

FANFARE





Passing the Baton

Horn students and alumni celebrated the monumental career of professor emerita and alumna Gail Williams '76 MMus, who retired last June. The former associate principal horn of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra served on Bienen's faculty from 1989 to 2025, creating a legacy of profound music-making that was on full display in the farewell concert. Students, faculty, and more than 50 alumni joined to close the evening with a performance of Norman Schweikert's arrangement of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. The concert was a fitting finale for Williams's tenure and a poignant passing of the baton to new horn professor Adam Unsworth '91.



SCAN TO HEAR THE
PERFORMANCE

CONTENTS



A Campus Icon
Pick-Staiger celebrates
50 years



**Tracking
Vocal Health**
A smart wearable
brings new
possibilities



Italian Opera Academy
An alumna trains under
Maestro Muti



In Tune
Bienen's piano fleet
is in good hands

SUMMER 2026
OPUS 69
Northwestern University
Bienen School of Music

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Jonathan Bailey Holland

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On the cover
Robert Taylor leads the
Symphonic Wind Ensemble
and ~Nois Quartet in Viet
Cuong's *Second Nature*.
Photo by Elliot Mandel.

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FIRST CHAIR



One of the most important factors in a student's choice of music school is the institution's faculty. Instruction through weekly lessons, classes, advising sessions, and performances extends across multiple years, with connections built and often maintained for years after graduation.

My own journey has been shaped by many teachers who shared their expertise and encouragement. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate to study composition with Bienen alumnus Ned Rorem '44 at the Curtis Institute of Music. Rorem was as much a personality as he was a composer, and the four years I spent working with him were about not only learning to compose but discovering what it meant to be an artist. Before he enrolled at Northwestern, Rorem took piano lessons with alumna and Chicago musical luminary Margaret Bonds '33, '34 MMus.

Coming full circle, the Bienen School recently celebrated Bonds by hosting a special concert of the Chicago Sinfonietta in Pick-Staiger Concert Hall. The event dedicated a long-overdue headstone on Bonds's grave, and we were honored to partner with the Sinfonietta to recognize the installation of this neglected final monument. One week later, the school held an investiture ceremony to recognize three faculty members who hold endowed chairs—including my own chair, which is named after

Evanston native Kay Davis '42, '43 MMus. Following her graduation from the School of Music, she began performing with Duke Ellington, and in 1948 she sang the premiere of Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life" at Carnegie Hall.

These recent celebratory events provided unique opportunities to commemorate members of the school community who have left a positive impact on the University and beyond through their music, research, service, and teaching. And the events were important reminders that the work we do to prepare our students for success reaches well past the present moment.

As we reflect on the past, we also look to the future, committed to sustaining the excellence of those who came before us. In the spirit of new beginnings, we hope you enjoy the updated design of *Fanfare*, which offers a refreshed look while continuing to celebrate the achievements of our alumni, students, and faculty.

Jonathan Bailey Holland
Dean
Kay Davis Professor of Music

NOTEWORTHY

New Faculty Appointments



Ryan Dohoney, associate dean for faculty, has served on the musicology faculty since 2013 and was previously director of graduate music studies. He is also an affiliated faculty member with Northwestern's interdisciplinary clusters in critical theory, global avant-garde and modernist studies, and gender and sexuality studies. He provides broad support for faculty affairs, including faculty development, curricular development, and interdisciplinary initiatives.



Kelley Sheehan, assistant professor of composition and music technology, is a composer and electronic musician involved in the electroacoustic, multimedia, and performance-art fields. She holds a PhD in music composition from Harvard University, where she studied with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku; she was previously a postdoctoral fellow in music technology at Smith College.



Adam Unsworth, professor of horn, is principal horn of the Ann Arbor Symphony. He was previously on the faculty of the University of Michigan and was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. A former student of Gail Williams, Unsworth received his bachelor's degree from Northwestern and master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



1 NUNC!
The sixth edition of Northwestern's NUNC! new music conference featured guest composers George Lewis (above) and Bec Plexus, the International Contemporary Ensemble, keynote speaker Kirsten Speyer Carithers '17 PhD, and a broad range of performances and presentations. The Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Contemporary Music Ensemble, and saxophone ensemble each presented concerts during the three-day festival.



2 LEÓN RETURNS
Tania León, winner of the 2023 Nemmers Prize in Music Composition, spent a week coaching students that culminated in a Contemporary Music Ensemble concert featuring her *Rítmicas*. In addition to attending several rehearsals, she presented a master class for composition students and visited musicology classes as part of her final Nemmers residency.

3 (RE)LOADING THE CANON
Bienen hosted a workshop and recording session for Shawn Okpebholo's concerto *Flow, Riffs, and Running Bass* with cellist Gabriel Cabezas and the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra. A partnership with the American Composers



Orchestra and the Sphinx Organization, the project was part of (Re)loading the Canon, a commissioning consortium that aims to develop a series of string concertos by Black and Latino composers.

4 VITAL CURRENTS
The Symphonic Wind Ensemble, led by Robert Taylor, performed and recorded music by Viet Cuong alongside guest ensembles Third Coast Percussion, Eighth Blackbird, and ~Nois Quartet. Over two weeks, Cuong and the guest artists, including many alumni, engaged in

residencies, working closely with students in rehearsals and master classes. The effort will result in a series of professional video and audio recordings.

5 MANGO STREET
Bienen voice students performed select arias from *The House on Mango Street*, the new opera based on the novel by Sandra Cisneros. The author read poetry at the event and joined composer Derek Bermel and Bienen director of opera Joachim Schamberger in a discussion between selections.



Andsnes Wins Piano Prize

The Bienen School awarded Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes the 2025 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance. The prize honors pianists who have achieved the highest levels of national and international recognition and includes a \$75,000 cash award, a public recital, and two non-consecutive residencies at the school.

"From his award-winning and captivating recordings to his artistic partnerships with many of the most highly respected musical institutions around the globe, Leif Ove Andsnes represents the highest level of artistry," said Dean Jonathan Bailey Holland.

Andsnes presented a sold-out recital of works by Chopin and Janáček as part of the Skyline Piano Artist Series (above) and coached Bienen students in several master classes during his first residency. He will return to Northwestern in February 2027.



War Requiem

The Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra and a grand combined choir of all five Bienen voice ensembles presented Britten's *War Requiem* under the direction of Andrew Megill. The featured soloists —soprano master's student Cynthia Hu and guest artists David Newman and Sumner Thompson—joined more than 260 students in two performances of the monumental work, which interweaves the traditional Latin Mass for the Dead with nine poems about war by Wilfred Owen. A statement of protest against conflict and violence, the *War Requiem* remains a powerful musical expression.



SCAN TO HEAR THE PERFORMANCE



Pianos United

Pianist and former John Evans Distinguished Professor of Music Ursula Oppens (right) returned to Northwestern for a performance of Frederic Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* Fifty years prior, she premiered the work, which was dedicated to her by the composer. Jerome Lowenthal (left) and more than 30 piano students joined Oppens in performing the piece, which comprises 36 variations and has become an international anthem of the Chilean resistance.



Ode to Dowland and Gibbons

The Evelyn Dunbar Memorial Early Music Festival brought scholars, performers, and early music aficionados together for four days to celebrate Renaissance composers John Dowland and Orlando Gibbons. Guest scholar and music historian K. Dawn Grapes's opening lecture focused on Dowland's *Lachrimae*. Lutenist Paul O'Dette (right) and tenor Aaron Sheehan (left), both Grammy winners, presented a public master class for students and a concert of Dowland's music. Andrew Megill led the Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble in a program of both composers' music alongside contemporary works they inspired, and a vocal ensemble and professional viol consort led by Stephen Alltop presented a program of sacred and secular works by both. Alltop's keyboard students also performed a recital of works for the virginal.

Music and Health



Associate professor of music education Sarah Bartolome (right) led the inaugural Symposium for Music and Health at Northwestern. The conference brought together a global network of scholars, clinicians, and musicians who are committed to leveraging the power of music to support human health and well-being.

