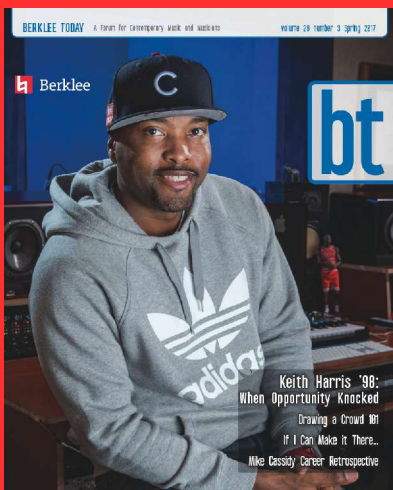


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**Tiwa Savage '06:  
The Queen of African Music**  
A Desert Rose  
Multifaceted Freelancers  
From Hollywood to Rome





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## Preserving Cultural History

By Heather Reid, Dean of Learning Resources

In 2012, the Stan Getz Library received a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant to establish the Berklee Archives. Administered by the National Archives, the NHPRC program promotes the preservation of materials that document American culture and history. The grant recognized the key role of Berklee in promoting and sustaining America's musical heritage.

The funds enabled us to solidify and protect the archives' foundational collections, which consist of Berklee-created materials together with collections of manuscripts, recordings, memorabilia, and other artifacts donated by significant musicians. Some of the notable materials include a collection of the published and unpublished compositions, teaching materials, and other artifacts of longtime faculty member John LaPorta; the Frank McGinley collection of memorabilia related to Duke Ellington and the rise of swing; Lawrence Berk's personal papers and notebooks on the Schillinger system; and *Jazz in the Classroom*, an innovative collection of scores and re-

cordings developed at Berklee from 1957 to 1980. A full listing of available collections can be found at the archives website: <https://archive.berklee.edu>.

Some of the most heavily requested items are from the extensive collection of campus event recordings. They include recordings of commencement concerts and ceremonies from 1969 to the present. In May we were awarded a Grammy Foundation grant to help preserve this collection. The funds will help digitize commencement speeches and concerts from the years 1985 to 2001, which now exist on fragile VHS tape. These commencement-related recordings capture legendary musicians imparting wisdom in commencement speeches and often performing onstage with Berklee students. Some of the featured musicians include Sting, Billy Joel, David Bowie, Dave Grusin, Chick Corea, Pat Metheny, and Bruce Lundvall. After David Bowie's death in 2016, the video of his 1999 commencement address received more than 150,000 views on YouTube.

Another exciting development for the archives is the recent acquisi-

tion of the personal collection of saxophonist David Liebman, a 2011 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Award. Liebman's extensive performing career spans more than four decades and he has appeared on more than 350 recordings. Liebman, also a noted educator, has enjoyed a long affiliation with Berklee and is a graduate guest artist for the Berklee Global Jazz Institute. The David Liebman collection will house published and unpublished manuscripts, recordings, photographs, and a significant amount of memorabilia such as concert posters, scrapbooks, reviews, and even set lists. We are excited to acquire this collection, which constitutes another milestone in establishing the Berklee Archives as an important national resource documenting key developments and figures in the history of contemporary music—especially jazz—in America.

While some archival collections can be accessed only on campus, several digitized collections can be fully accessed via the web. One such collection is the Berklee Oral History Project

(BOHP), which documents the rich and diverse history of Berklee and the Boston music scene from those who lived, shaped, and defined it. Interviews are available with such Berklee notables as Don Puluse, Herb Pomeroy, Dean Earl, Gary Burton, Joanne Brackeen, Toshiko Akiyoshi, and David Mash, who recently retired as Berklee's senior vice president of strategy and innovation after 40 years of service. You can see the BOHP collection at <https://archives.berklee.edu/bca-011-berklee-oral-history-project-interview-collection/bca-011-bohp>.

Another current project is the integration of the collections of the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and the college's archives. The conservatory's materials document the 150-year history of the institution through documents, photographs, scores, and recordings. A portion of the materials were used in the new book celebrating the Conservatory's 150th anniversary: *150 Stories: Celebrating 150 Years of People, Places, and Events that Defined Boston Conservatory*. Future generations will benefit from the glimpse at the past that these archival resources offer.

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# BERKLEE BEAT

## Welcoming the Class of 2021

On August 28, in the waning days of summer, President Roger H. Brown was among the many who welcomed members of the class of 2021 during the Entering Student Convocation ceremonies at the Berklee Performance Center. Introducing the theme of the day, “Tell Your Own Story,” Brown counseled as he shared his personal history against a backdrop of slides. He reminded the students and parents that everyone ultimately finds his or her own career path and that Berklee has much to offer for career preparation.

Berklee graduate Will Wells ’11 continued the theme in a pre-taped video greeting, in which he discussed his academic experience at the college and his current work. Wells is an in-demand recording engineer, producer, and songwriter, as well as a touring musician with Imagine Dragons and Logic.

Three musical numbers were interspersed throughout the program. Singer-guitarist Jonathan O’Neal and harmonica player-vocalist Sarah Messias took turns singing lead on two blues tunes. Messias interjected soulful harmonica licks between verses as O’Neal accompanied her playing his acoustic guitar with a bottleneck slide. Also featured was the Venezuelan Project, a sextet of student musicians from the north-most country in South America. They enlivened the crowd with their original music and unusual instrumentation that included cuatro and harp, alongside bass, piano, percussion, and vocals. The third number featured Boston Conservatory dancer Sadiya Ramos dancing to the solo violin accompaniment of Peyton Cook. Ramos was this year’s recipient of the Beyoncé Formation Scholars Award (see related story on page 12).

Betsy Newman, Berklee’s senior

vice president for student enrollment and engagement, drew on titles and lyrics of U2 songs as entry points for her advice to the new students. Cathy Young, executive director of Boston Conservatory at Berklee, shared her perspective as the mother of a college student. She encouraged the students to put themselves out there and engage in Berklee’s vibrant community.

A few days later, for college’s 12th annual opening day, faculty, staff, and administrators gathered in a large ballroom at the Westin Copley Place hotel. Addressing the large gathering, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost Larry Simpson stated, “Berklee is and was the dream of the new students. Now they are here and they have been sniffing out their artistic, intellectual, and physical boundaries. Let’s commit to meet their energy and uncertainties with our knowledge, wisdom, spirit, compassion, and commitment to their success.”

Cathy Young spoke of highlights since the merger of the Boston Conservatory and Berklee. But, Young said, “more exciting than where we have been are the opportunities for where we can go. We now have an opportunity to reimagine and redefine conservatory education for the 21st century. We have a chance to reframe Western classicism as essential but not immutable. A living language in dialogue with other languages and forms. Recognized as one among many classical forms throughout the world.”

Roger Brown spoke of new initiatives. He touched on an increased focus on helping students and alumni find job opportunities and plans to take the current diversity and inclusion framework to the next level.

Panos Panay, who is Berklee’s new vice president for innovation and strategy, presented a slide show illus-



Members of the Grooversity Drumming Network welcomed the new students outside of the 161 Massachusetts Avenue building.



Cathy Young, executive director for Boston Conservatory at Berklee, encouraged the incoming students to engage with Berklee’s vibrant community.

trating how the music industry has changed over the 26 years since he was a Berklee student. “Today, a global hit can have as many as 700,000 ways of making money and 50 intermediaries,” Panay said. “And there is no agreement among these people about how this money ought to flow and how to identify rights owners. This is why we launched the Open Music Initiative [OMI] a year ago in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab.” Panay and OMI are working to create a protocol for uniform identification of rights owners throughout the industry. Thus far, 200 companies—among them the major record labels and streaming companies—have joined the initiative.

Vocalist Kaitlyn Lusk was the Opening Day keynote speaker. She is best known for her role as soprano soloist in Howard Shore’s *Lord of the Rings Symphony*, which she has sung with 50 of the world’s top orchestras. Backed by a 10-piece ensemble of Berklee and Boston Conservatory musicians, Lusk sang three songs: an evocative rendition of the hymn tune “Amazing Grace,” followed by “Into the West” (from *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*), and an original song, “Into the Universe.”

Lusk discussed the need for artists to be individuals and properly showcase



Kaitlyn Lusk was the keynote speaker for the Opening Day exercises and sang three songs accompanied by a 10-piece ensemble.

their artistry. “When the microphone is handed to me, for better or worse, it is in my hands,” Lusk said. She stated that her approach to each new opportunity is “to breathe the present air into everything I do.”

In closing, she addressed the faculty members, saying, “You never know what a student might manifest from your words in their musicianship.” Together, the student and teacher are a team she said. “You are helping them to become professionals in their own way,” Lusk stated. “Through their own path, they will see that they can create their own life.” She closed her address by saying, “Put the music first, and the rest will fall into place.”



## Graduates Number 137 in Valencia

By Amanda Tornel

On July 8, the commencement celebrations at the Berklee Valencia, Spain campus kicked off with a concert titled “La Nit de Berklee,” that attracted thousands to Valencia’s Hemisfèric. The concert also marked the fifth anniversary of the graduation of the class of 2013 with an alumni reunion that drew performers, composers, producers, and other music industry professionals from around the world.

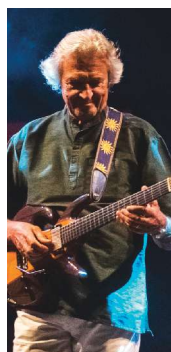
The concert program featured performances by the commencement honoree, superstar guitarist John McLaughlin as well as DJs and student performers. The show culminated in a medley of songs by Leonard Cohen, George Michael, and Chuck Berry, honoring three of the musical icons that passed away during the past year.

Two days later on July 10 at Valencia’s Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, 137 new graduates, hailing from 30 nations, received graduate degrees in music production, technology, and in-

novation; scoring for film, television, and video games; and contemporary performance with a concentration in production; and global entertainment and music business.

During the proceedings Berklee President Roger H. Brown presented an honorary doctor of music degree to the legendary jazz-fusion guitarist, composer, and bandleader John McLaughlin. “Among the innumerable guitarists of the world, John McLaughlin has stood far above the crowd for half a century,” Brown noted as he introduced McLaughlin. Best known as the founder of the famed Mahavishnu Orchestra, McLaughlin has worked with such artists as Miles Davis, Chick Corea, Carlos Santana, Paco de Lucia, and many others in a career spanning five decades.

In accepting the degree, McLaughlin told the audience, “The role of music is today what it has always been in the past. It is the universal lan-



John McLaughlin sits in with the student band at the commencement concert.



From the left: President Roger Brown, honoree John McLaughlin, and vice president for academic affairs/provost Jay Kennedy

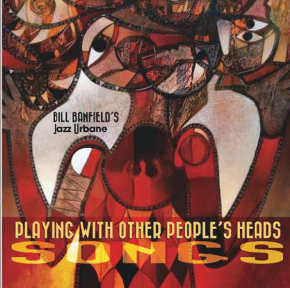
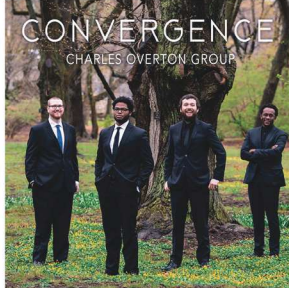
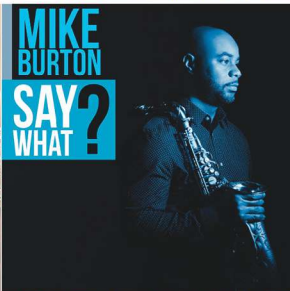
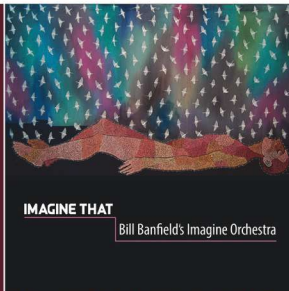
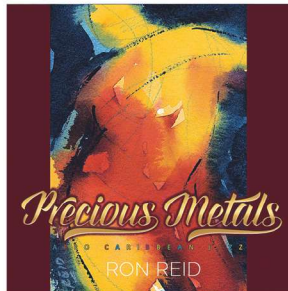
guage of love, both human and divine. Music is our highest form of collective unity, since in any given concert there will be Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and atheists, all under one roof, enjoying music.”

McLaughlin also shared his thoughts on the centrality of jazz, noting, “From its early beginnings, jazz was—and is today—an integration of musical cultures.” He said that jazz can

don the crown of global music given its influences in Central and South America, the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

McLaughlin concluded by telling the new grads, “Whatever we give to music with love and dedication is repaid a thousand times over back to us in ways that defy categorization. To be a musician is one of the greatest privileges.”

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# Mayer Tunes Up Songwriters

By Bryan Parys



John Mayer shares his input with Carrie Sullivan '17.

During a June visit to Boston for two shows at Fenway Park with Dead & Company, songwriter and guitar titan John Mayer '98 gave a songwriting master class at the college. Professor Pat Pattison handpicked six top songwriting students in Mayer's class held at the Berklee Performance Center. The "six incredibly frightened students," as Pattison joked, each performed a song onstage for Mayer and 500 jubilant peers looking on, and then listened as Mayer provided generous, constructive feedback, and shared the wisdom he has gained as one of his generation's most celebrated writers and performers.

"If you're a songwriter in the room, we already know each other," Mayer said, setting a tone of camaraderie. "There is no luxury form of songwriting. It's no easier for me than it is for you. We go to the same place. We try just as hard for just as long."

Throughout the two-plus-hour event, Mayer kept the atmosphere welcoming, whether it was through offering lyric-writing advice ("Make things tangible," he said), or keeping it light with a relatable, self-aware sense of humor ("Oh my God, I'm back in the BPC talking about flat-sixes!"). In turn, his cool-professor vibe helped give all the songwriters confidence to deliver their impressive songs and not to flinch when he suggested they sing something again with a new line or chord change, and sometimes harmonized with them on a second run-through.

First up was Callie Sullivan singing "The Sinner." Mayer complimented her on her lyric couplets: "You are the summer, I am the winter/ You are the Bible, I am the sinner." The song's tonal center was A minor, and Mayer suggested she play it again with an unexpected D chord at the coda. An audible "Ah" of approval swept through the audience as members heard the change.

Hearing Charlotte Lessin sang her song "Faith," Mayer was enthusiastic. "The music sounds like the message of the lyrics," he said. "I know you from this tune." He noted the juxtaposition of Lessin's piano accompaniment and harmonic choices with the specificity of the lyrics. "You are delving into the abstract," he said, "flying over an idea rather than parachuting into it. I want you to be weirder. Say things that only you understand."

After hearing Brian Walker sing "Let Me In," Mayer said, "I'm going to be a little harder on this one because it wants to be in the pop realm." He advised Walker to spend further time on the lyrics. "Your fun with this song is over," Mayer said regarding bursts of inspiration vis à vis the effort required to craft a finished song. "It will be all work from here. Crack the code." As an example, he suggested Walker try reversing the order of the lines in his final chorus.

Mayer followed the epic workshop session with an impromptu performance at the piano of "Simple Song" (unreleased) and "You're Gonna Live Forever in Me," from his *Search for Everything* album. He spoke about his lyrics and offered a glimpse of the inner-workings of his own process. Afterward, he waxed reflective, saying that songwriting is a mystical process of elusive self-discovery where you "try to truly see yourself in a way that's just beyond—most of the time—your ability to comprehend."

His parting words to the students again emphasized that they are equals. "I promise, you are real songwriters... You're just waiting on a check," he said, adding that turning this into a career is close on the horizon. "You've already crossed all the divides except the one where you get to do it for a living, which you're on the edge of doing."

# Mashine Room Dedicated

By Mike Keefe-Feldman

On September 8, Berklee honored David Mash B.M. '76 with the dedication of the Mashine Room in the college's 150 Massachusetts Avenue building as faculty, administrators, trustees, alumni, staff, friends, children, and grandchildren gathered around the retired senior vice president for innovation, strategy, and technology. Mash served as a Berklee faculty member prior to becoming an administrator, and also enjoyed a long career working with companies such as Moog, who presented a Moog Modular IIIc synthesizer to Berklee for the occasion as a salute to Mash. The instrument was funded through a \$20,000 donation in Mash's name from Chris Halaby, CEO of KVR Audio and a member of Berklee's Presidential Advisory Council, and an in-

kind donation from Moog Music.

Michael Bierylo, chair of the Electronic Production and Design Department that Mash founded, noted that among Mash's many contributions, "one of the most important is that he got this bright idea in the 1980s that every musician would be using technology and that the synthesizer was an instrument that deserved recognition and study as any other."

"What a great honor," Mash told those gathered, as he struggled to hold back emotions built up over four dedicated decades at Berklee. "Thank you very much."

Since retiring, Mash has been busy composing and recording music, recently releasing a new album, *Seasons*, under his Mashine Music moniker.



Berklee President Roger H. Brown (left) and David Mash, recently retired senior vice president of innovation, strategy, and technology, cut the ribbon at the dedication of the Mashine Room named in Mash's honor.



Michael Bierylo (right), chair of the Electronic Production and Design Department, and Brown shared words of gratitude for Mash's 40 years of service to Berklee.



# A New Crop of Academic Leaders

By Nick Balkin, Libby Botsford, Allen Bush, and Tori Donahue



Cathy Young



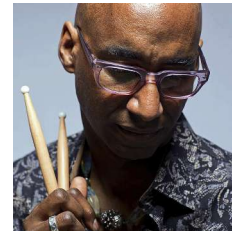
Michael Shinn



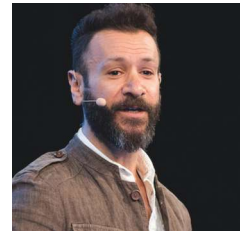
Tonya Butler



Carin Nuernberg



Omar Hakim



Panos Panay

## The Boston Conservatory at Berklee

On June 6, **Cathy Young** was named the executive director for Boston Conservatory at Berklee making her the first woman to lead the 150-year-old institution. Young formerly served as the conservatory's dean of dance, a position she has held since joining the institution in 2011. She will oversee the conservatory's Dance, Music, and Theater divisions, as well as all operations for the institution. The role of executive director is a new position for the conservatory, which merged with Berklee in 2016.

Under Young's leadership, the dance division at the conservatory grew from 60 students in 2011 to 150 students today. During her six-year tenure, she has overseen the implementation of a comprehensive new curriculum designed to prepare dance artists for 21st-century entrepreneurial dance careers.

A nationally recognized master teacher, Young has taught and conducted residencies at more than 30 colleges, universities, and dance festivals across the country.

**Michael Shinn** has been named as the dean of music for Boston Conservatory at Berklee and will oversee the school's Music Division. An accomplished pianist, Shinn has worked as a performer, educator, entrepreneur, and arts advocate. Previously, he served as the chair of keyboard studies at the Juilliard School of Music, where in addition to teaching, he developed digital learning tools and courses for Juilliard's online program.

In 2011, Shinn established and directing pianoSonoma, a successful music festival in Sonoma County, CA.

## Music Business/Management

**Tonya Butler** is the new assistant chair of the Music Business/Management Department. She is the first woman to hold a leadership role in the department. An accomplished educator, attorney, administrator, and motivational speaker, Butler comes to Berklee from Minnesota State University, Mankato. There she directed the Music Industry Studies program. She previously served as the coordinator of music business at the University of Memphis and course director of entertainment marketing and media distribution at the Los Angeles Film School.

Prior to teaching, Butler spent 14 years as an entertainment attorney working in-house for record and publishing companies and film studios.

## Percussion Department

**Omar Hakim**—a master drummer who has played on countless hits, from David Bowie's "Let's Dance" to Daft Punk's "Get Lucky"—is the new chair of the Percussion Department.

One of the most influential drummers of the past 40 years, Hakim is renowned for his versatility. He has hundreds of albums to his credit and has collaborated with scores of prominent artists, including Miles Davis, Madonna, Lionel Richie, Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, Mariah Carey, Chaka Khan, D'Angelo, and others.

A native of New York City, Hakim took up the drums at five years old. During the 1980s, he rose to prominence as a member of the seminal fusion band Weather Report.

He later recorded with Bowie, Miles Davis, and Sting. In the 1990s, Hakim toured and recorded with

Lionel Richie and Madonna. In 2014, Hakim released his critically acclaimed third solo album, *We Are One*.

## VP for Innovation and Strategy

**Panos Panay** has been promoted to vice president for innovation and strategy. Panay, a Berklee graduate who founded the artist booking platform Sonicbids, will remain the managing director of Berklee's Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship (BerkleeICE). In that role, Panay led the founding of the Open Music Initiative, whose mission is to create an open protocol for identifying and compensating creators of music.

Panay will work across all Berklee divisions, departments, and campuses to develop, advance, and implement innovative new programs and overall strategic direction for the institution. This will include developing relationships, partnerships, and future-oriented projects that fulfill Berklee's vision to transform arts education and to empower artists to better the world.

Additionally, Panay will explore the role that emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality—plays in the education and creative industries through the development of various learning and research-based initiatives.

## Film Scoring Department

**Sean McMahon** has been named assistant chair of the Film Scoring Department. Originally from Toronto, Canada, he earned bachelor's degree in Film Scoring from Berklee in 2000 and later completed the University of Southern California's (USC) Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television program in Los Angeles.

Previously, he worked for Hollywood film composer Christopher Young as a project manager and lead orchestrator on the films *Spider-Man 3*, *The Grudge*, *Ghost Rider*, and *Tyler Perry's A Madea Christmas*, among others. Additionally, he penned orchestrations for composer John Ottman and scored the video games *Jump Dewds!* and *Strata*.

## Berklee Online

**Carin Nuernberg** has been promoted to vice president of online education. A foundational team member of Berklee Online, Nuernberg played an instrumental role in creating the design and development model for teaching music online. Under her leadership, Berklee Online has launched more than 180 courses and earned recognition from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association, winning its best online college course award for eight years in a row and a Strategic Innovation in Online Education award.

In her new role, Nuernberg will oversee the development and expansion of Berklee Online's graduate and undergraduate degree programs, instructor-led courses and certificate programs, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and campus events for online students.

In addition, Nuernberg will collaborate across the college to create flexible and affordable pathways for students in pursuit of their educational goals. She will oversee the college's book publishing operation, Berklee Press, and provide leadership for ensuring accreditation, accessibility, and a unified approach to program and curriculum development.

# Africana Studies Marks A Decade at Berklee

By Dr. Bill Banfield

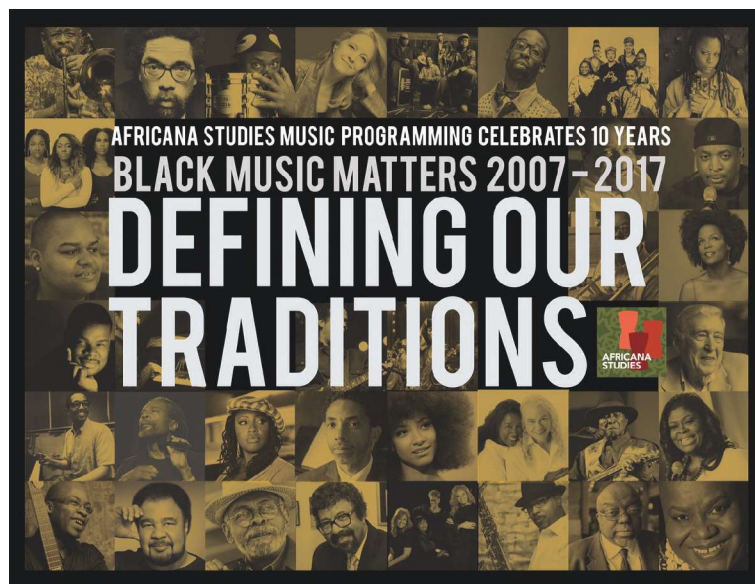
This fall, Berklee's Africana Studies program is entering its second decade. Since the program's founding in 2007, we have achieved a number of the things we set out to accomplish.

