Department News

Fall 2020 is a semester like no other. Despite the fires, gusting wind, lack of rain, and (of course) the pandemic, the Music Department’s students, faculty, and staff have been working hard to provide the most vibrant educational experience possible given these challenging times. All of our classroom courses, private studios, and ensembles are running virtually. Although online interaction is less than ideal, we’re making the best of it and everyone has risen to the occasion.

Additionally, we have been making music available to anyone within listening reach since early May, with three different kinds of musical offerings: our “Mid-Week Musical Interlude” podcast this summer, a bi-weekly Saturday Afternoon Concerts collaboration with KSPC of concerts from the Music Department’s archives, and three virtual concerts prepared specifically for this semester featuring many faculty who will be familiar to you: Tom Flaherty, Genevieve Feiwen Lee, Melissa Givens, Joti Rockwell, Cynthia Fogg, and Scott Graff.

You will read about many of our efforts in these pages; there are countless others that will go unmentioned but are equally critical. And of course, none of it would be possible without our dedicated staff: Cathy Endress, Elizabeth Champion, Sherrill Herring, Barry Werger, and David Vanderlip. From sending out microphones and instruments to our students, to addressing myriad technology challenges for, well, everything—special shout out to Barry!—and to redesigning this gazette, they have kept everything going.

We hope you and your loved ones stay safe in the coming months.

– Donna M. Di Grazia, Department Chair

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Guests & Special Concerts

GUEST COMPOSERS “zoomed” into two of Professor Flaherty’s classes this fall. The first, Jack Van Zandt, met with Music 96a (Electronic Music Studio), and later in the semester Juhi Bansal spoke with Music 184 (20th Century Music History & Theory).

VIRTUAL CONCERTS have made it possible to present three stunning performances this fall. The series opened with Celliola and Friends in keeping with their annual concert schedule. Genevieve Feiwen Lee followed with a solo piano recital “Of Dreams, Dance and Spirit.” Completing the series, soprano Melissa Givens offered “Out of the Shadows: Art Songs by Black Composers” with Prof. Lee. All three concerts are now available on-demand.

Performing Ensembles

This semester a contingent of the POMONA COLLEGE BAND has been meeting weekly to learn about the history of the wind band, listen to wind ensemble literature, and discuss relevant topics. Guest presenters have included Tom Flaherty, Stephen Klein and Leslie Schroerlucke. The band’s November 2019 performance of Prof. Flaherty’s Reading the Scales with soloist Leslie Schroerlucke was presented on the summer Mid-Week Musical Interlude podcast.

The 32-member strong POMONA COLLEGE CHOIR has been working hard in the online environment. Work on a virtual recording of James Erb’s famous arrangement of Shenandoah has been at the center of their focus, but they have also used class time for other learning experiences, including musicianship workshops, guest lectures, and for building community. Singers have spent considerable time not just learning the music, but also developing their technical skills in recording themselves (audio and video), and in imagining how to sing in an ensemble in which they cannot hear other singers around them other than on a guide track.

The Choir was also represented along with the Orchestra in two of the Mid-Week Musical Interlude podcasts featuring selections from previously recorded concerts.

Following the cancellation of their planned tour to Spain last May due to the coronavirus pandemic, the POMONA COLLEGE GLEE CLUB offered a virtual concert in May as part of the “Thursdays in the Cathedral” series hosted by the Fundación Caja Rural Jaén and the Jaén Cathedral in Jaén, Spain.

Last spring the POMONA COLLEGE JAZZ ENSEMBLE created a final virtual project including Sammy Nestico’s A Pair of Aces, featuring Caleb Caton ’20 (trumpet), Riley Fang ’20 (saxophone), and Luis Verdin ’22 (guitar), compiled by Barb Catlin. This fall, while normally an auditioned group, everyone who was interested was
accepted. The group is focusing on playing, “grilling and drilling,” scales, transpositions, ear training, and other exercises. They are also exploring writing compositions and arrangements, with students transcribing iconic recordings and writing their own works. The members even have kept up the Thursday post-rehearsal tradition of “Jazz Dinner”!

POMONA COLLEGE ORCHESTRA is operating in a hybrid format this semester, combining classroom-style meetings, guest appearances (including LA Philharmonic concertmaster Martin Chalifour), and virtual performance. Members are preparing individual recordings and meeting in group rehearsals hosted on the internet audio platform Cleanfeed, working on Prof. Lindholm’s specially composed Soundscape No. 1 for quasi-synchronous ensemble. Topics for class meetings have included “A Brief History of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra” and “The Best Beethoven Symphony You Don’t Know Very Well.” The orchestra has added 13 new participants this fall, in spite of pandemic-imposed limitations, and has many others planning to jump in once we get back to live music-making.