“My hope is that, every two years, leaders in the fields of music and health will come to the Bienen School to share cutting-edge research that advances both fields and ultimately increases access to music as a force for human flourishing.”

—Sarah Bartolome



Celebrating the Class of '25

Deborah Rutter presented the Bienen School's 2025 convocation address last June. An arts and culture leader, advocate, and adviser, Rutter was the first female president of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she led a period of transformative growth. After beginning her career at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, she went on to lead the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, where she engaged Riccardo Muti as music director.

The convocation also featured an address by student Oliver Stark and a musical performance by associate professor She-e Wu and student percussionists.



“I encourage you to innovate, experiment, expand the canon, teach differently, and always perform courageously while making space for others. You are not just the inheritors of a tradition but the authors of a new one. I have no doubt that you will make the concert hall more inclusive.”

—Deborah Rutter



Opera Highlights

POPPEA'S CORONATION

In spring 2025 Northwestern Opera Theater staged *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Monteverdi's tale of love, deception, and murder. Mistress of Emperor Nerone, Poppea is determined to ascend the throne, whatever the costs. Directed by artist-in-residence Joachim Schamberger, the opera featured a cast and chorus of Bienen voice students along with the Baroque Music Ensemble, conducted by Stephen Alltop.

A HAUNTING PREMIERE

Missy Mazzoli's evocative *Proving Up* had its Chicago-area premiere last fall at Northwestern. The opera tells of one family's harrowing experience while homesteading on the Nebraska plains in the 1870s. Mazzoli participated in postshow talkbacks with Schamberger and conductor Alan Pierson, who led the Contemporary Music Ensemble in four sold-out performances.





50 YEARS OF A CAMPUS ICON

Since 1975, Pick-Staiger Concert Hall has functioned as both a classroom and a performance facility for the school's ensembles, faculty, festivals, and guest artists. Dedicated on October 26 of that year in honor of Corinne Frada Pick and in memory of Pauline Pick Staiger, the hall brought a much-needed large performance space to campus.



(From left) Northwestern chancellor J. Roscoe Miller, Albert and Corrine Pick, and Charles G. Staiger performed the ceremonial groundbreaking in July 1973.

Audiences in the storied hall have enjoyed appearances by such artists as the Assad Brothers, Daniel Barenboim, Grace Bumbry, John Cage, Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Branford Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin, the Philip Glass Ensemble, Steve Reich, Frederica Von Stade, and Pinchas Zukerman. Renowned conductors have led major orchestras there, including Carlo Maria Giulini with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lorin Maazel with the Cleveland Orchestra, and Pierre Boulez with Ensemble InterContemporain.

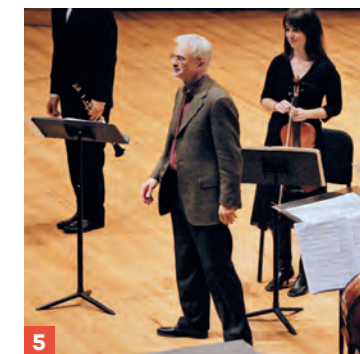
Pick-Staiger hosts roughly 85 public events each academic year and is the source of countless memories—made onstage, backstage, and in the audience. It remains an important cultural landmark of Northwestern and the north Chicago suburbs.



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NOTABLE PICK-STAIGER PERFORMANCES

1 1975 The hall is dedicated with a performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 by the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra featuring Ralph Votapek '60.

2 1992 The six-day John Cage Now Festival celebrates the artist's 80th birthday.

3 1997 Daniel Barenboim performs the Brahms Piano Quintet at the inaugural Winter Chamber Music Festival.

4 2004 A Monster Piano concert features 20 faculty and alumni.

5 2005 John Adams, inaugural winner of the Nemmers Prize in Music Composition, conducts the Contemporary Music Ensemble.

6 2008 Renée Fleming leads one of the many vocal master classes she has presented at Northwestern.

7 2016 Branford Marsalis performs with the Jazz Orchestra in a concert honoring the new Ryan Center for the Musical Arts.

8 2019 Nearly 200 alumni return for a concert celebrating the Symphonic Wind Ensemble's 50th anniversary.

9 2022 Victor Yampolsky leads the Symphony Orchestra in Mahler's Symphony No. 9 in his last concert as director of orchestras.



In Tune

Among the busiest people at the Bienen School of Music are the keyboard maintenance staff, who use their specialized skills to oversee an impressive fleet of pianos.



Chris Scroggins, piano technician,
and Wesley Owen, supervisor of
keyboard maintenance

Hours before some of the world’s most celebrated pianists take the Galvin Recital Hall stage for Skyline Piano Artist Series performances, Wesley Owen can be found tinkering with one of the Bienen School’s model D Steinway pianos—tuning, voicing, and making adjustments to meet the artists’ unique specifications. As supervisor of keyboard maintenance, Owen is responsible for providing the highest level of tuning, maintenance, and concert preparation for nearly 300 instruments across the school.

Bienen’s annual performance calendar of more than 400 concerts and events keeps Owen and piano technician Chris Scroggins quite busy. Both are highly skilled at their craft, with years of experience, certifications, and memberships in the Piano Technicians Guild, a global network of more than 3,300 members. Three private contractors support their work, including one intern, a role that Owen himself previously held under the guidance of former Northwestern supervisors Ken Eschete and Bill Schwartz. Today Owen and Scroggins continue a legacy of excellence and ensure that each instrument is ready to meet the school’s academic and performance needs. They spoke with *Fanfare* to share more about their essential work.

What skills make for an excellent piano technician?

OWEN: The work demands a broad and adaptable skill set. You must be proficient in all aspects of piano maintenance, including tuning, regulation, voicing, and parts replacement, and be prepared to care for a diverse fleet of instruments of varying ages and usage levels. The role also requires strong planning abilities to anticipate needs in advance, as well as the flexibility to troubleshoot and resolve unexpected issues as they arise.

What amount of training goes into this craft?

SCROGGINS: Piano technology is traditionally learned through years of apprenticeship. We were both very fortunate to graduate from North Bennet Street School, which provides a foundation of tuning, repairs, and action regulation. Following that program, I took the Piano Technicians Guild exams to become a registered technician and continued my education by apprenticing in a world-class rebuilding shop and working summers at the Aspen Music Festival. I’ve also completed all the training that the Steinway & Sons piano factory offers.

Describe a typical day at Bienen.

OWEN: Each day looks a little different. Most mornings are spent tuning between two and six pianos, followed by maintenance work in the afternoon. Some days are devoted entirely to shop work, while others are spent tuning from morning to evening and being on standby for a guest artist. There are also days when we move pianos or the portative organ between buildings or handle repairs such as fixing piano benches.

What’s one of the most interesting days at work recently?

OWEN: Working with Stephen Hough for the Skyline Piano Artist Series concert was a thrill. He is a truly amazing artist and was a great deal of fun to speak with about pianos.

SCROGGINS: There is always something interesting. I like days that have a lot of variety, like when I work in a venue space, then go tune the practice room harpsichord, then spend most of the afternoon in the shop working on a piano that is getting new parts.



THE BIENEN FLEET

Overseen by the keyboard
maintenance department

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 118 grand pianos | 5 harpsichords |
| 122 uprights | 44 electric pianos |
| 2 celestas | 1 portative organ |



What would people be surprised to learn about your work?

SCROGGINS: Maybe just how meticulous it is beyond tuning. Each note on the piano has over 20 moving parts that all need very fine microadjustments, which all create nuances in the touch. Each note’s hammer felt can respond differently to the physical manipulation we do, and it is up to us to make judgments with our ears to get every hammer sounding even in tone.

What’s the best part of your job?

SCROGGINS: I remind myself every day how lucky I am to do something I love so much, and I get to put a lot of effort into improving my own skills and knowledge while trying to improve the pianos. I am also happy to be working at Bienen with all the incredible staff who have been so welcoming and supportive.

