

FANFARE

THE JOYCE AND HENRY SCHWOB SCHOOL OF MUSIC / WINTER 2025
Columbus State University / Columbus, Georgia

REXFEST

Schwob School of Music
faculty and friends
honor Rex Whiddon



FANFARE

Published twice a year by the
Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music
College of the Arts
Columbus State University
Columbus, Georgia

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ON THE COVER:
Faculty members play "Happy Birthday" at RexFest in celebration of Rex Whiddon's 80th birthday

ON THE INSIDE COVER:
Brett Williams, Performance major at the Schwob School, on the saxophone



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CELEBRATING REX WHIDDON

"Rex Whiddon's passion for philanthropy is infectious. He has poured his heart and soul for most of his life into elevating the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music, the College of the Arts, and Columbus State University. Working with him is inspiring, and his interaction with donors fosters their commitment to the institution he truly loves. The importance of his role in the success of CSU cannot be overstated. Many community members, donors, CSU staff, faculty and students, have had the vision of what CSU could become. Rex has enabled that vision. What he has done, and what he will continue to do, is a primary reason for the university's continued growth and success."

*— Meg and Frank Schley,
Schwob School of Music Board of Advisors*



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This issue of Fanfare vividly captures the excitement that brought everyone to their feet at RexFest, as we celebrated all that Rex Whiddon has meant for the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music. He is truly the indispensable man—and surrounded by family, friends, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and patrons of music, he had a blast at his 80th birthday celebration. You can still make a gift in Rex’s honor to the L. Rexford and Lynn K. Whiddon Special Initiative Fund. In the coming year we will have more to celebrate as a result of his tireless work on behalf of CSU: the 25th anniversaries of the Schwob School’s move to RiverCenter, the opening of Legacy Hall, and the establishment of the Woodruff Scholar Awards.



(l-r) Scott Harris, Rex Whiddon, Tao Ge, Noel Lewandowski, Debra Tommey

This time around, Fanfare is chock-full of stories about service through music and service to music: from a profile of Dr. Mary Schley to Healing Notes, a new collaboration with the John B. Amos Cancer Center; from Rodney Cox leading the great orchestras of the world to Dr. Barbara Brinson, a passionate advocate for music education. From reaching across the globe, to work in our own back yard, this is a school that impacts lives by elevating sound and service alike.

Every year at the Georgia Music Educators Association Annual Conference, the CSU Schwob School’s presence is all over Athens. This January the conference will feature performances by two of our major ensembles, the Schwob Singers and the Schwob Wind Ensemble, as well as our flute choir and a saxophone quartet. This will be a great start to 2025 for our faculty and students.

Happy reading, and Happy New Year from all of us at the Schwob School!

Scott Harris
Barbara C. and Clifford J. Swift III Director
The Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music



REXFEST



Celebration honors Whiddon's 80th birthday, launch of new donor fund

– by Carrie Beth Wallace, “The Columbusite”

Editor's Note: This originally appeared in “The Columbusite,” followed by online distribution through the CSU Office of Strategic Communication+Marketing. We thank them for allowing us to reprint this article.

On Sunday, Oct. 6, a concert was performed in Legacy Hall at RiverCenter for the Performing Arts in honor of L. Rexford Whiddon, Columbus State University's senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives. The concert was given the name “REXFEST.”

The special performance was coordinated to celebrate the occasion of Whiddon's 80th birthday. Additionally, in recognition of the momentous occasion, the L. Rexford & Lynn K. Whiddon Special Initiative Fund has been established as a tribute to the lives and legacy of Rex and his late wife Lynn Whiddon. The purpose of the new Special Initiative Fund is to provide funding for special projects that will advance the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music as a top-tier music school internationally.

Whiddon has been a lifelong advocate for the arts in Columbus. In addition to working for Columbus State, he has championed the advancement of the arts by leading and participating in major development campaigns, and has served on the boards of multiple arts organizations during his extensive career.

Much of Whiddon's life has been spent working toward the growth and development of the university's Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music and the College of the Arts. In addition, he spent decades serving alongside his wife in support of her effort to provide increased musical opportunities for young people in the community. Out of this dream, Lynn Whiddon founded and supported the growth of the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus until her death in 2018.

The impact of the Whiddons is wholly inestimable, as their efforts have touched many of the largest arts initiatives in Columbus during the last five decades. It is because of this that the new L. Rexford & Lynn K. Whiddon Special Initiative Fund has been created at Columbus State.

Throughout his career, Whiddon has worked with numerous colleagues who were eager to share their admiration of his impact.

REXFEST



CSU President Stuart Rayfield, Rex Whiddon and David Rayfield



Whiddon with his children and grandchildren



Esther Park, The L. Rexford Whiddon Distinguished Chair in Piano, expresses her appreciation to Whiddon after her performance of Brahms' Intermezzo from Klavierstücke, Op. 18



Top photo: Madeline Harts, Michelle DeBruyn, Joshua May, and Matthew Hoch
Bottom photo: Lisa Oberlander, Esther Park, Wendy Warner

“Rex Whiddon is a whirlwind of creative programs and music,” said Dr. Frank Brown, president emeritus and the university’s third president. “His leadership in the Schwob School of Music and his connections throughout the region led the way for the growth and prominence of CSU’s arts programs and its production of artists who are now spreading their wings in many and varied areas. A casual stroll along Broadway, at the intersection of 10th Street in the heart of CSU’s RiverPark Campus, will convince even the most casual observer that something is ‘in the air’ in this magical place. The growth and depth of the Schwob School of Music can be traced back to many educators and artists who have labored in the field of the ‘beauty of the arts,’ and prominent among them is the name of Rex Whiddon.”

When asked about Whiddon’s impact in anticipation of his 80th birthday celebration, many of his current colleagues were happy to share about his influence on the university overall.

“Rex Whiddon is a consummate

professional who has shared his love of music and his vision for Columbus State University with our community for more than 50 years,” said Catherine Trotter, a development officer and coworker. “He has been instrumental in the growth and development of Columbus State, always emphasizing that an investment in the university is an investment in the community. It is a privilege to be his colleague.”

Dr. Scott Harris, director and Barbara C. & Clifford J. Swift III Distinguished Chair of the Schwob School of Music, has worked with Whiddon for many years. “So many of the artistic pillars we enjoy at the Schwob School of Music are the direct result of Rex Whiddon’s decades of servant leadership in cultivating a generous community and connecting it with a music program that has grown in distinction year by year,” Harris said. “The university, the city and the musical world at large owe him a debt of gratitude, and a mighty chorus of ‘Happy Birthday!’ We look forward to the coming years of artistic excellence that Rex

will enjoy alongside everyone who benefits from his work and vision.”

Schwob School of Music faculty members also hold Whiddon and his devotion to the school in high esteem.

“Rex Whiddon has been one of the main drivers for the success of the Schwob School of Music over my 25-plus years on the faculty,” said Dr. Bradley Palmer, professor of trombone and coordinator of brass studies. “I believe we would quite literally not be where we are without his dedication to Schwob. He has been a friend of the community and of the Schwob School of Music from well before we moved into RiverCenter, and continues to this day to be one of our strongest advocates to the public.”

The Whiddon family was ecstatic to see its patriarch honored with “REXFEST” and grateful the new special initiative fund will honor their late mother too.

“My siblings and I grew up hearing my father talk about his vision for Columbus’ music scene at the dinner table,” said the Whiddons’ daughter, Caroline Whiddon.

“The current success of the Schwob School and the realities of the world-class facilities at the RiverCenter? These are things my dad was dreaming up decades ago, starting in the 70s.”

When asked about her father’s legacy, Caroline was intentional to discuss her mother’s impact on the arts as well. “While dad has always been the dreamer in the family, my mom approached things from a practical viewpoint,” she said.

“Mom was focused on the here and now – always asking, ‘what is the logical next step to create musical opportunities for young people in the community?’ Those dinner table conversations revolved around providing good private-lesson teachers and building solid infrastructure for the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus as we know it today.

“I believe we would quite literally not be where we are without his dedication to Schwob. He has been a friend of the community and of the Schwob School of Music from well before we moved into RiverCenter, and continues to this day to be one of our strongest advocates to the public.”

- Dr. Bradley Palmer, professor of trombone and coordinator of brass studies, Schwob School of Music

“My dad knows that when he describes a compelling vision for the future, people will share his dreams,” she continued. “His dreams are always about great music and art. This is the stuff that makes life worth living, and it’s what dad has always wanted for the people of Columbus. At the age of 80, my father is still making plans for bigger and better things for Columbus’

arts scene. He has spent more than 50 years pouring his blood, sweat and tears into Columbus’s arts scene. His life’s work has been about celebrating other people, so this birthday feels like a great time to finally put the spotlight on him.”

Community leaders, colleagues pay tribute to Whiddon

“Rex and our families go back many years. Through my interest in music I got to know and work with Rex for many years. At that time, the Music School was starting to grow. Rex already showed signs of strong talent and leadership. Today, the Music School is recognized worldwide for this talent. As Rex looks back over his career he can feel very proud of what he has accomplished! It has been a great privilege over these many years to have had these many musical experiences with Rex!”

– Joyce and Henry Schwob

“Sometimes, in the life of an institution, the right people come together with the right opportunities and exceptional and imaginative things happen. When Rex came to CSU, he seized the opportunity to make a contribution of great significance, realizing accomplishments important not only to the university but also to the people of our region. Even before we had superior facilities, Rex led the success of hard work and creative alliances within the community and our reputation grew throughout the Americas and in Europe. I have given CSU Founding President Thomas Y. Whitley credit for the inspiration of the eventual RiverCenter through his inclusion of the arts in early curriculum development. I gladly shine the spotlight on Rex for building the music program in size and quality, making RiverCenter and other additions necessary!”

– Dr. Frank D. Brown, President Emeritus, Columbus State University

“We celebrate Rex’s birthday today and the 54 years he has spent at Columbus State University. Rex, you have made everyone in this room a believer in things that if someone else had told us, we probably would have thought impossible to achieve. But through your grit, your dedication and your vision you made everyone believe that we could be sitting here today listening to world-class musicians. I want to say that as we listen today, we are celebrating you. We are celebrating your 80 years. I want to thank you personally for spending so many of those years at Columbus State and so many of your years in the future. Happy Birthday, Rex!”

– Dr. Stuart Rayfield, President, Columbus State University, in remarks at REXFEST

Rex Whiddon, piano faculty at Columbus College, performing in Fine Arts Hall in the 1970s



Rex Whiddon, Henry and Joyce Schwob, Frank Brown on the occasion of the naming of the Schwob Department of Music, December 7, 1986

“Rex’s limitless vision, his bedrock dedication to improving the life of the entire Columbus community and the well-earned respect and trust that he has built over his entire career combine to make him a champion in all endeavors. His creation of the new Whiddon Fund makes him a beacon of optimism and achievement for the future.”