POMONA COLLEGE BALINESE GAMELAN ENSEMBLE, Giri Kusuma, continues to meet virtually and learn about Indonesian gamelan traditions from directors I Nyoman and Nanik Wenten. Students in the group have suling (flutes) from Bali that have been mailed to them to play for the semester, and they are working on creative recording projects.

POMONA COLLEGE WEST AFRICAN MUSIC ENSEMBLE has been running online with adaptations to take advantage of the unique conditions of remote teaching. Professor Nani Agbeli has students digging into the intricacies of polyrhythm by utilizing specially-prepared recordings with their individual performances on the foundational Ghanaian instrument, gankogui (double-bell).

While the pandemic has made it impossible to perform in ensemble fashion, nonetheless, creative ways have been found to deepen focus on certain aspects of traditions that preparing for concerts does not ordinarily permit.

Faculty News

Associate Professor Alfred Cramer continues to work on two major research projects. One aims at a unified analytical framework applicable to both melody in music and intonation in language. The second is a study of the musical and cultural meanings of Woody Guthrie’s song *This Land Is Your Land*.

In November, with his wife YouYoung Kang (Scripps College), he gave a presentation, “Ruth Crawford Seeger and Songs For Children,” at the Work and Family session during the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory. This presentation emerges from a 2015 Pomona faculty recital that involved the two, and several faculty members with a number of children.

Prof. Cramer is a 2020-21 fellow of the Pomona College Humanities Studio, and was recently elected President of the Pacific Southwest Chapter of the American Musicological Society.

Donna M. Di Grazia is continuing in her role as Co-Artistic Director of PRISM. The ensemble has launched a new website (prismensemble.org), and will release two virtual choral selections online in December, performed by eight of its members.

She also collaborated with Matthew Cook (’20) on documenting the history of Pomona’s choral program for the Department’s website (choral.pomona.edu). This is the second of two large-scale projects he took on during his undergraduate days, the other being a history of the college songs, also for the website.

In August Professor Tom Flaherty’s *Invention Extension* premiered online (with its inspiration, Bach Invention No. 3)
by pianist Lorenzo Marrasso. In October, the 5-C Cello Choir, led by Maggie Parkins, released an online performance of his Elegy for cello quartet, and the same month the Celliola and Friends concert included the premiere of his Dear Lieder with Melissa Givens, Scott Graff, Joti Rockwell, Cynthia Fogg, Tom Flaherty, and Genevieve Feiwen Lee, along with his Mandolin Songs with Melissa Givens and Joti Rockwell. On the same program, Prof. Flaherty performed Oliver Dubon’s (‘20) Untitled and Karl Kohn’s Soliloquy II both for solo cello. In November he was a featured composer for the Boston New Music Festival.

This summer Assistant Professor Melissa Givens judged the Boulder Bach Festival’s Inaugural World Bach Competition with over 270 submissions from 39 countries, and sang in the virtual premiere of To be a stranger by Eric Banks with Ensemble Diaspora, written for The School of Good Citizenship’s event, “I Once Was Lost But Now Am Found.”

In the fall she moderated a Pomona College panel, “Musical Connections to Interdisciplinary Studies,” for the Intensive Summer Experience Symposium. In October she sang in the Conspirare virtual concert “Unity: Songs of Invitation,” which premiered on the 30th of the month, and for which the ensemble members had to record their own audio and video. Prof. Givens has also recently judged the American Negro Spiritual Category of the National Association of Teachers of Singing-Texoma Region Student Auditions, and served as a master class clinician for voice students at the University of Puget Sound. On November 10 Prof. Givens appeared on the ABC game-show Jeopardy with the late Alex Trebek.

In August Genevieve Feiwen Lee was asked to contribute to the Garth Newel virtual summer festival. She offered her harpsichord performance of François Couperin’s Ordre in C from last February’s solo recital in Bridges Hall of Music. It is part of the “Virtual Concert 8: Go For Baroque!” concert available on YouTube. On October 2, Mills College presented their annual Darius Milhaud Concert virtually. This year it featured a number of Pomona faculty members who recorded their selections from Bridges Hall of Music. Prof. Lee performed solo piano music by Milhaud and accompanied Melissa Givens on songs by Milhaud, Satie, Bolcom, and Bacharach.

