

# Waterworthy

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TENNESSEE  
SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC, 2016

## THE PIANO MAN

The artful science of  
keeping 124 pianos in  
perfect tune.

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In New York City, rain fell as Chris Cox, our director of development, and I made our way in a cab through the Upper East Side. It was 4:30 p.m.—just three hours until we’d be watching the kickoff of the Vols season opener.

Turning from First Avenue on to 81st Street, the cab stopped at a nondescript building where we were meeting with our new friend Tony Monte. We had met Tony about a year and a half earlier to discuss creating an endowment in the name of his late wife, Shirley Ford (’60).

We spent time reminiscing and reading Tony his article for *Noteworthy* (p. 21). Soon, the clock read 9 p.m., but none of us noticed.

They say time is *the great thief*. Not that evening. Tony, then terminally ill, reminded us of the power of music. It had brought him and Shirley together, bonding them throughout their shared life more closely than we could imagine.

As Tony got teary-eyed numerous times recounting his love for Shirley, it reminded me of exactly the reason everyone at the School of Music does what they do: *for the love of music*.

Tony, thank you, my friend. I promised to visit you before the holidays, but time, this time, was the great thief. You left us on November 14. Rest in peace, my friend. Thank you for reminding me what’s important in my life. It’s a lesson worth remembering.

Jeffrey Pappas  
Director, School of Music

# Noteworthy

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On the cover: Dan Frank opens his tool kit to show us how he keeps the School of Music’s 124 pianos pitch-perfect every day of the year. Photo by Daryl Johnson.

Find more School of Music news and events online at [music.utk.edu](http://music.utk.edu).

## Shiner Hits a High Note

BY KATHERINE GAUL

Recent alumna Alexandria Shiner (MM, ’16) got the chance to sing for renowned opera singer Renée Fleming over the summer in Chicago.

Shiner came to UT in 2013 as a graduate student. Associate Professor Marjorie Stephens, who recruited Shiner after working with her at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria, said she thinks Shiner has the potential to have her own international career.

Shiner was chosen from hundreds of applicants to participate in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) master class, a small workshop at which Fleming mentored four chosen students; the students prepared and then performed a concert in front of an audience that included Fleming, friends, family, and others.

“I heard about the NATS opportunity through a friend, and then Professor Stephens nominated me for the master class. I made a recording, crossed my fingers, and hoped for the best,” said Shiner. “I was absolutely thrilled when I found out I had been selected.”

Fleming has performed with major opera companies around the world, received many international awards, and is considered one of the greatest figures on the opera stage. Her approach to mentoring and teaching was one of kindness and enthusiasm, Shiner said, adding that the opera singer made her feel incredibly comfortable despite the fact that she was singing in front of hundreds of voice teachers.

“The energy was super enthusiastic and positive, and I had a blast. Ms. Fleming made me feel like I was absolutely doing

the right things vocally, and that was so incredibly affirming to me,” said Shiner, who sang one of her favorite arias, “Dich teure Halle,” from Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*.

During the experience, Shiner learned that Fleming faced many of the same obstacles she faces.

“It was amazing to listen to her talk about the struggles that come from this career, and that she had many similar obstacles in her early years,” Shiner said. “She helped solidify that I’m exactly where I need to be on my journey right now.”

The experience is leading to more opportunities for Shiner. While participating in the NATS program in Chicago, she also received the opportunity to sing for staff from the Ryan Opera Center, the Chicago Lyric Opera’s young artist program. The program is a two- to three-year paid internship at the Chicago Lyric. Participating artists receive lessons, coaching, and dramatic training and function as the chorus, fill small roles, and often cover leading roles on the main stage.

“I was able to sing for the vocal coordinator, Julia Faulkner, twice while I was in Chicago, and she was very helpful to me. Both Ms. Faulkner and Ms. Fleming expressed to me that they would like to see me at the Ryan Opera Center,” said Shiner.

“I will apply to the Ryan Opera Center this January in order to join the 2018-2019 ensemble. Until then, I’m still singing, applying the concepts I learned from Ms. Fleming, and waiting to see how this all unfolds,” said Shiner.





# Mixing Styles Helps Creativity Blossom

BY WHITNEY HEINS

When you hear the word “cross-pollination,” most likely the images of bees and flowers come to mind. But clear your head and instead imagine the sounds of electronic works blended with video followed by tonal string quartets.

That’s what cross-pollination means for some students in the School of Music. Or, put differently, it brings together collaborations so they “bloom.”

Three School of Music composition professors are redefining the meaning of cross-pollination by initiating never seen or heard before collaborations between UT’s young musicians.

Brendan McConville, Andrew Sigler, and Jorge Variego are blending together their distinctly different styles and genres of music in informal practice sessions to the benefit of their students.

What do we mean by distinctly different? Think traditional music meets orchestra meets computer.

McConville, an associate professor, is a theorist and composer whose works have been commissioned, performed, televised, and recorded in the United States and Europe.

Sigler, a lecturer and adjunct assistant professor of composition, composes for chamber ensembles, orchestra, dance, theater, and film. He’s also done sound design for video games, advertising, and animation for companies like Microsoft and Google.

Variego, a lecturer and adjunct assistant professor of music theory and composition, is a pioneer in the field of interactive computer music. He’s performed around the globe.

The three are turning students’ perspectives of music on their heads by showing that composition curriculum is about more than traditional classical music.

“While that remains the root of what we do, students soon realize that not only is the world of music and composition much larger than they thought, but also that their own personal experiences and backgrounds should and must play a role,” said Sigler.

The result is often a traditional chamber ensemble programmed alongside music for fixed electronics, live instrument and electronic combinations, or even a scored film trailer.

“Our work brings together students from a variety of majors for a high degree of improvisation. You’ll find students playing traditional instruments and electronic instruments. We had one student make a waterphone, which uses water and pipes to make unique sounds,” said Variego, who directs the Electroacoustic Ensemble, an outgrowth of this collaboration.

Between the musical notes, you may also hear students exclaiming “I should learn that, too!”

“The students are having fun and enjoying learning from each other,” said McConville. “They are also having success with the experience. We have had several students win signif-

icant composition awards within the past year and have their music performed in various locations across the South.”

The end result of these collaborations is the Contemporary Music Festival, organized by the three professors and Andy Bliss, assistant professor of percussion.

The festival is a celebration of contemporary music that showcases an increasing interest of the school in electronic music and music for video games and film.

“What makes that festival unique and so great is that it puts all of its acts out there without any pretense,” explained Sigler.

“Rarely are the terms classical, jazz, rock, or other limiting descriptors used, and this allows the audience to come to each performance without too many preconceived notions.”

As Sigler puts it, “it’s all music and we embrace it.”



Composer Mark Mellits at his Portrait Concert during the Contemporary Music Festival.



Students Julian Calvin (piano), Emory Hensley (marimba), and Warren Oja (cello) perform Mellits's *Tight Sweater*

“Our work brings together a variety of majors for a high degree of improvisation. You’ll find students playing traditional instruments and electronic instruments. We had one student make a waterphone, which uses water and pipes to make unique sounds.”