– Joseph Golden, Professor of Music, Schwob School of Music (retired)

Rex was our organist for 28 years and in a lot of ways helped set a tone for quality music within our church. He’s worked in development for so long and has been a tireless advocate for music and the arts in the community. As a musician virtuoso – which he is – he’s not just raising funds on the side. He’s raising funds as an impassioned participant in music who invites others into that realm and gives them ways to participate. His big dream is for us to be the premier arts and music community in the state of Georgia – and there’s no reason we couldn’t be. The momentum of what he’s done will go on for generations and will always be a defining part of the Columbus arts community.

– Dr. James C. “Jimmy” Elder Jr., Pastor, First Baptist Church



Rex and Lynn Whiddon

WHIDDON Special Initiative Fund

The L. Rexford & Lynn K. Whiddon Special Initiative Fund has been established as a tribute to the lives and legacy of Rex and his late wife Lynn Whiddon. The purpose of the new Special Initiative Fund is to provide funding for special projects that will advance the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music as a top-tier music school internationally.

Whiddon Special Initiative Fund Donors as of December 15, 2024

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
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To make a gift to the Whiddon Special Initiative Fund scan the QR code or call CSU Advancement Services at 706-507-8933.

HEALING NOTES

HEALING WITH TALENT AND HEART

— by Marion Scott

“Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans,” according to the legendary John Lennon. The pandemic put many plans on hold – including the development of the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music’s Healing Notes program.

“We started thinking about this just before the pandemic happened,” said Paul Hostetter, Ethel Foley Distinguished Chair in Orchestral Activities and professor of music at the Schwob School. “It brought the conversations to a halt until this terrible virus was better addressed.”

Those conversations resumed as life started returning to normal – but life intervened again with loss of potential funding. That dilemma was resolved thanks to Robert Sharpe, a Schwob School graduate, accomplished musician and co-owner of his family business, U-Save-It Pharmacies.

From planning and funding to performing

Hostetter and Rex Whiddon, senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives at Columbus State, put a proposal together and Sharpe graciously agreed to fund the program through the pharmacies. Hostetter then worked with Schwob director Dr. Scott Harris to restart this important effort.

Faculty made recommendations of students to participate and the students selected went through the full process



Robert Sharpe

“We could not do this without visionary support from U-Save-It Pharmacies and Robert Sharpe. And learning that, while he was a Schwob School student, Robert performed as a volunteer for patients at Piedmont Columbus Regional, gives this support a special and personal resonance.”

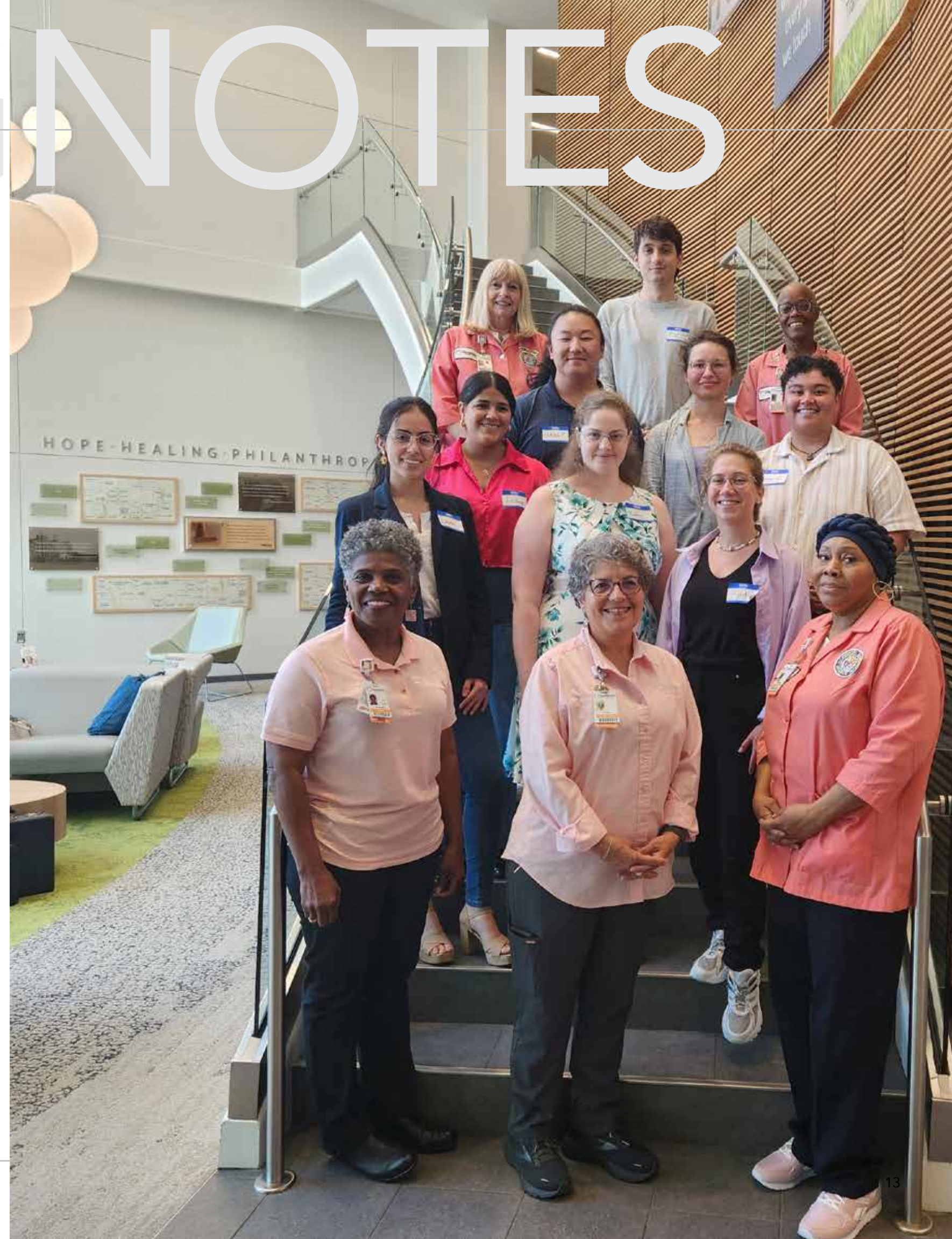
— Dr. Scott Harris, Barbara C. and Clifford J. Swift III director of the Schwob School

of onboarding at Piedmont Columbus Regional in preparation for a concert season at the John B. Amos Cancer Center. Students will perform weekly at the cancer center through May, the end of the CSU academic year. In future seasons, Hostetter and Harris envision expanding this program to other venues such as retirement centers, assisted living facilities, memory care centers, dialysis centers and other facilities.

“This will be an empowering experience for students, who will use music in a healing manner,” Hostetter

told his faculty colleagues as the current fall semester began. “These performances will truly make a difference in people’s lives.”

“Some of the most ancient writings on music have recognized its therapeutic power,” Harris said. “At the same time, some of the most current research is discovering ever more powerful linkages between music and health. Introducing our students directly into this confluence is so exciting, and I know it will be deeply meaningful for them and for the community they serve.”



Harris noted the connection between Sharpe and this concept even before U-Save-It Pharmacies signed on as sponsor. “We could not do this without visionary support from U-Save-It and Robert Sharpe,” Harris said. “And learning that, while he was a Schwob School student, Robert performed as a volunteer for patients at Piedmont Columbus Regional, gives this support a special and personal resonance.”

Life and planning finally intersected Oct. 4, when the first student duo performed at the John B. Amos Cancer Center. Those students were Mason Stokes on the flute and Ben Richardson on the guitar.

The inspiration for the program

As Hostetter recalled the process to reach that launch after four years, he also reflected on what inspired him to

pursue this and the roles two key figures have played and will continue to play. While he was on faculty at Montclair State University in New Jersey, he served as director of the Colonial Symphony Orchestra and oversaw a similar partnership between the symphony and the Carol G. Simon Cancer Center in Morristown called “Listening is Healing.” There, the professional members of the symphony performed in partnership with the New Jersey Youth Symphony’s students and brought comfort to patients, their families and caregivers.

He remembered the success of that program and also a talented colleague at Montclair – Dr. Brian Abrams, associate professor of music therapy. Hostetter engaged Abrams to provide guidance for Schwob’s new program and lead the intensive training required of the student performers.

Two factors influenced the selection

of the John B. Amos Cancer Center for this first concert season, in addition to the successful program in New Jersey. “One is that almost all of us have had a connection to somebody who’s experienced cancer and more likely than not we have probably lost somebody we loved to cancer,” Hostetter said. “Also, I deeply respect what this cancer center has been doing for years.”

What is now the Piedmont Columbus Regional Auxiliary established its Healing Notes program in 2012. “The musicians who play at the John B. Amos Cancer Center and Midtown Medical Center have a special quality,” said Nancy Williams, Volunteer Services director at Piedmont Columbus Regional. “Not only are they excellent musicians but they are committed to giving a true gift of their music to those who have great need.” The music performed addresses the diverse population of patients,



“These young student-musicians represent a future of caring, compassion and hope. Our patients, families and staff witness the talent and stewardship of these young adults. Music is universal, it breaks across generations, cultures and demographics. The Schwob School students are truly making a difference in every life they touch.”

– Nancy Williams, Volunteer Services director at Piedmont Columbus Regional

families and staff, according to Williams. “The Schwob School of Music partnership with the Auxiliary has brought a new energy and excitement to the Healing Notes program,” she added. “These young student-musicians represent a future of caring, compassion and hope. Our patients, families and staff witness the talent and stewardship of these young adults,” she said. “Music is universal, it breaks across generations, cultures and demographics. The Schwob School students are truly making a difference in every life they touch.”

Preparing the student musicians

Hostetter believes everyone at the cancer center will benefit from having the students (who are also professional musicians) perform in the facility. Those students received intensive training from Abrams when he visited the Schwob School in August.

Abrams brings a unique approach to the program as one of the preeminent scholars in the growing music therapy field. His work with the students focused on therapeutic processes and protocols and how to perform in ambient settings which differ from concert halls. Training also focused on how to perform in a way that meets the expectations and needs of people in this environment and how to interact with staff, patients and families in a

constructive and supportive way. Students also learned what kind of music should be programmed and what pieces work best in a clinical setting.

Hostetter served on the faculty search committee that hired Abrams at Montclair State. “He’s a fantastic scholar,” he said of Abrams. “He’s a rock star in his profession,” he added.

“There’s a positive impact on the patient experience and the staff experience of working in a facility where the challenges are steep,” Hostetter said. “As for the students, it’s a place where you can get to know people. And as they get to know people they will see some who heal and that’s the best thing ever. But they will see some people who don’t recover as well.” Fortunately, Columbus State offers student counseling services and Abrams will continue to provide support to performers who may need further assistance.