Over the past 10 years, we've developed a minor in Africana Studies, a range of classes, clinics, concerts, and film and lecture series. We've also sponsored black music studies professorships with Amiri Baraka, Bobby McFerrin, and Lalah Hathaway '90.

The program has invited more than 75 of the world's leading artists and scholars in the field including Geri Allen, Dr. Billy Taylor, King (featuring Paris Strother '08), founding members of the Sun Ra Arkestra, George Duke, Robin Kelley, George Clinton, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Stanley Crouch, Regina Carter,

Richard Smallwood, Mint Condition, Maria Schneider, the Clark Sisters, Tye Tribbet, David Honey Boy Edwards, Lionel Loueke '00, Esperanza Spalding '05, and many more.

This past April, we celebrated the decade with a concert titled Black Music Matters 2007–2017: Defining Our Traditions, which featured Stokley Williams (Mint Condition), Morris Hayes (the music director for Prince), and Dr. Patrice Rushen. We opened up the concert with a video of the inaugural concert 10 years prior, during which Dr. Cornel West said, "The music allowed us to be bigger, to be true to the music, connecting . . . being compassionate, justice-seeking, freedom-finding, willing to sacrifice for young people who are 100 percent our future. That's why black music matters."



In our classes today, we are talking about "music educating" as contemporary ethnomusicology. We focus on thinking through carefully and deeply the meaning, purpose, reasons for, and impact of music through the music itself: the

lyrics and images and what they represent in these times. For us, it is about cultivating and sharpening creative minds and upholding great musical traditions in the neighborhoods, cities, nation, and world. That's artistic citizenry.

## A Berklee Footprint in New York

On September 19, a crowd of engineers, producers, artists, and members of the Berklee community—many with ties to the iconic Power Station recording studio in New York City—gathered at that facility for the announcement by President Roger H. Brown about the establishment of Power Station at BerkleeNYC. A new private-public partnership, it combines philanthropic support and funding from the City of New York to preserve the famed recording studios where countless albums by music superstars and Broadway cast recordings were made. As well, construction of new cutting-edge facilities that will embrace the future of music, entertainment, and education is being planned.

Julie Menin, the commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, told the audience that the new project will support vital components of the city's \$21 bil-

lion music ecosystem. "That's why we and our partners at [the city's Economic Development Corporation] were thrilled to invest \$6 million of city funds in this truly visionary partnership," Menin said.

Stephen Webber, executive director of Power Station at BerkleeNYC, Roger Brown, and Berklee trustee Pete Muller—the moving force behind it all—gave details about the history of the project.

Rick DePofi BM '81, known for his production, arranging, and engineering work for Paul McCartney, Rosanne Cash, Elvis Costello, and composing for film, TV, and commercials, had originally suggested the idea for the studio to Muller.

In the course of the evening, Brown presented Berklee's American Master Award to DePofi, stating, "You have done so much for the Berklee community. If you hadn't recorded here and tossed around your crazy idea with Pete, we might not be here tonight"

## Scholarship Named for Fred Taylor

On September 12, an all-star cast of musicians performed at the Berklee Performance Center to pay tribute to Fred Taylor, Boston's revered jazz promoter and concert producer. Taylor has devoted more than five decades of his life to booking countless musicians primarily in jazz, but in popular music too, building careers in the process.

Saxophonist and vocalist Grace Kelly BM '12, was the creative force behind the event, a fundraiser to establish an endowed scholarship at Berklee in Taylor's name. Kelly reached out to president Roger Brown who offered the BPC as the venue. Together with her parents Irene Chang and Bob Kelly, Grace Kelly assembled a team to handle all logistics.

Acting as the evening's cohost with Boston media personality Robin Young, Kelly stated that 100 percent of the ticket revenue went toward the scholarship fund because the featured musicians traveled at their own expense and performed gratis. Among the night's performers whose careers Taylor boosted were Kurt Elling, Monty Alexander, Bo and Bill Winiker, Danilo Pérez, Kat Edmonson, Terri Lyne Carrington, Catherine Russell, John Patitucci, James Montgomery, and Grace Kelly. The core backing band included faculty members Jason Palmer (trumpet, music director), Tim Ray (piano), and Mark Walker (drums), plus James Dale (bass).

Among the musical highlights were vocalists Kat Edmonson's gentle samba "What Else Can I Do," and Kurt Elling's dynamic delivery of "Nature Boy." Kelly performed throughout, but really shined on her gospel-tinged original, "Trying to Figure it Out." Pianist Monty Alexander, backed by Patitucci and Carrington, rendered "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as a shuffle. Carrington, Pérez, and Montgomery each led their own energetic sets.

Speaking rather than playing, Pat Metheny recalled fondly Taylor's encouragement when he was just 21. He noted that subsequently they have worked together for the past 42 years.

In 1965, Taylor opened Paul's Mall and the Jazz Workshop, storied adjoining nightclubs at 733 Boylston Street. At the Jazz Workshop he booked then-rising jazz stars John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, George Benson, and countless others. He hosted emerging pop artists such as Billy Joel, Aerosmith, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Marley, Bette Midler, and others at Paul's Mall.

Throughout the evening, fond reminiscences flowed from the artists onstage and others via video. Taking the mic, the octogenarian Taylor thanked all for their words and music. He remarked that he'd never married or had a family. To that, statement, Robin Young replied warmly, "Fred, we are your family."



From the left: Stephen Webber (executive director of Power Station at BerkleeNYC), Pete Muller (Berklee trustee), Julie Menin (commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment), and Berklee president Roger H. Brown celebrate Berklee's establishing a center in New York at the former Power Station recording studios. (See related story on page 13)



# FACULTY NOTES



Mark Kohler



Catherine Bent



Mark Zaleski



Beth Denisch

Music by professor **Marti Epstein** was performed in September at Trinity Church in New York City during the Time's Arrow Festival celebrating the music of Anton Webern.

Professor **Ellen Francese** received a Faculty-Led Innovations in Education grant to introduce service learning to the Berklee curriculum. The initiative aims to develop socially responsible student citizens and break down the traditional boundaries of the classroom.

Professor **Dennis Montgomery III** appears on camera with his Praise of Zion Choir in the final scene of the movie *Detroit* performing James Cleveland's gospel song "Peace, Be Still."

Assistant professor **Sergio Bellotti** did a visiting artist residency at Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano, Switzerland, and taught at a percussion summer camp in Taipei, Taiwan, hosted by the Ju Percussion Group.

Professor **Bill Elliott** and Greg Anthony Rassen wrote the orchestrations for the Broadway musical *Bandstand*, which opened in May. Their orchestrations received nominations for Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards.

Assistant professor **Christi Catt** received a Berklee faculty grant to write the book *The Kinesthetic Singer: Lessons on Singing from Yoga and Basketball*. It is available in the Berklee Bookstore.

Berklee faculty members **David Tronzo, Ned Rothenberg, David Fiuczynski, Randy Roos, and Amy Bellamy** were guest artists during the summer residency of the dub-jazz collective Club d'Elf at the Lizard Lounge in Cambridge, MA.

Professor **John Funkhouser** toured Sweden as the pianist and musical director for Swedish singer Anna-Frida Abrahamsson and a band that included Lars Lamburger '80.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council named assistant professor **Jason Palmer** a 2017 Fellow in Music Composition. Palmer recently completed a semester as a visiting assistant professor for Harvard University's music department.

Associate professor **Daniel Ian Smith** appears on Brian McCarthy's CD *The Better Angels of Our Nature* produced by Linda Little '05, featuring Civil War-era music adapted for a nine-piece jazz ensemble.

The Omaha Symphony Orchestra, led by music director Thomas Wilkins, performed the orchestral suite *The Great Chaplin* by associate professor **Elena Roussanova Lucas**. Additionally, *Fanfare* magazine published an interview and reviews of a CD featuring her composition *Moments of Arrival*.

Assistant professor **Mark Kohler** purchased the Eames Drum Company in Saugus, MA, and builds custom snare drums and drum sets when he's not teaching at Berklee.

Associate professor **Francisco Noya** has been appointed as the new music director and conductor of the Boston Civic Symphony Orchestra.

Associate professor **Ben Houge** developed a class exploring the link between music composition and gastronomy, working in collaboration with chefs from the Berklee Dining Hall. Student participants created a soundtrack to a four-course meal at America's Test Kitchen.

Professor **Susan Rogers**, former recording engineer for Prince, wrote the album liner notes and was a consultant to Warner Bros. for their four-disc set *Purple Rain: Deluxe Edition* by Prince and the Revolution.

On October 7, associate professor of guitar **Jon Wheatley** will perform with vocalist Daryl Sherman at Chan's in Rhode Island. On October 28, he and vocalist-associate professor **Patrice Williamson** will present songs from their recent CD *Comes Love* for Lexington Community Music.

Assistant professor **Jennifer Andrews** launched a summer writing program at Port Townsend School of the Arts in Washington State. Andrews is currently writing a book titled *Proud Flesh*.

Cellist **Catherine Bent** recorded her first album of original compositions in Rio de Janeiro with engineer João Ferraz '04, and worked on a tribute album to Jacob do Bandolim. She also toured Germany with guitarist and vocalist Elisabeth Horst '14. Visit [elisandcatherine.com](http://elisandcatherine.com).

This Fall assistant professor **Geneviève Leclair** will conduct the National Ballet of Canada and the Houston Ballet.

Professor **Victor Wallis** penned the review essay "13th and the Culture of Surplus Punishment," which appeared in the August issue of *San Francisco Bay View* (<http://sfbayview.com/2017/07/13th-and-the-culture-of-surplus-punishment/>).

Former professor **Gregory Fritze** won first prize in the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Composition Contest held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in July. Fritze currently teaches summer programs at Berklee Valencia.

Piano faculty members **Hey Rim Jeon, Robert Christopherson, Ross Ramsay, and Tim Ray** contributed arrangements to the new book, *Berklee Jazz Standards for Solo Piano*, published by Berklee Press.

Professor **David Fiuczynski** returned to his German roots with the CD *Innovative Microtonal Jazz*, featuring music inspired primarily by German expressionist painting and art. Visit [rarenoiserecords.com](http://rarenoiserecords.com).

The fourth edition of the Cambridge Jazz Festival, cofounded by interim dean of the Performance Division **Ron Savage**, attracted 8,000 people on July 30. Performers included Ron Savage with Eula Lawrence, **Tia Fuller**, and Pieces of a Dream.

Assistant professor **Renato Milone** won a grant to re-arrange and re-record all examples of horn writing used for all Berklee's Arranging 1 and 2 classes and more.

In June, faculty members **George Garzone**, **Phil Grenadier**, and **John Lockwood** were sponsored by Jazz at Lincoln Center for a tour of Mexico.

Professor **Laszlo Gardony** released the solo piano album *Serious Play* featuring jazz standards and spontaneous improvisations. Visit [lgjazz.com](http://lgjazz.com).

Professor **Tom Stein** was the key-note speaker at the U.S.-Sino China Online Higher Education Conference held in May at the Chongqing College of Art, Science, and Technology in Chongqing, China.

Assistant professor **Marshall Gilkes** was voted the number-one rising star trombonist in the *DownBeat* magazine critics poll.

Under the direction of associate professor **Ned Rosenblatt**, the Berklee Vocal Jazz Ensemble won a *DownBeat* magazine student music award for outstanding performance.

Assistant professor and guitarist **Amanda Monaco** celebrated the release of her latest CD *Glitter* at the Cornelia Street Cafe in New York City. Visit [amandamonaco.com](http://amandamonaco.com).

Professor **Oscar Stagnaro** (bass) performed at Scullers in July with his brother Ramon Stagnaro (guitar) and son Paulo Stagnaro '10 (percussion).

"The Tree House" by professor **Beth Denisch** was performed multiple times in Scotland in June. In July, she presented a paper at the Feminist Theory and Music 14 Conference at San Francisco State University.

In July, associate professor **Marcelle Gauvin** taught at the Contemporary Commercial Music Voice Pedagogy Institute at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA.

Assistant professor **Mike Tucker** recently performed with the Arturo Sandoval Quartet and is featured on bassist Dave Zinno's latest album, *River of January*.

Professor **Mark Walker** played drums on Steve Khan's album *Backlog* with Mike Mainieri, Bob Mintzer, Randy Brecker, Marc Quiñones, Bobby Allende, Ruben Rodriguez, and Rob Mounsey '75.

*Continued on page 10*

## faculty profile

### Bruce Gertz '76

### Not Lightening Up

by Mark Small

In June, after returning to Berklee from a semester-long sabbatical, bass professor Bruce Gertz had to shift gears abruptly. He'd spent the prior months focused on developing a practice app, recording a new album with four of his faculty peers, and releasing three additional CDs of original music on his Open Mind Jazz label. Once back on campus, he dove into his duties in the summer bass workshop with Victor Wooten, the Berklee Global String Intensive, and Berklee's Five Week Summer Performance Program. "So far, I've been pretty busy this summer, and it isn't going to lighten up," Gertz says.

He's not worried, though. Since joining the Berklee faculty in 1976, Gertz has managed teaching full time, playing countless jazz gigs, writing and recording material for 15 albums as a leader (and playing on many more as a sideman), in addition to raising two daughters with his wife. He'll easily handle the tempo of the summer of 2017.

Gertz grew up in Providence, RI, in a family with multigenerational musical roots. His grandfather had been a classical violinist until the Great Depression hit and he took a job delivering fruit. His mother played piano and sang, and his father had a more unusual musical gift. "He was a whistler with pretty good pitch and rhythm," Gertz recalls. "He'd whistle songs by George Gershwin, Harold Arlen, and Jerome Kern around the house." Because he was steeped in blues and rock as a kid, Gertz didn't realize where the melodies his father whistled came from until much later when he began learning jazz standards as a Berklee student.

Gertz found his musical voice in the bass after trying piano and guitar. His initiation to jazz came when his high-school friend, saxophonist Ed Tomassi (now a Berklee professor), told him he needed to listen to Bird. Another friend gave him the *Blues & Roots* album by Charles Mingus. "Listening to that, I heard the blues in a new way and was totally blown away," Gertz remem-

bers. "I went to the library and read everything I could find on Mingus." As a newly enrolled Berklee student, Gertz had a chance meeting with Mingus at Boston's Jazz Workshop. "He had these huge hands and thick fingers—made for the bass," Gertz recalls. "I'd been really into electric bass, but after meeting Mingus, I got serious about playing upright bass."

Gertz was a composition major and studied with Berklee's classical elder statesmen Bill Maloof, John Bavicchi, and Jeronimas Kacinskas, writing symphonic, chamber music, and more for his portfolio. Ultimately, though, his writing veered toward jazz. To date, Gertz has recorded 200 of his own works. "My catalog keeps growing because I write every day," he says. "Sometimes I write a whole song, other times it's just a snippet or an exercise for bass."

Gertz's acoustic bass teacher at Berklee was John Neves, who had played with such jazz giants as George Shearing, Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan, and Herb Pomeroy. He was in high demand locally and began asking Gertz to cover for him when he was double-booked. "John would throw you into the deep end of the pool sometimes," Gertz recalls. "Just after I graduated, he asked me to sub for him at [the nightclub] Sandy's Jazz Revival to play with [pianist] Ray Bryant, [drummer] Alan Dawson, and [vocalist] Helen Humes. But he didn't tell them he was sending a sub.

"I showed up and everyone was asking, 'Where's Neves?' Alan Dawson was really nice and said he was looking forward to playing with me. But Ray Bryant had an attitude and was wondering who this punk was. I had to prove myself on the bandstand. During the set, Helen announced that there was a very special guest in the audience, Count Basie. She invited him to sit in. Dawson, who had been playing for years, said he'd always wanted to play with Basie. And here I was playing with all of these people for



Bruce Gertz '76

the first time! Basie called a blues in F, and every note he played was perfect. It was so much fun."

Gertz began playing steadily around Boston and built his résumé working with jazz mainstays such as Gary Burton, Billy Eckstine, Gil Evans, Maynard Ferguson, Bill Frisell, Jerry Bergonzi, Tom Harrell, Joe Lovano, and many others. He also had a weekly gig at Michael's Jazz Club on Gainsborough Street backing Mike Stern and his guest artists just before the guitarist joined Miles Davis's band in the early 1980s.

Gertz began teaching ensembles and bass labs at Berklee during his senior year. Soon after, electric bass was recognized as a principal instrument at Berklee. "When I got hired, there weren't a lot of electric bass teachers here," Gertz says. [Former department chair] Rich Appleman brought me in early on. Together with the other faculty members we really built up the department."

During his 41 years at Berklee, Gertz has devoted lots of energy to education. Along the way, he has mentored some top bassists, including Esperanza Spalding '05, Matt Garrison '92, Stu Hamm '80, Kai Eckhardt '87, and Victor Bailey '80.

"I've loved seeing these students succeed," Gertz says. "They come back [to campus] and tell everyone that they studied with me. Then I see the things that they are doing, and they're things I can't do! I have my own thing, but having incredible players always telling people that I was their teacher is humbling."

Gertz remains highly motivated. He has created a series of instructional videos and written six method books, the latest, *Berklee Jazz Bass*, was cowritten with fellow bassists Whit Brown and Rich Appleman. And there is more in the pipeline. "I have other books and the app to finish," he says. "I also have a group album that needs to be mixed and I will release my third solo bass record. I just turned 60, and I want to get all of this stuff out. If I don't do it now, when will I do it?"



Professor **Neil Olmstead** served as a distinguished fellow at the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences in Rabun Gap, GA, in July, and composed a set of etudes and preludes for piano.

Assistant professor **Alonzo Harris**, the musical director and keyboardist for the band H.E.R., opened dates of the Bryson Tiller Set It Off tour of North America.

Music Business/Management Department chair **Don Gorder** gave lectures on copyright law and music licensing at the Recording Innovation and Music Culture Symposium and Workshop, sponsored by Communication University of China.

Professor **Teodros Kiros** published the novel *Cambridge Days* and will give keynote speeches at conferences in

Antigua and Bonn, Germany, in 2017. He wrote two entries for *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy*.

Assistant professor **Peter Bufano** composed and directed music for the Bindlestiff Family Circus in a performance of "A Cardboard and Duct Tape Spectacular" and "Midnight at the Museum" by Circus Smirkus.

*Santiago in the Stream*, a work for orchestra, narrator, percussion ensemble, and dancers by professor **Apostolos Paraskevas**, was premiered on August 23 at Boston's Hatch Memorial Shell.

Associate professor **Richie Hart** released the CD *45 Lives*. It was produced by James Hart (Hohenberger) '07 and features Bobby Deitch '75 and Scott Reeves '16. It's available on CD Baby, Amazon, and iTunes.

In May, assistant chair of composition **Gregory Glancey** heard his work *Out of the Fray* for cello and piano premiered at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School by Ensemble Parallax.

On October 6, assistant professor **Mark Zaleski** released his band's second CD *Days, Months, Years*. Zaleski played saxophone and bass on the recording.

Associate professor **John Whynot** mixed Mychael Danna's scores for eight episodes of *The Last Tycoon* and the feature film *The Man Who Invented Christmas*. He also mixed scores by Mychael and Jeff Danna for the animated feature *The Breadwinner*.

Feather Records has released a single and video for the song "Lean Back into Me" by professor **Lauren Passarelli**. During her career, she has released nine CDs and two EPs.

Professor of Music Therapy **Suzanne Hanser** published *Michio's Musings*, an e-book featuring illustrations by Michio Iwata accompanied by Hanser's original piano music. Visit [michiosmusings.com](http://michiosmusings.com).

Associate professor **Matt Jensen** received a Newbury Comics Faculty Fellowship Grant to produce the educational video *The Art of Playing Reggae*.

Assistant professor **Orlando Cela** conducted the North Carolina Governor's School Orchestra in world premieres by composers Renée Baker, Bernhard Lang, and Anthony Green.

Professor **Sheryl Bailey** released *Bebop Fakebook*, an instructional DVD that features 25 bebop staples.

Professor **Tony Thunder Smith** received a faculty recording grant to work on a project at Guilford Sound Studios with faculty members **David Ficzynski, Jeff Lockhart, Jason Stokes**, and others.

Electronic Production and Design Department faculty members **Michael Bierylo, Richard Boulanger**, and **Matthew Davidson** and students participated in MoogFest in Durham, NC. Boulanger worked with **Nona Hendryx** on the piece *Sounds of Dreaming*, which incorporated software developed by the students. Bierylo, Boulanger, and Davidson also performed as the Berklee Modular Synthesizer Ensemble and presented workshops.

## Joanne Brackeen Named NEA Jazz Master

On June 12, the 2018 National Endowment for the Arts NEA Jazz Masters award recipients were announced, and professor of piano Joanne Brackeen was named among them. Also on the list were guitarist Pat Metheny H'96, vocalist Dianne Reeves H'03, and producer, artistic programmer, and club owner Todd Barkan. The jazz masters were selected for their achievements logged during a lifetime in music and exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz. Each will receive a \$25,000 award and will be honored at a tribute concert on April 16, 2018, in Washington, DC.

"I am surprised to be honored with the NEA's prestigious award and to be in such inspiring company," Brackeen stated after receiving word of the upcoming honor. "It feels marvelous and awesome, and it motivates and enables me to expand more in this intriguing and fascinating world of jazz."

Born in Ventura, CA, Brackeen started playing the piano in her youth and was mostly self-taught. During the late 1950s, she began playing around Los Angeles with such jazzmen as Dexter Gordon, Harold Land, Charles Lloyd, Bobby Hutcherson, and others. After moving to New York in the 1960s, she began playing with George Benson H'90, Sonny Stitt, Woody Shaw, and others. In 1969 she became the first female member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. After stints in the bands of Joe Henderson and Stan Getz, Brackeen began releasing albums as



Lucy Cobos  
Joanne Brackeen

a leader. To date, she has recorded more than two dozen albums with some 100 of her original compositions. Through the years, Brackeen's band has featured Terence Blanchard, Michael Brecker, Ravi Coltrane, Jack DeJohnette, Eddie Gomez, Billy Hart, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Branford Marsalis, Cecil McBee, John Patitucci, Chris Potter, and Greg Osby.

Brackeen joined the Berklee faculty in 1994 and has been recognized as an educator with Berklee's Distinguished Faculty Award and the Berklee Global Jazz Institute award as well as the outstanding educator award from the International Association for Jazz Education. As a performer and composer, Brackeen has received a living legend award from the International Women in Jazz and the BNY Mellon Jazz 2014 Living Legacy Award. She continues to tour and has performed across the globe in 46 countries.

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# 2017 SIGNATURE SERIES at Berklee

## Michael Gibbs Directs the Only Chrome Waterfall Orchestra

Featuring Gary Burton, Bill Frisell, Jim Odegren, and the Berklee Concert Jazz orchestra, conducted by Greg Hopkins

**October 19, 2017, 8:00 p.m.**

Tickets \$8, \$14, and \$30

Berklee Performance Center



Celebrated composer and arranger **Michael Gibbs** has worked with Pat Metheny, John McLaughlin, Joni Mitchell, John Scofield, Michael Mantler, Whitney Houston, and Peter Gabriel, in addition to releasing a

series of trailblazing recordings under his own name. As a faculty member at Berklee in the 1970s, he led a groundbreaking ensemble—the Only Chrome Waterfall Orchestra—that has influenced composers and performers for generations. Longtime associates Gary Burton, Bill Frisell, and Jim Odegren are featured performers on this career-spanning concert with Greg Hopkins and the Berklee Concert Jazz Orchestra.