OWEN: My favorite part is solving a problem that I have not ever encountered before. Even after years of doing this work, new challenges pop up when I do not expect them. A close second favorite is working with the high-level artists. It is often a thrill to see up close what they can do with the pianos.

FACULTY

Linda Austern (MUSICOLOGY) presented a paper on instrumental variations for the Ubiquitous Musicking in Early Modern England panel and chaired a session on the language of flowers at the Renaissance Society of America’s annual meeting. She was appointed to the advisory board of Mainstream Song, Class, and Culture, 1520–2020, a multiyear project based at Newcastle University and funded by UK Research and Innovation.

Jennifer Blackwell (MUSIC EDUCATION) published papers in the *International Journal of Music Education* and *Frontiers in Psychology: Performance Science*. She secured a contract with Oxford University Press for *The New Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, coedited with Gary McPherson, and presented research at the International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition and the Illinois Music Education Conference.

Ben Bolter (CONDUCTING) is composing music for the animatic, web, and graphic novel project *Turtle Island*, which received a grant from the City of Chicago’s cultural affairs department. He is collaborating with his wife, Monica Rickert Bolter, and brother-in-law, Joel Rickert.

Karen Brunssen (VOICE AND OPERA) led a panel at the International Conference for Voice Teachers and gave a presentation for the Huntsville Master Chorale. She led master classes at Wheaton and Luther Colleges, Miami University, and the Central Region NATS Conference and taught at the Voice Study Centre at the University of Essex. She adjudicated the Schmidt Vocal Competitions in Boston and the NATS National Student Auditions finals in Philadelphia.

George Cederquist (VOICE AND OPERA) is the producing artistic director of Chicago Fringe Opera, where he most recently developed *Op*erratic*, a completely improvised Mozartian opera. The *Chicago Tribune* wrote, “Depending on what night you go . . . the bodily fluids invoked may vary. But the laughs? Sempre forte.”

Clayton Dahm (MUSIC EDUCATION) published “Transforming Ethnomusical Recordings into Curricular Resource” in *The Orff Echo*. He presented papers at the conferences of Cultural Diversity in Music Education and the International Society for the Philosophy of Music Education.

Drew Edward Davies (MUSICOLOGY) completed his second term as president of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music. He presented the paper “Manuel Sumaya and Timbre in New Spanish Cathedral Music” at the University of Navarre, Spain, and participated in a panel on editing early music for the Encounters in Eighteenth-Century Music webinar series. He collaborated with the

Coro de Madrigalistas de Bellas Artes in Mexico City in performances of music by Sumaya informed by his research.

Ryan Dohoney (MUSICOLOGY) became associate dean for faculty last fall. He gave invited talks at the University at Buffalo, the Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, and the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in Minneapolis. He gave a keynote lecture at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, for the symposium Star-Crossed Rendezvous: The Musical Legacy of Isang Yun.

Leslie Grimm (CHAMBER MUSIC) won a grant from the Alumnae of Northwestern University to support a multimedia publication titled *First the Air: A Breathing Compendium for Woodwind Players*.

Jennifer Gunn (PICCOLO) premiered Thea Musgrave’s concerto *Piccolo Play* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Daniela Candillari. She also premiered Stacy Garrop’s *A la Kujala*, commissioned by the Chicago Flute Club in memory of former CSO flutist and Northwestern faculty member Walfrid Kujala. Gunn presented master classes at Orford Musique in Canada and the New Music School in Chicago and performed a recital with pianist Jeff Panko.

Nancy Gustafson (VOICE AND OPERA) is founder of Songs by Heart, a sing-along program for memory care and assisted living communities across the US that helps residents connect with the joy and language of music. Now in its 11th year, the program has expanded with the Songs by Heart Partnership for undergraduate students at Northwestern.

Michael Heno (OBOE) produced and hosted a concert at SPACE in Evanston as part of the national arts initiative Fall of Freedom. The Musicians Stand Up for Democracy and Freedom of Expression concert featured 12 performers, including **Desiree Ruhstrat** and **Jennifer Gunn**.

Jonathan Bailey Holland (DEAN) presented the keynote address at the Music Institute of Chicago’s Martin Luther King Jr. celebration concert. His music has recently been performed by the Chicago Youth, Detroit, and Evanston Symphony Orchestras and the Monterey and Utah Symphonies. Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings premiered his *Ephemer* at the Bowling Green New Music Festival, and he gave a residency at the Longy School of Music of Bard College with Castle of Our Skins.

Karen Kan-Walsh (PIANO PEDAGOGY) and **Lam Wong** (PIANO PEDAGOGY) presented “Emerging Technology: Motion Capture for Enhanced Learning and Accessibility” at the Illinois State Music Teachers Association conference. Last year marked the inaugural application of motion-capture technology in the field of piano pedagogy. The ongoing project is a collaboration with Northwestern’s Emerging Technologies Lab.



(Left to right) **Gavin Chuck** (MUSIC THEORY AND COGNITION) and **Alan Pierson** (CONDUCTING) won their first Grammy, the 2026 award for best chamber music/small ensemble performance, for Alarm Will Sound’s recording of Donnacha Dennehy’s *Land of Winter*. Pierson is the ensemble’s artistic director and conductor; Chuck is executive director. *Land of Winter* was also nominated for best contemporary classical composition.



Daniel Shanahan (MUSIC THEORY AND COGNITION) was a faculty fellow at the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities this academic year. The competitive residency reduces faculty members’ teaching load so they can pursue significant humanities research projects. Shanahan is working on a book titled *A History of the Algorithmic Individuation of Music*. He has also given invited lectures at the University of Iowa and Georgia Institute of Technology, published articles in *Music Theory Online* and the *Journal of New Music Research*, and written a chapter with Morgan Patrick ’25 for *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Variations*.



Tracking Vocal Health

Research related to vocal health led by Bienen senior lecturer **Theresa Brancaccio** (VOICE AND OPERA) (above left, with master’s voice student Alec Fore) is supported through the new Querrey Simpson Institute for Translational Engineering for Advanced Medical Systems at Northwestern. QSI-TEAMS aims to expedite the clinical validation, adoption, and launch of pioneering technologies at the intersections of engineering, science, and medicine. Leading the initiative is John Rogers, the Louis Simpson and Kimberly Querrey Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, and Neurological Surgery.

Brancaccio and speech pathologist Aaron Johnson ’95, ’99 MMus worked with Rogers’s team to develop the first wearable device that continuously tracks voice-usage level, providing overuse alerts before vocal fatigue and potential injury set in. The device comfortably adheres to the upper chest, sensing subtle vibrations associated with talking and singing while simultaneously measuring ambient sounds. The data is then streamed via Bluetooth to users’ smartphones or tablets, where they can monitor vocal activities throughout the day and measure cumulative usage and quality. The technology could help preserve the voice for people who sing or talk for a living and could help clinicians remotely monitor patients with voice disorders.

“Being selected as one of the launch projects for QSI-TEAMS marks a pivotal moment in our ability to fully realize the project’s potential,” Brancaccio said. “Our wearable smart device aims to help people prevent vocal fatigue and injury while also opening new possibilities for clinical voice care and research in areas such as hearing loss, Parkinson’s disease, and cancer radiation.”



“Our wearable smart device aims to help people prevent vocal fatigue and injury while also opening new possibilities for clinical voice care and research.”

—Theresa Brancaccio

Todd Levy (CLARINET) gave the Milwaukee premiere of Richard Danielpour’s clarinet concerto *From the Mountaintop*, inspired by the words of Martin Luther King Jr., with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Music director Ken-David Masure conducted with the composer in attendance.

Patrice Michaels (VOICE AND OPERA) developed new volumes for advanced singers for the Royal Conservatory of Music’s Voice Series, a comprehensive singer training program. She compiled, edited, and arranged the volumes for levels 9 and 10 and served on a team that updated all volumes through the intermediate level.