—Jorge Variego



# Presenting a Tennessee Touchstone

BY AMY BLAKELY AND WHITNEY HEINS

## Neyland Stadium. The Sunsphere. The Smokies.

Last fall, East Tennessee became home to another landmark. But this one couldn't be seen on the region's landscape. Instead, it could be heard reverberating through Knoxville's Tennessee Theatre.

The landmark was the premiere of *Knoxville: Summer of 2015*, a musical sequel to Samuel Barber's famous *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. The piece was written by Oak Ridge native Ellen Reid, a young composer and rising star, and noted librettist Royce Vavrek, who wrote the lyrics for the acclaimed operas *Dog Days*, *JFK*, and *O Columbia*.

The concert, performed by UT's symphony orchestra with graduate soprano Maxwell Porterfield (MM '16), was a collaboration of the School of Music and the Department of Theatre and featured instrumental, vocal, and spoken word performances.

"It was a wonderful experience to build the piece with the orchestra and students," said Reid. "The support of the music school enabled us to really develop it . . . and hear it come to life. That's really rare today."

*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, composed by Barber in 1947, sets to music excerpts from James Agee's prose poem "Knoxville: Summer 1915." That piece—a nostalgic recollection of an idyllic summer night in Knoxville when he was five years old—later became a preamble to his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *A Death in the Family*.

Like Agee's piece, *Knoxville: Summer of 2015* is about an adult reminiscing about family, life, and East Tennessee. It is set during the narrator's return visit to Knoxville in 2015 to celebrate a great-grandfather's 100th birthday.

"The piece is from the perspective of a young adult who is dealing with his generation's rapid acceleration of change and trying to imagine what life was like in East Tennessee for his great-grandfather," explained Reid.

Reid and Vavrek came up with the idea to write the musical sequel one night over dinner. Reid then reached out to her past high school teacher, Katy Wolfe, now a voice instructor in the Department of Theatre, and the wheels were set in motion.

"For our students to be part of the creative process on a musical piece that could become a new classic—this was a

once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Wolfe, who produced and sang in the performance.

School of Music Director Jeff Pappas couldn't have agreed more. "When Katy brought this opportunity to our school, I jumped on it," he said. "Not only for the historical significance of the pairing of the piece with the Barber classic, but the opportunity for our students to premiere a work and go through the creative process with a composer and librettist."

Wolfe and Reid helped Vavrek get a true taste of East Tennessee through visits to iconic places like Dollywood, a UT football game, and the Smoky Mountains. They also spent time interacting with the UT Symphony and its conductor, Jim Fellenbaum.

"We exposed Royce to a lot, and that eventually wove its way into his text," Reid said.

After Vavrek finished the lyrics, he turned them over to Reid to compose the music. Reid used the same instrumentation as Barber, which she characterizes as soft and warm yet laced with "existential anxiety" about the way the world is today.

After more than a year of working with the piece, Reid finally watched (and heard) it come to life—and was surprised by the audience's response.

"There was a standing ovation immediately. That's not something that happens every time," she said.

"The point of writing something is that it has a life," said Reid, who hopes that in a hundred years someone will write another iteration, and East Tennessee will have another musical landmark.



**Right:** Students rehearse with composer Ellen Reid before the premiere.



# Pentatonix’s Kaplan Electrifies Students

BY WHITNEY HEINS

“It was like Elvis walked into the building.” That was how UT Singers Director Jaclyn Johnson described her students’ reactions when Avi Kaplan of the multi-Grammy-Award-winning recording artists Pentatonix visited campus earlier this year to host a workshop. “The students had an electric response to him,” added Johnson, who also serves as interim associate director of choral activities.

Kaplan came to campus to host the first contemporary a cappella workshop at UT for high school students. He also worked with the university’s three contemporary a cappella ensembles, the UT Singers, reVOLution, and VOLume. “Last year was the first year UT Singers, the university’s oldest choir, became a contemporary a cappella ensemble, which is a huge recruitment tool for us,” explained Johnson. “So we wanted to do something different for high school students to bring them to campus for something that is fun, vibrant, and of the time.”

The two-day workshop, now an annual event, included a day when Kaplan worked with UT students and a day when he focused on the high school students. Johnson had a connection to Kaplan since they both went to Mt. San Antonio College, known worldwide for its strong choral and a cappella tradition, and studied under the same choir director. When she reached out, he jumped at the chance.

“Avi is big advocate for music in schools and working with high school students,” said Johnson, noting that every summer he hosts an a cappella camp called “A Cappella Academy.” Although they were singing contemporary music like Lady Gaga, Fun., and Michael Jackson, Kaplan used the traditional method of “rote” to coach the kids.

“He would sing something and the students would echo it back,” said Johnson. “He taught us new notes to augment our harmonies and make them sound more complex. He also suggested ways to improve our arrangements.” “Working with Avi was the experience of a lifetime,” said UT Singers member Hayley McGinnis. “Everything that he taught us and advised us to do was so simple—it was just little things that he tweaked or changed around that just made such a huge impact. It was so interesting to hear some outside perspective from someone who has had so much success in his career in this genre.”

Kaplan also focused on microphone technique to help the students finesse their sound to sing more softly yet more powerfully. “He was very patient,” said Johnson, who added that Kaplan was also very relatable despite being part of a group that has number one Billboard hits. Johnson is working to see if “Elvis” can enter the building one more time in the near future.



# Allison Lands First Professional Jazz Album

BY AMY BLAKELY | PHOTO BY CAREY J. KING



When one of Luther Allison’s professors recommended him as the drummer at the Jazz Trombone Institute summer camp in Brevard, North Carolina, Allison never imagined the doors that would open for him.

A senior jazz student, Allison has made his professional debut on trombonist Michael Dease’s recently released album, *Father Figure*.

“My father would always tell me, ‘Always be ready because you never know when people will discover you,’” Allison said. Dease was performing at the camp and was impressed by Allison’s skill on the drums. It was there that Dease asked Allison, a junior at the time, to perform on his album.

In early October 2015, Allison drove 11 hours from Hess Hall on UT’s campus to Brooklyn, New York, to meet with Dease and other professional and collegiate musicians performing on the album. They spent the following week rehearsing, recording the album, and performing shows in New York and Michigan, getting little sleep and practicing throughout the night.

“I was having the time of my life,” Allison said. “I was sleeping for an hour and a half or two hours a night, but my adrenaline was pumping the whole week, so missing sleep wasn’t an issue.”

“I knew right away that I was about to meet a special soul full of passion and humility,” Dease said of Allison. “After our first rehearsal I was convinced of his immense talent, which is somewhat hidden by his sincerity and maturity.”

The opportunity to record with Dease allowed Allison to showcase his skills but also taught him a valuable lesson. “I learned to pace myself, whether it be musically or in my life in general,” said Allison. “If this is the career path I want to have in the future, I have to be in shape mentally, physically, emotionally, and professionally to keep up with the lifestyle.”