## Toninho Horta Meets Berklee

**November 2, 2017, 8:00 p.m.**

Tickets \$8 and \$14

Berklee Performance Center



Legendary composer, vocalist, and guitarist **Toninho Horta** grew up in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. His lifelong friend and collaborator Milton Nascimento featured him on the album *Clube da Esquina* (1972),

which jump-started Horta's career and led to work with Antônio Carlos Jobim, João Bosco, Nana Caymmi, Gal Costa, and Elis Regina. His debut solo album, *Terras Dos Passaros* (1980), was released in the U.S. through Capitol Records in 1990. Horta has since gone on to work with Pat Metheny, Wayne Shorter, Sérgio Mendes, Herbie Hancock, George Duke, and the Manhattan Transfer. Toninho Horta Meets Berklee features a large student orchestra performing Horta's inspired compositions and arrangements, produced Matthew Nicholl and Oscar Stagnaro.

## Singers Showcase

**November 30, 2017, 8:00 p.m.**

Berklee Performance Center



Berklee's finest student vocalists perform a variety of musical styles. The end of the concert will feature a musical celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' classic album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

## Shreya Ghoshal Meets Berklee

**December 7, 2017, 8:00 p.m.**

Tickets \$8, \$14, and \$30

Berklee Performance Center



India's premier Bollywood playback singer, **Shreya Ghoshal**, joins the Berklee Indian Ensemble in a celebration of her remarkable musical journey. The Berklee Indian Ensemble is world-renowned

through its stunning YouTube videos, reaching over 45 million people around the globe. Together, Shreya and the Berklee Indian Ensemble will bring magic to the stage with their spirited and uplifting performance. *Produced by Annette Philip and Clint Valladares.*



# Berklee



## Beyoncé Chooses Berklee

By Beverly Tryon '82

In celebration of the one-year anniversary of the critically acclaimed and academically heralded visual album *Lemonade*, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter chose Berklee to receive a \$25,000 Formation Scholars Award. The scholarship was instituted to encourage the educational pursuit of undergraduate and postgraduate female students for the 2017-2018 academic year.

More than 250 students from Berklee (Boston and Valencia campuses, the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Berklee Online) vied for the competitive scholarship that was ultimately awarded to Sadiya Ramos, a sophomore studying dance at Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Applicants were required to have a GPA of 3.5 or above and provide a portfolio and compelling essay on how the *Lemonade* album inspired their educational goals.

The Formation Scholars Award encourages and supports young women who are unafraid to think outside the box and are bold, creative, conscious, and confident. In addition to Berklee, Spelman College, Howard University, and Parsons School of Design were chosen to receive this prestigious award.

Ramos, who is originally from Suffern, NY, began dancing at the age of six under the guidance of Arthur Mitchell at the Dance Theatre of Harlem, where she was selected to perform with their ensemble at the Kennedy Center and the White House. By the age of eight, she was studying at Ballet Academy East's pre-professional program with Darla Hoover. Ramos worked with François Perron at the French Academie of Ballet as a teenager to acquire the instruction needed to develop her individual style and improve her performance skills.

While training with the Debbie Allen Dance Academy during the summer of 2015, Ramos was invited to perform with Allen's dancers for the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and was also selected to dance on stage as Stevie Wonder performed at the event.

"I am tremendously humbled and honored to receive Beyoncé's Formation Scholars Award on behalf of Boston Conservatory at Berklee," Ramos says. "Beyoncé's artistry and determination have inspired me as a dancer, and I plan to pay tribute and



Beyoncé Knowles-Carter chose Berklee and three other institutions to receive \$25,000 Formation Scholars Awards to support ambitious and creative female students.

build on her legacy at the conservatory with this scholarship."

"We at Berklee love Beyoncé," Berklee President Roger H. Brown says. "As a singer, writer, producer, performer, and humanitarian, Beyoncé is a strong and inspiring role model for our students. Her original all-female band included a current professor and two Berklee alumnae. Beyoncé's support for a female student studying at Berklee will have an impact on the global music industry, and further Beyoncé's own mission of artistic excellence and innovative business practices that have made her the most compelling artist of the 21st century."

Last spring, Berklee hosted a 10-year anniversary celebration of Beyoncé's original all-female band at the Berklee Performance Center. The concert featured Berklee alumni and faculty members who have toured

with Beyoncé, including Tia Fuller, a professor in Berklee's Ensemble Department, Nikki Glaspie '04, Rie Tsuji B.M. '02, and dancer Ebony Williams B.F.A. '05.



Sadiya Ramos, a dance student at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, received the \$25,000 Formation Scholars Award.

## Reach Out Initiative Promotes Student Well-being

By Leah Driscoll

Thanks to the Gary Slaight family's continuing support of an initiative called Reach Out, there has been increased awareness and focus on issues related to mental health and well-being, substance abuse, and violence prevention specifically as they relate to the performing artists' experience. Under my leadership as director of the Berklee's Health & Wellness programs, the initiative has been helping people for the past five years.

Reach Out sponsors a variety of programs, events, and services. A visiting artist series has become the signature annual event. Since 2013, the initiative has made it possible for us to invite professional musicians to come and speak with Berklee students about a challenge they've experienced related to their personal well-being, whether that

was dealing with depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, or body image and self-esteem issues. Through sharing their narratives, the artists are able to normalize for students what the students may be experiencing, and provide inspiration and practical advice for successfully addressing these issues personally and professionally.

Additionally, each of these visiting artists has recorded short educational videos during their visit, which are now being used as part of the curriculum of the new LENS course, a first semester seminar program taken by entering students. Guest artists have included India Arie, Kelly Price, Big Freedia, Rocco Prestia, Dave Ellefson, and Berklee alumnus Ray Greene.

One of the most significant ways the initiative has had direct

student impact is through the student group Student Allies in Anti-Violence Education (Berklee SAAVE). Established in 2015, it is a response to the Obama administration's campaign "It's On Us," a call to action to address sexual assault and relationship violence on college campuses. The student group meets biweekly to discuss how they can be agents of change at Berklee, in the music industry, and in society at large. The group developed a public service announcement about sexual and gender-based violence that is now viewed by all entering students during orientation in an effort to create a safe and inclusive community at Berklee.

Reach Out also sponsors programs intended to help students connect, de-compress, and encourage self-care in their day-to-

day lives. One of those programs features "nap pods" in co-sponsorship with the Student Activities Center. Six nap pods were installed in the commuter lounge at 150 Massachusetts Avenue to provide a quiet space for students to relax. The student response was overwhelmingly positive. Many expressed that having a space to nap showed that the school cared about their well-being during a stressful time of the year.

The contributions to Reach Out by the Slaight family and other donors have facilitated the development of staff positions specifically designed to help students struggling with their overall well-being or mental health. The Reach Out initiative will help these students to move forward in their Berklee and professional careers.

## Recharging the Power Station

By Roger H. Brown



The architect's rendering of the facade of the future Power Station at BerkleeNYC

The city of New York has joined forces with Berklee and Pete Muller, a Berklee trustee, in a public-private-nonprofit partnership to establish a center for Berklee in New York at the historic Power Station Studios on West 53rd Street. The facility was most recently known as Avatar Studios. Berklee will operate the studio—where artists like Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Esperanza Spalding, Herbie Hancock, Tony Bennett, Pat Metheny, Lady Gaga, David Bowie, Madonna, Bob Dylan, the cast of the musical *Hamilton*, and many others recorded iconic albums—while renovating and transforming it into a state-of-the-art recording and video production facility for the city's music, theater, television, and film industries.

The original name of the studio will be revived as Power Station at BerkleeNYC. The project was spearheaded by trustee Pete Muller, an accomplished singer-songwriter who started out busking in the New York City subways, recently performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival, and is a pioneer in quantitative investing.

This project was made possible through three significant philanthropic gifts—one of which is the largest in Berklee's history. We believe more will be forthcoming. These will constitute the Berklee New York Fund, which will provide the resources to operate educational programs, renovate and reimagine the studios, and fund other efforts.

This new home for Berklee brings enormous opportunities to expand



Berklee trustee Pete Muller

the college's presence in New York, and create continuing education, career strategy, and skills acquisition programs for musicians, composers, producers, music business students, and engineers. Other planned programs will explore the intersection of music, dance, theater, and technology; artist incubation; and internships for Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory at Berklee students.

There is much work yet to be done to determine an ideal blend of professional recording, educational programming, and community outreach. In the coming months, the facility will undergo a two-phase refurbishment period, financed by the largest philanthropic contribution in Berklee's history. Stephen Webber, who over the past several years has led the technology programs at

## Boston Conservatory Gala Raises \$763k

By Dana Grider

Boston Conservatory at Berklee celebrated its 150th anniversary with a once-in-a-lifetime gala on May 9. Guests at Boston's iconic Symphony Hall were treated to stunning dance, musical, operatic, and theater performances by current students, alumni, and faculty members. The evening made history by raising a record-breaking \$763,000 in support for student scholarships and to sustain the Conservatory's tradition of artistic excellence.

Actor and activist Alan Cumming performed alongside students and served as master of ceremonies. In the course of the evening, Cumming received an honorary doctorate of arts degree from Boston Conservatory. Notable performances included violinist and faculty member Markus Placci GPD '04, AD '06, soprano Vanessa Becerra MM '14, dance faculty

member Kurt Douglas BFA '02, and Broadway actress Alysha Umphress BFA '04. Famed singer, conductor, and philanthropist Plácido Domingo surprised guests with a pretaped video appearance, and current students paid tribute to beloved conservatory President Richard Ortner, who retired in June 2017 after leading the conservatory for nearly 20 years.

The 150th Anniversary Gala was cochaired by Cynthia and Oliver Curme and Gregory E. Bulger and Richard J. Dix. The Boston Conservatory at Berklee is especially grateful to headliner sponsor Marilyn Zacharis, and VIP table hosts Gregory E. Bulger and Richard J. Dix, Cynthia and Oliver Curme, Pamela S. Kunkemüller, and Martin and Tristin Mannion for their generosity. AE Events designed this special celebration.



Berklee President Roger H. Brown (center) and Boston Conservatory at Berklee President Richard Ortner (right) awarded actor Alan Cumming an Honorary Master of Arts Degree during a gala celebration at Boston's Symphony Hall.

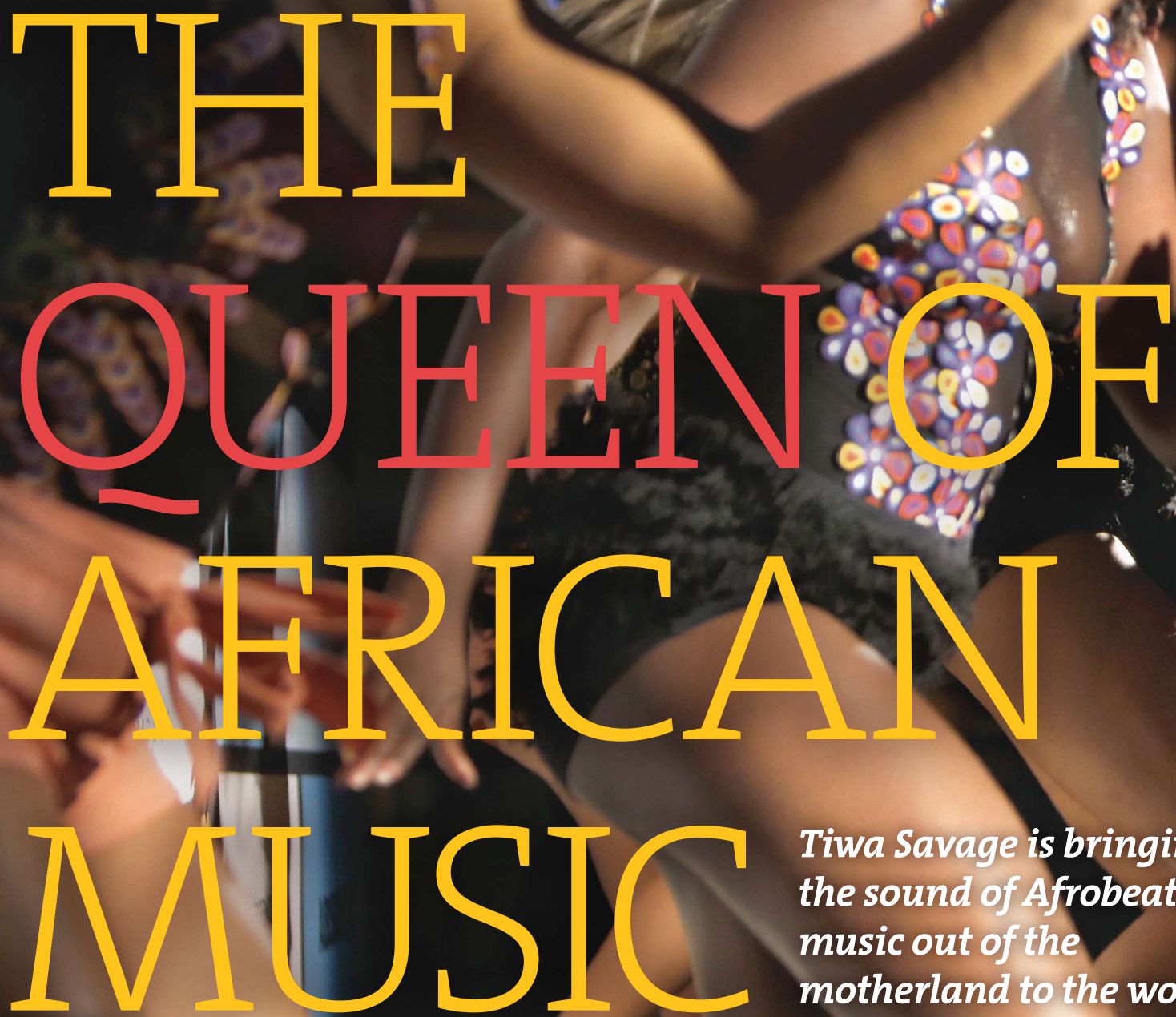
Berklee's campus in Valencia, Spain, will direct the effort to transform the technology and the physical plant, while developing a professional vision and educational programs.

In addition to the studio renovation, the building's lower level will be converted into a flexible-use practice/performance venue featuring a professional stage and state-of-the-art sound, lighting, and projection equipment. It will also include a virtual reality/augmented reality studio and a video control room that can capture and post-produce video from throughout the building.

Stephen Webber has been named as the executive director of BerkleeNYC, and will contribute to Berklee at large as dean of strategic initiatives. Many thanks go to Webber, senior vice president for finance and administration/chief financial officer Mac Hisey, vice president for innovation and strategy Panos Panay, and Jeff Wilkins, strategic adviser to the Muller family office, for their dedicated work in helping to make this a reality.

We are especially grateful to Pete Muller for his vision in seeing the possibilities of this historic collaboration.





# THE QUEEN OF AFRICAN MUSIC

*Tiwa Savage is bringing the sound of Afrobeats music out of the motherland to the world.*





By Mark Small '73

It's a sultry August night and the audience at One Africa Music Fest in Brooklyn, NY, eagerly anticipates the appearance of Tiwa Savage '06, Nigeria's hottest music diva. Introducing her, master of ceremonies Banky W., tells the crowd, "Welcome your queen, the queen of African music," and the crowd erupts. Savage takes the stage, barefooted and sporting long hair that flies with her every move during a set that showcases her singing and energetic dancing to her distinctive Afrobeats tunes.

Savage became the first African artist signed to Jay Z's Roc Nation entertainment company in 2016. A native of Nigeria, Savage resides in Lagos, the music hub of her country, and in recent years she has become a major celebrity in Africa. Her songs and videos, acting in the MTV series *Shuga*, and appearances in ad campaigns for major brands such as Pepsi, have brought her name and face recognition in the motherland and beyond. Observing her star steadily rise, the Roc Nation team pegged Savage as an artist with the potential to introduce music and other aspects of African culture to audiences in America and globally.

Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Savage moved to London with her family when she was 11 years old. There, she discovered her voice. At 16, she launched her career as a background singer and ultimately found herself singing with such artists as George Michael, Kelly Clarkson, and Blu Cantrell. Before diving headlong into a music career, she earned an accounting degree from the University of Kent at the urging of her parents. Then she returned to music. While out on tour backing Mary J. Blige, she met Keith Harris '98, who was playing drums with the Black Eyed Peas on the same tour. Harris counseled Savage to study music if she was serious about music as a career.

She heeded his advice and came to Berklee where earned her diploma in professional music. From there, she moved to New York, where she

began collaborating in songwriting sessions. A publishing deal with Sony ATV followed. On the move again, Savage relocated to Los Angeles. There she worked with such artists as Frank Ocean, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, and others.

Listening to the Afrobeats music bubbling under in Nigeria, Savage aspired to blend the r&b, pop, and hip-hop she'd been working on in America with Afrobeats. After relocating to Lagos, Savage wrote songs fusing musical styles and lyrics predominantly in English but peppered with phrases from native Nigerian tongues Yoruba and Igbo. She formed the label, 323 Entertainment, and began releasing singles and videos. In 2012, she signed with Nigerian producer Don Jazzy's Mavin Records, and released her debut album *Once Upon a Time* in 2013. Her sophomore album *R.E.D.* was released in 2016. She has collaborated with top Nigerian stars including Wizkid, Dr. Sid, DJ Kaywise, and many more. The sensual themes, dancing, and outfits in of some her videos have fueled controversy in some quarters. But ultimately, it only stoked the flames of Savage's growing fame.

She has an affable charisma and star quality that can't be missed whether she's on the Jumbotron at a concert or in the room with you. At the Times Square offices of Roc Nation the day before her appearance in Brooklyn, rain coursed down the windows as Savage described the winding path her career has taken. Just a few days prior, she made the 16-hour flight from Lagos to New York to do a handful of concerts and to play the Roc Nation team music she has co-written and recorded for her upcoming EP.

During our interview, Savage was enthusiastic as she mentioned elements of Afrobeats music showing up the songs "In Common" by Alicia Keys, "Run Up" by Nicki Manaj and Major Lazer, and "Come Closer" by Drake and Wizkid. "A lot of artists are looking for the next sound," she says. Tiwa Savage has already found it.



“I knew that going back to Nigeria meant I’d be starting over again.”

**Was it a big adjustment to leave Lagos and move to London at 11?**

It was huge, especially since I didn’t know I was going to live there. My mum originally said we were going to London on vacation, then she decided we’d live there. I had a strong Nigerian accent and didn’t have the trendy clothes the other kids had. I was bullied in secondary school, but those people became my friends once I started singing and doing local competitions.

**I understand that you played trombone before you began singing in high school.**

I had a crush on a guy who hung out with students who sang and played music at school. I wanted to take a music class to try to get his attention, and the teacher gave me the trombone to play. Eventually, I told him that I wanted to sing instead. He asked me to sing something and I did a song from *The Sound of Music*. He was pleasantly surprised and told me that I had a beautiful, sweet tone. That’s how it all began for me. Then I met some musicians who introduced me to gospel music—the Clark Sisters and Kim Burrell. I started getting into jazz as well. I just fell in love with music at that point.

**At 16, you were working as a backup singer with the Laurence Johnson Tuff Session Singers. Did that make you yearn for a chance to become a headliner?**

As I started really getting into music, I always saw myself as an artist. But my first gig was as a backup singer and I loved that. It was an opportunity to be in the shadows and learn what the industry was about without the pressure of being the artist.

**What made you decide to put music on hold and go to the University of Kent?**

African parents are very strict about further education, so mine didn’t buy the idea of me quitting secondary school and going into music. My dad told me to pick between being a doctor, lawyer, accountant, or engineer. So I went to the university and studied accounting. After I graduated, I gave my dad my certificate and told him that I was going off to sing. But the reality of being a session musician who might get three gigs a week and then nothing, hit me. It wasn’t as glamorous as I thought it would be. I ended up taking a day job as a trainee accountant. In the evenings, I would go to studio sessions and jam, and then wake up and go to work the next morning. I started getting calls to sing backup for George Michael and others and then a call to go on tour with Mary J. Blige. The tour would take me away for two or three months, so I had to make a decision to leave my job and do music full time. I decided to do the tour.

**Can you fill me in on Keith Harris encouraging you to come to Berklee?**

The Black Eyed Peas were on that tour and Keith was playing drums for them. I looked at the American musicians as if they had an aura about them. He was so sweet and gave me some time and talked to me about music. He said that if I was serious about it, I should study at Berklee. I told him that you don’t hear huge pop stars saying that they had a music degree. They got started at church or were discovered at a petrol station or something. I thought I just needed to be in the right place at the right time. But he told me, “No, you should study music.” My parents loved the idea of me getting another degree and told me to go for it. When I saw how expensive Berklee would be, I thought there was no way I could afford it. Keith told me I should apply for a scholarship.

Berklee was holding auditions in Ireland, so I flew there. I had tried to prepare, but when I got in the audition, I was asked to read a piece of music. I started crying and said I couldn’t read music and that was why I wanted to come to Berklee. So [the person conducting the audition] asked me to just sing something. In a few weeks, I heard that I’d gotten a partial scholarship, maybe 70 percent.

**As a professional music major you could pick your courses. What did you choose to study?**

I took courses in music business, songwriting, and vocal performance. I remember really liking my vocal teachers Donna McElroy and Robin McKelle. Everyone who comes to Berklee was the superstar in their town, the best in their church or school ensemble. You are among the best of the best and that’s scary initially. You walk by a rehearsal room and hear someone taking a solo and ask yourself, “What am I doing here?” But it sharpens and prepares you. I loved everything I learned there, it has given me so much confidence in reading contracts and knowing what to tell a producer in the studio about the sound I want. That gets you respect when you’re among other musicians.

Berklee was also important because of the relationships I made there. Some of my closest friends today are people I met at Berklee. Candace Coles [’07], Nadine Ford [’07], Darien Dorsey [’07], and Kamaria Ousley [’05] all came to my wedding in Dubai. Beyond music and Berklee, we are all still good friends.

**What was next after you finished your studies?**

After I graduated, I left a community of musicians and went to New York on the Greyhound bus. I stayed with friends for a couple of days before getting a little apartment in Bed-Stuy [the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood] in Brooklyn.

My student visa was going to expire in a year and I was wondering what I was going to do. Then I started writing songs with other musicians. One of the songs caught the

attention of [*American Idol* winner] Fantasia [Barrino]. A guy from Sony ATV named Rich Christina heard it and offered me a publishing deal just as my visa was about to expire.

Fantasia recorded the song, “This Time” but didn’t release it. When I got my first check from Sony I moved to L.A. and started writing more. I met with producer Oak [Warren “Oak” Felder] and his partner Pop [Andrew “Pop” Wansel]. We wrote a song called “Collard Greens and Cornbread” that made it onto Fantasia’s *Back to Me* album. That was one of the songs I needed to write toward fulfilling my contract with Sony.

**How did you come to sing background vocals on what would be Whitney Houston’s last studio album, *I Look to You*?**

That was incredible. I don’t remember where I was, but I got a call from someone saying one of the singers for that session didn’t show up, and they asked if I could come through. I went there and sang on it. I need to find that CD with the credits on it and frame it.