Danuta Mirka (MUSIC THEORY AND COGNITION) received an honorary doctorate from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, Poland. She presented her research at the University of Chicago and for the International Colloquium Series organized by the Israeli Musicological Society. She also chaired the Marjorie Weston Emerson Award committee of the Mozart Society of America.

Toni-Marie Montgomery (EMERITA) received the Think Big! Award from Chicago Jazz Philharmonic for her impact as a visionary education leader, institution builder, and concert pianist.

Steven Morrison (MUSIC EDUCATION) contributed an essay on connections between world music pedagogy and music cognition for *Perspectives on Music, Education, and Diversity*, a book honoring Patricia Shehan Campbell. With **Daniel Shanahan** (MUSIC THEORY AND COGNITION), he will host Society for Music Perception and Cognition conference at the Bienen School in July.

Donald Nally (EMERITUS), conductor of The Crossing, received a best choral performance Grammy nomination for David Lang’s *Poor Hymnal* with the group, its 11th nomination in the category.

Yasuko Oura (COLLABORATIVE PIANO) performed with tenor David Portillo at Baylor and Texas Christian Universities and with violinist Janet Sung in Chicago. She returned to Des Moines Metro Opera to coach apprentice artists and perform in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, assisted Dame Jane Glover in Gluck’s *Orfeo* with Music of the Baroque, and performed with Chicago Opera Theater for its Shakespeare Sings concert and the Chicago premiere of Salieri’s *Falstaff*, for which she was also music director.

Roger Pines (VOICE AND OPERA) wrote an in-depth profile of soprano Nadine Sierra for *Opera* magazine. His article on the demands of a Verdi baritone appeared in San Francisco Opera’s *Rigoletto* program, and he wrote liner notes for several rereleases of recordings by Luciano Pavarotti on the Decca label. At Lyric Opera of Chicago, he moderated a talk following Cherubini’s *Medea* and gave a preperformance lecture on *Cavalleria rusticana*/Pagliacci.

Diego Pinto (MUSIC EDUCATION) gave lectures on commercial tools and services for music education to graduate students and on choral methods and materials to undergraduate students at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro. He recently received an Undergraduate



Jinjoo Cho (VIOLIN) performed as soloist in Elgar’s Violin Concerto in B Minor with the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra, conducted by **Donald Schleicher** (CONDUCTING).



SCAN TO HEAR THE PERFORMANCE

FACULTY

Research Assistant Program grant from Northwestern to support his work on middle school students’ musical-ability growth mindset.

Robert Reinhart (MUSIC THEORY AND COGNITION) performed in concerts with the a.p.e.r.i.o.d.i.c ensemble at Constellation and for the Poetry and Poetics Colloquium at Northwestern. He presented “GEST: A Card Game to Reinforce Music Theory Terminology” with Jaz Thomasian ’25 at Northwestern’s TEACHx conference. His piece *Mortise* for prepared piano was performed by Shi-An Costello at Constellation and Colvin House, and his saxophone quartet *Warp and Woof* was recorded by the Estrella Consort.

Jesse Rosenberg (MUSICOLOGY) contributed the chapter “Opera and Race: A Bulletin on an American University Course” to *Opera Across Borders: Word, Image, Scene, and Digital Transformations*; published an article in *Quaderni Musicali Marchigiani* on the depiction of Jewish characters in Italian operas with subjects drawn from plays by Alfred De Vigny; and contributed a chapter to the Florence Conservatory’s Arnaldo Bonaventura conference about *Nepta*, an opera set in Ethiopia by the Jewish fascist composer Mary Rosselli-Nissim.

Desirée Ruhstrat (VIOLIN) released *Dance of the Night Sky* on Cedille Records with Black Oak Ensemble. The group’s third album, it features a collection of contemporary works, including four world-premiere recordings, all by British women composers. In honor of Women’s History Month, Ruhstrat was recognized with an award from the Illinois treasurer’s office for outstanding achievement in the arts and humanities.

Taimur Sullivan (SAXOPHONE) was in residence at the University of Missouri–Kansas City and served as guest professor at the Eastman School of Music. With PRISM Quartet he presented 48 world

premieres as part of the Unlocking Your Inner Composer project and released three new recordings: Robert Capanna’s *Piccolo Concertante*, Adam Silverman’s *TITLE*, and Miguel Zenon’s *El Eco de Un Tambor*. He launched a series of educational videos with online education platform Tonebase.

Robert Taylor (CONDUCTING) published the book *The Hill We Climb: LGBTQ+, Band, and Belonging* with coeditor Erik Leung ’16 DMA. He organized the project Vital Currents to bring composer Viet Cuong to campus for a residency, concert, and recording project of the composer’s music by the Symphonic Wind Ensemble

featuring Chicago ensembles Eighth Blackbird, Third Coast Percussion, and ~Nois Quartet. The project will result in a series of recordings and a documentary.

Sylvia Wang (PIANO) performed Gershwin’s *I Got Rhythm* variations with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra under **Stephen Alltop** (CONDUCTING). With violinist Elizabeth Chang and hornist Ann Ellsworth, she performed at a fundraiser in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, followed by two concerts in Elizabethtown, New York. She taught at Bravura Summer Music, presented a class at the Chicago Chamber Music Festival, and judged the concerto competition at Wheaton College.



Daniel Farris (CONDUCTING) retired at the end of this academic year following 26 years of service to the University and 43 years in the profession. As director of athletic bands, Farris conducted the Northwestern University “Wildcat” Marching, Basketball, and Concert Bands, leading the Marching Band in nearly 200 home football games and 14 bowl appearances. He also taught conducting and served as faculty adviser to Phi Mu Alpha. Farris previously held faculty positions at Illinois State University and the University of Nevada and was director of the Walt Disney World Collegiate All-Star Band. Bands under his direction have performed at the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day and Dublin St. Patrick’s Day parades and in exhibition at the Bands of America Grand National Finals.

STUDENTS

Cameron Akioka, a doctoral piano student of James Giles, won a Nerenberg Award from the Musicians Club of Women and won first prize in the 2026 Thaviu-Isaak Endowed Piano Scholarship Competition.

Abigail Arnold, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree voice student of Pamela Hinchman, received an encouragement award in the Illinois district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

David Bennette, a master’s saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, won first prize in the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition and third prize in the North American Saxophone Alliance collegiate solo competition. With his quartet Zed, he advanced to the semifinals of the 2025 Naumburg Foundation Chamber Music Competition.

Leo Casti ’21 MMus, a music theory and cognition doctoral candidate, presented “Of Stream Merging and Gap Filling: A Theory of Metric Perception in Arvo Pärt” at the annual meeting of Music Theory Southeast and “The Metric Effects of Silences and Streams: Two Further Extensions of the Parallel Multiple-Analysis Processor” at the McGill Music Graduate Symposium in Montreal.



He was also a winner of the Bienen School’s concerto/aria competition and Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship Competition.

Pedram Diba, a doctoral composition student of Alex Mincek, won the Faricy Award for his work *Pazhvak Astaneh*, which premiered at IRCAM in Paris.

Dominic Doutney, a doctoral piano student of James Giles, won second prize in the Thaviu-Isaak Endowed Piano Scholarship Competition.

Marie Engle ’15, a doctoral voice student of W. Stephen Smith, was a winner in the Bienen School’s concerto/aria competition.

Miguel Flores-Padilla, a saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, received a Northwestern summer internship grant to fund his participation in the Blue Devils Drum and Bugle Corps as a soprano saxophonist. He toured the US with the ensemble, which placed fourth out of 40 competing corps at the 2025 Drum Corps International Championship.

Alec Fore, a master’s voice student of Theresa Brancaccio, was selected for the Lehrer Vocal Institute at Music Academy of the West, where he will sing the roles of the librarian and the priest in Kevin Puts’s *Elizabeth Cree*.