Having taken part in the Mid-Week Music Interlude podcasts, the Saturday Afternoon Concerts on KSMP, and on all the virtual concerts at Pomona this fall, her October solo piano program featured works by Juhi Bansal, Margaret Bonds, Gao Ping, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Karen Tanaka, Zenobia Powell Perry, and Joshua Uzoigwe.

Professor Eric Lindholm has responded to the distinctive circumstances of this fall’s Pomona College Orchestra by
writing Soundscape No. 1 for quasi-synchronous ensemble. The work is 13 minutes long for flexible instrumentation, and splits the ensemble into six parts, employing melodic and harmonic material that can co-exist in the same timespace without requiring precise coordination. Progress through the piece is paced by a color-coded slideshow. Although technological limitations will likely preclude a live performance, it should be possible to create a performance document with less than the usual amount of post-production editing, reflecting the degree of interaction more genuinely. Prof. Lindholm’s other major project this fall includes selecting several of the lesser-known art songs by pioneering Black composer Florence Price, and orchestrating them to create a concert suite. He is drawing from a recently edited volume by Richard Heard and a new recording of a different set of songs produced by the soprano Christine Jobson. Among the most striking songs are I Grew a Rose, on a pair of poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar called Promise and Fulfilment, and Don’t You Tell Me No, with a text by Price herself.

Emeritus Faculty


Karl Kohn has penned ten new works now available from Theodore Front Musical Literatures, Inc. They include: Cantilena II for viola and piano, Cantilena 2020 for cello and piano, and Cantilena III 2020 for viola, cello, and piano. Plus solo piano pieces: Three Intermezzos, More Bits and Pieces, Six Pandemic Preludes, and Four 2020 Visions; and two works for piano and violin: Conords and Meditation.

William Peterson’s album of performances on the Hill Memorial Organ in Little Bridges, Recital at Bridges Hall, was reviewed in the September 2020 issue of The Diapason. Peterson’s performance of Alexandre Guilmant’s Choral, Op. 49, No. 3 and Jacques Ibert’s Choral: Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt from the same album were featured on the summer Mid-Week Musical Interlude podcast with generous permission from Loft Recordings, LLC.

“GRAVITAS IS THE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN ONE HEARS DR. PETERSON... [HE] IS TO BE CONGRATULATED FOR HIS FIRST-RATE PLAYING...”

from The Diapason

Joti Rockwell, Associate Professor of Music, performed in this fall’s Celliola concert as a mandolinist and mandolist. Along with Hao Huang (Scripps College), he published an article in the journal EnviroLab Asia (vol. 3, issue 2, 2019) entitled “Nature and the Spirit: Tri Hita Karana, Sacred Artistic Practices, and Musical Ecology in Bali.” He continues to work on a research project involving the topic of music and motion, particularly as it relates to the pedal steel guitar.

Assistant Professor Gibb Schreffler has completed the manuscript for a monograph entitled Dhol: Drummers, Identities, and Modern Punjab. The book is the result of fresh fieldwork initiated two years ago that adds to his ethnographic research on hereditary-professional drummers of the past two decades. The work is scheduled for a release by University of Illinois Press in Fall 2021. Prof. Schreffler presented excerpts from this research in October at the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting in a paper titled “‘Real Folk’ or ‘Child’s Play’? Musical Stylistic Values as Expressions of Identity Among Dhol Drummers of Punjab.”
Student Activities

Among students participating in Pomona College’s RAISE (Remote Alternative Independent Summer Experience) projects were Nam Do (‘23) who researched the art songs of Vietnamese Composer Trinh Cong Son; and Dylan Yin (‘23) who composed an album, Connections, that explores the various connections within and among people. Both students worked with Prof. Givens.

Baritone Matthew Cook (‘20) presented a virtual Senior Recital of music by Bach, Chausson, Gershwin, Mozart, and Schumann on June 27 from Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield, Virginia. Originally scheduled in April, the date and location were changed due to the pandemic. Cook graduated last year as a music major and studied voice with Scott Lehmkuhl and organ with William Peterson.