Allison is already a disciplined musician. He practices five hours a day and maintains a 3.7 grade point average. He also takes to heart the advice and constructive feedback of his professors and mentors.

“Mentorship is something I think is imperative in bringing up the next generation,” Allison said. “In order to be able to keep tradition going, you really need your predecessors to set the tone for what you need to do in the future. Dease did an extraordinary job in taking me under his wing and introducing me to other musicians. It’s both humbling and exciting—it makes me want to work that much harder because I want to live up to his expectations.”

Allison has since recorded again with Dease on a forthcoming album, this time as a pianist.



A man with glasses and a red shirt is working on a piano. He is leaning over the piano, which has its lid open, revealing the internal mechanism. He is using a tool to adjust a string. The background is a wooden wall with horizontal slats.

# The Piano Man

BY BROOKS CLARK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DARYL JOHNSON

Just three days into his piano technology class as a freshman at the University of Michigan, Dan Frank realized he could hear the “beat” a piano string makes when it’s out of tune.

“It’s like a sine wave,” says Frank, who now proudly calls UT home. “If you don’t hear that wavering, you’ll never be able to tune pianos.” In fact, only a tiny percentage of people *can* hear it. When his professor realized Frank was one of them, he told him, “You can do this. You can be a really good tuner.”

Nowadays, as resident piano technician, Frank takes care of the School of Music’s 124 pianos.





Once a year, Frank removes the action—that is, the keys and hammers—from each of the School of Music’s grand pianos and puts them on his workbench to perform seven or eight different regulations on each key. In this case, he is adjusting the let-off of the hammer. Below right, Frank’s inventory of rail regulating punchings await placement beneath piano keys. The green felt washers prevent the keys from “clacking” and the paper washers adjust the key height and depth.



Above, one regulation Frank sets is the different levels of the hammers. Each hammer has to be within one sixteenth of an inch of the bar that he uses. Frank teaches a survey class in piano technology each spring to five students. Out of the 45 students he’s had over the years, only one could hear the “beats” well enough to be able to tune professionally.



“Being able to hear the ‘beat’ of a string out of tune is a mixed blessing,” Frank says. “I try not to go to the concerts, because I’m listening for the pianos to be out of tune. The really good pianists don’t knock the instrument out of tune. They find the limits of the piano they are playing and stay within those parameters of loud and soft, not forcing the piano.”



At left, the red temperament strip dampens the adjacent strings so Frank can tune the middle one, in this case G5, also called key no. 59. Below, the dampers of the piano stop the strings from vibrating when the key or pedal is released. “It takes 500 or 600 pianos before you get good at tuning,” says Frank, who trained at the Steinway factory in Queens, New York, in 1998. “It takes an entire year to build a piano. That’s why it’s expensive. It’s still done by craftsmen.”





# Dan Frank's Piano Tool Kit



1 The tuning fork. Once a quintessential item, it's been largely replaced by the electronic tuner. "I have nowhere close to perfect pitch," says Frank.

2 Key leadweights like this one substitute for the weight of the hammer during maintenance work.

3 The tuning hammer is used to turn tuning pins to raise or lower the pitch of a string.

4 This small saw is used to trim excess glue from the hammer shanks as they are replaced.

5 During concert tunings, when time is of the essence, the single-needle hammer voicer quickly voices hammers while the action remains in the piano.

6 When a tuning pin is loose, this pin setter is used to hammer the precise pin further into the pin block to tighten it.

7 A hammer head extractor is used to remove the hammer from the shank to replace or reset it.

8 The tool with no name—Frank's home-made device measures the height of black keys above white keys, which should be exactly one half-inch.

9 After prolonged play, keys can wriggle loose and get too close to one another. This front rail regulator bends the front rail pins to evenly space the keys.

10 This 80-grit red sandpaper is glued onto wood for filing hammers to adjust their shape, which affects tone.

11 If the felt is too tight and a key gets stuck, this piano key easer helps widen the felt on either side of the key to allow it to move freely.

12 Strings are tuned one at a time in harmony with another pitch. Unlike a regular rubber mute, a Papp's mute is thin enough to fit between the hammers on an upright piano and dampen the strings on either side of the one being tuned.

13 The red felt temperament strip dampens an entire section of strings, allowing Frank to set the equal temperament on the middle octave.

In all, Dan Frank does 800 tunings a year, including a full tuning before every concert. "I love my work," says Frank, who punctuates many statements with a warm laugh. "I'm 66. I could retire. I enjoy it too much to retire. I'm in heaven."



# La Pioggia, Naturally

BY BRENDAN MCCONVILLE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC THEORY/COMPOSITION

This year, I was honored to be selected as a Core Fulbright US Scholar to conduct research and teach in Italy. My research component was dedicated to creating a musical setting of Abruzzese poet Gabriele D’Annunzio’s “La Pioggia nel Pineto” (The Rain in the Pine Forest). “La Pioggia” is world renowned for breaking traditions regarding syntax, thereby generating aural sensations from the words and phrases themselves. Devices such as repetition, onomatopoeia, and simile make the poem naturally musical in the Italian language. My goal was to merge the sound effects in the poetry with the natural sounds of birds, insects, animals, and seaside rainstorms found in the precise locations that inspired D’Annunzio’s text.

In March and April, I recorded hundreds of sounds and have many recording stories from the project. I once got lost in a remote area of the national park of Abruzzo in a massive rainstorm. It was my fault. I had a tendency to chase rain systems. Another time I tracked interesting sounds along a path high up a mountainside, and rested at the top near an abandoned old refuge. As I began to descend, I heard many squealing and scurrying wild boars (cinghiali) on my path below. My recording gear and headphones were quite good so I picked up the sounds from a distance. I had to wait out the boars!

The completed piece is in four movements titled according to the opening text of each part of the poem: Taci (“be quiet”), Odi? (“can you hear?”), Ascolta (“listen”), and Piove (“it’s raining”). It is written for soprano, tenor, piano, and fixed electronics. The electronics include the canvas of sounds behind the performers that support and accompany all of the foreground activity. Each movement includes 40 to 60 tracks of sounds, some lasting for seconds, some for minutes.

Some recorded sounds were left natural behind the performers while others were heavily manipulated by computer. For example, in the third movement when the soprano sings “la rana, canta nell’ombra più fonda, chi sa dove, chi sa dove!” (“the frog, sings from the deepest shadows, who knows where, who knows where!”) the music intensifies while an Abruzzese frog sings in the background. However, when I captured the frog sounds I had two problems: I didn’t like the pitches it was singing and I didn’t want all of the high-pitched bat sounds behind the frog. So I edited out the bats and used pitch correction software to ensure my frog sang in the key I wanted. In fact, the frog harmonized the soprano.

The piece was premiered at the Villa Paris in Roseto degli Abruzzi. My performers and I are now working on a commercial recording of “La Pioggia” with an Italian label, and we are planning future performances of the work.

The teaching component of my Fulbright experience was invaluable. At my host institution, the Conservatorio di Musica Luisa D’Annunzio, I worked with a great group of young composers, introducing them to a variety of compositional methods and approaches that I have studied and acquired over the years. They were particularly interested in new music from American composers. They understood little English so I lectured in Italian, the first time I have taught in Italian.