Generous support making it possible

Hostetter noted the significant contribution of Sharpe not only in terms of his company’s financial support but in his own experience performing in clinical settings. Sharpe performed in facilities around Cleveland while pursuing his doctorate and has performed for patients at Piedmont Columbus Regional and at Phoebe Putney Health System in his hometown of Albany.

“Robert is a unique person,” Hostetter said. “He came to this project with expertise and passion.” Sharpe has been engaged in the project from the early planning stages. “He has made an incalculable impact on this program and how it’s evolved,” Hostetter added.

Sharpe became interested in classical guitar as a teenager and while attending Westover High School in Albany he began taking lessons from Dr. Andrew Zohn, who was teaching at Darton College in Albany at the time and is now professor of guitar at the Schwob School. After Zohn joined the Schwob faculty full-time, Sharpe would drive to Columbus once a week to continue studying with him. When the time came to select a college and major program, there was no doubt in Sharpe’s mind: It was the Schwob School of Music and the classical guitar program.

“I had a great time at the school and I’m proud of my time there,” Sharpe said. He was a Woodruff Scholar at Schwob and also earned the prestigious Presser Foundation scholarship. Sharpe went on to earn his master’s degree from Yale University and doctorate in musical arts from the Cleveland Institute of Music. While completing his doctorate, he moved back to this area, where he performed and taught at the Schwob School as an adjunct instructor.

Meanwhile, his family’s U-Save-It pharmacy chain was growing and



now includes 30 stores in Georgia and Alabama. His father was a pharmacist and Sharpe decided to go to the University of Georgia for a pharmacy degree to prepare for a leadership role in the business.

“When I returned [from Cleveland] I was going into our stores and working at whatever needed to be done – pharmacy technician, delivery driver, cashier,” he said. “I just kind of naturally gravitated toward spending more and more time in the family business and at some point I think my dad thought it would be nice if one of the sons was a pharmacist.” Sharpe’s other brothers had business training and were working on that side, not the clinical side of the company. So he earned a second doctorate and now is a practicing pharmacist licensed in Georgia and Alabama.

“When I came back to Columbus after pharmacy school, Rex [Whiddon] invited me to be on the board of advisors for the Schwob School,” he said. “I’m honored to be serving in that capacity.”

He still performs in and around Columbus. “I’ve been playing classical guitar for almost 25 years so I don’t feel quite right when I’m not playing,” he said. “I find if I’m not practicing semi-regularly I’m not as focused day-to-day. Music really does something in that regard; in terms of helping with my focus, my stress level and just my overall well-being.”

Sharpe attends as many Schwob



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– Robert Sharpe

concerts as he can and still has a great relationship with Zohn. He supports the guitar studio activities and also arranges for Schwob students to perform in venues in Albany, including at his parents’ church.

Sharpe and his brothers believe U-Save-It should support and give back to the community in which it was founded. They have sponsored concerts, chamber ensembles and other performances. “What Andrew [Zohn] and I have tried to do is piggyback on some of the artists he is bringing and find other performances for them in Albany,” he said. “We’ve been able to do that for a few years now and have had some wonderful performances.”

The Sharpes also provide corporate sponsorships of athletic events in Albany, including an annual basketball tournament for high school teams from around the state. “My brother was an athlete so athletics has been important to him and obviously music is important to me,” Sharpe said. “So we’ve tried to concentrate our giving in those areas.”

While in Cleveland he became involved with a nonprofit organization called Access the Arts which attracted volunteer performers from the music institute. That’s where he experienced a healing notes-type program. He performed frequently with Access the Arts and

found it to be an extremely beneficial experience for a musician. “When you’re in that developmental phase, the most important thing you can do as a performer is to go out and perform,” he said. Sharpe performed in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, in hospitals and cancer centers.

“I thought the audience interaction was so profound. Normally when you’re playing a concert you go on stage, play the concert, walk off stage and then occasionally you may stick around and some audience members you know stay to talk to you,” he said. “That’s always rewarding but in these situations you are right there with the patient or the resident and they’re a very appreciative audience. They’re happy to be there, they’re listening and then they’re talking to you and they’re sharing their experiences.”

That was a valuable experience in his development as a person in addition to his development as a musician, and the positive experience stayed with him. He mentioned the program’s potential over coffee with Whiddon after joining the board. That’s when he learned Hostetter was working on the plan for Healing Notes. “I asked what it would take to start it and it was something we felt we could do,” he said.

“Paul told me it would be at the John B. Amos Cancer Center and I really liked that idea,” he added. He recalled experiencing the impact of such a program from the perspective of a caretaker when his father was undergoing treatment at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta. They encountered a volunteer pianist performing in the facility. “I can’t imagine what my dad was going through, but the exhaustion, the tiredness and stress just evaporated for me,” he said. “I really believe that is the power of music. It’s hard to quantify in a clinical setting but it’s just really for the spirit. I think everyone knows that music has tremendous value in that regard.” ■



“Robert is a unique person,” Hostetter said. “He came to this project with expertise and passion.” Sharpe has been engaged in the project from the early planning stages. “He has made an incalculable impact on this program and how it’s evolved,” Hostetter added.

– Paul Hostetter, Ethel Foley Distinguished Chair in Orchestral Activities and professor of music at the Schwob School of Music



STUDENTS KICK OFF A SEASON OF MUSIC AT CANCER CENTER

Schwob School Senior Benjamin Richardson, majoring in guitar performance and flute major Mason Stokes presented the first “official” Healing Notes concert at the John B. Amos Cancer Center Friday, Oct. 4. “I think Mason and I were a little nervous to start because we weren’t exactly sure what to expect and we had not yet performed all the pieces we prepared,” Richardson wrote in an email after the concert. “Once we got acclimated, we had a ton of fun. We had some amazing interactions with patients which made all our preparation worth it.”

Richardson was looking forward to participating in the program during this inaugural season. “As a musician, it is always rewarding to perform for others,” he wrote. “It is even more rewarding to perform for active listeners in a space so in need of the wonders of music. Healing Notes was a great opportunity to hone my craft, learn some new pieces and all for an amazing cause.”

When asked why a program like Healing Notes is important, he noted music’s healing properties. “It can convey emotions and experiences all without needing a single word. It really is a universal language,” he wrote. “That being said, I think musicians can do a lot to help their community through their music. Programs like Healing Notes are an amazing way to reach out to and support a community of people in need of music’s humanity.”

SCHWOB GRADUATE, RETIRED EDUCATOR SHARES HER PASSION AND LEGACY

– by Marion Scott

Barbara Brinson has enjoyed many roles in her life. Public school teacher, university professor, noted authority in choral music education, author of a widely used choral music textbook, philanthropist – and now, in retirement, a stained-glass artist.

The Columbus native earned her bachelor's degree in music education from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. She taught at Carver Elementary School, moved to Atlanta for two years, then returned to her hometown. Here, she taught at Rothschild Junior High School and served as its choral director before becoming the first choral director at Shaw High School.

Barbara earned her master's degree in 1976 at what was then Columbus College. As often happens, two classes at CSU made a difference in the direction her career would take. The first was music theory and was taught by Rex Whiddon, now senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives and celebrating his 54th year at CSU. "It changed my life as far as rhythm goes," Barbara says. "He was such a fabulous teacher and he made me a better musician." She also recalls an introduction to research class. "I'd never had a class like that," she says. "It laid the foundation for the rest of my education and career."

But after 10 years of teaching and going to school, she recalls feeling "burned out" and even considered getting out of the profession. "This was a real turning point for me," she says. Rather than leave a profession that she loved



Barbara Brinson

but was taking a lot out of her, she took a break from teaching and went back to school for another master's degree – this time in choral conducting at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

"I got recharged there," she says. But

when it was time to start applying for teaching positions in a high school, she realized her heart wasn't in it. "I was committed to teaching again, but not high school," she says. So she went on to Florida State University for a PhD in

music education with a choral emphasis.

With that degree in hand, Barbara accepted a position on the music faculty at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She enjoyed a 14-year career there, then decided she wanted a new adventure in a quieter location with a slower pace of life. So she accepted a position at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia. "They had a fabulous music education program, as well as a strong performance program," she says.

Barbara was on faculty at SUNY-Fredonia until 2014, when she retired and moved to North Carolina, where she lives today. She left behind a productive academic career and noted accomplishments, including authoring textbooks and journal articles, serving in professional organizations, conducting clinics, serving as a guest conductor and adjudicator at choral festivals.

Now, in retirement, the pace and focus have changed. "I have reinvented myself here," she says. "I have learned to relax." She has also focused on her stained-glass art, which she had taken up while on a sabbatical from Fredonia several years earlier. Today, she sells her work in a nonprofit handicraft store in Black Mountain, North Carolina. "Here, I am not known as Barbara the musician," she says. "I'm known as Barbara the stained-glass artist."

While she doesn't get back to Columbus too often, she remembers it fondly as her hometown and CSU as a place where she began to find herself as a music educator. That led her to pursue additional degrees and ultimately led her into a career in higher education. She remembers the influence of engaged professors, the exposure to theories and practical content in her classes, and the opportunities to explore options available to her.

"I was keenly aware throughout my career that I had the opportunity and responsibility to shape future music educators in my little corner of the world and music education in general," she says. "That is the power of music; it's what makes it so important in our lives."

– Barbara Brinson

Her combined experiences moved her to become a loyal donor to the Schwob School of Music, and she gives at the Legacy level. "This is an investment I'm making in a very talented group of young people," she says.

She envisions an annual choral music education seminar for Schwob students which could also be open to choral educators from the local community and the region (both church and school). To facilitate these seminars, an outstanding choral educator would be brought in for several days of workshops, lectures, reading sessions, conducting labs and Q-and-A opportunities. Some sort of performance opportunity may also be included.

One member of the Schwob School faculty was inspired by Barbara long before learning of her connection to CSU and before meeting her. Dr. Michelle Folta, associate professor in the choral music program, was an undergraduate at the University of Texas when she discovered Barbara's textbook. "It was one of the best because it was all-inclusive for everything you needed to know to be a choir director," she says. Folta still uses a

newer edition in her classes.

She learned that Barbara was a CSU graduate while chatting with Whiddon over lunch one day. Whiddon connected the two of them and Folta invited her to speak to her class in 2022. "She was just delightful," Folta recalls. Barbara remains a friend and mentor generous with her time and knowledge. "She loves choir and she loves pedagogy. The most inspirational part for me is finding someone who has had a lifelong love for her craft and is continuing to make it better even past her retirement," Folta says.

"Barbara has such an interesting, unique perspective and a forward-thinking approach to leaving a legacy gift," Whiddon says. "She had a long, successful career as a music educator and she understands better than most that teaching is a joy but it can become all-consuming if you allow it to."