Hui Sing Fan, a doctoral violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro, won the Meadowmount School of Music’s 2026 Gurrena Fellowship. He won the Dallas International Violin Competition’s second and audience prizes and advanced to the semifinals of the Premio Paganini Violin Competition.



Wenting Shi, a doctoral piano student of James Giles, was named a Steinway Artist, joining a prestigious roster of the world’s most celebrated pianists. Naxos this year released her solo album of works by Liszt.

Noam Ginsparg, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree cello student of Hans Jensen, won second prize in the Klein Competition and the American Opera Society of Chicago Award in honor of Mary Jane Peterson.

Solamada Pando Girard, a master’s voice student of Karen Brussen, received an encouragement award in the Indiana district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

Laine Gruver, a music theory and cognition doctoral candidate, presented “Musical Continuity as Authenticity in Popular Fantasy Prequels” at the Midwest Graduate Music Consortium’s annual meeting. *Music and the Moving Image* published her article “Here, Yet There: A Musical Analysis of Planet Earth and Planet Earth II.”

Tejas Kishan Gururaja, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree voice student of Patrice Michaels, was named a 2026 vocal fellow of the Grant Park Music Festival.



So Proudly We Hailed

The Northwestern Trombone Choir gave a rousing performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner” for the 2025 NU Day at Wrigley Field. The rendition, arranged by Joe Maiocco, went viral on social media, showcasing Bienen’s renowned brass program well beyond the Friendly Confines.



SCAN TO HEAR THE PERFORMANCE

Ryan Ha, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree oboe student of Michael Henocho, received the Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award.

Brandon Harper, a jazz piano student of Jeremy Kahn, received honorable mentions for piano and combo arranging at the National Collegiate Jazz Championship at Lincoln Center. He also received an outstanding recognition award at the Elmhurst University Jazz Festival.

Wanxinyi Huang, a doctoral viola student of Helen Callus, won third place in the Northwestern Viola Prize competition.

Brian Kachur, a doctoral saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, was named adjunct assistant professor of saxophone at Carthage College. A winner in the Bienen School’s concerto/aria competition, he has performed with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and at the US Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium and presented master



Michael Slattery ’20, a music theory and cognition doctoral candidate, was named a 2025–26 Franke Graduate Fellow by Northwestern’s Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. His project “The Heavens Are Telling: Cultural Meanings of the Do-Re-Mi” investigates recurring musical patterns as sites of communication and units of structure.

classes at Western Illinois University, DePauw University, and Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Haven Kahn, a master’s saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, advanced to the finals of the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh’s Young Artist Competition and to the semifinals of both the Chamber Orchestra of the Springs Emerging Soloist and North American Saxophone Alliance Young Artist Competitions. (See also facing page.)

James Kang, a doctoral viola student of Helen Callus, won third prize in the 2025 Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship Competition in String Performance and won the American Opera Society of Chicago Ginger and Jim Meyer Centennial Award.

Haddon Kay ’22, ’24 MMus, a doctoral cello student of Hans Jensen, won first prize in the 2026 Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship Competition in String Performance.

Paige Klemenhausen, a Bienen-Communication dual-degree voice student of Nancy Gustafson, advanced to the finals of the American Pop Orchestra’s NextGen Collegiate Vocal Competition.

Philip Kleutgens ’24 MMus, a doctoral saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, won the 2025 US Army Band National Collegiate Solo Competition and performed as soloist with the US Army Concert Band in August. (See also below right.)

Oliver Koenig, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree jazz saxophone student of Rob Dixon, received an honorable mention for tenor saxophone solo at the National Collegiate Jazz Championship at Lincoln Center.

Sinhwa Lee, a master’s piano student of Christopher Guzman, won second prize in the 2026 Thaviu-Isaak Endowed Piano Scholarship Competition.

Xinyi Liu, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree voice student of Patrice Michael, won a Nerenberg Award from the Musicians Club of Women.

Zhiwen (Wendy) Liu, a musicology student advised by Jesse Rosenberg, received Northwestern’s Fletcher Undergraduate Research Award for most outstanding summer project in the arts, humanities, and journalism.

Jasmine Meyer, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree piano student of Sylvia Wang, won a Farwell Award from the Musicians Club of Women.

Raúl Orellana, a master’s trumpet student of David Bilger, won a one-year third trumpet position with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Xin Quan, a doctoral violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro, won second prize in the 2026 Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship Competition in String Performance.

Keshav Srinivasan, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree violin student of Desirée Ruhstrat, won third prize in the 2026 Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship Competition in String Performance.

Oliver Stark ’25 MMus, a master’s wind conducting student of Robert Taylor, was a winner in the Bienen School’s concerto/aria competition.

Annabelle Sweet, a Bienen-Communication dual-degree voice student of Patrice Michaels, was named a winner in the Schmidt Vocal Arts Competition undergraduate awards’ upper division.

Ruoxuan Nola Tan, a master’s voice student of Patrice Michaels, won an encouragement award in the Nebraska district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. She was named a 2026 vocal fellow of the Grant Park Music Festival.

The Synchrony saxophone quartet—**Philip Kleutgens, Hudson O’Reilly, Matthew Johnson**, and **Haven Kahn**—won top prizes in the North American Saxophone Alliance, Music Teachers National Association, and Coltman Chamber Music Competitions. Coached by Taimur Sullivan, the quartet also received the silver prize in the Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition and advanced to the quarterfinals of the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.



STUDENTS

Julian Velasco '20 MMus, a doctoral saxophone student of Taimur Sullivan, has performed across the country as a soloist and member of ~Nois Quartet, including appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Third Coast Percussion, and Sô Percussion. He has given residencies at the Universities of Chicago and California (Los Angeles and Santa Barbara) and Howard and Lawrence Universities. He performed on five new recordings, including the Grammy-nominated *Songs in Flight* by Shawn Okebholo.

Luiz Fernando Venturelli '21, '23 MMus, a doctoral cello student of Hans Jensen, won first prize in the 2025 Samuel and Elinor Thaviu Endowed Scholarship

Competition in String Performance. He was selected to participate in the Queen Elisabeth Cello Competition.

Kerry Walther, a master's viola student of Helen Callus, won first place in the Northwestern Viola Prize competition.

Saifei Wang, a master's piano student of James Giles, won the 2025 Pauline Lindsay Award.

Ethan Weisman, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree jazz saxophone student of Rob Dixon, received an outstanding recognition award at the Elmhurst University Jazz Festival and an award for outstanding woodwind doubler at the National Collegiate Jazz Championship at Lincoln Center.

Sanford Whatley, a Bienen-Weinberg dual-degree viola student of Helen Callus, won second place in the Northwestern Viola Prize competition.

Marie Wurtz, a piano student of James Giles, won third prize in the Thaviu-Isaak Endowed Piano Scholarship Competition and a Nerenberg Award from the Musicians Club of Women.

Elizabeth Yang, a piano student of Sylvia Wang, won a Farwell Award from the Musicians Club of Women.

Kyungmin Yang, a master's piano student of James Giles, won third prize in the 2026 Thaviu-Isaak Endowed Piano Scholarship Competition.

Seho Young, a doctoral piano student of James Giles, was invited to participate in the Queen Elisabeth Competition and advanced to the finals of the Cedille Emerging Artist Competition.



Jungah Yoon, a doctoral flute student of John Thorne, was appointed principal flute of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

ALUMNI

1960s

Otto Dolansky '61 inspired Chicago Public Schools students with music and education for more than 40 years and in retirement continues to create original compositions daily. He attends classical music concerts and advocates for music appreciation.

1810 Hinman and later to Deering Library. In 1983 he began working in the Libraries information technology unit, where he remained for the rest of his career.

Stanley Osborn '78 MMus is organist and choirmaster of the chapel at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. In a program he organized to teach children how pipe organs work and inspire a future generation of musicians, 20 children assembled a small pipe organ from a kit designed in the Netherlands, then took turns pumping air and playing tunes.