The students were very formal and respectful, and asked excellent questions. I plan to keep in touch with my colleague and host composer, Fabio Cellini, and we hope to collaborate on other projects soon.

*Listen to McConville’s work at [tiny.utk.edu/Pioggia](http://tiny.utk.edu/Pioggia).*



# Global Music Explorations

BY WHITNEY HEINS

If one wants to travel around the world, they only need to step inside the halls of the School of Music.

Two new groups, the Middle East Ensemble and the Balinese Gamelan, are breaking new ground at the school by taking students to far-flung places—musically and culturally.

Les Gay’s Balinese Gamelan, the first in the state, has introduced students and community members to the Indonesian ensemble commonly played at formal occasions and in traditional ceremonies.

The students get to experience playing an assortment of percussive instruments uncommon in the United States, such as jublags, jego-gans, and gangsas, as well as learn a different way of thinking about music.

“The melodies and harmonies of the gamelan are very different than what we see in Western cultures,” explained Gay, associate professor of musicology. “In the West, music has a beginning, middle, and end. But in the gamelan, it’s cyclical with a different sense of temporality and musical richness.”

The students also learn about culture—a critical educational component—says Lillie Gordon, lecturer and director of UT’s Middle East Ensemble. As she puts it, in learning about music, we learn about people.

“The Middle East so often gets dehumanized,” said Gordon, who studied in Egypt. “The media focuses on violence and political unrest there. But our students are playing songs that portray real human emotions with which we can all identify.”

Also composed of students and community members, the Middle East Ensemble focuses on playing music from across the Arab world as well as Turkey, Iran, Greece, and Armenia.

The experience has exposed the musicians to a new way of expressing emotion using scales not common in Western music, and instruments like the ‘ud (short-necked lute), nay (end-blown, reed flute), and darabukka (goblet-shaped drum), which they had never seen before, let alone played.

Both professors hope their students’ experiences make them more aware not only of different types of music but also their own assumptions.

“I see this as educational tool as well as an artistic venture,” said Gordon.



**Right:** Performances by the Balinese Gamelan (upper two images) and Middle East Ensemble (lower two images) in the Sandra G. Powell Recital Hall.

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  - Patricia S. Carter
  - Willene Rush Chalmers
  - Hanshu Chang
  - Mike and Dawn Channell
  - Church Street United Methodist Church
  - Dale R. Clark
  - Kevin James Class



# VolOpera Celebrates Inaugural Year



VolOpera began with a thirst for knowledge and opportunity. Created last year, the student organization provides a way for undergraduates in UT’s opera program to network with each other and learn more about the business of opera—everything from resume building to stagecraft. Music seniors Rachel Brown and Ryan Colbert, along with faculty members Lorraine DiSimone and Cecily Nall, were the driving forces in forming VolOpera.

“Last fall, VolOpera covered a bevy of subjects with several workshops,” Colbert said. The group hosted programs on major Mozart operas (*Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute*) and the German Fach system (a method of classifying opera singers by the range, weight, and color of their voices). In the spring, VolOpera focused on its opera scenes program, which gives members the chance to stage individual scenes from various operas using simple props and homemade costumes.

“We hit the ground running with musical coaching and staging rehearsals for eight scenes from various operas, including *Così fan tutte*, *The Rake’s Progress*, and *Hansel and Gretel*,” Colbert explained. Also last spring, VolOpera participants had the opportunity to audition for Knoxville’s Rossini Festival.

“Maestro Brian Salesky of Knoxville Opera graciously allowed us a time slot, and we had the opportunity to perform a concert version—music only, without props and costumes—of our scenes program for festival goers,” Colbert said. This year, Colbert and junior Kate Smith are co-leading VolOpera.

“For this year, we have workshops about resume building, auditioning, stage presence, the Fach system, and summer programs. The scenes program will happen again in April, and we’ll be doing selections from Benjamin Britten’s *Albert Herring*, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*, and others,” Colbert explained.

*Special thanks to Ryan Colbert for her contributions to this article.*

**Above (left to right):** Taylor Stone, Jack Francis, Ellen Sudarshan, Lee Brandt, and Rachel Brown in *The Rake’s Progress*.  
**Below (left to right):** Rachel Brown, Haley Retterer, Katlyn Householder, Ashlee King, and Kate Smith in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*.

**Michelle Barren’s** (MM) brass quintet “Fanfare and Promenade” was chosen for performance at the Women Composers Festival of Hartford.  
**Marya Barry** (MM) sang the role of Bradamante in Handel’s *Alcina* with the Oberlin in Italy program this summer.

**Brandon Bell** (MM) sang the roles of Bottom the Weaver in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Toots in the world premiere of *Falling Angel* by J. Mark Searce for the Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Center.

**Hannah Brown** (BM), soprano, sang the role of Mabel in the Tennessee Valley Players’ June 2016 production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Pirates of Penzance*, following her success as Cosette in TVP’s 2015 production of *Les Misérables*.

Mezzo-soprano **Allison Deady** (MM) was awarded the prestigious Verdi Prize at the National Orpheus Vocal Competition in March. She also performed at the Chautauqua Music Festival in New York.

**Siobhan Drury** (MM) was the recipient of a 2016 UT Chancellor’s Extraordinary Professional Promise Award.

**Skye Van Duuren** (MM) received a UT Thomas Fellowship and \$10,000 for 2016–17 for his proposal “Purest Harmony: A Practical Process for Creating Music in Just Intonation.”

**Seth Felker** (MM) presented the poster “Non Music Majors’ Reasons for Joining and Continuing Their Participation in the University of Tennessee Pride of the Southland Marching Band” during the 2016 Tennessee Music Education Association Conference in Nashville.

**Nat Gallagher** (BM) performed a solo marimba work at the McCormick Marimba Festival in Tampa, Florida.

**Emory Hensley** (MM) gave the premiere of a vibraphone solo composed by UT professor Jorge Variego.

**Claire Hoppen** (BM) was chosen to participate in the summer program Si Parla Si Canta in Urbania, Italy.

**Katlyn Householder** (BM) performed with the Red River Lyric Opera.

**Mia Pafumi** (MM) appeared with Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York in Donizetti’s *Pa-risina d’Este* at the Rose Theater at Lincoln Center.

**Jasmeen Pantleay** (BM) served as East Tennessee president for Tennessee C-NAfME and was the co-winner of the 2016 Tennessee State C-NAfME Member of the Year. She also was the recipient of a 2016 UT Chancellor’s Extraordinary Professional Promise Award.

“Synaptic Connections” by **Paul Royse** (BM) won first place for the state of Tennessee at the Music Teachers National Association Composition Contest in October.

**Ryan Stennes** (BM) was awarded a fellowship to the prestigious composition program in the Alba Music Festival. Stennes was the only undergraduate accepted to the program. His choral work “When I Am Dead My Dearest” was a winner of the 2016 Missouri Composers Project Competition and a semifinalist for the International Maurice Ravel award in the choral category.