Barbara was passionate about her career as a music educator and is now passionate about supporting efforts to engage, nurture and energize aspiring and practicing choral music educators. "I was keenly aware throughout my career that I had the opportunity and responsibility to shape future music educators in my little corner of the world and music education in general," she says. "That is the power of music; it's what makes it so important in our lives." ■

G

enerous donors make remarkable collection possible

Talented, dedicated students. An accomplished faculty. And a remarkable collection of musical instruments.

The Schwob School of Music is home to a variety of instruments made possible through the generosity of its donors. “Our instrument collection is an amazing addition to the Schwob School,” said Dr. Scott Harris, the Barbara C. and Clifford J. Swift III director. “The collection enhances the educational and performance experiences of our students.”

The growing instrument collection is an example of how donors provide multi-faceted, direct support to students, according to Rex Whiddon, senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives for Columbus State. “Our students, the school and

the university are fortunate to have the most supportive and generous donors,” he said. “They have enabled us to build an impressive collection of world-class instruments which supports the needs of our students, encourages our faculty and helps us continue to build our reputation as a top-tier music school.”



Maxine Schiffman and Rex Whiddon



The Saunders Instrument Collection

This is a beautiful collection of instruments handcrafted according to long-held traditions. The Schwob School acquired the collection through The Mrs. C. Alexander Saunders Music Equipment Acquisition Fund and the generosity of Charlotte (Alex) Saunders. The timpani, marimba, harp, bass clarinets and guitar are featured prominently in large and small ensembles.

The Maxine R. and Jack S. Schiffman Family Foundation Collection

The Schiffman Family Foundation made a gift in the 1990s to name the Percussion Studio in memory of the late Jack Schiffman, followed by a generous gift to provide state-of-the-art percussion instruments. In 2008, the Schiffman Foundation provided the funding for Schwob School’s collection of 68 Steinway pianos, which made Schwob an all-Steinway music school.

The Blanchard Steinway Piano

This historic piano, dating from 1896, was given in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Mercer Carter Blanchard, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson Cator Pagon and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Banks Dorsey. The piano was given in appreciation of Columbus State University and the Schwob School of Music and with the best wishes of Elizabeth Blanchard Staples, Belle Blanchard Newton, Margaret Blanchard Smith, Susan Blanchard Adams and members of the Blanchard family.

The Jordan Concert Organ

Dedicated at a series of concerts in 2001, the Jordan Concert Organ in Legacy Hall was designed by retired Professor Joseph Golden and built by the renowned Orgues LeTourneau of Canada. The organ was a gift from the family of the late G. Gunby Jordan II.

The Watson Harpsichord

This stunning 1777 Richard Kingston French double manual harpsichord was a gift from Janice M. Watson in memory of her husband, Dr. Davis R. Watson Sr., and in honor of their great-grandchildren Adelina Philpott, Piper Watson and Cooper Cornet.

The Yamaha Disklavier CFX Concert Grand Piano

This exceptional instrument was acquired in 2014 through a generous gift from Gail B. Greenblatt. This piano enables students and faculty to take part in remote lessons, performances and master classes with musicians from around the country and the world, according to material provided by Yamaha. Known for its rich palette of tonal colors and unprecedented tonal projection, the DCFX is also imbued with powerful Disklavier technology that makes it possible for a pianist to perform live in one location, while their exact keystrokes and pedal movements are transmitted in real time to any other Yamaha Disklavier located anywhere else in the world, along with synchronized video.



The Guitar Collection

In our continued effort to keep the Schwob Guitar Studio as one of the first-choice institutions in America, we have been acquiring some of the finest guitars in the world for student use. Students not only are able to use the instruments in special performances; they also learn the subtleties of different instruments before investing in their own. The Schwob School has a number of notable guitars in its collection, including the following.

The Jo and George Jeter Collection

Dennis Tolz (Berlin) – Tolz is one of the most sought-after young luthiers in Europe today. Current performers of Tolz guitars include David Russell and John Dearman (LAGQ).

Glenn Canin (Mill Valley, California) – Canin, along with Stephen Walter, are the two preeminent luthiers in America today. Current performers of Canin guitars include Rene Izquierdo and Andrew Zohn.

Martin Blackwell (Vancouver) – A Blackwell guitar is another sought-after instrument, especially in this latest generation. Schwob Alumna Leonela Alejandro used this guitar this past summer to win first prize in the Guitar Foundation of America International, the world’s most prestigious competition for guitar.

Kristopher Barnett (Berlin) – This is a fantastic example of the new German School of guitar building.

The Schiffman Foundation Collection

Gregg Smallman (Sydney) – Smallman guitars are easily one of the top three most desired guitars in the world, made famous by the great British guitarist John Williams who performed on one for decades. This is the crown jewel of the collection.

Glenn Canin (Mill Valley, California) – This was a gift from the Schiffman Foundation. It was our intent to have two guitars of the same luthier to help train guitar duos.

Steven Walter (Chicago) – Walter is one of the top two American guitar makers today. Schwob alumnus Dragos Ilie currently performs on a Steven Walter.

The U-Save-It Pharmacies Collection

Roberto de Miranda (Milan) – This beautiful Italian lyrical guitar was purchased to be performed in a duo with a second de Miranda. It is a beautiful contrast to other guitars in the collection as it possesses a singular voice. ■



Support the collection

We sincerely thank the individual donors and family foundations who have made this collection possible. If you would like to support the musical instruments collection at the Schwob School, please see our “wish list” below.

- Contrabassoon (Fox model) - \$40,000
- Set of timpani (Dresden) - \$40,000
- Celesta - \$28,000
- Piccolos (two) - \$6,000 (\$3,000 each)
- Bass flute - \$5,000
- Bass clarinet - \$14,525
- E-flat clarinet - \$7,800
- Artist-quality cello and bow - \$9,000-\$15,000
- Artist-quality viola and bow - \$9,000-\$15,000
- Steinway Concert Grand Piano - \$200,000

For more information contact:
Rex Whiddon
706-507-8430
whiddon_rex@columbusstate.edu

Faculty News

Anne-Marie Cherry



Dr. Cherry recently performed with the LaGrange Symphony Strauss’s beloved first “Horn Concerto.” She performs regularly with the nationally acclaimed Atlanta Symphony and serves as principal horn of the LaGrange Symphony. In the summer of 2024, she adjudicated the International Horn Competition of America, performed with soloists and members of major American orchestras for the International Horn Symposium and recorded an album with Newfound Chamber Winds.

Michelle (Shellie) DeBruyn



Dr. Shellie DeBruyn received a Faculty Development Grant which helped to fund the commission of a new piece and a visit from the composer. The commission was titled “The Job” by Melissa Dunphy and was sung as part of a

recital featuring text and music created by women. The recital was performed in Taichung, Taiwan last May and Columbus in August. Additionally, Dr. DeBruyn had two students chosen as finalists in the NATS National Student Auditions (NSA). Bartlett Scholars Zachary Hornbeck and Makoa Whitfield were awarded third and second place respectively in the Lower Musical Theatre TBB Voices division. This marks the first-ever NSA finalists from the Schwob School of Music!

Michelle Folta



The Voices of the Valley Children’s Chorus traveled to Italy this summer where they performed in Pisa, Rome and sang mass at the Vatican. Michael John Trotta, renowned composer, joined the choir to conduct a world premiere of his commissioned work, “Have You Earned Your Tomorrow?” Additionally, Dr. Trotta gifted Voices of the Valley “Jubilate Deo” to perform in the Vatican. The Voices of the Valley staff, composed of current undergraduate and graduate students, were able to attend the tour thanks to our generous donors. These students gained hands-on

experience planning for and traveling internationally with a choir.

Matthew Hoch



Matthew Hoch edited the fourth edition of “The Singing Book,” the most widely used textbook for class voice in the United States. Written by Cynthia Vaughn and the late Meribeth Dame (1938–2019), “The Singing Book” was first published in 2004. After Dayne’s passing, Vaughn invited Hoch to collaborate with her on this and future editions. <https://www.amazon.com/Singing-National-Association-Teachers-Books/dp/1538180286/>

Paul Hostetter



Paul Hostetter led a recording in Bisbee, Arizona, with pop artists, presented masterclasses at Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University and led a concert with Ensemble Flageolet, all in September.

His student Enluis Montes Olivar, received the Glenn Gould Foundation Award, presented at Carnegie Hall. He is serving this year as a cover conductor with the New York Philharmonic among many guest appearances. Hostetter also led a recording in New York in October and presented masterclasses at Montclair State University and with the New Jersey Youth Symphony. He continues to mentor professional conductors from New Jersey, Tennessee, England, Austria, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

Aaron Jensen



Dr. Jensen performed and taught masterclasses at Texas Tech University, University of Texas-El Paso and New Mexico State University. He also served on faculty at the Corfu International Trumpet Festival in Corfu, Greece and performed six cycles with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Jensen began tenure as the volunteer coordinator for the International Trumpet Guild Conferences and has upcoming tours with the Session Brass Quintet and Legacy Brass Quintet. He has a solo performance with South Forsyth High at GMEA in January 2025.

Katrin Meidell



In Fall 2024 Dr. Katrin Meidell welcomed four new viola students – two graduate and two undergraduate. Three of these are international, including two recipients of the newly created Dr. Mary Wheatland Schley Music Scholarship Fund. During the fall semester she traveled in Georgia, as well as to Texas, Florida and Honduras to teach, perform and recruit. She also performed in several chamber music concerts in Legacy Hall at RiverCenter for the Performing Arts in Columbus. In June 2024 she was honored by the American Viola Society (AVS) as recipient of the Founders Award, joining a short list of celebrated violists who have been recognized for distinguished contributions to the AVS, and for advocacy and leadership on behalf of the viola.

Lisa Oberlander



Dr. Oberlander was a faculty artist for the 2nd annual Atlanta Clarinet Day in November in Stone Mountain, Georgia. She performed and presented masterclasses for hundreds of middle and

high school students from throughout Georgia. All 19 of the Schwob Clarinet Studio members also performed as a clarinet ensemble. Schwob Clarinetist and Concerto Competition winner Jesus David Moreno Montaña performed Copland's "Clarinet Concerto" with the Schwob Philharmonic in October. Last spring, Schwob Clarinet Studio alumnus Jorge Diez won the position of Principal Clarinet in the Mississippi Symphony.

Bradley Palmer



The Schwob School of Music will recognize Dr. Palmer's 25 years of service at a concert on March 10, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. The Schwob Philharmonic will perform Jennifer Higdon's "Low Brass Concerto," featuring faculty tubist Alex Avila and three of Dr. Palmer's former students. They are Dr. Evan Williams, Assistant Principal trombone, National Symphony Orchestra; Masa Ohtake, Second Trombone, Alabama Symphony and Christopher Bassett, Bass Trombone, San Francisco Symphony. The concert will include a special selection including current and former students in an antiphonal trombone choir surrounding Legacy Hall. Join us for a 6:30 p.m. Alumni Trombone Ensemble pre-concert lobby performance and a post-concert reception.