**How did you end up deciding to move back to Nigeria?**

Everyone confuses Tee Billz from Interscope Records with the Tee Billz who was my husband, they are two different people with the same name and nickname. So it was the Tee Billz that I met in Los Angeles who became my husband and was into Afrobeats who said I should go back to Nigeria.

At that time I was thinking of going into r&b and pop, but it felt a little foreign to me. That kind of music was something I could do but it wasn’t what was in my heart. I started listening to Afrobeats and knew that it was really starting to grow back home. I decided to do a blend of Afrobeats, r&b, and pop. A friend knew the Tee Billz who worked Interscope told me to send my music to him. I sent it, but didn’t hear back from him. I went to a concert and someone pointed him out to me. I went up to him and said, “I sent you my music a month ago, and you didn’t respond. You’re about to miss out on the next big thing to come out of Africa!” He told me to calm down and that he would check out my music. He called me back and said he felt I had something special.

I told my manager at the time, a man named Touch who was also managing Frank Ocean and others, that I was going to move back to Africa. He told me I was crazy to leave with a publishing deal and a lot of sessions set up. But that’s what I wanted to do, and I left. I still have the publishing deal.

**So you had very little trepidation about the move?**

It doesn’t phase me to move. I moved to the U.K. and to Boston without knowing anyone there. Later I went to New York and Los Angeles. I knew that going back to Nigeria meant I’d be starting over again. A lot of Nigerians looked at me as someone who had lived outside of the country for so long and my accent and the way I dress



From the left: Jay Z, Tiwa Savage, and Don Jazzy after Savage signed a management contract with Roc Nation in 2016.

were different. I am a little more liberal than many of the people there. So I was starting over again, but it was fun.

**Did you hope to do something to remedy the fact that there were few female artists in the Nigerian music scene?**

I fell in love with Afrobeats music because it was a blend of African music with hip-hop that was perfect for me as someone who had lived in Nigeria, the U.K., and the U.S. I wanted to be part of the revolution that was happening. There weren’t too many female artists in the music and so there weren’t too many songs from a female point of view of.

**How long was it before you got a toehold?**

I started a label with Tee Billz, my husband at the time, and we began hustling. My first single “Kele Kele Love” did extremely well. People in the industry started to know who I was. I met Don Jazzy, who is a legend in African music, and told him I needed a label to help us reach our potential. He recorded a song with me called “Without My Heart” that was produced by Oak from L.A. Don Jazzy eventually signed me to his label Mavin.

We had been dropping songs and videos, but as soon as I started working with Don Jazzy, it was a whole different ballgame. I was attached to a huge brand. Some things came a lot easier after that, but a lot more was expected as well. They expected me to not come out with any music that was less than what Don Jazzy had built through his brand.

**“Kele Kele Love” came out in 2011. Why did you take so long to release the your debut album *Once upon a Time*?**

Nigeria is a singles-based market and it took me a while to release the album because the singles were doing so well. Also, I was performing so much that it was hard to get into the studio and record more.

*“I walked into a room and Jay Z was sitting there. He’s very cool and really believes in African culture—not just music, but fashion and movies too. He said, ‘This is the future, Africa is coming on strong.’”*



*“You need to go for it in life. I tell people all the time—I don’t care if you’re 20, 50, or 70—it’s not too late to start something.”*

**Were you touring mainly in Nigeria?**

I worked in Nigeria and within Africa. But I also did some concerts in the U.K., Australia, Europe, and the U.S., but it was mainly in Africa. Afrobeats music is pretty universal in Africa. Social media and technology have made connecting a lot easier. If a song was released at home, it wouldn’t matter if I was in Australia.

**You regrouped in Los Angeles shortly after launching your career in Nigeria. Was that because you’d gotten some pushback?**

When I first moved back to Nigeria, people were wondering, “Who is this girl who dresses like this?” Some of my videos were banned because of the skimpy outfits I was wearing. Some promoters didn’t put me in their shows either because I was female or because they thought other women might feel threatened by someone who was so confident about her sexuality and music. It was difficult, so I went back to L.A. But I became depressed and decided to go back and fight rather than give up.

**When did Bee-High Biggs, Jay Z’s cousin, enter the picture?**

I learned that [Bee-High] had been coming to Africa a bit to watch the music industry. He said he was monitoring a few artists quietly and I was one of them. He felt I was the right person to be the first African artist to sign with Roc Nation and that I would fit into the family.

I wasn’t looking at the international market because the African market is so huge and we hadn’t conquered every part of it. When he approached me I felt it was good. I wasn’t going to them trying to force my way through the door. They opened it for me because they liked what I was doing. I didn’t have to convince them and I was so excited.

I went to New York with Don Jazzy to meet the people at Roc Nation about a management deal. I walked into a room and Jay Z was sitting there. He’s very cool and really believes in African culture—not just music, but fashion and movies too. He said, “This is the future, Africa is coming on strong.” He said he didn’t want to change me, he wanted to sell what I already have. That sold me. I go on instinct and I liked this. They have treated me like family and everyone here works very hard.

**Will Roc Nation expand your brand with fashion, perfume, or other lines?**

We have meetings about that stuff all the time. A lot of companies are interested because Africa is a huge market with millions of consumers. But we are focusing on music the most. We are planning the release of my first singles stateside and are trying to find a balance. The EP will be released both in Africa and the U.S. I came to New York to play it for people so they can think about it crossing over. It will be Afrobeats, but something that non-Africans can also enjoy.

Yesterday, we were in Times Square, and a car went by with non-Africans in it and they were listening to Afrobeats. That brought joy to my heart. I feel that in 10 years this music will be like reggae music that’s everywhere now. I feel so blessed to be one of the people holding a torch for it.

**Were you involved in the songwriting for the EP?**

Yes, I love writing, vibing, and being in the studio. The more successful you get the less time you get in the studio. There are so many other things you have to do. You have to attend to the business side with meetings, rehearsals, press rounds, and traveling.

**You have a two-year-old son now, how has that affected your view of things?**

Everything seems to make more sense now. The hustle, the hard work, the late nights, the traveling, I am doing it for someone. I don’t seem to get as tired anymore. I need to hustle for my son and the energy just comes from somewhere. I want to be at home with him as much as I can.

As I watch him learning to speak and walk, I think about my own challenges. But if he can learn to walk, I feel that I should be able to do anything I put my mind to. You need to go for it in life. I tell people all the time—I don’t care if you’re 20, 50, or 70—it’s not too late to start something. I’ve started over so many times.

**If you could look into a crystal ball, what would you hope to see for your career in the future?**

To be honest, I wouldn’t want to see it. That would spoil it for me. The adventure is the unknown. I didn’t know how all these parts of my life would piece together: going to London, going to Berklee, going back to Nigeria, getting signed with Roc Nation. If I had known all that, I might have taken things for granted. If I already knew Jay Z was going to sign me, I might have gotten lazy. I might go crazy if I knew what was coming. If I was to see that I was going to have six kids, I might say break the crystal ball!

**Can you share some thoughts on your philosophy about music?**

Music is something more than can be explained in words. It must be a spiritual, supernatural thing, something higher than what the eye can see. When I play or listen to certain music, it makes me feel better than a bowl of ice cream or a hug from someone can make me feel. Music can make me cry, laugh, or want to dance. Sometimes I hear music in a language that I can’t understand, but I can feel it. That’s why I think music has to be a spiritual thing.

Musicians are in such a special space because we can touch a stadium full of people in a way that a politician or a religious leader can’t. People listen to and absorb your music. It’s so powerful, and musicians create it.

# Multifaceted Freelancers

Building careers on diverse interests and talents

By Mark Small and Mike Keefe-Feldman



## No Nine-to-Fiver

One would be hard-pressed to find a freelance musician busier or more diversified in his pursuits than Michael Hatfield '75. Since relocating from Boston to San Francisco in 1981, Hatfield has maintained a packed schedule as a performer; arranger and musical director; a partner in Hatfield & Walker (a sound, lighting, backline, and video rental company); a musical contractor and producer for major corporate events; a teacher; and a music director at a local church on Sunday mornings. No gig is too large or small for Hatfield.

Growing up in Columbus, OH, Hatfield played keyboards and drums in addition to singing, but his primary interest was the vibraphone. After winning a music competition in high school, he got the opportunity to spend a week at a summer stage band camp where vibraphonist Gary Burton was teaching. Hatfield later enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington, in a program would have prepared him to become a classical percussionist. He wasn't overly enthused about his major when a chance to hear Burton's band became a course-altering event.

"Gary was playing a concert in Bowling Green, OH, and got a ride up there with my buddies," Hatfield recalls. "They left after the concert, but I stayed overnight, planning to ride back with other friends the next morning. Unbeknownst to me, they also left that night, so I had to hitchhike back to Bloomington." As luck would have it, Burton was on the freeway that morning, and recognizing Hatfield, picked him up. During the long drive Burton told Hatfield about Berklee and offered to write a letter of recommendation for him. "He wrote the letter and I was accepted," Hatfield says. "Once I got to Berklee and saw what was going on there, it was like nirvana to me."

Hatfield dove into his studies, including courses with Burton. He played vibes with rehearsal bands and began leading groups for Boston-area gigs. During Hatfield's senior year at Berklee, Burton asked him to join the faculty and he taught for five years. Hatfield was working with a Zappa-esque band called Booga Booga that played original music by Frank Macchia '80. The group—made up almost entirely of Berklee alumni—decided to relocate to San Francisco en masse and make an album in 1981. After relocating and making the record, the band split up, but Hatfield was committed to staying in the area.

He took a job delivering meals for a catering company until he made enough contacts to support himself with gigs. "Back in my Berklee days, I always owned a van and a PA system," Hatfield says. "Sometimes I'd get chosen for gigs simply because hiring

me solved other logistical issues!" In San Francisco as in Boston, Hatfield started asking double pay for providing, transporting, and set-up and tear-down of the PA in addition to playing. "I never had a problem working a little harder than the others in the band," he says. His appetite for hard work has served him well.

Hatfield and Larry Walker, a Bay Area drummer, decided to pool their gear and buy additional instruments, amplifiers, PA systems, lighting and video equipment and form an equipment rental company. Their equipment inventory ultimately filled a 5,000-square-foot warehouse. They bought two delivery trucks, and hired a crew. For more than 20 years, Hatfield & Walker LLC has served big-name touring and local acts, fulfilling needs ranging from full A/V, lighting, and technical staff to an accordion for Bruce Hornsby's concerts.

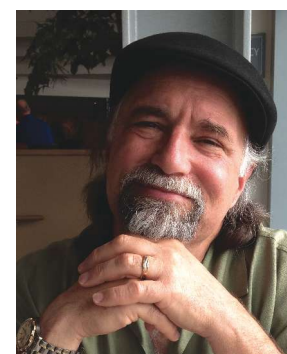
Hatfield freelances with countless cover groups, but has been a longtime member of the Fabulous Bud E. Luv Show, a campy Vegas-style lounge act fronted by comedian Bobby Vickers. The outfit has played in small-group or big-band configurations coast-to-coast with Hatfield serving as arranger, musical director, and keyboardist.

His work as a contractor combines his performance and business skills for huge corporate events for which he frequently supplies equipment in addition to handling all musical issues. Among his clients are Apple, Advanced Micro Devices, Silicon Graphics, and others for events in locations including Hawaii, New Orleans, Nashville, and throughout California. "A lot of times there are skits for these events," Hatfield says. "I'll write all the music to go with those and contract the musicians to play with me."

For the past 15 years, Hatfield has also been the go-to guy for music at the Bohemian Grove north of San Francisco and the Bohemian Club in the city. Members of the exclusive men's-only club include top figures in business, politics, entertainment, and the military.

"The Grove is very different from my typical gigs," he says. "It's really fun and there is usually top talent there." The Bohemian Grove is a camp and among the activities are outdoor plays and musical performances that Hatfield coordinates. His work there has placed him onstage with Zac Brown, Marty Stewart, Kix Brooks, and many others.

Additionally, Hatfield teaches young students in his home and fields questions from parents wondering about music as a career. "Some parents think that you can't make a living in music," he says. "I always say, 'Yes you can if you have the drive!'" Hatfield's success comes from his boundless energy and being prepared for



Michael Hatfield '75



anything. He's also fastidious about financial details with clients, the IRS, and in creating his own retirement portfolio.

"Freelance musicians need to have the mindset of an entrepreneur," Hatfield posits. "You need to be able to say yes to a call, hang up the phone, panic, and then figure out how you're going to pull off what you just agreed to do."

### Freelance Forever

Over the course of the past four decades, Larry "the O" Oppenheimer has cultivated a diverse set of skills enabling him to pursue a career drawing on his entrepreneurial spirit and ability to function in corporate environments when needed. Starting in his youth as a drummer, his subsequent experience with emerging music synthesizer technology at the State University of New York, Albany, and further studies in performance, composition and recording engineering at Berklee until 1977, set the course for a colorful professional journey. (In 2015, Oppenheimer later became the first to earn a degree through Berklee Online.)

After his early days as a bench tech and product demonstrator for Lexicon, he made his way to the San Francisco area, where he still resides. In 1984, he began working as a writer freelancing for *Mix* and *Electronic Musician* magazines and writing technical manuals and books. "During the period when I was writing a lot, digital-audio was in its flower," Oppenheimer recalls. "I was at the right place at the right time. I got a variety of perspectives on the industry by interviewing such people as Beatles' producer George Martin, loudspeaker designer John Meyer, and the 'father of computer music,' Max Matthews."

Drawing on all his abilities, Oppenheimer played gigs in and worked at musical equipment repair, audio system installation, producing and engineering recordings, and sound and music editing for feature films and video games. During a stint at LucasArts, Oppenheimer helped with studio rewiring and oversaw construction of a new facility before moving into creating music and sound design for video games. He later jumped to a position as audio director for Electronic Arts, a leading games publisher.

While serving as a recording engineer, music editor, and sound designer for Russian Hill Recording, he worked on the animated TV shows *Gumby* and *Bump in the Night*. One of Oppenheimer's most unusual credits came during the rerecording of the sound for the *Gumby* series. "The Blockheads were the villains in the *Gumby* show," Oppenheimer says. "You always saw them snickering and laughing, but there was never any sound. I went into the booth did some snickers and chortles and became the only voice of the Blockheads—ever!"

During the past eight years, Oppenheimer has worked on a number of projects, producing written and audio content. Most recently he has turned his attention to producing more personal content and exploited his skills as a composer, instrumentalist, sound designer, recording engineer, and writer.

In 2016, he launched *Ears Hear Now*, a storytelling podcast that uses cinematic scoring techniques with music and sound design to support Oppenheimer's own narration of stories. In his first episode, "Out of Body, Out of Mind," he details a weird experience he had while playing drums at a biker bar in Manchester, NH, during his Berklee days. Working in his home studio, he recorded his voice and composed and played the music on guitars, bass, and drums, and added sound elements.

He entered the piece in the 2017 HEAR Now; The Audio Fiction and Arts Festival, and it was chosen as a platinum selection. The piece was premiered in Kansas City, MO, in June. He is currently working on a second episode titled "The Incident."

Oppenheimer is working on the logistics of earning money from his podcast. "The idea is to find the intersection of the things you enjoy and the things people will pay you to do," he says. "This market is exploding. Storytelling radio shows and podcasts have broad listenership, and audio books are a burgeoning industry. Why? Because the proliferation of devices means that many people are listening to audio on the go during commutes, walks, and other times."

He is assessing his potential in the marketplace. "For my first story to be named a platinum selection at a festival tells me that I may be on track," he says. "I'm trying to develop a rich way of telling a story. Developing it into a theatrical-style event that can be performed live would be a lot of fun. If I am being me, and I am the product, I won't age out of it."

"I am leveraging the range of experience I have gathered working in manufacturing, live sound, film, albums, TV, video games, magazine writing, marketing, industrial-sound design, and various other angles I have pursued."

Ever the freelancer, Oppenheimer continues to keep an eye on his options. "At the same time, these [podcast] projects I'm doing can be demos of my skills or for other things I might use them for."

### From New York to Savannah

The career path of saxophonist Jody Espina B.M. '83 has twisted and turned, from performing and recording to heading education programs in Barcelona, Spain, and New York to establishing the internationally hailed saxophone mouthpiece manufacturing company, JodyJazz. These days, Espina balances all three by performing regularly around his hometown of Savannah, GA, touring globally for saxophone clinics and mouthpiece demonstrations, and overseeing the operations at his factory in Savannah.

The trail for Espina began in Tampa, FL, where he got his introduction to music at 12 years old. "My school offered band in seventh grade, and I wanted to play saxophone," Espina recounted in a recent phone call from JodyJazz headquarters. "There was a clarinet in our house, so I started on that. "I got a saxophone a year later and played both throughout my school years." Within three years, Espina was playing gigs three nights a week. His band directors introduced him to jazz, though they also offered caveats about the difficulty of making a living as a musician. Undeterred, Espina enrolled at University of South Florida (USF) majoring in classical clarinet, before transferring to Berklee a year later to pursue jazz as an alto saxophonist. He cites experiences with faculty members Joe Viola, George Garzone, John LaPorta, and Herb Pomeroy as pivotal in his artistic development.

With no gigs the summer after he graduated, Espina bought a Eurail pass and ended up in Spain. "I found a job teaching in Barcelona at L'Aula de Música Moderna i Jazz," he recalls. "I led their big band and taught lessons." His European sojourn also included a short stint touring with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. After seven months abroad, Espina moved to New York. "I took a job selling horns at Sam Ash Music and got some gigs from connections I made there. Later, I started teaching at the Hoff-Barthelsson Music School in Scarsdale, NY, where I became the director of the school's jazz program."

Inspired by Julia Cameron's book *The Artist's Way*, Espina began pushing beyond self-imposed barriers. He sought out a mouthpiece maker named Santy Runyon in Louisiana, and wrote an article about the nonagenarian's life's work. "It was part of the journey I was on of being creative and not being afraid to do things because I felt I might not be good enough at them." The article touched Runyon, and he invited Espina to come down to play at his



Larry "the O" Oppenheimer '15

93rd birthday party, which he did. Before returning to New York, Espina picked out a mouthpiece from Runyon's factory. But after playing it, Espina called Runyon with suggestions for improving it.

"He told me to come back and he'd reface it for me," Espina says. "I went mainly for the opportunity to hang out with him again. He refaced it with sandpaper and files and it was amazing. I told him I loved it, and he said we'd call it the JodyJazz mouthpiece." Ultimately, Espina began traveling regularly to Runyon's factory to make the JodyJazz mouthpiece himself to sell to his students. Word of a great new accessory began spreading through an online saxophone forum.

"My quality control was higher than Santy's and I repackaged the mouthpieces with a different ligature and raised the price," Espina says. "I play-tested every mouthpiece—most manufacturers weren't doing that." Espina also prototyped a metal mouthpiece and began to expand his product line. Espina based his new business in his New York apartment and traveled several times a year to Louisiana to work a week during each visit in Runyon's factory and with a local machinist for metal mouthpieces. Espina moved to progressively larger apartments until he decided to move his business and family to Savannah in 2008.

Through tireless effort in manufacturing and marketing, Espina's JodyJazz mouthpieces are distributed throughout the United States and around the world. "We have about eight mouthpiece models for all saxophones made from four materials: silver- and gold-plated brass, hard rubber, polycarbonate, hard-anodized aluminum. George Garzone uses the aluminum mouthpiece that we call the Giant." Espina's products are noted for being carefully crafted. "I became obsessed with them being consistent and selling every customer a great mouthpiece," he says. "We do hand work in the critical finishing phase." Top saxophonists from around the world endorse the exclusive JodyJazz product line.

As for performing, Espina has a steady gig in Savannah every weekend, and recently recorded a new jazz album with Howard Paul, the president of Benedetto Guitars. Last spring, he completed a highly successful educational clinic tour of Asia.

Espina knows well that you can't predict where your path in life will go, but he also cautions against spreading yourself too thin in too many areas. "You need to be *really good* at something," he says. "Along the way as you learn other things, learn to do them well. Work hard, pay attention, and show up with a good attitude. A bad attitude will bite you in the butt."

### **Composer, Software Developer, Recording Engineer, Performer**

Working in New York City, Joseph Branciforte B.M. '07 is something of a poster child for a contemporary mix-and-match music career. Sitting in Greyfade Studio, his mixing and mastering facility in Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood, he describes his work as a recording engineer, composer, multi-instrumentalist, and software engineer.

"Part of the nature of having a freelance music career in New York is being open to doing a lot of things simultaneously," Branciforte says. "One week, I might have a lot of audio engineering work mixing or mastering work at the studio, then a week where I'm preparing for a performance of my own, and then a week engineering a live record at a jazz club, then a few days off to compose and write."

Adept at drums, piano, and electronic instruments, Branciforte composes and plays drums as part of the Cellar and Point, a septet specializing in "garage chamber" music, a mix of contemporary classical, jazz, post-rock, and electronics. Branciforte also writes and performs minimalist ambient music, both solo and in collaboration with artists such as experimental

vocalist Theo Bleckmann. He draws on instrumentation including a Fender Rhodes piano, unusual percussion items, and an array of electronics such as loop pedals and modular synths, in addition to more low-tech components like cassette recorders.

In his "day job," he does engineering, producing, mixing, mastering, and postproduction work for an impressive array of clients on the cutting edge of jazz, including Vijay Iyer, Nels Cline, Ben Monder, and Ran Blake.

"I'm of the engineering school of recording it properly and using the least amount of processing necessary for the finished product," Branciforte says. "World-class musicians, a good room, a great microphone, and a great preamp are the foundation of everything I do." His audio work happens both in the studio and at various locations for live performances. Branciforte recently spent two weeks recording jazz guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel live at The Village Vanguard in New York and this summer, he travelled to Norway to work for acclaimed jazz composers Iyer and Steve Lehman.

Doing on-location recording offered Branciforte "a way around the traditional studio chain of command," as he describes it. He broke into the industry by offering to work for free for musicians that he admired, many of whom eventually became or referred him to paying clients. "A lot of my gigs came about just from showing up and offering to help people," he says.

For most, all this would seem like a full plate, but Branciforte is also a software designer, having spent more than three years developing interactive software for both composing and translating musical "data" into musical notation in real time. The software uses an Ethernet connection to link each performer in an ensemble to Branciforte's laptop. It generates a score with the capacity to make changes on the fly, thereby redefining the whole concept of a "score" by building in unlimited compositional flexibility.

Branciforte says he began thinking of the idea while studying in Berklee's Electronic Production and Design Department with professors Neil Leonard and Richard Boulanger. The software works by presenting musicians with a scrolling score, and in order to preserve flexibility for the composer to make changes during performance, the musicians see only one measure ahead—an arrangement that Branciforte acknowledges takes some getting used to. The implications are many, ranging from allowing a composer to adjust the music at hand to the acoustics or crowd reaction of a specific venue to creating instant notation of acoustic improv sessions, and more.

Given his software development, live performances, and multifaceted engineering work, it's natural to wonder how he fits everything in. But Branciforte can't imagine life any other way. Having passion for his work has served him well in New York's competitive music scene. He attributes his success to being comfortable working without a script.

"There are a lot of people who want to make a life in music in New York," Branciforte says. "I think the only way to survive is to be willing to invent a role for yourself. There are not a lot of pre-made jobs or paths here. That's both the exciting thing and the tricky thing about New York."