**Peter Naughton** (MM) performed his solo vibraphone composition at the McCormick Marimba Festival in Tampa, Florida. He also received an assistantship to attend the University of Iowa to begin working on his DMA in percussion performance.

**Makoto Winkler** (MM) was selected as an apprentice artist for the Glimmerglass Opera.



UT students fared well this spring at the biennial NATS Artist Award Competition, which was hosted by the School of Music as part of the National Association of Teachers of Singing Annual Regional Competition.

In the Advanced Women category, Lindsey Fuson finished first, Kacie Kenton was second, and Maxwell Porterfield placed third. Brent Hetherington won the Advanced Men category, and in the Second Year College Division, Meghan Mayes finished second.

- Karen J. Cobb
- Mark A. and Melony J. Colquitt
- Community Foundation for the Fox Valley
- Mary Costa
- Christopher Cox
- Betsey Beeler Creekmore
- Susan Creswell and Thomas A. Cervone
- Katherine Crews
- Reid R. and Olga Crumpton
- Mary F. Cushman
- Janan H. and Susan M. Dakak
- John Edwin and Martha B. Davidson
- Harry Preston Davis
- Sarah M. Davis
- Susanna V. and Anthony M. Deaton
- William R. and Jane Warwick Dempster
- Lucinda and Harold Denton
- Adrienne DiIulio
- Lorraine DiSimone
- Cathleen Dodge
- Lew W. Dougherty Jr. and Mary Jo Dougherty
- Eileen Marie Downey
- Michael W. Driskill and Elizabeth B. Ford
- E. Ely and Phyllis N. Driver
- Sue Isaac Dubois
- Lisa Easter and Craig Dunn
- East Tennessee Foundation
- H. Wallace Edwards Jr.
- Lynn W. England
- Webb C. Eskew Jr. and Jeanne T. Eskew
- Estate of Mary Ann Little
- Mary F. Eure
- Stephen Edward Eure
- Walter R. and Alice R. Farkas
- R. Kent and Susan A. Farris
- Joe C. Freeman Jr.
- John F. Fellers
- Pat Felts
- Colleen T. Ferron
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- Joseph A. and Ruth Fielden
- Thomas F. Fine and Patricia Maffeo
- First Christian Church
- Melody J. Fitzsimmons
- Cindy Flores
- Daniel Lee Frank
- Nancy Frank
- Joel W. and Sandra M. Garber
- Ledyard Gardner Jr.
- Susan Morrison Boatman Garland
- Stephen P. and Mary Ann Geoffrey
- Tara Ghorashi
- Charles P. Giambrone
- Karen G. and Roger L. Gilbert
- Charles W. Goan
- Mitchell and Margy Goldman
- Francis D. and Christina Graffeo
- Cathy H. Graves
- Caaj A. and Yellie Greebe
- Suzanne Smith Greene
- Alan C. Guy



CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE  
COMPETITION

Part of the college-wide Exhibition for Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EUR&CA).

**School of Music winners—first place: Rebecca Percy, flute; second place: Paul Royse, piano; third place: Jared Hopland, Kevin O’Bryan and Brianna Stock, marimba**

2015 STUDENT RESEARCH CONTEST IN MUSIC

**First place: Konstantine Vlasis** for his paper “*Rímur*: Defining the Sound of Sigur Ros.”

**Second place: Megan Whiteman** for her paper “Psychologically Witched, Women of the French *Tragedie Lyrique*.”

**COLLEGE MUSIC SOCIETY SOUTHERN CHAPTER 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**Finalist, student paper contest: Joseph Falconer** for his paper “The Development of Stringed Instrument Education in the United States.”

**MUSIC STUDY CLUB SCHOLARSHIP**  
**2015–2016: Syd Warren**

**STUDENT AMBASSADORS, 2015–2016:**  
**Lee Brandt, Hannah Brown, Caroline Farmer, Natalie Gregg, Hannah Smith, and Kate Smith**

**OUTSTANDING GRADUATING SENIORS, 2015–2016**  
Chosen by the faculty in their individual areas, recipients must have a 3.5 GPA, show professional promise, and have made a significant overall contribution to the program.

**Melissa Quarles, BA, music & culture;**  
**Jasmeen Pantleay, BM, music education;**  
**Miriam Budayr, BM, theory/composition;**  
**Christine Dunn, BM, piano; Hunter Smith, BM, studio music & Jazz; Douglas Temples, BM, strings; Rachel Brown, BM, vocal performance**

SIGMA ALPHA IOTA SCHOLASTIC AWARD:  
Alicia Faggioli

Presented to an active senior member of the Gamma Rho chapter of SAI who holds the highest grade point average.

SIGMA ALPHA IOTA: COLLEGIATE HONOR  
AWARD: Anna Whitley

Presented to a collegiate member for outstanding musicianship, scholarship, and fraternity service.

**GERALD W. BARNES FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN WOODWINDS AWARD: Sarah Emmons**  
Established by the Arkansas Community Foundation to reward excellence in woodwind studies.

**PRESSER SCHOLARSHIP: Caroline Farmer**  
Presented annually to a music major who is a rising senior with a high grade point average and at least one third of his or her classes outside the field of music. The award is voted on by the faculty.

**PI KAPPA LAMBDA HONOR SOCIETY**  
The only music organization recognized by the Association of College Honor Societies. Dedicated by its founders to the fostering of scholarly interest in the theoretical and historical aspects of music and to the pursuit of eminent achievement in performance, composition, music education, and research.

**2016 NEW MEMBERS**  
**Melanie Burbules**  
**Robert Clark**  
**Bryan Daniels**  
**Michael Douty**  
**Caroline Farmer**  
**Brady McNeil**  
**Jacqueline Messinetti**  
**Erin Murphy**  
**Michelle Walter**

For the Love of Music

BY BROOKS CLARK

It was a love story born in jazz and leavened by classical.

Shirley Ruth Ford (’60) had launched her career in New York City as a writer, producer, and program director for classical music stations. But she also loved to sing jazz. She asked a friend of hers, a drummer for the balladeer Johnny Hartman, if he knew someone who could play for her.

The drummer thought of his friend Tony Monte, a legendary pianist, arranger, and studio producer who at one time had accompanied Judy Garland. “Shirley called me up,” says Monte. “I saw this little blond come in and I thought, that’s the end of me. I knew it was over. You know it when it happens.”

The first Christmas after they were married, Monte wrote a 30-minute arrangement, went into a recording studio, and made a music track she could sing along to. “When she heard it,” says Monte, “she flipped out. Every time she told people about it, she started crying.”

When Shirley died in 2013 after 35 wedded years, Monte wanted her to be remembered at the school she loved and to support young students in pursuing the music education she valued so much. “For her, it was a joy to learn things,” says Monte. “She held to the ancient Greek ideal about learning, that the more you know the better you are and the better you feel.”