Sergiu Schwartz



Sergiu Schwartz performed and taught masterclasses at the Bowdoin International Festival. The "Atlas" piano trio he coached was awarded 2nd place in the MTNA National Competition. His alumni Boris Abramov and Samuel Vargas were appointed professors at Belmont University in Tennessee and Schwob School. Other alumni won positions in orchestras such as the Boston Symphony and those in Knoxville and Nashville Tennessee, and Sarasota and Orlando in Florida. His student Didi Stone was Concertmaster of the National Youth Orchestra of America, performing at Carnegie Hall in New York and in Europe and South America, and won the Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists competition. Schwartz also performed and taught masterclasses at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

Paul Vaillancourt



Dr. Vaillancourt was recently invited to conduct a faculty/alumni ensemble in the composition faculty concert at the Eastman School of Music. Last spring saw him tour cities in Mexico

with duo partner guitarist Dieter Hennings, as well as conducting the Sinfonietta Museo Iconographico Quijote (MIQ) in another tour of the same region.

Victoria Warnet



Dr. Warnet presented her research on the performance behaviors of conductors at the National Association for Music Education Conference in Atlanta in September. She will present at the Georgia and Florida state music education conferences in January 2025. Additionally, Dr. Warnet was selected as a semi-finalist for the GRAMMY® Music Educator of the Year Award.

Reba Wissner



Dr. Wissner gave a lecture entitled "Heard on the Small Screen: Music in Jack Arnold's and Henry Mancini's Episodes of Peter Gunn" at the Library of Congress as part of the Henry Mancini Centennial Celebration in September 2024. The lecture was co-presented by the Library of Congress and the American Musicological Society.

Woodward scholarship honors memory of local guitarist

– by Marion Scott
(We gratefully acknowledge Yvonne Culpepper's contribution to this tribute to her brother.)

Jesse D. Woodward Jr. lost his battle with pancreatic cancer in October 2021 at the age of 59. This gifted musician loved playing guitar and teaching others to play. His older sister, Yvonne, and her husband Bill are ensuring that love is remembered.

Yvonne and Bill established the Jesse D. Woodward Jr. Scholarship in Guitar at the Schwob School of Music in spring 2024. Their only stipulation was that the scholarship be awarded to students with need.

The first recipient is Enzo Risi, a native of Santiago, Chile. Enzo relocated to the United States in 2022 following formal study of classical guitar at the University of Chile. He earned his master's degree in music from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

He is continuing his musical training at the Schwob School, with guidance from Dr. Andrew Zohn, the George and Jo Jeter Distinguished Chair in Guitar. Enzo feels a "deep sense of belonging" in Columbus and is "particularly drawn to the close relationships between the music school, local churches and donors, and the mutual support they provide to the community," according to his official biography. Enzo feels "incredibly fortunate" to study at CSU and deeply appreciates the support he has received.

Jesse is remembered as a practical joker, history buff and Civil War reenactor. But playing and collecting guitars were two of his passions in life, according to Yvonne.

"Our father, grandfather and uncle all played," she says. "So as soon as his hands



From left: Nephew Gabriel Rissman and Jesse in September 2019

were large enough, Jesse began playing." He also played trumpet in middle school and high school and played in the marching band. "Music was a major part of his life."

Jesse was a career electrician. In his free time, he enjoyed his hobbies – especially teaching guitar lessons. "He found teaching others to play and passing on his love of guitar to be truly rewarding," Yvonne says.

"We sincerely appreciate Yvonne and Bill's generosity in making this scholar-

ship possible," says Rex Whiddon, senior associate VP for Leadership Philanthropy and Strategic Initiatives at CSU. "His legacy will live on through the talent and accomplishments of the students whose lives he will touch."

Jesse's widow, Lorena, says he was a modest man who would be pleased with the scholarship in his memory. "I'm absolutely sure he would be proud, and humbled, to know his love of the guitar will be remembered and passed on to others." ■



Dr. Matthew McCabe

Schwob livestream:

49
countries

300+
concerts per year

3,500+
concert recordings
in archives

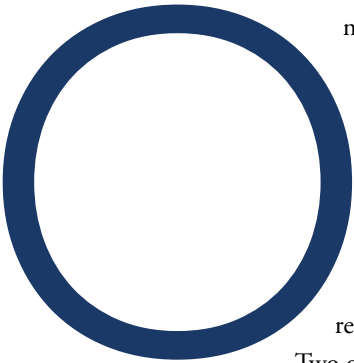
 Schwob concerts have been viewed in these countries



Donors make the Schwob experience more available and accessible

– by Marion Scott

If you attend a Schwob School of Music concert in Legacy Hall, you likely will be focused on the beauty of the facility, the musicians – and of course, the music itself. But making that concert a memorable experience for the audience involves dozens of people working hard behind the scenes.



ne such team is led by Dr. Matthew McCabe, the Sam and Jacquie Rawls Distinguished Professor of Music and associate professor of audio technology for the Schwob School. They make it possible for the audience in the concert hall and those watching and listening remotely to enjoy the experience.

Two of the Schwob initiatives for which McCabe and team are responsible have opened up the world of music in Legacy Hall to thousands of people. These are the live concert streaming service and assistive listening technology.

Live streaming takes Schwob throughout the world

The establishment of the Greenblatt Music Enhancement Technology Endowment Fund was celebrated at a CSU Philharmonic concert in October 2016. There was much to celebrate then and now.

“Gail Greenblatt’s gift of the live streaming service and the idea behind it were wonderful,” McCabe said. It turned out to be prescient too, as it kept the music alive throughout the pandemic. “It really rescued us during that entire time,” McCabe added.

Since the implementation of live streaming more than eight years ago, McCabe’s team of undergraduate and graduate student assistants has streamed and recorded nearly 300 live



Staff engineer Julian Chalon checks camera angles for a Schwob School live-streamed concert

concert events every year. These include presentations by faculty, ensembles, student recitals, lectures and guest artists, according to a report compiled by Nick Williams-Smith, a member of McCabe’s team, in 2024.

There are now more than 3,500 concert event recordings in the SchwobTech archives, and the Schwob YouTube channel that features the live streams has compiled more than 53,000 hours – or approximately six years – of watch time from all over the world.

“The live streaming gift made by Gail Greenblatt has not only allowed us to reach dozens of countries all over the world, but also has given student assistants practical training in production that results in jobs after graduation, and even jobs in the community while they are still enrolled as students,” the report continued.

“The Greenblatt Endowment for Music Technology has enabled us to literally bring Schwob to the world,” said Rex Whiddon, senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives at CSU. “Thanks to her generosity, the families of our international students, prospective students worldwide and music lovers around the globe are able to enjoy Schwob concerts.”



Preparing for a recording: Staff engineer Nick Williams-Smith (left) and Dr. Matthew McCabe at the mixing console in the Saunders Center for Music Studies control room

Assistive listening system enhances enjoyment of concerts

Hearing loss affects approximately 60.7 million Americans 12 and older, according to the National Council on Aging. Approximately 31 percent of people 65 and older experience hearing loss, while 40.3 percent of those 75 and older have some level of loss. It's a common condition and the incidence in the United States is on the rise.

Schwob advisory board member David Bottoms, who is hearing-impaired, wanted to help those in our community with hearing loss to better enjoy the concert events in Legacy Hall. He provided the funding needed to acquire and install assistive listening technology.

McCabe and his team spent much of 2023 preparing for and overseeing installation of the technology, with the launch

occurring at a concert in late fall 2023. "We needed to take the time to get it right," he said. He noted the reputation of the Schwob School and the quality of the product delivered by students and faculty, and he had an equally high expectation for the technical implementation of the technology.

McCabe also had a unique interest in bringing this technology to Schwob. While completing his doctorate in music composition at the University of Florida, he had to select and earn credit in an external discipline as part of his degree requirements. He selected cognitive neurosciences and became familiar with topics such as hearing loss and hearing loss prevention.

"The sound of our system is amazing," McCabe said as he and his team prepared to "go live" in late 2023. "It's at the cutting edge of available technology."

McCabe said they can give a patron a small belt pack that

essentially is a small FM radio, with several options available for use. "The patron can wear an earpiece over an existing hearing aid, or wear a neck loop which couples directly to their hearing aid so they don't have to put anything additional on their ears," he said. A patron who does not wear a conventional hearing aid can use an earbud for more direct sound. The new system also has a Wi-Fi component. If patrons have bleeding-edge hearing aids connected to their mobile devices, they can use those existing hearing aids and tie directly into the system through their phones. "The sound quality of that is superior to the FM system, which also sounds good," McCabe said.

McCabe expressed appreciation to David Bottoms for making the technology possible for Schwob patrons who may have curtailed their concert attendance when hearing difficulty made the performances challenging and less than enjoyable.

"David's generous gift has made it possible for concertgoers of any age to enjoy the music in Legacy Hall as fully as possible," Whiddon said. "The assistive listening devices make the performances by Schwob students and faculty more accessible to our community, and for that we are grateful to David and to Matt and his team."

There is much more to the audio technology program at Schwob, Whiddon added. "There are exciting advances on the way, and we will feature them in a future issue of 'Fanfare.'" ■



Above right: Audio engineering and trombone performance student Nick McRae dials in the mixing board for a Schwob School live-streamed concert

2016

Greenblatt Music Enhancement Technology Endowment Fund established

53,000+

hours of live streams from Schwob School YouTube channel

300+

live events streamed per year

3,500+

concerts recordings in the archives

New Faculty

We are delighted to welcome three outstanding new faculty members to the Joyce and Henry Schwob School of Music. Their diverse expertise and passion for teaching will greatly enrich our community, and we are excited for the impact they will have on our students and programs.

DR. MADELINE HARTS

Lecturer in Music – Voice

Dr. Madeline Harts, soprano, is a singer, vocal pedagogue and vocologist from Buffalo, New York, with a deep commitment to vocal pedagogy, vocology and the advancement of women in music. She has taught at SUNY Fredonia, Niagara University, University of Buffalo, University of Miami Frost School of Music, Miami Conservatory of Music, Bowling Green State University, BGSU Summer Vocal Arts Academy and Buffalo Seminary.

Harts’ research and practice focuses on women composers and pedagogues, Interfaith Art Song Literature and singer habilitation. She received the 2020 Presser Foundation Music Grant for her research on the art songs of Liza Lehmann and Clara Kathleen Rogers, presented at the Harvard University Houghton Archives and British Library. Her findings have been presented at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Conference and the Sam Houston State University Art Song Festival. She continues to give masterclasses and lectures on these topics.