1970s

Bassist **Rufus Reid** '71 and his jazz quartet performed a recital in Pick-Staiger Concert Hall during Northwestern's Homecoming and Reunion weekend. The program featured jazz standards and several of Reid's own compositions.

Vincent McCoy '75 retired from Northwestern University Libraries last year. He began in 1970 as a work-study student in the Music Library, then became full-time in 1974. He helped relocate the Music Library twice, from the Music Administration Building to

1980s

Robin Wieber '81 MMus retired after 25 years as pastor of congregational care and worship at Grace Covenant Church in Austin, Texas. He was previously organist and choir director at churches in Spokane, Washington. He and his wife, Debbie, look forward to traveling and spending time with their four grandchildren.

Martha Gilmer '78, president and CEO of the San Diego Symphony, was named 2026 impresario of the year by *Musical America Worldwide*. The award celebrates Gilmer's leadership, creativity, and more than 45 years of shaping American orchestral life.



as an adjunct instructor supervising student teachers in music education at DePaul University and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Glenn Williams

'94 MMus received the John Paynter Lifetime Achievement Award in music education from the Quinlan and Fabish Music Company. Since retiring in 2021 as music teacher and fine arts department chair at Downers Grove (Illinois) South High School, Williams continues to teach

Bruce Tammen '82 MMus retires as artistic director of Chicago Chorale at the end of the 2025–26 season. Tammen founded the chorale in 2001 without institutional funding or sponsorship; the 60-voice choir has flourished under his direction. Having recorded seven CDs and completed four successful European tours, the group has been listed multiple times among the top classical performances of the year by the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Classical Review*.

Edward Lewis III '85 was named senior vice president of institutional advancement at Berklee College of Music.

Denise L. Meyer '86 wrote the book *Swimming in the Sea of Qi: The Taiji Path to Energetic and Spiritual Awareness*, published last year by Floating World Press.

Warren Fremling '88 MMus authored the biography *Walter Cassel: Warm as the Autumn Light* about the operatic baritone, with whom Fremling studied for many years.

1990s

John W. Richmond '90 PhD was reappointed for a third five-year term as dean of the College of Music at the University of North Texas. During his tenure the college has recruited more than 50 full-time music faculty, including a Guggenheim Fellow, an NEH fellow, and multiple Fulbright fellows and Grammy winners.

Tim Weiss '90, professor of conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, received the 2025 Alice M. Ditson Fund Conductor's Award, the oldest continuing award honoring conductors for distinguished contributions to American music.



The Sounds of Havana

Marco Paguia '99, music director of Broadway's *Buena Vista Social Club*, won a Grammy Award for best musical theater album and a Tony Award for best orchestrations. He was also honored with a special Tony Award presented to the musicians of the *Buena Vista Social Club* band.

1990s CONTINUED

Peter Dabrowski '91 MMus, '98 DMus is celebrating his 25th year as music director and conductor of Texas's Valley Symphony Orchestra. He has shaped its artistic profile and reach, guiding performances across the Rio Grande Valley and beyond. Among his proudest achievements is creating the VSO Educational Concerts, which have introduced nearly 200,000 precollege students to live orchestral performances.

Randy Sundell '92, '96 MMus retired after 33 years in public education, the last 25 at Vernon Hills (Illinois) High School. More

than 60 of the school's alumni performed at his retirement concert, which included the world premiere of *Propulsion* by **Jay Kennedy** '73, '74 MMus.

Kyle Dzapó '96 DMus, the Caterpillar Professor of Music at Bradley University, performed at the 2025 Singapore Flute Festival and in Australia and Croatia and presented a lecture-recital at the 2025 National Flute Association convention. Oxford University Press released her book *Joachim Andersen: Flutist, Conductor, and Composer of More Than the Etudes* and published her new edition of Andersen's *Au bord de la mer*, Op. 9, as part of its Kyle Dzapó Series.

Mary Beth Molenaar '96 DMus, former director of Northwestern's Music Academy, was named 2025 teacher of the year by the Illinois State Music Teachers Association.

Alana Carithers '99 MMus was appointed executive director of Virginia's Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra. She has been a member of the symphony's violin section since 2005 and for the past decade has served as principal second violin.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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2000s

Ian Derrer '01 MMus was appointed general director of the Canadian Opera Company. He had been general director and CEO of the Dallas Opera since 2018.

Blaine Inafuku '02 was named director of artistic administration and planning for Seattle Opera.

Teresa Suen-Campbell '02 MMus, '08 DMus released her second album, *My Voice*, on Navona Records. It features three harp concertos, including two new works by Canadian composers James W. Campbell and Chan Ka Nin.

Violist **Matt Albert** '03 MMus performed with Alarm Will Sound on the album *Land of Winter*, which won the Grammy Award for best chamber music/small ensemble performance.

Flutist **Lindsey Goodman** '03 MMus made her Carnegie Hall debut at a sold-out Weill Recital Hall. The New York City recital, presented by PARMA Recordings and performed with pianist Clare Longendyke, celebrated the release of Goodman's fourth solo album, *in the company of music*. Her fifth solo album, *transporting bright*, was released in November with support from the Ohio Arts Council and the Greater Columbus Arts Council.

Matthew D. Harder '03 DMus is professor of music at West Virginia's West Liberty University. His piece *Where I'm From* for choir

and orchestra was premiered by the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra under the direction of John Devlin and also performed in Poland.

Agnieszka Roginska '04 PhD, professor of music technology at New York University, was elected director of the Audio Engineering Society by its board of governors.

Josephine Lee '07 MMus was named one of *Newcity Music's* top 45 Chicago music producers for her work as president and artistic director of Uniting Voices Chicago.

2010s

Olga Sanchez-Kisielewska '11 MMus, '18 PhD received an Emerging Scholar Award from the Society for Music Theory for her article "On Figaro's Alleged Minuet and Some Challenges and Opportunities of Topic Theory" in *Music Theory Spectrum*.

Timothy Higgins '04 was named principal trombone of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He was previously principal trombone of the San Francisco Symphony.



Giancarlo Guerrero '92 MMus (left) conducted a group of young string players during the performance of *Monaco* by Bad Bunny (right, with Guerrero in background) at the Super Bowl LX halftime show. Guerrero is music director of the Sarasota Orchestra, artistic director and principal conductor of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival, and music director laureate of the Nashville Symphony.

Alok Nadig '12 was promoted to partner at civil rights law firm Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight.

Zach Robinson '12 received an Emmy nomination for outstanding music composition for a series for the original dramatic score of *Cobra Kai*. He won an Emmy in 2023 for *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*.

Cellist **Tommy Mesa** '14 MMus headlined an episode of the PBS *Great Performances* Taking Note series. The program features Mesa performing works by Ernesto Lecuona and Debussy.

Ashlen Udell '14 MMus completed her DMA in music education at Rutgers University. She conducted the 2025 New Jersey Intermediate Region II Symphonic Band and was appointed to the adjunct music education faculty of Montclair State University's John J. Cali School of Music.

Cellist **Russell Houston** '16 is a member of the Balourdet Quartet, named the Seattle Chamber Music Society's first-ever string quartet in residence.

Taichi Fukumura '17 MMus, '21 DMus was named assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra.

Violist **Gabriel Napoli** '17 was appointed to the Cleveland Orchestra.

Katherine Benson '18, assistant professor of piano at Pennsylvania State University, received the inaugural Stecher and Horowitz Foundation Gateway Prize for Advancement in the Arts from the Music Teachers National Association. She was recognized at the 2026 MTNA national conference in Chicago.

Kelsey Williams '18 MMus was named second horn of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Firer '19 DMA joined the faculty of Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts as assistant professor of conducting. He leads the university's large ensembles and teaches courses in conducting and orchestral studies. Firer is also music director of the Harper Symphony Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Rockford Symphony Orchestra.

Michael Martin '19 MMus joined the double bass section of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.



CAROLINE DAVIS '10 PHD

A New York–based saxophonist, composer, educator, and social justice advocate, Davis holds a doctorate in music cognition from Bienen. She has released nine albums as a leader and is the recipient of numerous awards, including a 2025 Guggenheim Fellowship.