Ford had grown up in a shotgun house off Knoxville’s Magnolia Avenue and graduated from East High in 1956. At UT, she majored in music history and literature, and treasured longtime Professor of Music History George DeVine as a mentor and friend. Ford played clarinet and worked at WUOT, where she became program director after graduation. “UT made her who she was,” says Tony. “She brought the nobility of East Tennessee to New York and she made a big impression.”

Through the Shirley R. Ford Memorial Music Endowment, Monte’s gift will provide not only scholarships but also the funds to meet the pesky incidentals that are a part of a performing artist’s education. “You might have your tuition paid up,” says Monte, speaking as one who knows, “but you still need a bow tie, or a clean white shirt, or a tuxedo, or a good haircut, and you just don’t have the cash. It might be a new instrument or the money to travel to a unique learning opportunity. Shirley would want the students to just keep going and learn as much as they can.

“The whole thing is, Shirley loved music and art. . . . For her, it was endless, and eternal, and beautiful. I never really met anybody who loved music so much.”



Jazz piano legend Tony Monte looks over an arrangement.



Alumna Shirley Ford (’60) works the controls at WUOT.



Tony remembers Shirley through an endowment.

- John C. and Dorothy Metzger Habel
- Virginia Hagens
- Melvyn L. and Edith C. Halbert
- William T. Hall
- Kenneth Hamilton and Lynda Newton
- Sharon Wotring Hammat LCSW and Giles R. Hammat
- Steven R. and Rebecca P. Hancock
- Judy Handley
- Samia and Wahid T. Hanna
- Happy Hikers O’Connor Senior Center
- Charlenne A. Harb
- Albert J. and Carmen C. Harb
- Hardin Valley Elementary PTA
- R. Leslie and Carla Lou Hargrove
- Linda D. and Randall F. Hartwig
- Haslam Family Foundation Inc.
- James A. Haslam II and Natalie Leach Haslam
- John J. and Patricia A. Hattery
- Kenneth N. Hawkins
- Mark A. and Judith E. Hector
- Anna Stephens and Allen Clark Henderson
- Christopher Herndon
- Hillary Anne Herndon
- Brandon Herrenbruck
- Connie Hetherington
- Stephanie Rose Hibbert
- Sheila and Christopher T. Hill
- Mark L. and Catherine C. Hill
- Frederick William and Harriet Ann Hodge
- Ann K. Holler
- Judith Ann and Gerald E. Hollingsworth
- Dana C. Holloway
- William C. Hoppe Jr. and Julia G. Hoppe
- Carol Y. Horne
- Martha Ragsdale House
- Maria Nathalie and Miroslav Petrov Hristov
- Fred Alan and Regina Hurst
- Inskip Elementary School
- J. A. Fielden Co. Inc.
- Carol G. Jacobs
- Alan R. Javorcky
- Melissa M. Jenkins
- Christopher Allan Jerger and Alice Schoo-Jerger
- Patrica A. Jobe
- Johnson String Instruments Inc.
- Jodie McTeer and John Thomas Johnson
- Judith Johnson
- Katie Marguerite Johnson
- Allen E. Johnson
- Anne Curtis and James W. Johnson
- Jeffrey H. and Sharon B. Johnson
- Joy of Music School
- John Richard Kaboff
- Pawel Karolczak
- Howard F. Kastner Jr. and Susan Kastner
- Joanne L. Kennedy
- Ricky B. Kennedy



# Adams is Teacher of the Year

BY AMY BLAKELY

When Fay Adams was in second grade, she told her classmates on Career Day that she wanted to be a piano teacher.

Last spring, Adams retired from UT after teaching piano for 44 years. But before she left, she added a huge honor to her resume: Adams was named Music Teacher of the Year by the Music Teachers National Association.

An associate professor of piano and coordinator of keyboard studies, Adams received the award at the MTNA national conference in April in San Antonio, Texas. It's a crowning achievement in a career that's been a labor of love.

"I just love my students. It doesn't matter their level as long as they work hard," said Adams. "I want them to love music and to want to share that love with their own students."

Adams began taking piano lessons at her mother's urging. She grew up an only child in Johnson City, Tennessee, on a street where she didn't have many playmates. Piano became her solace and joy.

She earned a bachelor's degree in music from the New England Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music in piano from UT.

"I've performed all my life, but that's not what I love doing," said Adams, whose subject is piano pedagogy: she teaches others how to be piano teachers.

Her philosophy is simple: Be positive and encouraging. Expect the most from every student.



"While this award recognizes Fay's outstanding teaching, it's also about being a great person. Fay has both of those qualities. She is humble, encouraging, and a consummate professional," said Jeff Pappas, director of the School of Music. "She talks a lot about loving her students. Let me assure you, they love her right back."

When she retires, Adams plans to spend plenty of time with her grandsons, ages two and nine, and her granddaughters, ages four and seven. Her granddaughters are already learning to play piano under her tutelage.

While she'll continue teaching private lessons, Adams said she's also looking forward to having more time to enjoy her second passion: watching sports.

"I love football, soccer, basketball . . . Peyton Manning!" she said. "I think the discipline of sports—the repetition of skills and practicing—is a lot like teaching music."

## Faculty CD Recordings

**Greg Tardy, *Chasing After the Wind*** (SteepleChase) Tardy combines his own new music with a handful of intriguing past compositions by other artists to set the scene for this stellar sextet. The album features his longtime friend and trumpeter Alex Norris as well as Sam Sadigursky, flute; Bruce Barth, piano; Sean Conly, bass; and Jaimeo Brown, drums.



**Jorge Variego, *Discordia: Electroacoustic Music From the Southeast*** (EMPiRES) The album's overarching theme is discord, musically depicted in rhythm, space, form, and contrasting characters of sound source elements. The ninth track, "Nunca tan lejos," is written for vibraphone and incorporates fixed media and video. It tells a story of distance and departure by developing textures of conflict and juxtaposition.

**Loneka Wilkinson Battiste** (music education) presented the paper "'Music Down in My Soul': Black Musical Aesthetic and Cultural Appropriation in the Performance of Moses Hogan Spirituals" during the 60th annual Conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) in Austin, Texas. During the same conference, she led a clinic titled "Afro Caribbean Rhythms: From Africa to my iPod," for the SEM Education Section's conference outreach activity, "Ethnomusicology Goes to Middle School," and was elected co-chair-elect of the education section. In the spring, she presented the findings of her dissertation, "'Music Down in My Soul': Achieving a Sound Ideal for Moses Hogan Spirituals," at the National Association for Music Education Music Research and Teacher Education National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Andrew Bliss** (percussion) paired up with Atlanta's Chamber Cartel ensemble to perform Iannis Xenakis' concert-length work *Pleiades* at the Goat Farm Arts Center in

Atlanta. In the spring, he collaborated with a collective of the country's foremost authorities in contemporary music to perform Pierre Boulez's "Le Marteau sans Maître" in Lexington, Kentucky. Bliss joined the Knoxville Symphony for a performance of John Luther Adams's Pulitzer- and Grammy-winning *Become Ocean* with the composer in attendance at the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville. Bliss also performed three concerts at the Big Ears Festival with the nief-norf project, including Morton Feldmans's 90-minute work for flute, piano, and percussion, *Crippled Symmetry*.



