**Chien-Kwan Lin ’07E (DMA)**, professor of saxophone, recently completed a series of residencies at the Shanghai Conservatory, Zhejiang Conservatory, Soochow University, Central Conservatory, China Conservatory, and Shandong University of the Arts. Before traveling to China, he performed and adjudicated at the Plowman Chamber Music Competition in Columbia, MO.



**2 Brad Lubman**, professor of conducting and ensembles, recently made two conducting debuts: the Hong Kong Philharmonic in November 2024, and earlier this year with the Munich Philharmonic. The program in Hong Kong included a work of Lubman’s and works by Stravinsky and Beethoven. The Munich program featured works by John Adams, Bryce Dessner, and Philip Glass.

**Dave Rivello ’89E (MM)**, assistant professor of jazz studies and contemporary media, traveled to Bos-

ton to conduct the premiere of his wind ensemble piece *As Time Bends the Path* featuring soprano saxophone soloist Mark Zaleski. Additionally, Rivello spent two days conducting composition master classes at Berklee College of Music.

Professor of Conducting and Ensembles **William Weinert** recently completed a residency at the University of Georgia School of Music. He led masterclasses, seminars on choral repertoire and performance practice, and choral preparation for a performance of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2.

The Eastman theory faculty were well represented at the Sixth International Schenker Symposium, held March 6–8, 2025, at the University of Michigan. At each gathering, scholars from around the world gather to consider Heinrich Schenker’s legacy in today’s musical and scholarly world. This year, Associate Professor of Music Theory **William Marvin ’94E (MA), ’02E (PhD)** presented his paper “The Einleitung Recapitulated: The Conclusion of Tristan und Isolde, Act One and the Double-Tonic Complex Reconsidered”; Assistant Professor of Music Theory **Sarah Marlowe ’13E (PhD)** presented “Reconsidering Schenker’s Views on Mode: An Exploration of Modal-Tonal Properties in Three Fugues by Dmitri Shostakovich”; Professor of Music Theory **Matthew Brown** presented “Schenker’s Melodic Bass Lines and the Legacy of Caccini and Peri”; and Professor of Music Theory **David Temperley** presented “Gradience in Prolongation.”



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**The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra**—renowned for its prestige, history, and acclaimed productions—is one of the most coveted appointments for professional musicians. It's also among the few American orchestras to feature two principal oboists. As of this summer, both seats are now held by Eastman alumni.

Peter Davies '23E recently won the position, joining fellow graduate John Upton '12E, who has been with the MET since 2024. Remarkably, both studied at Eastman under longtime oboe professor Richard Killmer, and both trace their musical roots to prominent Eastman alumna: Davies was mentored in high school by Erin Hannigan '96E, while Upton studied with Nancy Ambrose King '86E (MM), '99E (DMA).

This milestone underscores the excellence of Professor Killmer's studio and Eastman's enduring legacy in the world of orchestral performance. Congratulations to Peter Davies and John Upton on this extraordinary achievement.

**Photo provided by John Upton.**