WHAT HAS BEEN A CAREER HIGHLIGHT?

Last year I was able to perform with and for [activist] Angela Davis at the Chicago Humanities Festival. Nicole Mitchell, a friend who is a phenomenal flutist and composer, wrote a suite of music inspired by Angela. Former Chicago poet laureate avery r. young and a group of musicians from different places performed with us as well. It was one of the most incredible moments of my life, hanging out with Angela, hearing her speak before the concert, and playing music around her voice.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR GUGGENHEIM PROJECT.

I'm interested in engaging with the structures incarcerated people inhabit—prisons mostly—looking at where they are in the United States, the people who work there, and the people who are inside them. I hope to engage both with community members and field recordings at the sites of prisons, and with the people who go inside on a daily basis. But gaining trust is a slow process. Next year I plan to write music incorporating some of the field and video recordings of these places.

THE INCARCERATED ARE OFTEN AN OVERLOOKED POPULATION.
WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THIS PROJECT?

My ultimate dream is visibility. This is more conceptual, but I want to humanize people who are on the inside. I want to make music and make this whole project—the visual component, the audio component of their voices, and my compositions—part of a bigger concert experience. I'm interested in creating visibility through sound.

READ MORE OF DAVIS'S Q&A
music.northwestern.edu/caroline-davis

2010s CONTINUED

Jack Reeder '19, '21 MMus, '24 DMA was appointed visiting assistant professor of choral music at Longwood University, where he teaches conducting, aural skills, and choral music education and directs two advanced choral ensembles.

Max Winningham '19 won second prize in the International Society of Bassists double bass competition solo division.

2020s

Noah Cline '20 MMus won first prize in the Central Ohio Flute Association's Young Artist Competition.

Stephanie Gregoire '20 MMus, '25 PhD was named clinical assistant professor of music education at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Andrew Byun '21 won third prize and the Isang Yun Special Prize in the Isang Yun Cello Competition.

Tom Hicks '21 DMA, assistant professor of music and director of piano at the College of Charleston, released the album *Chopin: The Complete Nocturnes* with Divine Art Recordings Group.

Saxophonist **Chad Lilley** '21 MMus joined the faculty of Eastern Michigan University.

Dominic Talanca '21 DMA was named associate professor of music and director of bands at the University of Central Arkansas.

Mathew Arrellin '22 PhD won a Guggenheim Fellowship. He plans to compose a large-scale work for three bassoons in collaboration with **Ben Roidl-Ward** '21 DMA. The work will build on a previous work, *Still/Alive*, which can be heard on Roidl-Ward's solo album *Axis Mundi*.

Sophia Jean '22 won a second flute/piccolo position with the Jacksonville Symphony.

Elizabeth McCormack '22 was named principal flute of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Bradyn Debysingh '23 MMus is performing the role of Piangi in *The Phantom of the Opera* in London's West End.



Derek Hartman '19 won first prize in the International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna. More than 300 applicants from 32 countries competed, and 21 young pianists were selected to perform in Vienna.

Sylvia Denecke '23 won a horn position with the US Navy Band.

Quincy Erickson '23 won a third/utility trumpet position with the Jacksonville Symphony.

Zachary Good '23 DMA released *Lake Heritage*, his debut solo record, with Add Dye Editions.

Cellist **Olivia Jakyoung Huh** '23 MMus was appointed to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Cellist **Annie SeEun Hyung** '23 advanced to the finals of the Naumburg Chamber Music Competition as a member of Trio Eris.

Vaynu Kadiyali '23 was appointed piccolo/third flute of the Seattle Symphony.

Mezzo-soprano **Michelle Mariposa** '23 MMus returned to Washington National Opera for her second season as a Cafritz Young Artist.

Ben Poirot '23 MMus won a tuba position in the US Army Field Band.

Scott Sanders '23 was appointed fourth horn in the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Troy Archer '24 won a trumpet position in the US Navy Band.

Sarah Chong '24 won a cello position with the San Francisco Symphony.



Steven Banks '17 MMus (right) was appointed to the saxophone faculty of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. He was soloist on Takashi Yoshimatsu's soprano saxophone concerto *Albireo Mode* with the San Diego Symphony. Dean Jonathan Bailey Holland (left) hosted a postconcert reception honoring Banks and Martha Gilmer '78, the San Diego Symphony's president and CEO.

2020s CONTINUED

Tenor **Douglas Culclasure** '24 was a winner in the South Carolina district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and received a south-east region encouragement award.

Omar Haffar '24 MMus won a double bass position with the North Carolina Symphony.

Ryan Ran Huo '24 MMus won a first violin position in the Washington National Opera Orchestra.

Alba Layana Itzurieta '24 MMus was named concertmaster of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra.

Vaynu Kadiyali '24 was named third flute/piccolo of the North Carolina Symphony.

Soprano **Rena Maduro** '24 was a winner in the Boston district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

Mezzo-soprano **Julianna Smith** '24 MMus advanced to the national semifinals of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition after wins in the Maryland district and Middle Atlantic region.

Saxophonist **Yun Qu Tan** '24 MMus was named a Yamaha Artist.

Mezzo-soprano **Emily Amesquita** '25 won first place in the Opera Grand Rapids VanderLaan Prize competition. She was also a winner in the Illinois district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

Tenor **Spencer Greene** '25 MMus received an encouragement award in the San Diego district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition.

Broner McCoy '25 MMus won a bass position with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Penwell '25 PhD was named visiting assistant professor of music at Knox College.

Flutist **Miguel Rodriguez** '25 joined the Mexico City-based orchestra Sinfonica de Minería for its 2026 US tour.

Emily Schwitzgebel '25 PhD was named assistant professor of music and artificial intelligence at the University of South Carolina.

Matthew Sink '25 MMus is a resident artist of the American Vocal Academy in Philadelphia and the Merola Opera Program.

Soprano **Calista Smith** '25 won the American Opera Society of Chicago Award in honor of Joyce Van Cura. She was a winner in the North Carolina district Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and received a southeast region encouragement award.

Holly Venkitaswaran '25 MMus won first prize in the Chicago Flute Club's Donald Peck International Flute Competition. She was appointed second flute/piccolo with the Victoria Symphony.

Natalia Warthen '25 MMus joined Chicago-based saxophone quartet ~Nois. The all-Bienen ensemble includes **János Csontos** '18 MMus, doctoral candidate **Julian Velasco** '20 MMus, and **Jordan Lulloff** '18 MMus.



Vanessa Tonelli '22 PhD, assistant professor of musicology at the University of Southern Mississippi, programmed “Hidden Virtuosas,” a symposium and concert experience based on her research on the lives of orphaned female musicians of 17th- and 18th-century Venice. Featuring the Philadelphia

early-music ensemble Tempesta di Mare, the concerts presented music composed for or by the young women of the Ospedali of Venice.



Raising Their Voices

Several Bienen alumni and director of choral organizations Andrew Megill (far right) presented four performances of Handel’s *Messiah* with Music of the Baroque and the New York Philharmonic in December under the baton of Jane Glover. The events marked Megill’s New York Philharmonic debut.

Moyue Zhou’s Milan Master Class



Moyue Zhou '22 MMus was selected as one of nine young conductors from across the world—and the only participant trained in the US—for the 2025 Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy in Milan. Over 11 days of public master classes and rehearsals, Muti worked closely with each participant on Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, culminating in a final concert at Fondazione Prada. Each participant conducted sections of the opera.

“Working with Maestro Muti was an unforgettable and deeply inspiring experience. His musical standards are incredibly precise, and he has very specific expectations for both the singers and the orchestra,” Zhou said. “What struck me most was how strongly he emphasized the dramatic dimension of *Don Giovanni*. Every musical detail serves the theater—phrasing, articulation, and timing all contribute to shaping the drama on stage.”