**Keith Brown** (percussion) toured with trumpeter Doc Severinsen and the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra last fall. He also performed with the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra and played with recent

Grammy Award-winning vocalist Cecile McLorin Savant and bassist Christian McBride. This past spring, Brown, along with faculty members Mark Boling and Jon Hamar, performed at the Nashville Jazz Workshop and the Lafayette Listening Room in Memphis, and presented a concert and master class at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He also taught and performed at Interlochen Center for the Arts Percussion Institute in June.



**David Brunell** (piano) performed in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall with violinist Daniel Choo in December. This summer, he performed and served as an adjudicator for competitions of

the Tennessee Music Teachers Association state conference in Nashville and also taught and performed a solo recital at the East Tennessee State University summer piano camp in Johnson City, Tennessee.



**Edie Johnson** (organ) was a featured recitalist and clinician at the 2015 American Guild of Organists Great Lakes Region Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she played Rheinberger's Trio in C Minor for Organ, Violin, and Cello. She also led a presentation on freeing the mind and body for optimal musical performance. Her article on Arizona-based composer Pamela Decker's organ works was published in *The Diapason* last September. In January, she played the dedicatory recital for the new organ at Trinity Episcopal Church in Mobile, Alabama.

**Alexander Lapins** (tuba/euphonium) directed the UT tuba/euphonium ensemble, which performed a variety of works at the 33rd annual Tuba/Euphonium Workshop hosted by the Pershing's Own United States Army Band in Arlington, Virginia. UT was one of only two college ensembles invited to perform. Lapins also coordinated the well-attended International Tuba/Euphonium Conference held at UT in the Natalie L. Haslam Music Center.



**James Marvel** (opera) directed Verdi's *La Traviata* for New Orleans Opera and Cedar Rapids Opera; Delinger's *Amelia Lost* at the National Opera Center in New York City; and Wagner's *Das Rheingold* for North Carolina Opera.

- Chuckie Kirby
- Glorietta Klarich
- Jane W. and Lowry Franklin Kline
- Cherri Knox
- Knoxville Scottish Rite Foundation
- Knoxville Symphony Society
- Elisa Catherine Koehler
- Elizabeth M. Koester
- Karen S. and Robert T. Ladd
- William M. Law Jr. and Vickie H. Law
- Theresa Michaelene Lee and Jack Love
- Alexander and Roberta Limor
- Gregory F. Lohman
- Ruth Ann Looney
- Sharon B. Lord
- Floice R. Lund
- James F. Lyon III and Sandra Lyon
- Julia MacManus
- Julia A. and James E. Malia
- Tammy L. and David E. Marks
- Richard L. Mason
- Sandra L. and Lloyd J. Mathews
- Ross and Evelyn J. Mathews
- Brenda A. Maupin
- Veronica and Leon Maya
- Duane K. and Janice McNeeley McClelland
- Brendon Paul McConville and Annachiara Mariani
- Colene S. and John H. McCord
- Don J. and Rose A. McCullough
- Adele M. McDonald
- Daniel F. McGehee
- Douglas J. McKamey
- Hubert M. Meredith III
- Paul M. and Marion T. Miles
- Jacqueline L. Mines
- Fuad and Layla Mishu
- Tom and Jasmin Mishu
- M. Janice Mitchell
- Marissa Mitchell
- Kenneth M. Moffett
- Hal and Carolyn S. Moncier
- Marvelene C. Moore
- Andrew Paul Morales
- Michael T. and Judy Ann Morman
- Clark P. Morrell
- Rose L. and Harry L. Moseley
- Emerson J. and Joanne Riggins Mounger
- Charlotte Musgraves
- Music Study Club
- Cecily Janice Nall
- National Christian Foundation of East Tennessee
- Navarro Research and Engineering Inc.
- John M. Neal
- Milton H. Nelson
- Sandra J. Nelson
- Ruth H. and Theodore J. Newsome
- nief-norf
- Northern Illinois
- Nicholas J. and Jessica C. Northington
- David B. and Stephanie B. Northington





In addition to being a 2015–2016 Core Fulbright US Scholar, **Brendan McConville** (theory/composition) attended an international Fulbright conference in Rome, exchanging research and ideas, teaching, and learning about the language and culture. In the spring, McConville and **Jorge Variego** gave a presentation at the Regional Conference of the College Music Society Southern Chapter at Birmingham Southern College in Alabama on “Teaching with GlassCasts: Using Google Glass to Teach Music Theory.”



**David Royse** (music education) presented the session “Understanding Tennessee’s Fine Arts Portfolio Assessment” during the 2015 Tennessee C-NAfME Fall Kick Off at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. This spring, he presented the poster “Figuring It Out: Strategies for Improving Pre-Service Teachers’ Ensemble Error Detection Skills and Instructional Sequencing,” during the Southern Chapter of the College Music Society Annual Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, and gave two guest lectures at the James Madison University School of Music in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He currently serves as chair for the College Music Society’s National Committee on Academic Careers.

**Andrew Sigler’s** (composition) music was performed at the SoundNOW Festival, the National Association of Composers Conference, the 50th anniversary Society of Composers Conference, and at the Universities of South Carolina, Florida, Texas, and Tennessee. His work, “Finding the Air Up There,” was a semifinalist for the American Prize in the Chamber Music Composition division. He curated the UT Contemporary Music Festival in October with colleagues **Brendan McConville**, **Andy Bliss**, and **Jorge Variego**; and the National Association of Composers USA National Convention/SCI Snapshot Conference held at UT in May.



This summer, tenor **Andrew Skoog** (voice) made his debut with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra in Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* under the baton of Maestro Andrew Litton. It was Skoog’s 38th performance of the work. This past spring, he was the recipient of the Arkansas State University College of Fine Arts Distinguished Alumni Award and was the guest speaker for the college’s Convocation of Scholars luncheon in April. Skoog has been elected for a second term as president of the Tennessee Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. This fall he will begin serving as president of the UT chapter of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society.



This summer, **Greg Tardy** (saxophone) had a cover article in *Saxophone Today* magazine and was interviewed for *Cadence* magazine.

**Jorge Variego’s** (theory/composition) piece “Walls” for nine flutes received honorable mention in the American Prize 2015 in Composition. In the chamber music division, “La jungla” was a finalist in the 2016 SIME International Electro-acoustic Music Competition. His piece “Nunca tan lejos” for vibraphone, computer and video is part of the CD *Discordia* (2016), with music of composers from the Southeast. Variego also presented his work at the Via Stellae Festival in Santiago de Compostela, at the ISIM in Switzerland, and at the Sociedad de Música de Cámara de Bogotá in Colombia.