For Branciforte, the process of inventing his role is a combination of hustle, relationship building, and a boldness to say yes whenever possible. "I've gotten called for gigs where I wasn't necessarily 100 percent confident that I could do it, but if it was a project I wanted to be involved in, I just said yes and then learned the necessary skills to fill the role," he shares. "A big part of it is thinking, 'If this is something I believe in, I'm just going to figure out a way to make it happen.'" So far, he's figuring it out. ☐



Jody Espina '83



Joseph Branciforte '07

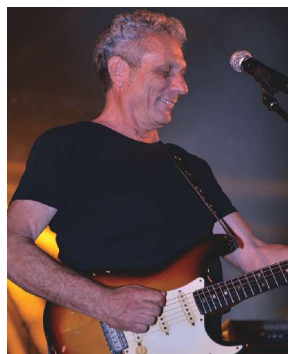


# A Desert Rose

Cofounded by Berklee alumni, the Rimon School of Music is lauded as a successful startup that has shaped Israel's music culture.

By Mark Small

Rimon opened a new, modern building in 2012. Benefactor Udi Angel gifted the construction costs for the building that houses a large recital hall, classrooms, and other facilities.



Rimon president and cofounder Yehuda Eder '79



Orlee Sela, Rimon cofounder and current director of external affairs.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah envisioned a future restoration in Israel when “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly even with joy and singing.” (Isaiah 35:1-2.) And it has in ways figurative and practical. In their 2009 best-selling book *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, authors Dan Senor and Saul Singer noted that the tiny, now-69-year-old nation state that is home to 8 million people, “surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources—produces more startup companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada, and the United Kingdom.” At the root of the phenomenon are high-tech innovation powered by Israel's youth trained in technology in the Israel Defense Forces and an affinity for entrepreneurship.

Yehuda Eder '79, the president of Tel Aviv's Rimon School of Music, expresses pride and surprise at the view among the press and government of his musical education endeavor. “There are many amazing startups in Israel and many people here are looking at Rimon as a startup,” Eder says, thumbing through a recent copy of *Forbes* magazine (the Israeli edition), which chronicled the appetite for innovation and music technology at Rimon.

“Six months ago I didn't know what innovation meant,” Eder says, half joking. “I still don't, but I can feel that it's important. The whole world is communicating. Innovating is like improvising together.” Through continued growth and educational excellence, Rimon, a Berklee partner school since 1993, is responsible for much of the “joy and singing” reverberating across the desert nation of Israel and beyond. During its 32-year existence Rimon has trained 5,000 alumni, and at most major musical events in the country, you'll find Rimon alumni performing on-stage or in technical support roles. During a nationally televised concert on May 8 celebrating Israeli independence, 28 Rimon-trained pianists played together on stage.

## A New Season

It's a sultry July evening and I'm in a cab heading down HaYarkon Street to the Shablul Jazz Club in the Old Port section of Tel Aviv. “Who's playing there tonight?” the driver asks. I tell him it's a birthday bash for rock guitarist Yehuda Eder with a group featuring some of his collaborators since his days in the band Tamuz. The driver knows of Tamuz, and that's not surprising. Israelis might justifiably compare the career of Tamuz to

those of New Radicals, Blind Faith, or the Sex Pistols. Each released but one album that was hugely influential.

Many call Tamuz's 1976 disc *The End of Orange Season* (*Sof Onat Hatapuzim*), the best Israeli rock album of all time. It yielded two hits, but then after tons of radio play and concerts to packed houses, the group disbanded. Two members became successful singer-songwriters, others became session musicians. Eder came to Berklee to study guitar, arranging, and composition with such faculty icons as Bret Wilmott, Herb Pomeroy, and Tom Lee among others. “When I came back to Israel after Berklee, I started producing a lot of albums, but it wasn't enough for me,” Eder says as we stroll around Rimon's small, gated campus. “I always had this vision of students working together, that was really needed in Israel.” Working together is a cherished ideal for Eder who was raised in a kibbutz, or collective community, that farmed citrus trees in the north of Israel.

Eder credits his wife, Miki Kam—a famous actress and singer known to TV and musical theater audiences across Israel—for fostering his dream. “I told her I was starting a school and she just said, ‘OK.’ If she had asked what I meant by that or was critical of the idea, Rimon might never have happened. I take the same approach with my songwriting students by accepting any idea they bring in. That's the basis of creation.”

Together with six other founders, Eder brainstormed about how to build an institution that could incorporate some of Berklee's best practices and educational methods to quench the thirst of young Israelis for contemporary music instruction. In addition to Eder, the founders included Gil Dor '75, Guri Agmon '76, Orlee Sela, Ilan Mochiach, and Harry Lipschitz. Amikam Kimelman '82 came aboard later in the process but is also considered a founder. The team met weekly for two years to discuss curriculum and teaching methods. From the start, Lipschitz a songwriter and successful entrepreneur, provided crucial guidance on business matters and became the school's leading financial officer. Eder found the location for the campus, a former elementary school in Ramat HaSharon, a suburb north of Tel Aviv. In 1985, Rimon opened its doors.

“When we started, this was revolutionary for Israel,” Eder says. “There were very good academies and conservatories, but they didn't know anything about improvising or the connections between Duke Ellington and Bach. We knew what we wanted to do; we had seen it at Berklee.”

“When we started, students who played only by ear couldn’t enter any other music academy,” Orlee Sela, Rimón’s current director of external affairs says. “We wanted to accept anyone who had musical ability even if they didn’t possess theoretical knowledge.”

“I knew we had the teachers and students somewhere in Israel,” Eder says. “The school was like a magnet. We got the very best students in the first two or three years, and a lot of them went on to become top artists, producers, and songwriters. Those students were pioneers just like we were.” The magnet also attracted a number of Berklee alumni as faculty members.

“We became known in Israel as a jazz school,” says Iris Portogaly ’89, a jazz drummer and vocalist who chaired the vocal department until becoming Rimón’s academic director in 2014. She and her husband, Ofer Portogaly ’89, met at Berklee, and their daughter Shai is a 2017 Berklee graduate. Ofer is a Rimón faculty member whose duties include teaching piano, ensembles, arranging, and leading a gospel choir. Regarding the latter, Iris states, “We don’t try to sound like an American gospel choir; we put our own soul into it. We’ve done a lot to combine local folk music with jazz and gospel styles. We have a great jazz program here, but our performance major embraces all styles.”

True enough. Rimón’s 80 faculty members lead ensembles playing jazz, pop, rock, folk, blues, country, gospel, hip-hop, electronic, Middle Eastern ethnic styles, and more. The school offers seven majors: composition, arranging, and conducting; performance; jazz institute; music education; electronic production; music production; and songwriting. Eder established Rimón’s songwriting major in 1985, before Berklee offered a songwriting major. It remains the school’s most popular major. Eder calculates that, During the past 32 years, more than 40,000 songs have been written for Rimón’s songwriting classes.

Some of Rimón’s top alumni are the biggest singers and songwriters in Israeli pop music. “Many of them are graduates of [Eder’s] songwriting classes,” Sela says. “They changed the sound of Israeli music and have written songs that are part of the people’s lives here. They are played at weddings and other occasions.”

### Important Allies

Eder cites two benefactors that have provided important early and sustaining support for the school. One is Udi Angel, a top Israeli business magnate and Rimón’s board chair. “Udi approached me about producing a project for him,” Eder recalls. “Then he decided he’d donate to the school. His support has really changed things here. Another important person is Dr. Tali Yariv-Mashal, director of the Beracha Foundation. Udi and Beracha helped the school to grow.” The Beracha Foundation, an Israeli charitable organization founded by Caroline and Joseph Gruss (grandparents of Berklee trustee Josh Gruss), focuses on the environment, Jewish-Arab co-existence, and Israeli culture. In partnership with Berklee, Beracha established the Rimón Jazz Institute, which is directed by Ronen Shumelli, a pianist and 2011 Berklee graduate. The jazz institute has significantly influenced the advancement of jazz education in Israel.

A May 1992 article about Rimón on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* caught the attention of former Berklee president Lee Eliot Berk. That ultimately precipitated discussions between Berk and Sela about an academic connection and transfer of credits between the two institutions. Eder keeps black-and-white photos on his phone, reminders of a

visit more than 30 years ago from then-Berklee deans Gary Burton and Richard Bobbitt. Larry Monroe, acting as vice president of Berklee’s office of international programs, shepherded the agreement that made Rimón a member of the Berklee International Network in 1993. Lee Berk journeyed to Tel Aviv in 1996 to sign an articulation agreement. That established a policy for transfer of credits, which enables students to complete two years of study at Rimón and another two in Boston to earn a Berklee degree.

Moshe Sinai, Rimón’s managing director since 2014, was an army representative to the Israeli Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs and later the mayor of Rosh Ha’Ayin, a city east of Tel Aviv, for 10 years. “The connection with Berklee is a wonderful and positive model for both schools,” Sinai says. “Both sides have mutual interests to develop this cooperation.”

Sinai characterizes Rimón’s community outreach program as one comparable to the Berklee City Music Program. “Our students and faculty members go to municipalities to work with at-risk youth,” he says. “We want to empower them through music. We play music with them and inspire them. This can help them to change their communities.” Rimón recently received an award from the office of the prime minister for work in communities in northern Israel with students on the autistic spectrum. “Through music we help them develop skills to lift them to a higher level of activity,” Sinai says.

“There are a lot of high schools here that teach computer programming, and then those students enter the military and go deeper into high tech,” says Izhar Schejter ’89. Schejter earned his undergraduate degree in jazz composition from Berklee and his master’s degree from New England Conservatory of Music. He taught harmony and music business at Berklee and worked for American music software companies before returning to Israel. He’s now Rimón’s assistant managing director. “Part of the DNA of the startup nation is that people get hands-on experience with the military’s advanced systems at a young age,” he says. “We want to harness some of that by going into the high schools to teach the students about music programming. Our hope is that some will go into music technology after they finish their military service.”

### Campus Expansion

In 2012, Rimón opened a new building, which the school’s top donor Udi Angel funded. It’s equipped with a large recital hall, classrooms, and two rooms outfitted with digital audio workstations for teaching various music technology courses. The campus also has a building with a recording studio and a basement rehearsal room where Bob Simon and a CBS television crew filmed a storied segment on the school in 1987. Additional facilities include the school’s library, cafeteria, and administrative offices. With the new building, Rimón can accommodate 1,000 students; 500 full-timers and 500 that take courses in the extension school.

The extension school—overseen by Rony Koral who is Rimón’s director of marketing—serves those who play music but aren’t considering becoming professionals. They take courses in music theory, songwriting, or music technology, and participate in the Friday jam sessions that are open to all students and led by Ofer Portogali. The extension school draws both youth and adult musicians from near and far. Among them are professionals—including doctors from local hospitals seeking to polish their musical skills.



Moshe Sinai, managing director



Izhar Schejter '89, assistant managing director



Iris Portogaly '89, academic director



Harry Lipschitz, financial director





From the left: Rimon School of Music founders Amikam Kimelman '82, Guri Agmon '76, Yehuda Eder '79, Orlee Sela, Ilan Mochiach, Gil Dor '75, and Harry Lipschitz.



From the left: Berklee president Roger Brown and Yehuda Eder. "I consider Yehuda to be my BFAM, or brother from another mother," says Brown. "I've enjoyed working with him. We share a passion for music and helping young people grow as musicians."



Rony Koral, director of marketing

Rimon's full-time students earn a diploma in three years, fulfilling part of Rimon's original vision to create opportunities for young Israelis to study in their country and in their own Hebrew language. "Some young Israeli students who begin studying at Rimon want to continue their studies at Berklee," Sinai says. "One way to Berklee is through Rimon's long-standing credit transfer agreement."

"Affordability is an issue for students everywhere," Schejter says. "Berklee's admissions department offers Rimon as an option for people who feel they can't afford Berklee. The rents here are less than in Boston and our tuition is lower." Students can complete two years at Rimon, transfer those credits to Berklee, and earn a music degree for less than the cost of spending four years at Berklee.

The newer program, Pathways, is in its second year. The program has drawn interest from participants from several countries, though to date students in the pathways to Berklee program are predominantly from the United States. "We teach the pathway students in English and use Berklee textbooks," Schejter explains. "Everyone teaching in the Pathways Program has gone to Berklee. This provides consistency for those continuing on. We are exploring the possibilities for them to take liberal arts courses that we don't offer online."

Pathways has drawn students from Venezuela, Uruguay, Argentina, Italy, and Colombia, in addition to American students wanting a study-abroad experience. Many Jewish-American families want their kids to experience living in Israel, and studying at Rimon has great appeal.

### Global Visions

Schejter is working on nurturing entrepreneurial skills among Rimon's tech-oriented students. Key figures evolving partnership are Panos Panay, founder of Berklee's Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship (BerkleeICE), and Tali Yariv-Mashal of the Beracha foundation. "I brought Panos here to meet with people from the Beracha Foundation that supports Israeli culture and funds educational incubators," Schejter recalls. "Both parties recognized that there was a natural connection between the foundation and what Berklee is doing. Rimon became the focal point in this." BerkleeICE and Rimon signed a memorandum of understanding [MOU] in 2016 to develop innovation labs at Rimon's Accelerando Incubator and BerkleeICE. The goal is to "broaden student entrepreneurial mindsets and career preparedness by creating environments that foster creativity, cross-discipline collaboration, and innovation with an emphasis on practical outcomes," the MOU states. It will build on the partnerships Berklee has with Harvard, Brown University, and MIT and Rimon's relationships with leading universities and enterprises in Israel. Among the projects and collaborations between the two labs will be semester-long student exchanges.



Israeli businessman and Rimon benefactor Udi Angel



Dr. Tali Yariv-Mashal, director of the Beracha Foundation

Eder dreams big and envisions Rimon becoming a global educational institution that will draw musicians from all over the world on its own merits. Key to reaching that goal is forging agreements that will enable Rimon issue a bachelor of music degree. To that end, Eder and his team are solidifying alliances between Rimon, Berklee, and Tel Aviv's Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts.

"Rimon will teach music courses, Berklee will teach music and online courses, and Tel Aviv's Kibbutzim College will offer the required liberal arts courses for a degree," Eder says. "David Mash [Berklee's former vice president for innovation, strategy, and technology] made strides toward this goal before he retired. Camille Colatosti [Berklee's dean of institutional research and assessment/graduate studies] supports the program. We are waiting for the OK from the Israeli council of higher education. After we get that, things will begin in 2019."

"The council of higher education is willing to grow with us because they have seen the change we have brought to Israeli culture," Eder continues. "It's major that the Israeli establishment is embracing Rimon, and Berklee and Roger Brown are a very important part of that. For Rimon to be able to grant a music degree in Israel will be revolutionary and very important for the future of the school."

### "Follow the Flag"

When he founded Rimon, Eder was working outside of Israel's education establishment. He finds it ironic that the establishment is now embracing Rimon's educational philosophy and not asking them to depart from their original vision. Rimon is also becoming connected to industries that have no connection to music.

"We are seen as starting a new way of thinking and collaborating," Eder says. "As a musician from my generation, you might have been considered a good rock guitar player but not a serious person. Now, all these people want to be part of Rimon."

A line from a Randy Newman's song "Follow the Flag" has become Rimon's unofficial motto. "If you believe in something bigger than yourself, you can follow the flag forever," Newman wrote. "The flag is there when you aren't thinking only about yourself, but about the needs of others," Eder contends.

Back at Shablul Jazz Club, the house lights are up, the set is over, and the crowd has dispersed into the humid night air. Wearing headphones, Eder is listening to the live-to-two-track recording of the set. He later tells me that he hopes now to put renewed focus on his guitar playing. "It's like going back to being 20 years old again," he says grinning. "That's something that you can only do after you've completed your mission. My mission was to start a music school." Like a rose that flourished in the Israeli desert, Rimon has become a well-established educational institution. Mission accomplished.

## From Hollywood to Rome

After receiving kudos and awards for his work with top music stars, Victor Vanacore gets a nod of approval from the Vatican.

By Mark Small

**Victor Vanacore** '74 is preparing for a concert that is the culmination of a life of study and work throughout his four-plus-decade music career. On October 8 at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood, he will conduct the premiere of *La Sorgente (The Source)*, a 48-minute work he composed for two soprano and four tenor soloists, chorus, and symphonic orchestra. The piece consists of 10 neoclassical arias with texts drawn from a book of meditations penned by Pope John Paul II.

The late pontiff had asked famed tenor Placido Domingo Senior, to sing his words, and Placido Domingo Jr. sent Vanacore the pope's book, *Trittico Romano: Meditation (The Roman Tryptych)*. After much back and forth, Vanacore received permission from the Vatican to create a new work using the pope's words.

"I never thought I was capable of doing something like this," Vanacore says. "But I guess I am after going to Italy and becoming interested in my culture, studying opera and orchestration, going to Berklee, and working as an orchestra conductor. I wrote the first aria in 2005, demoed it, and sent it to Placido who said he thought it was really beautiful." Encouraged, Vanacore created nine more expansive settings for the pope's reflections on the natural world, Michelangelo's masterful painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and characters from the Old Testament.

### Off to a Convent

The winding road to this project began when Vanacore started taking piano lessons as a first grader. "My parents sent me to a convent every day because I was a fresh kid and did crazy stuff," he recalls with a grin. "One of the nuns there offered to give me piano lessons." She taught him well enough that he was playing Beethoven's piano sonatas in third grade. But a becoming a classical pianist was not in the cards.

"My hands are very small and I am missing a thumb muscle, so I learned after my first competition that I [couldn't] be a classical pianist," Vanacore says. "My father brought a fake book home from a music store because he heard that working pianists used them. Later, I had a jazz teacher who showed me how to read the book's chord changes." As a teenager, Vanacore began playing gigs. When it came time for college, his parents didn't have the money for tuition, so he joined the U.S. Navy. Two of his naval assignments would influence his future.

"I was transferred to Italy with the Sixth Fleet," he says. "That was great because I was able to go to Naples and study conducting and absorb Italian culture. When I got back to the States, I was in the band at the New London, CT, submarine base. There, I met a bunch of Berklee guys who were amazing players and arrangers." Upon his discharge, Vanacore used his G.I. Bill benefits to fund his studies at Berklee.

"I went straight through including summers," Vanacore remembers. "I took a lot of courses. I studied piano with Ray Santisi, line writing with Herb Pomeroy, and conducting with Jeronimas Kacinskas. Ray advised me not to take the teaching job I was considering and to go out into the world instead. He told me I'd grow exponentially." Vanacore took the advice and moved to Los Angeles in the early 1970s. There, he studied orchestration with Albert Harris, whom Vanacore describes as "an encyclopedia for orchestration." Soon, he was conducting for a variety of acts playing charts penned by top Hollywood arrangers such as Jack Elliott, Ernie Freeman, and Sid Feller. He scrutinized their music to understand their methods.

### "Got to Be There"

Vanacore's first big gig was playing keyboards with the Jackson Five during the group's heyday. When the conductor for the act became sick and couldn't make a show at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Vanacore was asked to fill in. "We were doing the Jacksons' Motown songs but they needed a conductor because there

were a lot of production and dance numbers," he says. "I conducted the orchestra from the piano. It was there that my preparation met with opportunity." Vanacore subsequently became the Jacksons' conductor.

When the Jacksons began working less, Vanacore took a job as the conductor for the Fifth Dimension. He later spent two years conducting for Johnny Mathis before being hired by Barry Manilow when the singer/pianist was at the height of his fame. After six years, Vanacore, noting the growing use of technology in music, decided to take a hiatus to study it. "I left Barry's gig in 1986 to learn about MIDI sequencing and notation programs," Vanacore says. "It took me a few years to get up to speed."

### In Good Company

In 1990, Vanacore became the conductor, arranger, and music director for Ray Charles, he worked with the legendary singer until his passing in 2004. During those years, Charles recorded Vanacore's orchestral arrangements on his only platinum-selling record, *Genius Loves Company*, which included Vanacore's Grammy-winning chart for "Somewhere over the Rainbow," a duet arrangement sung by Ray Charles and Johnny Mathis.

When Charles was booked to play at the Hollywood Bowl, Vanacore was asked to direct the orchestra in the National Anthem. This led to subsequent invitations to conduct the orchestra in warm-up sets for Charles. Vanacore wrote charts for these opening spots and cultivated a new venture as a guest symphonic pops conductor. Given his deep background in popular, jazz, r&b, classical music, and more, plus his ability to write parts that musicians enjoyed playing and audiences loved hearing, demand for Vanacore as a guest conductor increased. He has since led orchestras in dozens of American cities and in Canada, Australia, and in the music hubs of Europe.

He created enough repertoire to launch Colonial Road Music Publishing, a music rental library that

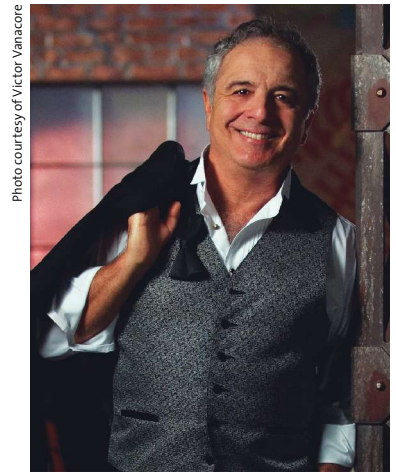


Photo courtesy of Victor Vanacore  
Victor Vanacore '74

enables other conductors to present his music. The company website ([colonialroadmusicpublishing.com](http://colonialroadmusicpublishing.com)) contains more than 100 distinctive arrangements (with MIDI demos) in a range of idioms including Broadway, TV and film themes, pop, Latin, patriotic, jazz, holiday, inspirational, swing selections, and more. "I just rented about 10 charts to the St. Louis Philharmonic," Vanacore says. "That's almost their whole program. Some nights I'll be somewhere playing a Christmas show and eight other orchestras are playing my arrangements in other cities."

The vast experience Vanacore has accrued writing and conducting brought him to the point where he could undertake a project of the magnitude of *La Sorgente*. And while the words were penned by a Catholic pope, Vanacore believes that the work will appeal to both secular and religious audiences. "It borders on sacred music but is deeply rooted in Italian opera," he says. "It could be played anywhere. With words about nature, the Sistine Chapel, and Old Testament figures like Abraham, it could even be performed in a synagogue."

At 69, Vanacore sees no sense in slowing down. "After preparing for challenges throughout my career, it seems to me that, as musicians, we don't prepare to retire. I've had this opportunity to write this piece. Where would I be if I hadn't pushed myself?"



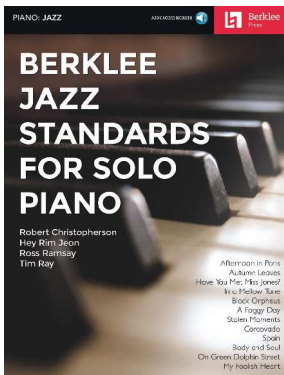
# THE WOODSHED

## Arranging a Jazz Classic for Solo Piano

Eric Antoniou



Hey Rim Jeon '01 is an assistant professor in the Piano Department and an active jazz artist nationally and internationally. She has released four albums as a leader. Visit [jazzjeon.com](http://jazzjeon.com).



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by Hey Rim Jeon

The following is excerpted from the book *Berklee Jazz Standards for Solo Piano*, published by Berklee Press.

“Autumn Leaves,” originally titled “Les Feuilles Mortes,” was written in 1945 by Hungarian-French composer Joseph Kosma with French lyrics by Jacques Prévert. English lyrics were coined two years later in 1947 by American songwriter Johnny Mercer. The song’s melody is perhaps one of the most recognizable within popular jazz repertoire, and has been recorded by countless jazz artists, including vocalists Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Sarah Vaughan, and pianists, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, and Monty Alexander. The song offers an excellent way for beginning players to become acquainted with jazz harmony, as the chord progression consists almost exclusively of II V I and II V sequences, which are typical in the jazz idiom.