Alumni Spotlight

Plucked string specialist Lucas Harris (‘96) has been working since fall 2019 on reconstructing, editing and recording the contents of the 1648 publication Scherzi di Sacra Melodia, a collection of twelve sacred motets for solo voice by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, a Benedictine nun who worked at the convent of Santa Radegonda in Milan. The publication survives without its instrumental bass line and the accompanying figures that tell the performer which chords to play above the notes. Six of the motets survive in arrangements for five-voice string accompaniment from which the bass line and the chords can be extracted. For the remaining six, both bass line and figures must be created from scratch. Lucas plans for the completed score to be published in the Web Library of Seventeenth-Century Music sponsored by the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music, and his article on the collection, co-authored with Prof. Robert Kendrick of the University of Chicago, will appear in the Italian journal Recercare. In addition, Lucas has produced and edited video performances of four of the motets which can be viewed on the Cozzolani Reunited website (lucasharris.ca/cozzolani-reunited). Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the vocal parts were recorded first by sopranos Suzie LeBlanc and Ariadne Lih in Montreal and the continuo bass parts were recorded later by Lucas on theorbo in his home studio in Toronto.

Lucas has been the regular lutenist for the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra for more than two decades, and performs with many other ensembles in the US and Canada including the Smithsonian Chamber Players and the Helicon Foundation. He is also a founding member of the Toronto Continuo Collective, the Vesuvius Ensemble, and the Lute Legends Ensemble. He was first introduced to the lute as a student at Pomona College, where he studied guitar with Jack Sanders, and has been active...
throughout his career as a teacher of the instrument, both privately and in connection with early music festivals and performing institutes. In addition to advanced studies in lute and continuo playing, Lucas completed graduate studies in choral conducting and has been the Artistic Director of the Toronto Chamber Choir since 2014. He has also directed projects for the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the Ohio State University Opera Program, Les voix baroques, and the Toronto Consort.

Alumni News

Composer Oliver Dubon (’20) has received a Fulbright Fellowship to study at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theater in Tallinn with renowned composer Toivo Tulev; the exact timing is yet to be determined. He has also been accepted to the 2021 RED NOTE New Music Festival Composition Workshop, joining only eight other successful applicants out of a pool of 175. Through RED NOTE, Oliver will work with Martin Bresnick of the Yale School of Music and compose a piece for either Mexico’s ONIX Ensemble or San Francisco’s Left Coast Chamber Ensemble.

“
A FULBRIGHT FELLOWSHIP TO STUDY AT THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND THEATER...
”

Jeremy Taylor (’18) was a recipient of the 2019 Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship. During his time in this program, Jeremy worked under the supervision of Kirk Delman at the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College. The Getty Marrow Internship is the largest and longest-standing diversity internship program in the visual arts in the United States, and since 1993 has supported paid positions for more than 3,200 interns at 175 organizations across Los Angeles County. A photo with Jeremy was featured in The Iris, the Getty Foundation’s blog, as part of the Foundation’s announcement of its release of the first major report on the impact of the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship Program.

Composer/performer Evelyn Saylor (’13) has enjoyed a number of recent premieres in Berlin, Germany, where she is currently based. Her Forgot to Remember, Remember to Forget, created with choreographer Ruben Reniers and originally commissioned by the Kontakte Festival 2019, Akademie der Künste Berlin in collaboration with Klangzeitort - KlangKunstBühne, Berlin Loudspeaker Orchestra and Universität der Künste Berlin, was performed as an online streaming video as part of the Soundance Festival Berlin on June 27, 2020. Her work Cyclus Cygnus: The Seven Ages of Swan for vocal/instrumental quintet and Electric Swan Ensemble, created in collaboration with Cherilyn MacNeil, was performed live outdoors at Strandbad Rahmersee in Berlin on August 29, 2020. And her composition Allongé, created with choreographer Julian Weber and featuring Evelyn as a singer, was premiered in Uferstudios on October 31, 2020.

Soprano Margaret Hunter (’00) was featured in a series of concerts with Capella de la Torre under the direction of Katerina Bäuml, in Braunschweig, Berlin, Hamburg-Harburg, Hannover, Kloster Michaelstein, and Stuttgart, Germany as well as Mt. St. Michel, France in fall 2020 as the ensemble celebrates its 15th birthday. Their recording of Air Music, with Margaret as one of the soloists, was issued on Deutsche Harmonia Mundi in 2019.

The ensemble Chatham Baroque, which includes plucked string specialist Scott Pauley (’87), and its affiliate Renaissance Baroque have announced their first-ever Digital Concert Series. This will consist of eight monthly concerts between October 2020 and May 2021. Five of these programs will feature Chatham Baroque and the other three will present guest performers. The concerts will be performed in venues around Pittsburgh, PA where the ensemble is based.

The Alumni section was compiled by Prof. Emeritus Graydon Beeks