# Chih-Long Hu is the Sandra G. Powell Endowed Professor in Piano

One hundred and eight miles east on I-40. That’s the distance it took to find the new Sandra G. Powell Endowed Professor of Piano. Chih-Long Hu, a native of Taiwan, joined the faculty after 10 years at East Tennessee State University. Music has always been his passion even though his undergraduate degree is in civil engineering. Following his mother’s musical background, he received a DMA in piano performance from the University of Michigan. Hu has received honors in piano competitions in Taiwan, Italy, Spain, Japan, and the

United States. He has performed as a concerto soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. His performances have been broadcast across America on NPR, televised in Taiwan and Japan, and released on critically acclaimed recordings. His goals include building a world-class piano program by “recruiting talent from everywhere in the world. Music is never just about the sound or notes, it is a reflection of the culture and humanity. More diversity results in more culture, which results in more richness in our music.”



Welcome  
New  
Faces

**Geoffrey Herd**, Lecturer of Violin

**Chih-Long Hu**, Sandra G. Powell Endowed Professor of Piano

**Igor G. Lipinski**, Lecturer of Piano/Piano Pedagogy

**James (Fuller) Lyon IV**, Interim Assistant Director of Bands

**Rob Sivy**, Lecturer in Music Theory

- Northshore Elementary School
- James M. and Kathleen C. O’Hara
- Paul K. and Connie O’Landt
- Susan and Forrest L. Orr
- Jeffrey Louis and Joni Pappas
- Joe P. Pass
- Timothy K. Patterson
- Carole T. and Walter T. Pattison
- W. E. Patton III and Lynn V. Patton
- Molly Pattullo
- Elizabeth A. and Fred N. Peebles
- Elizabeth Lapsley Pendergrast
- Dale J. and Rita S. Pendley
- John C. Peterson
- Albert and Cathy E. Petty
- Nancy R. and Ronald E. Pevey
- Linda L. Phillips and Kenneth D. McFarland
- Pilot Corporation
- Lynn W. Pitts
- Powell Foundation
- James J. Powell Sr. and Sandra G. Powell
- Presser Foundation
- Gene Price
- Charles Radanovics
- Michael R. Ragsdale
- Gwynn W. Ramsey
- Alicia Therese Randisi-Hooker and Henry C. Hooker
- Daren A. Redman
- Janice R. Reeves
- Bobby and Bernadette Renfro
- Reuning & Son Violins Inc.
- Barbara Anne and Michael D. Reynolds
- Henry Q. Rinne
- Albert and Jennie Ritchie
- Rocky Hill School PTO
- Patricia L. Rogers
- John T. Rose
- Wanda Maria and Jan Rosinski
- Kevin M. and Jannet A. Ross
- Virginia B. and Peton L. Rowlett
- William S. and Elisabeth Rukeyser
- Terrance Len Schmidt
- Gary W. and Nancy M. Scott
- James J. Secor III
- Alan K. and Sally Sefton
- Arthur G. Seymour Jr. and Susan T. Seymour
- Susan G. Shanks
- Donald D. Sharpe
- Courtney W. Shea
- Andrew Lloyd Sigler
- Moshe and Ilanna I. Siman-Tov
- William A. and Joyce C. Simms
- Muriel A. Simpson
- Scott Andrew Skoog
- Kimberly Beth and Otto W. Slater
- Jennings B. and Carol Ann Smalley
- Marshunda A. Smith
- Susan C. Somaini
- J. Renfro Sproul
- Eloise E. Spurgeon
- Emma B. Stallings



# Ensemble Drums Up Creative Ideas for Percussion Instruments

BY WHITNEY HEINS

Recorders, egg shakers, ping pong paddles, and wind instruments.

These aren't items most would expect to see at a percussion performance. But UT Percussion Ensemble's performance at the Percussive Arts Society International Conference (PASIC) in San Antonio last fall was no ordinary performance. And the conference was no ordinary conference.

"Playing at PASIC is a crowning achievement for a university ensemble," said Andy Bliss, director of percussion studies at UT. "It is like the Final Four for percussion ensembles. About 5,000 university students and professors and professional musicians come from all over the world for this conference."

PASIC is the world's largest percussion organization, and UT was one of just four schools chosen to perform a showcase during the conference. Bliss and his 19 students, ranging from freshmen to master's level, prepared all fall for the event. They learned classics and commissioned well-known composers to write new pieces.

"Our performance had lots of styles of composition. For example, we had a highly esteemed minimalist composer write a keyboard quartet. Another composer we commissioned incorporated everything you could possibly imagine, from a recorder to an egg shaker," said Bliss.

Bliss curated a 55-minute performance that included excerpts from a dozen pieces covering a range of styles and abilities. There were no breaks and the students performed from memory.

"We didn't want to drain important time by bowing and having clapping in between the pieces," explained Bliss. "And having the students play by memory allowed them to have their eyes up and be more physically engaged. It also made a huge impression on the audience, especially on the really difficult pieces."

Bliss said the performance "couldn't have gone any better" and was "career changing" for his students.

And there's a chance more of his students will have this experience again.

"PASIC is such a great opportunity to showcase our students' talents. I couldn't be more proud of them."

Watch a recording of the live performance at [tiny.utk.edu/PASIC2015](http://tiny.utk.edu/PASIC2015).



Left to right, Emory Hensley, Nat Gallagher, Lawrence Montgomery, and Christian Swafford performing at PASIC

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Rachel Friedman** (née Grubb, BA '10, AC '14) is completing her PhD in music education and orchestral conducting at Florida State University and expects to graduate in May 2017. Her dissertation is titled "Youth Educational Symphonies (YES): A Franchise Business Model for Establishing and Maintaining Youth Orchestras." Over the summer, Friedman worked as assistant conductor for Kirk Trevor during his ninth season with the Missouri Symphony Orchestra.

**Tad Ennen** (MM '15) was a Young Artist with the Pensacola Opera during the 2015-16 season and an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera last summer.

**Todd Barnhill** (MM '15) sang title roles with the Asheville Lyric Opera and Nashville Opera during the 2015-16 season and was an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera last summer.

**Jasmeen Pantleay** (BM '16) participated in NAFME's Hill Day with TMEA, where she learned about the politics behind education, specifically music education. She was thrilled to meet Senator Lamar Alexander, a supporter of music education. "I'm so grateful for all of the opportunities UT and NAFME have provided me over the last few years!"

## Are you an alumnus with noteworthy news to share?

Take a moment to send us your music-related stories and photos, along with your degree, instrument/area, and year of graduation. Please send updates to [musicnews@utk.edu](mailto:musicnews@utk.edu).

WANT TO  
GIVE  
TO THE SCHOOL  
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Did you know that the School of Music relies on donations to support the major portion of our scholarship funds, since a great majority of our students require financial assistance? Through a donation to the school, you can assist in ensuring that the best and most talented students attend the UT School of Music.

There are many ways to give. The School of Music Enrichment Fund allows the school to allocate money toward important initiatives as needed. Specific funds, including the UT Opera Theatre, the Jazz Program, and the UT Symphony Orchestra, among many others, provide support to programs of your choice.

For more information on giving opportunities, visit [utk.edu/go/gv](http://utk.edu/go/gv) or contact Christopher Cox, director of development for the College of Arts and Sciences, by phone at 865-974-7692 or email [ccox65@utk.edu](mailto:ccox65@utk.edu).

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