Praised for her “freely produced top and dark midrange” by South Florida Classical Review, she has performed with the John Duffy Institute of New Opera and won the Patti and Alan Herbert Frost Mirabelle Competition, performing at the Salzburgerfestspiele. She is an alumna of the Toledo Opera Resident Artist Program. Productions include Der Schauspieldirektor (Madame Herz), The Light in the Piazza (Margaret Johnson), The Pirates of Penzance (Mabel), The Music Man (Marian), Die Fledermaus (Adele), Werther (Sophie), Roméo et Juliette and Lucia di Lammermoor, among others.

Harts holds a DMA in Vocal Pedagogy and Performance from the University of Miami Frost School of Music and degrees from Bowling Green State University (MM) and Ithaca College (BM). As an arts administrator, she served as Executive Director of the Grammy® Award-winning Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus. For more information, visit www.madelineharts.com.

SAMUEL VARGAS

Lecturer in Music - Violin

Violinist Samuel Vargas Teixeira has received wide recognition for his powerful artistry and awards, including Outstanding Teacher Award at the Global Genius Music Competition (2024), Entrepreneurship Award 2022 by UCMP, the José Antonio Abreu International Award for the Arts (2022), First Prize of the Sphinx Competition (2021) and Yamaha Young Performing Artist (2019). Vargas holds the Pin Artistic Merits from “City Key of Prince George” and “Central Bank in Canada,” and has performed on tours in 40 countries, collaborating with acclaimed artists like Gustavo Dudamel, Anthony Parnter, Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado and Christian Vasquez. He began his musical journey through Venezuela’s El Sistema Program. In 2017 he won the prestigious Woodruff Award, enabling him to study with his mentor Sergiu Schwartz at the Schwob School.

As a soloist Vargas has performed with the New World Symphony, San Bernardino Symphony, Allentown Symphony Orchestra, Teresa Carreno Symphony Orchestra, Juan Jose Landaeta Symphony Orchestra, Iowa State University Symphony Orchestra, Simón Bolívar Orchestra, Prince George Symphony Orchestra, Georgia Philharmonic, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Schwob Philharmonic Orchestra. He is founder and president of the Vargas Foundation, an organization which is enriching communities and society through the power of classical music, emphasizing a holistic approach to music education supporting students in all areas of studies and well-being. Through his passionate work and entrepreneurship, he has founded eight active Venezuelan chamber orchestras, as well as mentoring students across South America.

Vargas recently published his first book, “The Art of Giving and Receiving: The Person Behind the Violin,” which encompasses the art of teaching and focuses on establishing a relationship between the musician and their inner being. He earned his bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and musicology certificate from the Schwob School. Vargas plays on a Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume 1860 generously loaned by Sergiu Schwartz.

DR. ALLEN YUEH

Lecturer in Music – Piano and Music Prep Coordinator

Dr. Allen Yueh is an American pianist and pedagogue serving on both the piano and theory faculties at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Yueh is a laureate of numerous competitions, including First Prize at The Fourth New York International Piano Competition. He was also awarded the Gold Award at the 2009 YoungARTS festival created by the National Foundation for the Advancement of Arts, and was distinguished as one of 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts, performing at the Kennedy Center.

In 2010 and 2012, Yueh won the Dorothy MacKenzie Artist Recognition Scholarship Award held at the International Keyboard Institute and Festival at the Mannes School of Music. He won the Columbus State University Concerto Competition in 2015, performing Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Schwob Philharmonic. In 2016, Yueh was awarded First Prize at the Third International Piano Festival in Italy Piano Competition and Special Prize for best performance of works by Alexey Shor. Most recently, Yueh was recognized as the Georgia MTNA State winner, Southern Division winner, and top prize winner of the National Finals in 2017.

As a result of winning The Fourth New York International Competition, Yueh has been invited annually by the Stecher and Horowitz Foundation to perform in a concert series in New York City, New York State, and Washington D.C., and was featured in the PBS documentary film “On a Personal Note.” Yueh is also frequently invited to concertize at the Shandee Music Festival in New York, having performed in 2006, 2012, 2013 and 2016.

After graduating from Harvard University in 2013 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Applied Mathematics, Yueh earned his Master’s Degree in Piano Performance at New York University in 2015 and Artist Diploma at Columbus State University in 2017, studying with Alexander Kobrin. In 2020, Yueh graduated with a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying with Haesun Paik and Daniel Shapiro.

Yueh uses his studies and experiences to bridge the gap between theoretical analysis and performance practice. Yueh joined CIM’s preparatory piano faculty in 2020, CIM’s conservatory theory faculty in 2021 and Case Western Reserve University’s piano faculty in 2022. As theory faculty, Yueh has taught classes including 18th century counterpoint, the DMA analytical seminar and several of the core undergraduate courses. He taught a theory course on the late Beethoven sonatas during the fall of 2023.



MADELINE HARTS



SAMUEL VARGAS



ALLEN YUEH

REMEMBERING COLUMBUS PEDIATRICIAN, MUSICIAN WITH SCHOLARSHIP

– by Marion Scott

When Dr. Mary W. Schley died in July 2022 at the age of 95, she was remembered as a devoted spouse, loving mother and grandmother, dedicated physician, generous patron of the arts – and talented violist. “Her departure from this life leaves an empty chair, but a vast and enduring legacy,” her family wrote in her obituary.

Now, family and friends have honored her memory and that legacy by establishing the Dr. Mary Wheatland Schley Music Scholarship for viola students at the Schwob School of Music.

Dr. Mary Schley met her husband, Columbus native Frank B. Schley Jr., while completing her residency in pediatrics at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. They married in 1955 and moved to Columbus where they continued his father’s pediatrics practice.

Three years later, she joined the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. She served as a symphony donor, board member and as the orchestra’s principal violist for many years.

Throughout a medical career filled with accomplishments, she also remained a passionate advocate for education and the arts. Columbus State awarded her an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2006 and named the Schley Medical Sciences Suite in 2018 in recognition of her many contributions.

Music remained a passion throughout her life, and the viola scholarship was established in 2024. The inaugural recipients are Aurimar Hernandez and Carlos Rada, both freshman viola students from Venezuela. There, they both participated in the El Sistema



Dr. Mary Schley

music-education program, each performing with a different professional youth symphony.

They are now studying viola under Dr. Katrin Meidell, associate professor of music at the Schwob School. In June 2024 Meidell received the American Viola Society’s prestigious Founders Award in recognition of her contributions to the society and for her advocacy and leadership on behalf of the viola.

“For both Auri and Carlos, this scholarship is the difference between a limited musical life in a country wrought with political upheaval, and one of endless possibilities that starts here at



Aurimar Hernandez and Carlos Rada

Schwob,” Meidell says. “It’s an incredible opportunity for these amazing young musicians, who are highly dedicated to improving their craft,” she adds.

“Dr. Mary Schley was a remarkable person – dedicated to the practice of pediatric medicine and to her music,” says Rex Whiddon, senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy and Strategic Initiatives at Columbus State. “We are so grateful to our donors for their generosity in establishing this scholarship. It will benefit many talented viola students as they prepare for what I am certain will be successful careers.”



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Schwob School of Music Alum & Conductor Roderick Cox Celebrated for Memorable Concerts with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

– by Carrie Beth Wallace, “The Columbusite”

This originally appeared in “The Columbusite.” We thank the author for allowing us to reprint this article.

Roderick Cox is a 2009 graduate of Columbus State University’s Schwob School of Music whose career as one of the world’s leading young conductors has taken him to podiums across the world. The Berlin-based American conductor is known for his fiery approach to conducting, and his passionate drive for arts education initiatives for young musicians.

A native of Macon, Georgia, Cox completed his undergraduate degree at Schwob School of Music where he majored in performance. He then went on to study at Northwestern University where he earned his master’s degree in 2011 and began conducting professionally across the United States and Europe.

Winner of the 2018 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award by the U.S Solti Foundation, Cox has been praised by major publications around the globe. In a story by NBC News, he was lauded as a conductor who is “paving the way” and was later recognized by the “Minnesota StarTribune” as a “trailblazer conductor who will be amongst the vanguard.”

Cox maintains a demanding schedule of conducting engagements around the world, but has taken time to give back through his music foundation for children. The Roderick Cox Music Initiative (RCMI) began in 2019 as a program to nurture the next generation of musicians and conductors ages 12-18 through music scholarships to underserved youth of color in the Twin Cities. Each scholarship is given to a promising student who aspires to have a future in classical music.

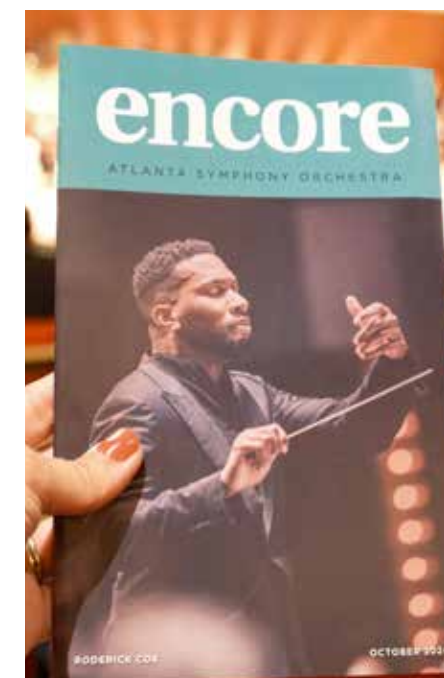
In October 2024, Cox was featured as a guest conductor in a series of two concerts with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra where he led an invigorating and surprising combination of repertoire focusing on themes inspired by his love of history. The first piece on the concert was Samuel Barber’s beloved “Adagio for Strings” which welcomed audience members with its comforting familiarity and treasured, robust harmonic structure.

At well over six feet tall, Cox is a commanding and steadfast presence at the helm of the orchestra. As Barber’s famous themes began, they appeared to seemingly cascade out of Cox’s baton and across Symphony Hall. The work felt like it had been intentionally programmed as the calm before the storm. Knowing what was to come, the audience seemed to settle into the work and enjoy the whole of its

offerings as a preparation for the darker themes ahead.

When “Adagio for Strings” finished, Cox exited the stage quickly, only to return with a microphone to prepare the audience for what was to come: John Adams’ apocalyptic “Doctor Atomic Symphony.” The intense work is based on the life and times of J. Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb.

As he addressed the audience, Cox transformed into an educator before our eyes. With incredible intentionality, he provided an in-depth look into the musical, emotional and historical elements of “Doctor Atomic” in order to prepare the audience for the complexities of the piece. Cox challenged listeners to audibly seek out themes related to the science of the bomb itself early in the first movement, and then later on in latter movements, to search for sections inspired by the consistent debate of morality among Oppenheimer and the scientists he worked with. This pre-performance talk was a highlight of the evening, and a hallmark moment for Cox, as it produced not only a more interesting experience for those of us in the audience, but also equipped everyone in attendance to be able to receive the work as the composer intended.