This arrangement of “Autumn Leaves” is in 4/4 time, in the key of G minor. It has an intro-AABC-outro song form, and is 64 bars in length. An unusual aspect of the arrangement is the classical introduction (measures 1–16), which is designed to surprise listeners upon first hearing. They will not be aware that the piece is “Autumn Leaves” until they recognize the well-known melody, which begins with the three-note pickup in the last measure before letter A. The use of a stylistically contrasting introduction reflects an original interpretation by Monty Alexander in his album *Alexander the Great*. The introduction is challenging because it’s essentially a two-part invention played with a straight-eighth-note feel that switches to swing when the main melody appears.

Once the melody is established at letter A, the AABC song form begins, each section being eight bars in length. In the first A section, the right hand plays the main melody with shell voicings providing rhythmic emphasis on the second

half of the even-numbered bars. When the second A begins, the same rhythmic figures are used. However, to provide musical variation, the melody line is embellished with sequential approach notes from above, and three-note voicings are employed in the left hand. The dominant seventh chords in both A sections feature a tritone built from the 3rd and 7th scale degrees, and one tension. Note, in measures 18–19, the line cliché played in the left hand beneath the right-hand melody. (See example 1 below). The musical phrase connects the two A sections and quotes the melody used in measure 7, reflecting the contrapuntal approach taken in the introduction of the piece.

To support the ascending B section melody (measures 33–40), four-note voicings are introduced in the left hand, with dominant seventh chords featuring a tritone built from the 3rd and 7th scale degree, and two tensions. Both this section

and the C section that follows (measures 33–40), make use of syncopated rhythms, that provide contrast to the rhythmic figures played in the A section.

Note in measures 37–39, the harmonized chromatic melody line, played with rhythmic anticipations. The chord voicings used are known as “So What” voicings. A “So What” voicing is a five-note chord structure consisting of three perfect fourth intervals followed by a major third. It is named after the voicings used by pianist Bill Evans in the song “So What” by Miles Davis from the album *Kind of Blue*. (See example 2.)

The arrangement finishes with an outro section, which is a return to the two-part invention heard in the introduction. As before, it is played in a straight-eighth feel. Rather than evoke surprise, this time the section is familiar to the listener and provides a balanced conclusion to the piece.

Example 1

In measure 18 an ascending line cliché sounds in the upper voice of the left hand. A melodic fragment quoted in bar 7 of the introduction is played in the right hand in bar 19.

Example 2

A series of three “So What” chord voicings begins on the “and” of beat four in bar 37. They move down chromatically with rhythmic anticipations.

# Autumn Leaves

Music by Joseph Kosma  
 English Lyric by Johnny Mercer  
 French lyric by Jacques Prévert  
 Arranged by Hey Rim Jeon

## Intro

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

Chords: Cmi7, E°7, F7, F7/A, B♭Ma7, B♭7/D, E♭Ma7, Ami7♭5, C#°7, D7, D7/F#, Gmi7, D7/A, Gmi/B♭, B°7, D7, Gmi7, Fine

### A Med. Swing

Chords: Cmi7, F7, B♭Ma7, E♭Ma7, Ami7♭5, D7, Gmi, Gmi6

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Section B Chords: Ami7♭5, D7, Gmi, Gmi6  
 Section C Chords: Ami7♭5, D7, Gmi7  
 Section D.S. al Fine Chords: E7, Ami7♭5, D7, Gmi7, Gmi6, D.S. al Fine

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# EXPERT TESTIMONY

Given by Grammy-winning songwriter  
Lori McKenna to Mark Small

## A Career Built to Her Specs

Lori McKenna has become one of country music's most sought-after songwriters without having ever lived in Nashville. A lifelong Massachusetts resident, she opted to stay local even when it became apparent that moving to the Music City could boost her career. "My life would be easier if I lived there, but the lives of those in my family would not be easier," she says. McKenna is a married mother of five children who puts family first and has succeeded at building a career on her own terms.

So far, McKenna has nabbed two Grammy Awards in the Best Country Song category. The first was in 2015 for cowriting the hit "Girl Crush" for Little Big Town. The second came earlier this year for "Humble and Kind," a smash for Tim McGraw. The latter was also the first song written by a solo songwriter to reach number one on *Billboard's* country charts in four years. She has also won awards from the Country Music Association, the Academy of Country Music, the Nashville Songwriters International, ASCAP, and the Boston Music Awards. Reba McEntire, Alison Krauss, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Keith Urban, Hunter Hayes, Mandy Moore, and Sara Evans are among the many artists who have recorded her songs.

McKenna started writing as a teenager, but she didn't start singing her songs at open mic nights around Boston until she was 28 and had three children. Since releasing her debut album *Paper Wings and Halo* in 2000, McKenna has completed nine more. The music on her 2016 album, *The Bird and the Rifle*, netted her three Grammy nominations. A year after she signed a publishing deal in 2004, Faith Hill cut four of McKenna's songs, and her songwriting career began to lift off. She estimates that she has written more than 1,000 songs to date.

McKenna, who is self-taught, spent two afternoons last summer sharing her hard-won wisdom with Berklee songwriters. She imparted two key points: First, each songwriter has to find his or her path to a career, and second, until you are writing great songs, no one can help you make your career a success.

### **Was it an adjustment for you to begin cowriting with others after working so long on your own?**

When I first got a publishing deal, I was about 35 and had never cowritten a song. Some of my songwriter friends were telling me that if I hadn't been cowriting, I shouldn't start. But I started and loved it. So many things opened up. Looking back years later, I find now that writing songs as part of a community is one of my strengths.

### **How often do you go to Nashville for writing sessions?**

I'm down there two or three times a month and I usually stay for three days on each trip. I miss opportunities sometimes because I'm not living there, but that's good in a way. I'm not



Lori McKenna

an everyday writer, and if I lived there I'd feel the pressure to write everyday because everyone else does. I don't know if that would be good for me. I like to get an idea and let it grow.

### **In addition to writing, you still make albums and tour as an artist.**

I do. After I released *The Bird and the Rifle* I did a tour of about 16 shows. Unless I am touring an album, I only do shows here and there, I don't go out for a year at a time like others do. If you do that, it's hard to write, and writing is my favorite part. I want to be able to write and get my songs cut by bigger artists. My manager Beth told me that having my artist side makes me a better writer overall. She taught me that I could do both things in a way that honors each without having to pick one over the other. It's two jobs, but if you're not writing every day or playing a show every weekend, you can do both.

### **After having a recording contract with Warner Music Nashville, what made you return to recording for indie labels?**

I remember making the *Unglamorous* record [2007] for Warner Bros with Byron Gallimore and Tim McGraw producing. There were a lot of musicians and this grand way of making a record that was so much fun. I remember an A&R guy from the label coming in and saying, "We're going to sell a million records!" But I was thinking, "No we're not." I was a little scared thinking that if it took off and we had a hit on country radio that I wouldn't be able to chase it. But that didn't happen.

I learned so much and it was a great experience for me. When it came time to make the next record, the 360-deal was in play. I loved the people at Warner—the president and A&R people—but I would have had to take a 360-deal where they would take a part of my publishing, merch, and touring. I couldn't hand over any of my publishing. That's what was keeping me afloat. So I asked to get out. It was a fun experience before we all went our separate ways.

### **What has been your reaction when you hear the version a top singer and producer have made of your song for the first time?**

I got a text from Karen Fairchild [of Little Big Town] when they were cutting "Happy People" saying she couldn't wait for me to hear it. I had five songs on that record [*The Breaker*]. I was in Nashville when they finished, and Karen invited me to meet them for a glass of wine. Four of us sat in her car listening to the mixes. It's always in a car! I remember the first time I heard [Tim McGraw's version of] "Humble and Kind" I was in a publisher's car outside Sony Publishing. I just lost it—it was so good. I've been really lucky that I've never heard my song and thought, "Oh no. What have they done?"

**Have you been surprised by interpretations of your lyrics in an artist's production video of your song?**

I was surprised by the "Humble and Kind" video. I had seen Tim the night before he made the video and he was trying to explain to me that it was going to be a little like the Oprah Winfrey "Belief" series. I knew that was a global thing. As he was telling me what they were going to do, I was thinking, "This is a song I wrote thinking about my five kids." I didn't understand how he saw it in such a big way. He sent me a link to an edit of the video and I watched it about 10 times. I had never seen the song in that way, it's brilliant! To me that's an example of how many different ways we can look at a song.

**In the writing process, do you make a lot of revisions to your songs?**

I have friends who feel precious about their songs, but I'm not really like that. If something isn't right, I'll just scrap it and try to write a better song. If there is a good line buried in a song that's not great, I may find a way to use it somewhere else. I heard [singer-songwriter] John Gorka say that you have to get the bad songs out so that they don't clog up the tube.

**Do you think that a songwriter's ultimate goal is to make people feel an emotion or have a realization about life?**

Everyone has a song that has opened their eyes to something they didn't realize they were feeling. Sometimes I'll talk with a listener who shows no facial expression as they tell me that a song was amazing. Someone else won't say anything, but I can see that they felt something. To me, that's much better. I think that's why songwriters are here.


**You seem to find plenty to draw on with your own life experiences and what you observe around you.**

Well, sometimes I get stuck like everyone else does, but I'm not one to just *not* write. I met a guy in an airport who asked me what kind of guitar I had with me. We started talking and he said he used to play, but now he doesn't even listen to music anymore. I tried to encourage him to pick his guitar up again, but he said no. He'd tried to be a musician back in the day and now he doesn't want to have anything to do with it.

I don't know him, but if I made up a story about him, it might be that he thought he could go into music and that it would give him something back. Some people go into music with an agenda for the success they want. My brother writes songs and has a great voice, but he plays only for himself. He loves music and it loves him back. Music is like a relationship, the more you give, the more you get.

**What would you tell a songwriter who is just starting out?**

I would say work at being able to interpret your own songs. I get a lot of songs and lyrics from people who want me to give them to Tim McGraw or some other artist, but I can't do that. My husband just told me about someone we know who said they just wrote a song. I asked, "Did you tell them to go and write 999 more?" Most people don't know that for every one of your songs that gets cut there may be 300 others that didn't. I may write 150 songs in a year and I'll be lucky to get two of them cut.

I know that there may come a day when I won't have a publishing deal anymore because I'm not delivering songs that people want to cut. But I will still always want to write songs and I'll still have the outlet to perform. That's a gift. 



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**Berklee**



# ALUM NOTES

Compiled by  
Vanessa Bouvry



Stan Bann '78



Sonya Jason '85



Steve Dawson '87



Amy Englehardt '90

1972

**David A. Boatwright** of Shelburne Falls, MA, was a founding member of the Loose Caboose band, and recorded the album *Dealer's World* with Bob Marley in Jamaica in 1981. Boatwright later joined the Equalites and recorded five CDs with the group.

1975

**Douglas Cooper Getschal** of Jupiter, FL, and Alan Palanker, co-owners of Palm Beach Jazz Records, topped the *Billboard* Smooth Jazz Song Chart with the Jazz Holdouts' song "Summer Nights."

1977

**Tony Corman** of Berkeley, CA, and his Morchestra jazz orchestra play often in the San Francisco Bay Area. Recent concerts included a program of Corman's Brazilian big band arrangements and concerts with guest vocalist Clairdee. Visit [tonycorman.com](http://tonycorman.com).

1978

**Stan Bann** of Eden Prairie, MN, released an album of his original jazz and concert works for low brass entitled *Penmanship*. Visitors can download the album at [stanbann.com](http://stanbann.com).

**Phil Bondi** of Bonita Springs, FL, is a busy piano technician in Southwest Florida. Visit [philbondi.com](http://philbondi.com).

1979

**Ken Field** of Cambridge, MA, was a 2017 finalist in music composition by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. He played on the soundtracks for a special program of the animated films by his late wife Karen Aqua at the Animator Festival in Poznan, Poland in July. Visit [kenfield.org](http://kenfield.org).

**Jonathan R. Lax** of Summit, NJ, recently performed under the baton of Doc Severinsen at the 2017 International Trumpet Guild Conference. Lax recently interviewed **Tony Scodwell '63** for an upcoming issue of *Brass Herald* magazine.

1980

**Mary Ellen Skeesick** of Victoria, MN, just released a new childrens music book entitled *Do Re Mi, Line Space Key, Sing with Me*. Visit [maryellenskeesick.com](http://maryellenskeesick.com).

Drummer **Bill Spoke** of Hollywood, CA, is co-leading the Gary Herbig & Bill Spoke Quintet in jazz gigs throughout the Los Angeles area. Visit [facebook.com/gbjazz](https://facebook.com/gbjazz).

1983

**Carol Evans** of New Orleans, LA, joined NOLA Voice Talent Foundation, a group that provides workshops for voice actors and announcers.

1985

**Ricardo Ferrari** of Nova Friburgo, Brazil, is working on the Lone Bassist Project, composing and arranging pieces for solo bass guitar.

Saxophonist **Sonya Jason** of Montara, CA, released her fourth solo CD, *Feels So Good: Live in Half Moon Bay*. The album is a tribute to the contemporary jazz artists of the 70s and 80s. Visit [sonyajason.com](http://sonyajason.com).

**Bill Myregaard** of Richmond, VT, teaches music at various schools in Vermont and plays in the bands Dark Star Project and The Willoughbys. Visit [laamusic.weebly.com](http://laamusic.weebly.com).

**Matt Rollings** of Nashville, TN, coproduced Wille Nelson's *Summertime: Willie Nelson Sings Gershwin* album, which won 2017 Grammy in the Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album category. Currently, he is producing a new album for the group Blues Traveler and touring with Lyle Lovett and his Large Band. Visit [mattrollings.com](http://mattrollings.com).

1986

Artist and musician **James T. Callahan** of Hillsborough, NJ, is a fine art and commercial photographer and a professional drummer. Visit [jamestcallahanphotographer.com](http://jamestcallahanphotographer.com).

**Ronald R. Carter** of Jeffersonville, VT, released *The Flying Pirate Circus*, his third album of pirate music and sea songs for all ages. Featured musicians include trumpeter **Bob Bean '86**. Visit [rockinonthefriendlypirate.com](http://rockinonthefriendlypirate.com).

Guitarist and composer **Kevin Kastning** of Groton, MA, recently released the albums *the Line to Three* with guitarist Mark Wingfield and *Invocation* with guitarist Sándor Szabó. Visit [kevinkastning.com](http://kevinkastning.com).

**Keijo Pennanen** of Vantaa, Finland, wrote the book *Contemporary Picking Etudes* for Mel Bay Publishing. The book's 23 original compositions explore pick-style guitar technique.

1987

**Steve Dawson** of Chicago, IL, cowrote a book on songwriting with Mark Caro titled *Take It to the Bridge: Unlocking the Great Songs Inside You*. Visit [stevedawsonmusic.com](http://stevedawsonmusic.com).

In April, **Chris Jentsch** of Brooklyn, NY, released the album *Fractured Pop* on the Fleur de Son label. Visit [chrisjentsch.com](http://chrisjentsch.com).

## alumni profile

### Sharon Farber '97

## Crossing Genres and Boundaries

By Mark Small



Kevin Rapillo '90

### 1988

**James “JamBoy” Boyer** of Old Tappan, NJ, was installed as the 61st rotary district governor for district 7490 that serves 50 rotary clubs in three New Jersey counties.

### 1989

**Kiyotaka Takiyama** of Omeshi, Japan, has toured and recorded with various Japanese artists and released several drum programming and instructional DVDs. Follow him on Instagram @kiyo\_takiyama.

### 1990

**Amy Engelhardt** of Los Angeles, CA, made her off-Broadway debut as the composer and lyricist for *Bastard Jones*, a rock musical based on Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*.

**Kevin Rapillo** of Nashville, TN, has toured as the music director and drummer for country artist Rodney Atkins.

### 1991

**Heather Edwards** of New York City won in the Outstanding Musical Direction category at the 2017 OnStage Theatre Awards for her work on *Sweeney Todd* with City Island Theater Group. Visit [heatheredwards.net](http://heatheredwards.net).

“After hearing the sound of my music coming at me I was hooked,” says **Sharon Farber** '97, recalling the first time she heard an orchestra play her music. It happened after she completed her studies at Berklee as a dual major in film scoring and composition. Farber was in the ASCAP film-scoring workshop in Los Angeles and was among the participants chosen to record an orchestral cue. Since then, she has made Los Angeles her home and seen her composing career unfold across genres and international boundaries.

To date, Farber has received four daytime Emmy Award nominations for her work on the TV drama series *The Young and the Restless*, and has won awards from the Society of Composers and Lyricists and the Women's International Film & Television Showcase. She is at home writing everything from a grand orchestral score for a feature film or small ensemble and electronic scores for a documentary or TV show. Simultaneously, Farber has broadened her horizons by writing concert music for orchestra and chorus and has received commissions and performances for her music across America and in Europe and Israel.

Farber's musical journey began with classical music in Bat Yam, Israel, a city south of Tel Aviv, where she began playing piano at seven years old. After graduating from the Thelma Yelin High School of the Arts and completing two years of service in the Israel Defense Forces, she came to Berklee as a scholarship student. Prior to the aforementioned ASCAP workshop, Farber completed an internship at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Los Angeles where TV composers Jonathan Wolff (best known for writing the *Seinfeld* theme) and Alf Clausen '65 (composer for *The Simpsons*) mentored her. Doors started opening soon afterward.

“At the end of the internship, Jonathan asked me who I would most like to meet in the TV music field,” Farber recalls. “I told him Shirley Walker. I was a huge fan of the *Batman* and *Superman* animated show and Shirley was the show's

composer. Shirley took me under her wing. I learned from her how to make a small orchestra sound big.” Farber started out writing orchestrations and later cues for Walker. It was through music editor Virginia Ellsworth that she met director Robert Munic who hired her to score two Showtime movies. After adding two film scores to her resumé, projects began to flow in.

Farber has since worked steadily for American and Israeli directors on a range of projects. Highlights have included the feature films *When Nietzsche Wept*, *The Dove Flyer*, and *Jemaya Jones and the Kingdom of Nir* (upcoming), documentaries *Honor Diaries*, *The Parkland Doctors*, and *Unmasked Judeophobia*; and the TV series *The Young and the Restless* and *Pendragon* (upcoming). Farber's upbringing in the Middle East and burgeoning Hollywood experience offer her a range of musical expression.

A prime example is the Israeli film *The Dove Flyer*. Set in Iraq, it chronicles the expulsion of Jews from that country during the 1950s. “They were the most ancient Jewish community in the world and the story is told from the perspective of a young boy,” Farber says. “The score was electronic with ethnic instruments, a mix of Hollywood sounds and Middle Eastern sounds. It was all very natural for me—quarter tones and all.”

One of Farber's early concert works was a 2002 choral piece written in memory of murdered *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. “His father, Judea Pearl, conducted a great Israeli choir, and I had been writing arrangements for him,” Farber says. “I wrote a piece called *The Third Mother: Mother's Lament* for a cappella voices based on a Hebrew poem and sent it to Judea as a gift. He called to tell me that he'd listened to it 13 times.” Subsequently, Farber sent it to the famed Los Angeles Master Chorale, and the group's artistic director Grant Gershon premiered in October 2002. “After that I decided that my career would be a fusion of everything I love doing: films, TV, orchestral, and choral music.”



Sharon Farber

Farber's most celebrated concert work to date is *Bestemming: Concerto for Cello, Orchestra, and Narrator* (narration by Farber, Richard Stellar, and Beth Wernick). “It's based on the story of a remarkable man, Curt Lowens,” she says. “He was a Holocaust survivor who later became an actor for [American] TV and movies. He fled Germany and at 14, joined the Dutch Resistance, and saved more than 100 Jewish children as well as two downed American pilots.” The 25-minute work has been performed several times, including an emotional June 2014 performance at the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills for which Lowens narrated his own story. Farber remained close with Lowens until his passing in May. “I feel that with this piece we gave him a grand finale,” Farber states. “I promised him that his legacy would live on through this concerto.” It will be played in November in Washington by the Northwest Sinfonia and Whatcom Symphony, conducted by Yaniv Attar.

Farber believes that her concert writing makes her a stronger film and TV composer because it burnishes her orchestral technique. Conversely, she is a better composer of concert music because film work demands that she take many elements into consideration. “In concert music, it's all my own imagination,” she says. “But in films you are collaborating with the director as are the cinematographer, costume designer, and lighting crew. I know I have to be a tool to bring the vision of the director to life. My ego has to take a step back. If he or she tells me something isn't working, I need to get it to work.”

The pace for Farber is relentless. After a summer respite in Israel, Farber returned to Los Angeles to write scores for a short film and a documentary and to arrange music for the Jewish high holidays at the Beverly Hills Temple of the Arts where she is the music director. On December 16th, she will premiere a new work for the National Children's Chorus at New York's Lincoln Center. It's a bit like drinking from a fire hose, but Farber is accustomed to meeting deadlines. “I just go with the flow,” she says.





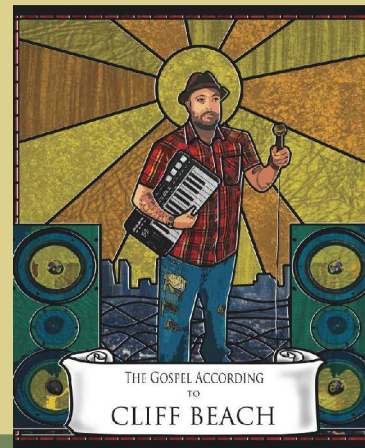
Alex James Muskat '94



Ed Lima '96



Geoff Zanelli '96



Cliff Beach '96

## 1992

**Jay Jennings** of Burbank, CA, did sound design for *Transformers: The Last Knight*. He is designing sound for the upcoming films *Meg* and *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*. Visit [birdhousesound.com](http://birdhousesound.com).

**Sly West** of Los Angeles, CA, was an assistant music editor for the film *War for the Planet of the Apes*, editing the score's orchestra and choir cues. Visit [slywest.com](http://slywest.com).

## 1993

Drummer **Steve Langone** of Waltham, MA, released the CD *Breathe* with the Steve Langone Trio featuring **Dave Zinno** '80 (bass) and assistant professor Kevin Harris (piano). Showcasing originals, standards, and a folk-song, the album was released by the Whaling City Sound label.

## 1994

**Jordan Feinstein** of San Francisco, CA, is playing in some 30 bands. He also leads his own band Jordan and the Ritual and recently performed with Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh. Visit [jordanandtheritual.com](http://jordanandtheritual.com).

Since founding Last Stop Records in 2000, **Alex James Muskat** of Daly City, CA, has produced and engineered recordings for Bay-Area artists. His own fifth studio album *Desire's Path*, which features his compositions, will be released this fall.

Ricardo Rosselló, the governor of Puerto Rico, recently appointed **Pedro Rúa-Jovet** of San Juan, as the Puerto Rico film Commissioner. Rúa-Jovet previously served as the president of the Puerto Rico Public Broadcasting Corporation. Visit [puertoricofilm.org](http://puertoricofilm.org).

## 1996

**Rudi-Renoir Appoldt** of Lucerne, Switzerland, organized a piano festival to be staged in an empty indoor swimming pool in Lucerne between October 12 and 14. Appoldt and **Larry Edoff** '94 of Transuranic Muse will perform, as will **Jean-Pierre Maillard** '98. Visit [piano-im-pool.ch](http://piano-im-pool.ch).