During rehearsals Muti shared insights with singers about how to fashion their characters and how the music reflects the psychology of each role. “Watching him guide both orchestra and cast to create a unified dramatic vision was truly remarkable,” Zhou said. “It was a powerful lesson in how a conductor can transform a score into living theater.”



“It was a powerful lesson in how a conductor can transform a score into living theater.”

—Moyue Zhou

Muti, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s music director emeritus for life, established his opera academy in 2015 to share his expertise in Italian opera with new generations. Bienen alumnus Nicholas Koo '18 MMus, '22 DMA was selected for the 2022 edition in Ravenna.

Zhou said her training at Bienen under professor emeritus Victor Yampolsky provided a solid technical and musical foundation in conducting. At Northwestern she had the opportunity to work with several ensembles, including the Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Baroque Music Ensemble, and to collaborate with Patrick Furrer on Puccini’s *La bohème* with Northwestern Opera Theater.

“These experiences helped me develop rehearsal technique, score study habits, and the ability to communicate musical ideas clearly to an orchestra,” she said. “Looking back, my time at Northwestern gave me both the technical preparation and the artistic curiosity that continue to shape my work today.”

IN MEMORIAM

Dates are 2025 unless noted

1950s

Wanda Harris '50 on May 17

Daisy N. Johnson '50 on April 27

Conan J. Castle '51, '52 MMus on April 12

Corinne Filter '51 on June 5

Donald O. Johnston '51, '54 MMus on June 4

William B. Payne '51, '52 MMus on May 18

Lowell E. Shaw '51, '56 MMus on December 9

Norma Jean Strand '51 on August 24

Richard K. Veleta '51, '52 MMus, '60 DMus on August 25

Vera B. Materre '52 on January 1, 2026

David C. McCormick '52 MMus, '70 DMus on December 2

Marilyn J. Eager '53 on April 18

Howard C. Heyer '53 on June 25

Mary Shadle '53 on February 4, 2026

Barbara Zima '53, '56 MMus on September 16

Barbara J. Wadlington '54 on September 23

Patricia Okaya '55 MMus on July 23

Leone M. Severin '55, '61 MMus on April 5

Richard Sovinec '55, '56 MMus, '70 DMus on June 7

Janet Droge '56 on June 9

Rita Kallman '56 on November 3

Phyllis A. Kincaid '57 on December 28

Verne E. Collins '58 MMus on August 4

Joanne K. Marimac '58 on May 11

Elinor M. Deming '59 MMus on January 8, 2026

Lawrence S. Kampa '59 MMus on September 1

John A. Salkowski '59, '60 MMus on January 4, 2026

William E. Schnell '59, '62 MMus on July 28

1960s

Randolph E. Coleman '60, '61 MMus, '63 DMus on April 24

Martin E. Le Beau '60 on October 23

Gretchen Darmand '62 on August 8

Meg Koerner '62 on January 10, 2026

Gerald Louis Swickert '62 on December 28

David L. Gaeth '63 MMus on June 29

Marshall T. Taylor '64 MMus on October 16

Donna R. Merris '65 MMus on August 18

Susan E. Dickey '66 MMus on January 23, 2026

Mary E. Kesler '66 MMus on December 4

Sheryl K. Lazzarotti '66, '67 MMus on July 25

Sylvia S. Summers '66 MMus on October 9

Jared T. Spears '67 DMus on September 18

Maria Taylor '68 MMus on March 13

1970s

Sylvia R. Dyck '71 MMus on April 3

Judith Dewell '72 PhD on September 17, 2023

Bruce E. Breslau '73 MMus on July 23

Richard Schoonover '74 PhD on June 3

Mary E. Doubleday '76 MMus on January 3, 2026

Wendy Taucher '76 on January 13, 2026

Kathleen Roderer '78 MMus on June 13

1980s

Sandra Truitt Field '80 MMus on August 7

Emily Dake Boris '81 MMus on January 20

Andrew Bossov '81 on July 1

Frieda Jacobowitz '81 on August 17

Peter Glenn Shoun '81 MMus on September 27

James S. Arns Jr. '84 MMus on December 29

Donald W. Deroche '88 PhD on June 9

2000s

David Jonathan Oppenheim '01 on December 9

Cynthia E. Bridges '02 MMus on April 9

Peter Olson '02 MMus on July 30

2010s

William Ernest Steiger '14 on August 11

PATRICIA SCHAEFER



Patricia Schaefer '51 died on April 2, 2025, at age 94. An accomplished pianist, she earned an undergraduate degree in piano and musicology from Northwestern and a master's degree in music from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The former director of the Muncie, Illinois, public library, Schaefer served on many boards supporting her varied interests in music, art, theater, literature, education, the humanities, and animal welfare. A loyal and generous donor to Northwestern and the Bienen School, she was recognized as a member of the Deering, Henry and Emma Rogers, Lutkin, and NU Loyal Societies and the Northwestern University Leadership Circle.

VERNICE "BUNKY" GREEN



Vernice Green '71 MMus died on March 1, 2025, at age 91. A jazz saxophonist, composer, and educator, Green influenced generations of musicians with his adventurous improvisation and commitment to pushing artistic boundaries. Born in Milwaukee, he rose to prominence in Chicago's jazz scene during the 1960s and '70s, recording as a leader for such labels as Cadet and Vanguard and performing with jazz greats Charles Mingus, Sonny Stitt, and Elvin Jones. He was later a professor and director of jazz studies at the University of North Florida and president of the International Association for Jazz Education. Green received Northwestern's Alumni Merit Award in 2012.

IN DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor, Bienen students enjoy access to prominent alumni working across varied industries who visit campus for a quarterly career panel series. Moderated by members of the school's faculty, these panels help students explore a variety of careers and leverage their music training in multiple settings. Afterward, students may sign up for one-on-one networking sessions with alumni, providing valuable opportunities for discovery and connection. Below, undergraduate composition student Cecelia Olszewski shares the transformative results of her engagement in this series.



Alumni (from left) Jennie Oh Brown '91, Oliver Camacho '97, and Philip Klein '07 participate in a career panel moderated by associate professor Andrew Talle.

BY CECELIA OLSZEWSKI

When I signed up for a career panel last year, I had no idea where it would lead. I never expected that my brief conversation with Chase Hopkins '12 would open the door to any opportunity. But what began as a quick networking moment turned into an experience that has solidified my passion for opera production. My summer internship with the Haymarket Opera Company has taught me so much about the opera world, and as I entered my senior year at Northwestern I was eager to apply what I had learned.

Growing up outside Philadelphia, I studied violin and piano from an early age and I loved writing musicals and putting them on with my friends. When I began composing as a freshman in high school, I quickly realized how central self-production would be to my ability



to succeed as a composer.

If I wanted to hear my music performed, I had to be the one to make it happen.

Self-production followed me to Northwestern, where I began writing opera as a composition major. In 2024 I founded Cosmia Opera Collective as a way to produce both my own work and the works of historically marginalized composers. The fulfillment I found in running this organization led me to declare a second major in arts administration and to seek opportunities for firsthand experience within a professional opera company. When I saw that the general director of an opera company was coming to the career panel, I jumped at the chance. After a conversation with Chase about my interests in production and development, I reached out to him that spring and he generously designed an internship for me.

In just one summer, I not only learned so much about opera administration but also had the privilege of getting to know and work alongside so many incredible people. I had long been a fan of early music, but from *Artaserse to Alcina*, Haymarket's productions revealed early opera as something more vivid and captivating than I had previously thought. These works reminded me that people centuries ago experienced the same emotions we feel today and that using music to express and process them is a tradition that remains just as urgent and necessary as it was then.

The experience was truly transformative, and I am so grateful to Chase and Haymarket for helping me discover and strengthen my path forward in opera production. I intend to continue pursuing both composition and production, building upon the skills and insights I gained through this incredible opportunity.

We are grateful to all who have made contributions to the Bienen School of Music. To see a list of recent donors, visit music.northwestern.edu/donate.

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