Cox shone as he went above and beyond to create space for informed and educated listening, while simultaneously offering himself as he clearly demonstrated remarkable rapport with the orchestra moments later via the podium as he led each musician on stage. The final notes of the symphony were received with a predictable silence as the heaviness of “Doctor Atomic” subsided, and then a raucous applause erupted to mark the start of intermission.

The second half of the concert featured Cox at the podium guiding strongly through Sergei Rachmaninoff’s “Symphonic Dances.” The most notable aspect? His clear affinity for the material. As he conducted each movement, the trademark confidence and passion with which he takes the podium were evident to all in the room. If anything, the consistency he showed throughout the entire concert was exceptional and left a mark on many in attendance. Conversations about his poise and excellence on the podium could be overheard throughout the hall as the audience made their way out of the venue at the close of the concert.

In a brief post-concert gathering with Columbus State University patrons and administrators, Cox graciously greeted everyone and thanked them for attending the performance. He also spoke fondly of his years at Schwob School of Music. “My time in Columbus was critical to my success,” Cox said to a group of CSU patrons and administrators after the ASO concert. “Choosing to study at Schwob provided the foundation I needed to pursue a career in conducting. I tell colleagues often about Schwob and the excellent training I received there. It was a very formative time for me.” ■



Roderick Cox receives a standing ovation after conducting the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in October 2024.

LEGACY

SCHWOB SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Legacy Society

The Legacy Society is comprised of a select group of alumni and friends who have notified the University of specific provisions in their estate, retirement, or life insurance plans or have named the University as a beneficiary of a charitable trust or life income gift such as an annuity.

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Opera Theater

Our upcoming 2025 Schwob Opera Theater spring season will be a double bill of exciting lyric dramas, *Suor Angelica* by Giacomo Puccini and *The Medium* by Gian Carlo Menotti. These two iconic operas will be performed in collaboration with the Schwob Opera Orchestra led by Professor Paul Hostetter.

We are also excited to collaborate with and present our mainstage opera production for the first time at the historic state theater of Georgia, the Springer Opera House.

Our student performers will work alongside a professional team of artists to bring these operas to life for our audiences this spring. Our performances will include a pre-concert talk presented by Dr. Reba Wissner for our audience members to learn more about the history of these incredible works. Performance dates are April 12, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. and April 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

For tickets, contact the Springer Opera House:
By phone at 706-327-3688 or online at
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Made possible by funding provided by The Sally and John Walden Endowment for Opera



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Schwob School welcomes internationally acclaimed visiting artists

– by Marion Scott

A generous gift from local philanthropists Marjorie and Jerry Newman is making it possible for Schwob School students to learn from two internationally acclaimed pianists during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Schwob School faculty welcomed Sofya Gulyak to campus during fall semester as the first artist funded through The Marjorie Newman Visiting Artist in Piano Residency Program. Gulyak is an artist faculty member at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University (IU). She has won major international competitions – most notably the 16th Leeds International Piano Competition in the United Kingdom. Gulyak was in residence at the Schwob School for a week in October 2024. The week ended with a community recital presented in Legacy Hall at RiverCenter for the Performing Arts.

Awadagin Pratt, artist faculty member at the San Francisco Conservatory, will be in residency for a week in April 2025. He will also present a community recital in Legacy Hall. Pratt is one of the most in-demand American pianists today.

“We are grateful to Marjorie and Jerry Newman for their generous support in making this residency possible,” said Rex Whiddon, senior associate vice president for Leadership Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives at Columbus State. “These community leaders are long-time supporters of the Schwob School and we sincerely appreciate all they do to enhance our programs.”

Dr. Esther Park, the L. Rexford



Visiting artist Sofya Gulyak (center) with Schwob piano students

Whiddon Distinguished Chair in Piano and associate professor of music at the Schwob School, is excited about the residency and the opportunities it provides to students. “We are very privileged to have this residency at Schwob,” Park says. “It will be a great opportunity for our students to learn from the most sought-after teachers and performers of our time. This is especially beneficial for our upperclassmen and graduate students because this may be a way for them to find future mentors by having a chance to work with them.”

She describes the fall semester residency with Gulyak as a success. “Her recital was one of the highlights of the season and really inspired our students to work harder at their art,” Park says.

“But it was also an opportunity for our three juniors and graduate students to get a window of how she may be as their teacher, should they aspire to continue studying at IU.”

Park is looking forward to the spring semester residency with Pratt. “I have admired his musicianship from my student days and am so happy that he will join us to work with our students as well as give a recital on April 16,” she says. “Mark your calendars!” ■

Professor Pratt’s recital for the community is scheduled Wednesday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m. in Legacy Hall in RiverCenter for the Performing Arts.

Patrons of Music Society

The Schwob School of Music gratefully acknowledges those donors who contributed to the ongoing excellence of the Schwob School from August 1, 2023 - December 15, 2024. These gifts enable Schwob to offer competitive scholarships, as well as the very best programs, faculty, facilities and equipment.

The 1958 Society

This recognition society, established in 2007, is comprises a leadership cadre of donors who recognize the value of empowering the university with the financial resources necessary to build a great university. Membership in this prestigious Society is reserved for the university’s most generous benefactors. Annual leadership giving by this group of philanthropists provides Columbus State University with the financial resources to attract world-renowned scholars and performing artists, support outstanding students and ensure educational excellence.

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So often the desire to give is coupled with a desire to recognize special people in our lives. Many of the gifts received between August 1, 2023, and December 15, 2024 were made in recognition of family members, friends, colleagues and beloved teachers. Listed below are those individuals for whom honorary or memorial gifts were made.

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In Honor of Meg Schley, Lisa and Jonathan Liss, JoRhee and Jack Pezold
Mr. L. Rexford Whiddon, Jr.

In Honor of Dr. Robert Sharpe
Mr. L. Rexford Whiddon, Jr.

In Honor of Musicians in Residence at Spring Harbor
Mrs. Barbara Ritten Waller

In Honor of Bobsie Swift
Mr. and Mrs. Neal B. Littlejohn

In Honor of Victor and Jennifer: SH - Students from Schwob
Mrs. Barbara Ritten Waller

In Honor of Janice Watson
Ms. Mimi Copelan

In Honor of Dr. David and Cathy Woolbright
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Creek

In Honor of Dr. Andrew Zohn
Dr. Alice Budge and Mr. John Greenman

Memorials

In Memory of Fred Aranas
Dr. Catalina T. Aranas
Fred and Catalina Aranas Family Foundation

In Memory of Dr. Champ Baker, Jr.
Mrs. Donald M. Leebern, Jr.

In Memory of John and E. Susanne Caminiti
Lt. Eric L. Caminiti USA (Ret.)

In Memory of Mrs. Twyla P. Dudley and Dr. A.B. Dudley, Jr.
Mr. Tan C. Hoang

In Memory of Mrs. Mae Sheets
Mr. Thomas L. Sheets

In Memory of Jane VanCleave Harp
Mr. and Mrs. B. Seth Harp, Jr.

In Memory of Lynn K. Whiddon
Mr. L. Rexford Whiddon, Jr.

For information on making honorary and/or memorial gifts, please contact Rex Whiddon at 706-507-8430 or via email at: Whiddon_Rex@ColumbusState.edu

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these lists; however, it is possible that errors have been made. If so, please accept our sincere apologies and call them to the attention of the Office of Development by calling 706-507-8430.

Alumni News

1980s

Martin Dean '83 (BM)

Martin Dean was band director for Habersham County, Georgia prior to retiring in 2013. He was with the 33rd Army Band and 214th Army Band from 1985-1989.

Michael Lee Hunt '88 (BM)

Michael Lee Hunt is director of bands/music teacher at Ansbach Middle High School, Ansbach, Germany, DODDS. He is in his 34th year of teaching, 26 of those years with DODDS. He also coaches basketball.

1990s

Vickie Helms '72, '91, '98 (BM, MM, EdS)

Vickie Helms is a retired Muscogee County Elementary School music teacher. She served three years post-retirement as an intervention specialist. She currently serves as the pianist at Bethesda Baptist Church in Ellerslie, Georgia.

Romona Wright Smith '98 (BM)

Romona Wright Smith received a service award in recognition of 25 years of service to music education presented at the Opening Session of the annual GMEA Conference on Jan. 25, 2024. She is currently in her 10th year as the music teacher/choral director at Woodward Academy North in Johns Creek, Georgia. She previously taught in the Atlanta Public Schools, Cobb County School District and Fulton County Schools, as well as providing private instruction in piano and voice.

Robin Wooten Thompson '92 (MM)

Robin Wooten Thompson served Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama as an adjunct instructor for the music department, teaching class piano and aural skills as well as piano instructor for the JSU Music Academy. She was a piano instructor at the Donoho School in Anniston, Alabama and also had a home studio of piano students. Robin also taught for 20 years at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga Cadek Conservatory of Music. She holds professional memberships in MTNA, AMTA, NFMCA and AFMC and is a founding member and festival chair of the Calhoun County Music Club. Robin resides in Anniston, Alabama

with her husband, Richard Thompson. She enjoys traveling, and a trip to Egypt is on her bucket list.

2000s

Miranda Carlsen '05 (BM)

Miranda Carlsen is director of choral activities and guitar studies at Lee County High School in Leesburg, Georgia.

Robert J. Grogan '07 (BM)

Dr. Robert J. Grogan was a saxophonist in the Wind Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble when he was a Schwob student. He is currently the director of bands at Barber Middle School in Cobb County, Georgia, where the program has earned regional and national acclaim, including invitations to UGA MidFest and MFA National Festival. In 2022, the Barber Band won the William P. Foster Award for Excellence. Dr. Grogan recently earned his Ph.D. in music education from Auburn University and has published articles in “SB&O Magazine” and the “Journal of Research in Music Education.” He is also a sought-after clinician and speaker with presentations at the Midwest Clinic and GMEA.

Jay Hand '09 (BA)

Jay Hand is pastor of worship and families at City Church of Gainesville, Florida, where he has served for the last 10 years. Whether self-taught or classically trained, Jay works with volunteer musicians of varying proficiency levels, helping them use their musical gifts to benefit the local church. Jay curates music, plans liturgy and rehearses musicians weekly for Sunday worship services with the goal of encouraging parishioners to engage with arts and music in a way that helps them flourish. Jay holds an M.Div. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a licensed minister in the Evangelical Free Church of America. Jay and his wife, Rachelle, have six children and reside in Gainesville.

Courtney Jones '07 (BA)

The newest directions in 21st Century trumpet performance are being explored and defined by Dr. Courtney D. Jones, an award-winning Conn-Selmer (Bach) performing and recording artist who has also emerged as a leading figure in contemporary perfor-

mance and pedagogy, conducting and service to inner-city youth through music outreach programs.