**Kevin Kaska** of Encino, CA, is producing three albums with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, featuring two albums of concert music, and one with professor Louis Stewart featuring the musical *Cambodia Agonistes*. Kaska is currently orchestrating for the TV show *Orville*, and the upcoming film *The Greatest Showman*. The Kevin Kaska Jazz Orchestra will release an album of original music this fall.

**Ed Lima** of Burbank, CA, was named audio manager for Binari Sonori, a subsidiary of Keywords Studios, in Los Angeles. Lima has composed music, designed sound effects, and directed dialogue and voiceover for some of the biggest selling games in the industry. Visit [binarisonori.com](http://binarisonori.com).

**Geoff Zanelli** of Woodland Hills, CA, took over scoring duties from Hans Zimmer and scored *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*. The film is on pace to earn more than \$800 million in worldwide box office receipts. Zanelli is also scoring the video game *Star Citizen: Squadron 42*. Visit [geoffzanelli.com](http://geoffzanelli.com).

## 1998

Singer/songwriter and producer **Emmanouela Maria Kourou** of Marousi-Athens, Greece, is the artistic director of the Fame Academy of Greece. Kourou was a voice coach for *X Factor* of Greece in 2008, and owns the recording studio Twenty8. Visit [twenty8recordingstudio.com](http://twenty8recordingstudio.com).

**Takashi Yoshida** of Quito, Ecuador is studying to become a professional national guide of Ecuador.

## 2000

**Jonathan Perkins** of Antioch, TN, played on the newest Chainsmokers album, *Memories . . . Do Not Open*. He recently signed a production and publishing deal with Writerslist.

Saxophonist **Bob Reynolds** of Studio City, CA, released the album *Hindsight*. It features seven original tunes with Aaron Goldberg (piano), Reuben Rogers (bass), and Obed Calvaire (drums) backing Reynolds. Visit [bobreynoldsmusic.com](http://bobreynoldsmusic.com).

**Gregg Stein** of Framingham, MA, is the vice president of global sales for the London-based company Kano. Stein has formerly worked for ROLI, Libratone Inc., Behringer Music, Line 6, and Avedis Zildjian, to name a few. Visit [greggstein.com](http://greggstein.com).

## 2001

**Nic Knight** of Taos, NM, is operating a nonprofit artist residency program for creative artists, composers, and songwriters. For more information, visit [wurlitzerfoundation.org](http://wurlitzerfoundation.org).

**Opal Leung** of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, worked on a case study for Ivey Publishing titled "OrganiGram: Navigating the Cannabis Industry with 'Grey Knowledge.'"

**Neil Santos** of Hudson, NH, was a finalist in the rock/alt category in the 2016 Great American Songwriting Competition with his song "Road Rage."

Compiled by Maxwell Wright

**David Federman '14** (Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games) of Toronto, Canada, scored *John Lives Again*, a film screened at the Maryland International Film Festival and the Silicon Beach Film Festival in April. The score features performances by **Tom McGeoch '14** and **Billy Centenaro '14** and was mixed by instructor Pablo G. Schuller in Valencia. Visit [federmusik.com](http://federmusik.com).

Guitarist **Juan Cristobal Aliaga '14** (Contemporary Performance) of Santiago, Chile, released an album with his band Cachai?. It's available on Spotify and other platforms. Aliaga is also a music instructor.

**Joan Martorell '15** (Music Production, Technology and Innovation) of Alicante, Spain, is working as a European marketing assistant at inMusic Brands in

Ash Vale, England. He works for brands such as Akai Professional, M-Audio, Alesis, HeadRush, Denon Professional, Marantz Professional & Rane.

**Alayna Hughes '14** of Valencia, Spain, and **Pier Barberis '14** founded Curisobot, a company making interactive installations featured at European Maker Faires and Sonar 2017. They are developing a center in Valencia for digital fabrication, virtual reality, art, and music technology. Visit [curisobot.com](http://curisobot.com).

**Manuel Delgado '14** (Global Entertainment and Music Business) is the marketing manager for the world's largest fitness music company, Power Music Inc. He manages product releases and marketing efforts. He has also founded Sample Road Records. Visit [SampleRoadRecords.com](http://SampleRoadRecords.com)

## Berklee Valencia Marks Fifth Anniversary

By Amanda Tornel



**Roger Brown** (kneeling, front row), **Maria Iturriaga** (to the left of Brown) and **John McLaughlin** (behind Brown), celebrated with Valencia alumni at the inaugural reunion held in July.

It has been five years since Berklee's Valencia campus opened its doors in 2012. Since then, much has happened at Berklee's first campus outside the United States. More than 1,800 students from 71 countries have attended and more than \$4,000,000 in scholarships has been granted. Berklee's first graduate degrees were established at this campus as well as the first Berklee Study Abroad and Year Abroad programs. Three summer programs were also established.

To celebrate the milestones, a series of commemorative events was hosted throughout the year, including a symposium on women and conducting featuring Plácido Domingo and a contest to trans-

form one wall in the library into an artistic mural. (French artist Paul Loubet won and painted the mural.) As well, Berklee Valencia's first alumni reunion was held in coordination with the July commencement weekend.

"The incredible efforts, dedication and talent of the whole team at Berklee Valencia have made it possible to celebrate our first five years with enormous satisfaction," said María Martínez Iturriaga, the executive director for Berklee Valencia. "We are looking forward to what the future will bring, and are truly excited to continue to see our alumni body grow and become the next generation of leaders in the music industry."

## Nashville Pros

### More than a Song

by David Petrelli '05

Making inroads in the music business is no easy feat for anyone. But for women in Nashville, the uphill climb has traditionally been especially tough. A casual look at the *Billboard* country top-30 quickly reveals that male artists outnumber women by an average of almost 15 to 1. Coupled with some societal attitudes that reinforce women's self-doubt, this trend could stifle the aspirations of talented artists before they've even begun. But two Berklee grads are seeking to change gender inequity through one amazing mentorship after another.

Girls Write Nashville is a songwriting mentorship program run by **Georgia English '14** and **Jen Starsinic '13**. It pairs young aspiring female writers with a professional working female musician. A collaborative "season" lasts close to six months, culminating in the young writers producing and recording original songs in a professional Nashville studio backed by an all-female band.

English, who is also the organization's founder, began coaching young musicians while at Berklee as a way to help pay the bills. She picked it up again after moving to Nashville and forming an especially close bond with a young girl whom she had met while working at an after-school program. It was this mentor relationship that sparked her vision for what would ultimately become Girls Write Nashville. A grant from Nashville's Metro Arts Commission got the ball rolling. Since then, English notes, "Our passion for empowering young girls through non-patronizing, professional opportunities continues to drive our daily work."

As an accomplished violinist and fiddler, Starsinic jumped at the chance to join her friend and help



**Jen Starsinic '13** and **Georgia English '14**

turn that passion into a reality. "I teach music to a lot of kids," Starsinic explains, "and I see too many girls who think guitar is for boys or who don't think what they have to say matters." At Girls Write Nashville, it's the girls—ranging in age from seven to 17—who have the voice and vision. The mentors are there to turn that vision into reality through, in their words, "empathetic listening and skillful musicianship." In the end, what these young girls get from the program is so much more than a song on a compilation album or a chance to perform at a local Nashville venue. They find a voice they never knew they had, and foster a confidence that otherwise might not have had a chance to shine.

Still in its infancy, Girls Write Nashville has already been featured in *The Tennessean* newspaper and on a number of local radio stations throughout Davidson County. This is a movement that continues to gain momentum for all the right reasons.

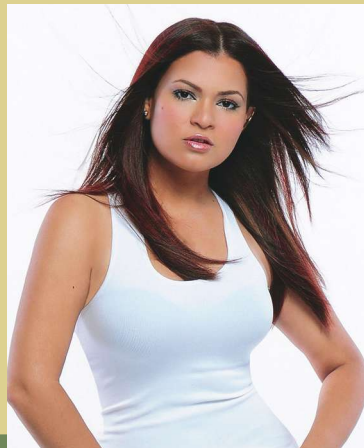
Not surprisingly, Berklee grads help one another, and this past year every one of the program's songwriting mentors was a Berklee graduate. Berklee professor Mark Simos recently signed on as one of the organization's board of directors.

English and Starsinic are working on obtaining their 501(c)3 status and "dreaming of how much more awesome stuff we can do to empower girls in our community." It will be fascinating to see what English and Starsinic can accomplish. They've already proven that they can make dreams come true.





Adriana Duarte '04



Cristal Marie '05



Samantha Nelson '06



Katie Thiroux '09

## 2002

**Cliff Beach** of Los Angeles, CA released his third solo album, *The Gospel According to Cliff Beach*, on October 6. Visit [cliffbeachmusic.com](http://cliffbeachmusic.com).

## 2003

**Marc Cincone** of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is the head of development for the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

**Tim Dvorkin** of Columbus, OH, and the Tim Dvorkin Trio released the album *Live & Raw*. Visit [timdvorkin.com](http://timdvorkin.com).

In May, **Shawn Thwaites** of Sacramento, CA, released the debut album by the Shawn Thwaites Rebel Quartet. Visit [strq.tv](http://strq.tv).

## 2004

**Adriana Duarte** of London, England, cowrote "One More Mistake I Made" with Nashville star Vince Gill for his album *Down to My Last Bad Habit*. Duarte is also pursuing a master's degree in ethnomusicology at the University of London. Visit [adrianarozario.com](http://adrianarozario.com).

Drummer **Omar Ledezma Jr.** of San Leandro, CA, has played on several albums, including the 2014 Grammy winner *Pacific Mambo Orchestra*. Visit [omarledezmajr.com](http://omarledezmajr.com).

**Rebecca Loebe** of Austin, TX, released *Blink*, her fourth studio album and recently completed a European tour. Over the past decade, she has played 120 shows per year. Visit [rebeccaloebe.com](http://rebeccaloebe.com)

**Shinya Ikuta** of Hamamatsu, Japan, organized a children's concert for the Hamamatsu World Music Festival 2017.

On October 20, singer, songwriter, and pianist **Oli Rockberger** of London, England, will release his new album *Sovereign*. The record chronicles his move from New York back to his hometown of London. Visit [olirockberger.com](http://olirockberger.com).

## 2005

Vocalist **Cristal Marie** of New York City performed at the 46th General Assembly of American States in 2016, and was profiled on the web-series, *El Maestro Unplugged*. She was featured as a voice and guest star on América Teve's "Somos Tu Voz" ("We Are Your Voice") national TV campaign. Visit [cristalmarie.com](http://cristalmarie.com).

**Julián Midón** of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and his group Tres Pajaritos released the album *The Jimi Hendrix Experimento*, wrote music for the theater play *Babilonia*, and toured with the children's music show *Volvete a Encontrar*. Visit [julianmidon.blogspot.com.ar](http://julianmidon.blogspot.com.ar).

**Bruno Miranda** of Brandon, FL, a two-time Latin Grammy nominee, has released the instrumental album *Chapter II*. Visit [brunomirandamusic.com](http://brunomirandamusic.com).

Pianist and singer **Christie-Gayane Sochakian Kanska** of Marlborough, MA, completed the album, *Le Rêve: The Dream*, which features an original instrumental composition and eight bossa nova songs. Visit [facebook.com/christie.kanska](http://facebook.com/christie.kanska).

## 2006

**Benjamin Guerrero** of El Paso, TX, is pursuing a Ph.D. at Eastman School of Music. Visit [benguerrero.com](http://benguerrero.com).

**Samantha Nelson** (aka Sammi Nicks) of Lake Elsinore, CA, has toured as a background vocalist with Demi Lovato, Christina Aguilera, and Duran Duran. She has sung on sessions for numerous artists and TV productions.

Guitarist **Michael Kohl** of Los Angeles, CA, bassist Ken Christianson, drummer **Eric Kalver** '09 and keyboardist **Tim Lillis** '09 perform as Extra Lives for weekly live performances of classic video-game themes. Visit [extralivesmusic.com](http://extralivesmusic.com).

## 2008

**Federico Jankilevich** of San Jose, Costa Rica, is a transactional lawyer aiding musicians, artists, and athletes that want to relocate to and from South America. Visit [globalcorpsa.com](http://globalcorpsa.com).

**Nicole Labrecque** of Charleston, SC, is the ticketing operations manager at the Charleston Gaillard Center and pursuing a master's degree in business design and arts leadership.

## 2009

**Bob Bradshaw** of Jamaica Plain, MA, released his seventh album of original songs, *American Echoes*, in October. Visit [bobbradshaw.net](http://bobbradshaw.net).

**Philip McGowan** of Los Angeles, CA recorded and mixed composer John Paesano's score for Marvel's *Defenders* on Netflix. Visit [mcgowansoundworks.com](http://mcgowansoundworks.com).

**Sandro Morales** of Sherman Oaks, CA, was the music composer for the documentary *Out of Iraq*, which won the Daytime Emmy in the Outstanding Special Class Program category in 2017. Visit [sandromorales.com](http://sandromorales.com).

**Erin Quinlan** of Jersey City, NJ, wrote the musical *God Save Queen Pam*, which will premiere off-Broadway in 2018. Visit [erinmurrayquinlan.com](http://erinmurrayquinlan.com).

## West Coast News

By Justine Taormino '06

Northern California alumni are abuzz with news of their work in a variety of areas. Here are some recent highlights.

**Benjamin Flint** '85 of Oakland led two Diablo Valley College jazz choirs Reno Jazz Festival where they took first and third places in their division. Flint also directs the Oakland Jazz Choir and has taught at Jazz Camp West.

This fall, saxophonist **Sonya Jason** '85 of Montana, will release *Feels So Good: Live in Half Moon Bay*, her fourth solo album. Recorded live at the legendary jazz venue Bach Dancing & Dynamite Society, the album is a tribute to influential contemporary jazz artists of the 1970s and 1980s.

**Michael Semanick** '85 of San Rafael is a re-recording mixer at Skywalker Sound. This year he worked on the films *Lego Batman*, *Cars 3*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, and *Coco*. Semanick received the Cinema Audio Society award for best sound for his work on the animated film *Finding Dory*.

**Kurt Ribak** '89 of Berkeley is completing his fifth recording as bandleader. The album will feature his tunes, upright bass playing, and vocals. Fellow alumni **Russ Gold** '84 and **Alan Hall** '79 are also featured on the album.

**Matt Zebley** '93 of Concord, CA, is establishing himself as a jazz artist and educator in the Bay Area. Since 2013, he has been the director of jazz studies at Diablo Valley College. Last May, he received tenure in the Contra Costa Community College District.

**Jordan Feinstein** '94 of San Francisco is an in-demand keyboard player working with numerous bands and recently played a gig with Phil Lesh, the bassist for the Grateful Dead. He also leads his own group, Jordan and the Ritual and operates a project studio called Studio 352.

**Alex James Muscat** '94 of Daly City founded of Last Stop Records and has been producing and engineering recordings for Bay Area artists at 7th Chord Studio. In addition to performing locally with his band Tall Shadows, he has released four studio albums



Michael Semanick '85

of original compositions. His latest album, *Desire Paths*, will be released in the fall.

**David Rupley** '02 of Concord is the CEO of Cumulus Sky Music, and has composed music for seven albums as well as an orchestral piece. He operates his own publishing company and has written a movie screenplay.

**Omar Ledezma Jr.** '04 of San Leandro, is a percussionist and singer for the Grammy-winning band Pacific Mambo Orchestra. He has released several albums in recent years and appears on videos featuring instruments from product manufacturers Sountone Cymbals and Pearl.

**Jon Keilson** '06 of San Francisco is director of product at Tuneln, an on-demand internet radio service that provides listeners access to more than 100,000 terrestrial radio stations and 4 million podcasts streaming from around the globe.

**Jeff Wheeler** '10 of Half Moon Bay is touring with the renowned Street Drum Corps in addition to playing shows with singer/songwriter Socorra and others. When he is not on the road, Wheeler maintains a full teaching schedule.

**Alán Hensley** '15 of Oakland was recently named the head of the Latino department for EMPIRE Distribution, a large independent music company that focuses on urban music.

## At the Crossroads of Metal Music and Comedy

By Peter Gordon '78

Jim Donnelly



Brendon Small '97

At the improbable intersection of metal music, animated TV, and stand-up comedy, the story of guitarist, composer, actor, and producer **Brendon Small** '97 stands apart. Metal fans worldwide know him as the creative mastermind behind the smash-hit animated TV show *Metalocalypse* and the metal bands Dethklok and Galaktikon.

Small's unique journey began in the laid-back northern California town of Salinas, where he remembers spending long hours practicing guitar and re-watching VHS copies of his favorite comedies. "I had no choice but to start getting serious about music and comedy," he says. Small became an avid reader of *Guitar Player* magazine and after realizing that his guitar heroes, **Steve Vai** '79 and **John Scofield** '73, had both attended Berklee, his college choice became clear.

When he was 17 years old, he attended Berklee's Five-Week Summer Performance Program and he fell in love with Boston. "It was the first time I met like-minded folks who lived, breathed, and slept music," he recalls. "I knew then that if I could just get out of Salinas and get to Boston, my creative life would truly start."

At Berklee as a full-time student, Small took guitar classes with professors Jon Finn and Tomo Fujita. But he had to face his fear of playing in front of people. Stage fright was a long-term challenge that Small eventually conquered through stand-up comedy.

During the summer before his final year at Berklee, Small was interning in New York and often visited a friend who was interning on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. His desire to create comedy took hold and he decided to pursue comedy writing. During his final year, Small took advantage of Berklee's sister-school relationship with Emerson College and took comedy and script-writing classes there. His teacher, Mike Bent, helped him get on stage at the Comedy Studio in Harvard Square. Soon Small was making regular appearances at the club.

After graduating from Berklee, some local TV producers in Boston saw him perform and offered him the opportunity to co-create his own show, *Home Movies*, an animated

sitcom that aired from 1999 to 2004. Although he also provided the show's music, he rapidly became better known as a comedian.

Toward the end of the show's run, Small began to turn back to the guitar. "I was so excited to hear what people were doing in metal," he says. "They were actually playing their instruments incredibly well! I now had the comedy chops and could write, thanks to *Home Movies*, so the music and comedy just blended naturally. Somehow I became a musician again."

This led to the creation of *Metalocalypse*, an adult animated television series, which premiered on August 6, 2006, and concluded on October 27, 2013, on *Adult Swim*. The storyline centers on the larger-than-life death-metal band Dethklok, with Small supplying the voice for many of the characters and creating the music. "The cool thing about *Metalocalypse* and Dethklok," Small says, "is that we got to turn kids onto metal and guitars and help grow a new crop of listeners and players."

Small's reputation as a guitar player led to a deal with Gibson guitars to create his own signature model: Brendon Small Snow Falcon Flying V guitar (visit [www.gibson.com](http://www.gibson.com)).

Brendon Small's Galaktikon is his latest project. Released in 2012, the first Galaktikon recording was a "high-stakes, intergalactic, extreme-rock album" that featured former Dethklok collaborators drummer Gene Hoglan (Testament, Death, Dark Angel) and bassist extraordinaire **Bryan Beller** '92 (the Aristocrats, Joe Satriani, Steve Vai).

The album *Galaktikon II: Become the Storm*, released in 2017, continues the original space-age storyline in another heavy metal opus. Underscoring the unique blend of Small's talents, the record release party for the new album was held at the legendary Hollywood Improv comedy club (visit [www.galaktikon.com](http://www.galaktikon.com)).

Speaking of Small, Bryan Beller says, "He's super-talented in so many ways, and I'm glad to be one small part of his creative universe."





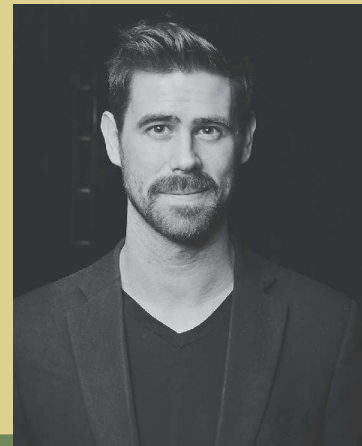
Martin Nessi '10



Natasha Key '11



Alisa Apreleva Kolomeytseva '13



Harry Miree '13

**Jeremy Reinhold** of Portland, OR, is the principal accompanist for the Portland Ballet. He teaches piano and composition at the Reinhold Music Studio.

**Pete Sabramowicz** of Valley Glen, CA, works for Line 6 as a technical support representative. He also freelances as a guitarist, engineer, and consultant.

In September, jazz bassist, vocalist, and composer **Katie Thiroux** of Long Beach, CA, released the album *Off Beat* for Capri Records. During the summer, she was an artist-in-residence at Quincy Jones's Dubai nightclub Q's Bar and Lounge.

## 2010

**Alexandra Borden** of Los Angeles, CA, wrote orchestrations for the musical *The Civility of Albert Cashier*, which premiered in August at Stage 773 in Chicago. She is currently scoring the movie *Project: Puppies* for Christmas. Visit, alexabordenmusic.com.

**Leland Edgcombe** of Hyattsville, MD, is an adjunct professor of jazz studies at Montgomery College in Silver Spring, MD. Visit montgomerycollege.edu.

**Martin Nessi** of Glendale, CA, was the music mixer for *Michael Jackson's 3D Thriller*. He was also the mixing and vocal recording engineer for Céline Dion's "How Does a Moment Last Forever" and the vocal producer and vocal mixer for Josh Groban's "Evermore," both of which were recorded for the movie *Beauty and the Beast*. He is working with Dion and Groban on new albums. Visit martinnessi.com.

**Cameron Outlaw** of Brooklyn, NY, released his debut album *Half Asleep* in July for Whirling Wolf Recordings, based in Amsterdam. The cross-genre electronic album features vocalists **Ingrid Bock '11**, **Miranda Glory '16**, and others. Visit camoutlaw.com.

## 2011

The album *Stranded in the Present Tense* by **Ryan Harris Brown** of Nashville, TN, landed in the top 40 on the singer/songwriter charts on the day of its release. Visit ryanharrisbrown.com.

**Miguel Guerrero Arnaiz** of Lima, Peru, performed a live synthesizer score for a local theater production, *Biopsia*. He also released experimental electronic music tracks under the artist name Vulcan Sessions with **Andreas Wittich '11**. Visit despuesdelarte.com.

**Natasha Key** of Los Angeles, CA, is the studio assistant for film composer Christopher Young and is a composer for Megatrax. She is currently working on an EDM orchestral album. Visit [imdb.me/natashakey](http://imdb.me/natashakey).

**Mikel Hurwitz** of West Hollywood, CA, worked with composer Danny Elfman's team on upcoming the film *Justice League*. Hurwitz also scored *Gente-fied*, which premiered at Sundance in January.

**Mario Jose** of Van Nuys, CA, debuted at number 33 on the iTunes pop charts with his first original EP, *Heart of Gold*. He has performed across America with Post Modern Jukebox and is co-headlining The Heart, Hope & Love Tour. Visit [mariojosemusic.com](http://mariojosemusic.com).

Audio director, music supervisor, and composer, **Yong Kim** of Seongnam-Si, South Korea, is working on *The Lost Ark*, one of the most anticipated online games for 2018. He is recording the score with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Abbey Road and Air studios in London.

## 2012

Drummer **Alessandro Lombardo** of London, U.K., has been playing with **Aubrey Logan '10** for her European shows. Lombardo has also been the main drum sub for the West End show *Bat Out of Hell*. Visit [alombardo.com](http://alombardo.com).

Drummer **Diego Joaquin Ramirez** of Woodside, NY, and his band Sula were finalists in the 2017 DCJazzPrix Competition. Following their competition performance, they received invitations to play at jazz festivals in the Washington, D.C., area.