Joan Thomas '04 (MM)

Joan Thomas has enjoyed 16 years in Pike County Schools as the high school choral director/theatre teacher. She also served as the choral director/music professor at Gordon State College until 2020.

Michael Thomas '08 (BM)

Michael Thomas received his master’s degree in music education from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro in 2010. He interned as a repair technician at Conn-Selmer Inc. in Elkhart, Indiana in 2010-2011. Michael taught music and served as a band director in North Carolina from 2011 until 2021. He currently works at Duke Energy as a business service specialist.

2010s

David Baker '16 (BA)

David Baker is the director of Jazz and Commercial music at Utah Valley University. He completed his doctorate in jazz studies at University of Northern Colorado in 2020 and assists in running a local music non-profit called Hot House West. He is actively touring and recording with artists. Most recently he released a singer/songwriter record with collaborators in classical, jazz and folk backgrounds called “The Great, Great Noise.”

Trey English '13 (BM)

Trey English graduated with degrees in music education and music performance. He is currently the director of bands at Feagin Mill Middle School in Warner Robins, Georgia. The Feagin Mill band program is the recipient of the Georgia Music Educators Association’s Exemplary Performance Award, and the Symphonic Band has been invited to perform at the 2025 Music for All Southeastern Band Festival.

Colin Fullerton '14 (BM)

After eight years as a concertist and educator in New York, Colin Fullerton has returned home to North Carolina where he’s been appointed as the guitar instructor in Duke University’s Department of Music.

Giuseppe Gallo-Balma '19 (BM)

Giuseppe Gallo-Balma earned a master’s degree in music composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, under the tutelage of Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Paul Rudy and Yotam Haber. His music has been performed by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, JACK Quartet, Bergamot Quartet, Transient Canvas, Re(a)d Trio, NewEar and the Bugallo-Williams Piano Duo. He has also been invited to participate in several music festivals such as MATA Festival, New Music on the Point and others.

Sarah Bridges High '12 (BM)

Sarah Elizabeth Bridges High is an energetic and passionate music educator and church musician in Columbia, South Carolina. She is the director of choirs at White Knoll High School in Lexington as well as the director of music at Salem United Methodist Church in Irmo. At White Knoll she directs the Chamber Choir, T-wolf Chorale and Treble Wolves. At SUMC she conducts the Chancel and children/youth choirs, and plans and leads worship weekly. She is involved in multiple disciplines and has experience leading both children’s and adult choirs, instrumental ensembles and teaching private flute and voice lessons. She is an active member of ACDA and NAFME and FUMWA, and is an alumna of SAI.

Adam Moxley-White '19 (MM)

Adam Moxley-White is the full-time music instructor for applied brass at Cape Fear Community College (CFCC). He also teaches music appreciation and electronic music at CFCC. Adam is an active performer as both a jazz/commercial and classical trumpet player in the Carolinas. He is the Solo Chair (2nd trumpet) in the Wilmington (North Carolina) Big Band. He is also a five-year member with the Wilmington Symphony, usually playing 2nd trumpet. Adam recently co-founded the Jasmine Duo with pianist Paul Miller. The Jasmine Duo features Adam on vocals and trumpet with Paul on the piano. Adam Lives in Wilmington, with his wife, Sarah Grace, and their dog Mabel (Aussie/Border Collie).

Felix Padilla '17 (BM)

Felix Padilla won a bass trombone position with the U.S. Army West Point Band in 2019 and New Haven Symphony Orchestra in 2023. He also performed with the Cleveland Orchestra for two weeks in 2023.

Andrew Shelton '10 (MM)

Andrew Shelton has had a varied career since graduation. He has taught band, strings and choir at several schools throughout Western North Carolina. In addition, he was director of bands at Mars Hill University for the 2017-2018 school year. Andrew is now an English teacher at North Buncombe High School in Weaverville, North Carolina, where he also instructs the teacher cadet program. Andrew lives in Weaverville with his wife Kathryn and dog Moe.

Matthew Watson '13 (BA)

Matthew Watson recently celebrated his two-year anniversary at Aflac Inc. as assistant producer of Event Productions. He produces and operates audio-visual content for Aflac company events across the United States.

Andrew Wilder '16 (BM)

Dr. Andrew Wilder released his second studio album, “Mozart and Hayden: Classical Guitar Transcriptions,” which consists of 14 new and original arrangements. He is currently employed as a lecturer of guitar at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

2020s

Hanna Hrybkova '21 (BM)

Hanna Hrybkova has performed at numerous venues in Belarus, Russia, Europe and the U.S. Hanna is pursuing a master’s degree at Rice University Shepherd School of Music with esteemed professor Cho-Liang Lin. She regularly performs as a DACAMERA Young Artist and in chamber ensembles and orchestras including the Aperio, Kinetic, the New World Symphony and recently the Houston Grand Opera. In 2022 she recorded a CD with the UCLA VEM ensemble. In summer 2024 Hanna attended the Montecito Music Festival

as a fellow artist and chamber coach, and also judged at the festival’s junior competition. She also contributes by bringing music as a volunteer to low-income communities.

Thai Johnson '19, '21 (BA, CER-Artist's Diploma)

Thai Johnson completed his master’s degree at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where he now works as full-time concert stage manager. Thai will continue to live in Boston to establish a professional singing and teaching career.

Arutyun Piloyan '21 (CER-Artist's Diploma)

Arutyun Piloyan, a native of Armenia, has collaborated with internationally acclaimed musicians such as Cho-Liang Lin, Sergiu Schwartz, Timothy Pitts and Dina Vainstein. He is a winner of international competitions including “Fuat Mansurov,” Komitas and the Citta di Pesaro International Violin Competitions. As an “All-Star Competition” winner he received the 1732 “Duke of Alcantara” Stradivarius violin in 2022. He had his Carnegie Hall debut in October 2024 supported by the AGBU Foundation. Arutyun’s CD was released by Naxos in March 2024. In July 2024 he attended the Montecito Music Festival as a fellow artist and a chamber coach, gave two masterclasses and judged three festival competitions.

Spencer White '23 (BA)

Spencer White spent the summer after graduation in Aspen, Colorado as the donor relations assistant at the Aspen Music Festival and School. He enrolled in the Eastman School of Music MA in Music Leadership program. He made a huge life decision to put his career on hold to join the Peace Corps and is currently serving as a volunteer on the Caribbean Coast of Colombia. He teaches music and English in various public school settings and plays trombone in a local salsa band. After finishing his volunteer service, he will continue his studies at the Eastman School of Music.

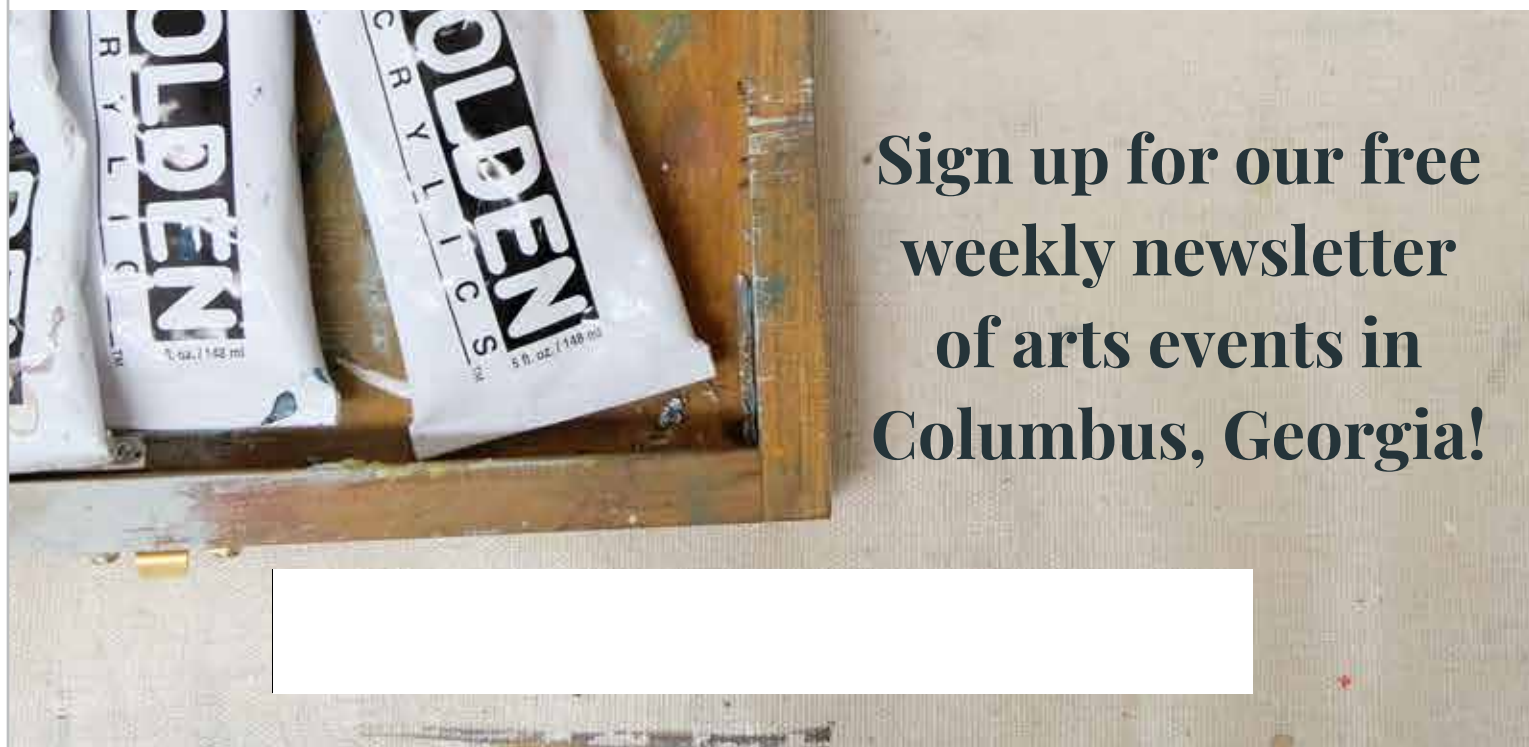
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If you are a music alumnus of CSU, we would love to hear from you.

Send an email to tommey_debra@columbusstate.edu, telling us what you’ve been up to since we last heard from you. Please give us your name when you graduated, your current name (if different), your major, the year you graduated and the news you would like us to share in the next “Fanfare.” You may also include a quality, high-resolution photo. We look forward to hearing from you!

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The Legacy Trombone quartet from the Schwob School of Music after winning the International Trombone Association's Trombone Quartet Competition at the 2024 International Trombone Festival. L-R: Drew Robertson, Wheaten Wills, Austin Murray, Anthony Cangemi, Dr. Bradley Palmer