**Lance Tobin** of Allston, MA, has worked for four years booking top acts for the Brighton Music Hall in Allston, MA.

Indie pop rock artist **Alyse Velturo** (aka Pronoun) of Brooklyn, NY, released a new EP titled *Use Passport to Choose a New Location*. At the 2017 SXSW festival, she was named among the top 100 acts by National Public Radio.

## 2013

**Alisa Apreleva Kolomeytseva** of Swampscott, MA, published a 272-page textbook in Russian entitled *Musician as a Volunteer: Therapeutic Applications of Music in Medical and Social Settings*. The free electronic version of the book is downloadable at [diaconia.ru/book/5967698b416da1b7318b4567](http://diaconia.ru/book/5967698b416da1b7318b4567).

**Sarah Martinico** of Sherman Oaks, CA, has partnered with BMG and ProTools for the first-ever royalty-bearing producer loops package called *Strictly Rhythm Producer Loops*. Martinico curated the package to contain loops, stems, and a cappella voices from hits from the 1990s. Visit [bmg.com](http://bmg.com).

## Shota Nakama: Video Game Music and More

By Mike Keefe-Feldman

As cosplay attendees dressed as everything from Wonder Woman to Ewoks roam the corridors of the San Diego Convention Center for this year's Comic Con, they're greeted by live renditions of music from the classic video game *Sonic the Hedgehog*—familiar to gamers with enough years to have been playing in the early nineties. The live *Sonic* tribute comes by way of Berklee and Boston Conservatory alumnus **Shota Nakama** B.M. '08 M.M. '11, a regular at such gamer gatherings and the founder of two successful businesses: the world-touring Video Game Orchestra and the Boston-based production company Soundtrec.

As Soundtrec's CEO, Nakama specializes in recording, producing, mixing, mastering, and voice over work; fellow alumnus **Falk Au Yeong** '14 runs the international company's Malaysian operations. Soundtrec does film and anime work, but is best known for its work on video games. On *Final Fantasy XV*, for instance—which quickly sold a staggering 6.5 million copies—Nakama took on composition, arranging, and orchestration work, conducting sessions recorded live with orchestra, choir, and rhythm section.

Sitting in a studio at Boston public

media station WGBH, where he recently recorded the anime soundtrack to Netflix's *Little Witch Academy* with composer Michiru Oshima, Nakama says, "For video games, you don't know how much time a player is spending at a certain stage." Unlike a film score, he says, the video game score must be interactive and thus "involves more technicalities."

Nakama's second business is the popular Video Game Orchestra (VGO), which he founded during his last semester at Berklee. The VGO has carved out a sizable niche with its brand of "rockstral" video game music, drawing capacity crowds in its initial tour of China. The VGO combines the bombastic stage antics of 1980s-era metal bands with Nakama's skillful arrangements of music from popular video games performed by a rock band, orchestra, and choir. (Nakama also plays guitar with the group.)

He generally stays true to the original video game pieces, but takes some artistic license in order to present them in large concert settings. That's especially true if his source material originated from an early 8-bit video game, which disal-

lowed the complexity of modern game scores.

Various professors supported Nakama's experience at Berklee, including Sheldon Mirowitz, Michael Sweet, Dave Fiuczynski, and Jeanine Cowen. Nakama subsequently earned his master's degree in classical guitar performance at The Boston Conservatory.

After many years studying and working as a musician in Boston, Nakama is a vociferous advocate for Boston as a world-class music city and he has hired several other Berklee and Conservatory graduates for both his recording and live performance work.

Under his leadership, the VGO has become a global touring force in the U.S., Mexico, Taiwan, Japan, and elsewhere. For Nakama, the work that goes into it—from securing licensing permissions from video game publishers to hammering out contracts with venues—is all worth it when he sees the interaction between the ensemble and the crowd.

"You'll never see musicians smiling so much on stage," Nakama says of the VGO's delightfully over-the-top shows, which often round out the video game



Shota Nakama B.M. '08, M.M. '11

music with an '80s rock encore. "We have a lot of fun on stage."

Such an outcome was far from guaranteed when Nakama launched the VGO, piecing together a 26-piece ensemble (mostly student friends) for a project that, he says, some saw as "subculture stuff."

Now, the VGO is a concert ensemble with an international fan base, and the success of Nakama's two businesses vindicates his persistence in traveling a non-traditional path. Video games and anime have exploded in growth alongside Nakama's career to the point that he says, "You can't really call it 'subculture' anymore."

## Alumni Happenings



On July 25 Neil Jacobson '99 (left), president of Geffen Records, sat for a discussion with Peter Gordon '78 about current trends in the music industry and his plans for Geffen Records. An audience of 70 alumni gathered at the offices of Universal Music Group in Santa Monica, CA, for the event, which continued the discussion started in Jacobson's June cover story interview in Berklee Today ([berklee.edu/berklee-today/summer-2017/neil-jacobson](http://berklee.edu/berklee-today/summer-2017/neil-jacobson)).



Alumni of The Boston Conservatory at Berklee were at the Boston Opera House for a run of the musical *Wicked* in July. From the left: pianist Adam McDonald M.M. '09 and musical theater graduates Allison Bailey B.F.A. '14, Dan Micciche B.F.A. '07, Lisa Finegold B.F.A. '11, John Krause B.F.A. '12, and Jillian Butler B.F.A. '15 are members of the national touring company for *Wicked*, and visited the Berklee campus while in Boston.

John Michael Kawooya

Kim Haack





Alán Hensley '15



Simona Minns '15



Nacho Gonzalez '16



David Murillo '16

Drummer **Harry Miree** of Nashville, TN, has spent 2017 drumming for the country duo LoCash, headlining the Live Nation's Ones to Watch Tour across North America. Visit [harrymiree.com](http://harrymiree.com).

**Ryo Tanaka** of Los Angeles, CA, tours with the punk band Peelander-Z. The *Village Voice* recently profiled the band. Visit [ryotanaka.net](http://ryotanaka.net).

**Erica Thomas** of Atlanta, GA, was named the 2015–16 Teacher of the Year at the Utopian Academy for the Arts charter school. Visit [utopianacademyforthearts.com/thomas-profile](http://utopianacademyforthearts.com/thomas-profile).

## 2014

**Byungseok Lee** of Busan, South Korea, recorded, mixed, and mastered the *When the Wind Blows* album by **Choi Sung Ho** '14, featuring **Sungho Choi** '11 (guitar), **Do Young Kim** '13 (bass), Hanearl Lee (piano) and Seon yeol Baek (drums). The album received the 2017 Korea Music Award for best jazz album of the year. Visit [blog.naver.com/byungsukmc](http://blog.naver.com/byungsukmc)

## 2015

**Alán Hensley** of Oakland, CA, has been hired to head the Latino department of Empire Distribution. The independent music company is focused largely on urban music. Visit [workbyalan.squarespace.com](http://workbyalan.squarespace.com).

Lithuanian composer and singer **Simona Minns** of Revere, MA, founded the contemporary performance company, SynTheater that produces theatrical performances, artistic workshops and networking events for artists in the Greater Boston Area. In May, Minns released her debut album, *A Hunger Artist*, for which she wrote and sang all the music. The album is available on major streaming platforms, and on physical CD through CD Baby. Visit [simonaminns.com](http://simonaminns.com).

**Max Wolpert** of Boulder, CO, composed a viola concerto titled *Giants*, which appears on the new recording *Harberg and Wolpert: Viola Concertos*. Released on the Naxos label, the album also includes Amanda Harberg's viola concerto and elegy. All three works were written for soloist Brett Deubner. Visit [bit.ly/ztNSB9U](http://bit.ly/ztNSB9U).

## 2016

**Matthew Alain Boerner** of Seattle, WA, graduated in July from the Seattle Film Institute with a master of music degree in film composition. Visit [matthewalainboerner.com](http://matthewalainboerner.com).

**Nacho Gonzalez** of Boston, MA, co-founded ULabMusic.com, a startup within Univision and Fusion Media Group. It focuses on identifying emerging talent and developing digital content for the different platforms. Gonzalez also just released his debut album *Illegal*

*Grooves* featuring John Patitucci, Hugo Fattoruso, Terence Blanchard, George Garzone, and Ruben Rada. Visit [nachogon.com](http://nachogon.com).

**Julian Harris** of Fort Lauderdale, FL, plays guitar for the Backroom Allstars at the Fish House in Miami every Thursday night, appearing with local luminaries. Harris and his band Soulpax will release an album this fall featuring vocalist **Julia Camayd** '16.

In July, **Kangri Kim** of Gyeonggi, South Korea, released his first jazz EP, *Keep the Beauty of Time Flow*. It features **Beomyul Yu** '08 (drums), and Joongkyuk Kim (bass), and is available on iTunes.

Film composer **David Murillo** of Los Angeles, CA, scored a film in Puerto Rico telling the story of reggaeton artist Hector El Father. Murillo

worked on about 50 productions, which include the award-winning movie *Between Sea and Land*, a Colombian TV show in development titled *Y Donde Es El Partido*, and an Egyptian documentary *Nefertiti's Daughters*. Visit [davidmurillor.com](http://davidmurillor.com).

## 2017

**Diego Herrera** of Ontario, CA, scored a short film directed by Camilo Ramirez called *Not a Monster*. Herrera is working as a vocal producer for the Colombian band Treemenage and produced their song "Lighter." He also mixed the song "All that I Want" for Chiara Useche.

**Hannah Kang** of Northbrook, IL, is completing an internship at Electronic Creatives with Laura Escudé.

## Alumni Finalists in IAMA Contest

Four Berklee alumni, a faculty member, and a student, reached the top ranks of the 13th annual International Acoustic Music Awards (IAMA). Berklee student **Madlyn Hall** '18 was the runner up in the Best Female Artist category for her song "Will You Take Me Home." Also in the best female artist category were finalists **Cara Smith** '14 ("Gonna Get Up"), **Tanya Darling** ("I Will Be"), and **Katherine Farnham** '01 ("Necessary Groove"). Finalists in the instrumental category included bass professor **Bruce Gertz** '76 ("M.J.") and **Scott Greer** '99 ("Off High Center"). Congratulations to all!

# FINAL CADENCE

Guitarist **John Abercrombie** '67 died of heart failure on August 22 in Cortlandt Manor, NY. He was 72. Abercrombie got his start in the 1970s playing with Johnny (Hammond) Smith, Chico Hamilton, Gato Barbieri, Ralph Towner, and Billy Cobham. He released a number of influential albums as a leader for the ECM label, including *Timeless*, his first in 1975 with Jan Hammer and Jack DeJohnette. His latest ECM album, *Up and Coming*, was released earlier this year. He leaves his wife of 31 years, Lisa Abrams.

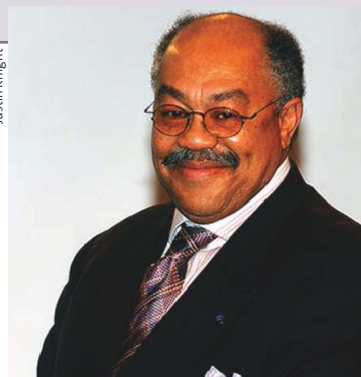
Drummer **John Blackwell** '95 of Tampa, FL, died on July 4 after battling a brain tumor. He was 43. Blackwell is best known for his 15-year tenure recording and touring with Prince. He had also played with Justin Timberlake, Maceo Parker, Lauryn Hill, and Patti LaBelle among many others. He leaves his wife Yaritza Cambero Blackwell, two daughters, and a son. His first-born daughter, Jia Blackwell, preceded him in death after a drowning accident in 2004.

**Dr. Warrick L. Carter** died on July 14 at his home in Sanford, FL, after a struggle with cancer. He was 75. Carter came to Berklee in 1984 as the dean of faculty, and later served as provost and vice

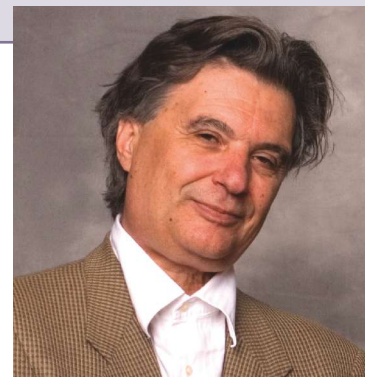
president for academic affairs. He left Berklee in 1996 to become director of entertainment arts for Walt Disney Entertainment in Orland, FL. In 2000, he was named as the president of Columbia College in Chicago and served there until his retirement in 2013. He was a two-time recipient of the National Black Music Caucus Achievement Award and entered the International Association for Jazz Educators Hall of Fame in 1996. He leaves his wife, Laurel; daughter Keisha; and grandchildren.

**John Cieslak** '58 of Scottsdale, AZ, passed away on May 19. He was 81. A lifelong musician, Cieslak played several instruments and had worked with Guy Mitchell, Harry James, and Wayne Newton. As a bandleader, he had been a mainstay at venues in Scottsdale. He leaves his wife, Cecile Cieslak.

**Gordon Homann** of Framingham, MA, died unexpectedly on July 14. He was 53. Homann had worked as the director of international student services for both Berklee and the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Homann was a strong advocate for international students and helped to create the Music and English Intensive Program to help international students get the appropriate



Warrick Carter



Matthew Marvuglio

English language training. He leaves his wife Michiko and daughter Mia.

**Lavine Hudson** '83 of London, England, died in April after a long battle with lupus. She was 55. Hudson was a renowned gospel singer and songwriter in England and had recorded two albums for Virgin Records.

**Matthew Marvuglio** '74 passed away after a long illness on August 4. Marvuglio joined the Berklee faculty in 1974 and became chair of the woodwind department in 1988. In 1996 he was promoted to dean of the Professional Performance Division and is the longest-serving dean in the history of the college. During his 21-year tenure as a dean, he oversaw many significant academic programs and

curriculum changes, including implementing a master's degree program in performance at the Boston and Valencia campuses. A virtuosic flute player, he performed and presented clinics throughout the world and wrote numerous articles on jazz flute performance. He also penned a book of flute études and the workbook for Berklee's traditional harmony courses. He leaves his wife, Mia, and sons Michael and David.

Word has reached us that **John W. Koessler III** '93, of Derby, NY, died May 13, 2016. He was 65. He had worked as the plant manager for Greater Buffalo Press for 18 years, and upon retiring, he enrolled at Berklee. Until recently he was a professional pianist. He leaves his wife, Ellen Carney; two daughters, and a son.

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On a separate sheet, provide details of the newsworthy milestones that you would like the Berklee community to know about. Entries will be edited. To include photos, CDs, or items of interest, mail to:

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## Lessons Learned While Going to Play

by Ed Bettinelli '79

My philosophy is that a musician must always be on a quest to bring his or her playing to the next level. It's an endless trip measured by time spent on the journey with countless lessons learned along the way. My trip started when I was about 11 years old seeing some of the older kids in my neighborhood on Long Island, NY, who had a rock band. On Saturdays, they would open the garage door and allow the younger kids to sit on the front lawn and watch them practice.

Seeing the drummer lit a spark in me, and it was drums for me from that point on. By 15, I was playing in local clubs. My parents supported my passion and suggested that I start taking drum lessons. At 16, I started studying with a well-known teacher. His teaching studio was state-of-the-art for its time, and remains the blueprint for my studio set up to this day.

In the musically heady days of the early 1970s when rock and jazz collided to create fusion, I was a fan of great drummers: Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, John "Jabo" Starks, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Gadd, and others. Billy Cobham's solo record *Spectrum* made my head spin. It was about this time that I realized that I wanted to become the best musician I could possibly be. At my parents' suggestion, I applied to Berklee. Much to my disappointment I didn't get in. I had no music theory background, and at the time, that was the deciding factor for admission.

But I was on a mission. A good friend of mine was in his first semester at Berklee and suggested I move to Boston and audition for a band he was in. I got the gig and was often in Berklee's rehearsal rooms. One day after a rehearsal, I ran into a professor who suggested that I take one of his courses. I told him I didn't go to Berklee, I hadn't gotten into the school. He set up a meeting for me with admissions, and after some back and forth, I was accepted to Berklee.

### Those Best Laid Plans . . .

After my second year at Berklee, I was home for the summer when I read an ad in the *Village Voice* for the band Preview, which was looking for a drummer. I auditioned and got the gig. I thought it would be a summer

gig, but by the end of summer we had created a huge buzz in New York City and six major labels began bidding for the band. It was a signing frenzy. Ours was one of the biggest record signings in New York at the time. We were the 13th band signed to Geffen Records. Keith Olsen, one of the hottest producers at the time, worked with us in the studio and I found myself recording and playing with some of the best-known figures in the industry. Thrown in the loop as they say.

The band's eponymous debut record fell way short of everyone's expectations after its release in 1983. But it took the band about 10 years to concede that fact. I found myself at a point in my career where my major record deal had fizzled and a number of auditions with such artists as John Waite, Michael Schenker, Def Leppard, and others hadn't gone my way.

So I did what any sensible 30-year-old musician living in New York City would do: I took a job tending bar to supplement the big bucks I was earning in the music biz and put another band together. The new group, Beg Borrow & Steal, scored a major deal with RCA/BMG Records. We flew out to Los Angeles and made a record during the Rodney King riots. Those were crazy times. The band made only one album, *Push & Shove*.

Two major record deals and about 20 years later, I found myself living outside of New York in Dobbs Ferry, a river town 18 miles north of the city where I still live with my wife and two sons. I set up a teaching studio, the Art of Drumming, and started giving private drum instruction. All of my experiences in the studio and playing live gave me a lot to share with my students as well as the idea to create a percussion instrument.

### A New Thang

Understanding the process of recording and the many layers that go into creating a composition is one thing, but trying to reproduce and add to those layers while playing live is a different challenge. As a musician and drummer, I'm always trying to bring diverse textures, tones, and colors into my drum part. Having four limbs to work with, I often found myself taking pieces of shakers, tambourines, and

other things and strapping or duct taping them to my body in an effort to create a more colorful, lush groove to support and elevate the song. In doing so, this would often create limitations, and impede the mobility and dexterity required to play the drums.

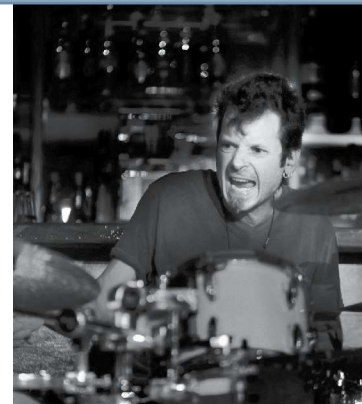
The shaker has been the default piece of percussion for decades. In many recordings, if you listen closely, someone is playing a shaker. Adding it to a track can be magical and hypnotic. If there is anything unsettling in a song, just add some shaker! Most people who add a shaker track usually play a 16th-note pulse that creates a rhythmic grid. All the rhythms happening within a song can usually find a resting point within this grid. Often it relaxes whatever might have felt unsettled within the song.

### So You're the Guy who Invented the Shaker Thang?

I started seeing devices on the market that would attach to drum sticks or the back of the fingers in hopes of enabling a drummer to add the effect of a shaker. To me, these often felt like a ball and chain. Balance is so important to stick control, so attaching something to a stick made absolutely no sense to me. I knew there had to be a better way. I set out to make a shaker that sounded, felt, and looked like no other and that could be hand held or attached to a finger without impeding mobility and dexterity.

Having an idea and then making it tangible is quite a process. I did years of research and development, opening up countless shakers to learn about the beads, weight, and volume that gave them their sound. Coming up with a prototype, name, and logo for a product, branding it, acquiring a patent, funding it, manufacturing and packaging it, and marketing it are a substantial undertaking. Finally getting a patent for my Thumb Thang was an accomplishment. But it offered far less protection than I thought it would.

After receiving my patent, I went to the NAMM show in Anaheim, CA, to show my patent-protected Thumb Thang to peers and some music companies. Within a year, a well-known percussion manufacturer to whom I'd shown the Thumb



Ed Bettinelli. Visit [drummersed.com](http://drummersed.com) or [thumbthang.com](http://thumbthang.com).

Thang at the NAMM show, released a knock-off version that was an absolute infringement on my patent. My attorney sent the company a cease-and-desist letter, and they countered with a letter that opened up the floodgates for litigation. Those costs are not in my budget! The moral of the story might be that a patent is only as good as the amount of money you have to protect it. What to do? Move onward and upward!

### Made in the USA

It was important to me to make the Thumb Thang in America with a nearby manufacturer in case I had to do some trouble shooting. I also wanted to send a message about supporting products made in the USA. So many businesses go outside the country to manufacture their goods. It's much more expensive to make things in the United States, but I didn't want to sell out like others that outsource their manufacturing to other countries to save money on the front end. It has taken me years, but finally, in addition to my brainchild becoming a reality, I am able to attest that the Thumb Thang is made in the USA!

I didn't plan my various career moves. Never once did I say, "I want to be a rock star." I just saw some kids in a garage playing music and knew I would become a musician who happened to play the drums. In the back of my mind I thought that at some point I would set up a teaching studio. But I never set out to go into music product manufacturing.

There are many roads that lead to a destination. But to get there, we need to find our passion, head toward it, and work hard. I've learned that at the end of the day if you fall shy of the mark, at least you know that you spent a good portion of your time doing what you love. To this day, I never say, "I'm going to work." I say, "I'm just going to play."

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is possible for all your music artists, they all started as unsigned artists!

Meghan Trainor shocked the music world won Best New Artist, She hit #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 Charts for the 9 weeks, making it the biggest hit of last year by a female artist, her debut single sold over 15 million copies, making it one of the best selling singles of all time by a debut artist. She has currently a total of 8 songs that have hit the Billboard Hot 100 Charts.

Ron Korb was nominated for Best New Age Album in the Grammy awards. He won BEST INSTRUMENTAL Awards in the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMA (International Acoustic Music Awards). He is a unique flute player and plays both the Chinese and western flute styles. His music is an electrifying blend of Eastern and Western music.

## What Others Are Saying

“I am very excited and surprised to win”  
–Meghan Trainor, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMA Best Female Artist Winner.

“Thank you for recognizing my music with your awards. It means a lot to be appreciated after so many years of writing and playing music for a living” –AJ Croce, 9<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMA Top Winner

“I’m thrilled to win this award. It means a lot to me” –Liz Longley, IAMA Top winner and BERKLEE Alumnus

“This is an excellent achievement for you & your winners. It also shows what a great competition the International Acoustic Music Awards is. Congratulations to both Meghan Trainor and the IAMA” –Cameron Ingram, singer-songwriter

“I am absolutely floored to have won this award, it’s such an honor, it’s pretty surreal to me!” –Jack Newsome, 12<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMA Overall Grand Prize Winner and BERKLEE Alumnus

“I’m excited to be the first Danish artist to ever win this competition, it’s a push in the right direction and I feel humbled that a group of judges chose me to win!” –Tim Schou, 13<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMA Overall Grand Prize Winner.

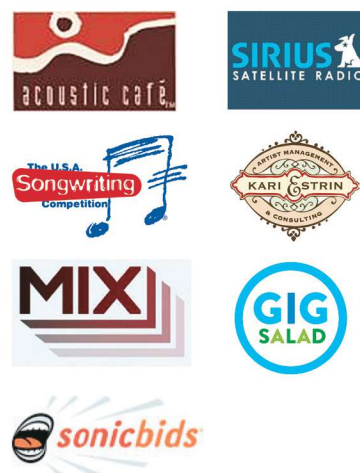
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