



# upbeat

Notes from the Concord Conservatory of Music

SPRING 2017

## Dual Performers: WHEN STUDENTS PURSUE BOTH MUSIC AND ATHLETICS

This spring, CCM will bid a fond farewell to four students who have managed to pursue both music and sports at a high level of performance, while also getting themselves successfully through high school. As they approach their last few months before graduation, we asked them to reflect on how they did it all. Their experiences demonstrate that, although music and sports can compete for a student’s time, they can also be complementary pursuits. At CCM and in their school groups, these musicians learned about goal setting, discipline, and practice—all of which served them well on the soccer pitch, the football field, the basketball court, or the fencing strip.

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**STUDENT: JOSH ALLEN**

Instrument: Baritone Saxophone

Sport: Football

There's a high correlation between sports and music in terms of having the mental fortitude to push forward. Playing football, you need a lot of physical and mental strength, while also being smart and light on your feet. There are many plays and formations to learn, just like there are many notes to learn on the staff and a few different ways to play some of those notes. For both football and my specific instrument, I also need a great deal of lung capacity: After playing football for four years and baritone saxophone for six, my lung capacity has certainly increased. As for juggling schedules, I would often be running from place to place, especially with other extra-curricular activities. I barely had time to eat and do homework, especially in my sophomore and junior years. There were always conflicts with concerts, practices and rehearsals, but we made it work. That's what we do as both musicians and athletes.



**STUDENT: CLAIRE DETTELBACH**

Instruments: Alto Saxophone, Piano

Sports: Soccer, Fencing

I take alto saxophone lessons with Carlos Averhoff Jr., and piano lessons with Yelena Beriyeva. I also play the alto saxophone for my high school concert band, and I play piano for my high school jazz band and pit orchestra. I've been playing soccer since elementary school, and this fall I was on the varsity team. I also fence foil on the women's varsity fencing team.

Sports and music overlap in two main areas: confidence and discipline. Although I've been doing it for 12 years now, performing at recitals still makes me nervous, no matter how long I've been preparing a certain piece. Sports, too, demand a similar sort of self-assurance: Especially in individual sports, it takes a lot of confidence and a couple of deep breaths to step out onto the strip with your entire team watching you. Having a background in music made it easier for me to tune out the distractions and focus while on the fencing strip or the soccer field.

Music taught me that in order for practicing to become fruitful and even fun, you have to be invested in it for yourself, not just for your teacher. When I was younger, piano practicing was a real chore. Somewhere along the line though, it became rewarding, and I began practicing with the knowledge that everything is more fun when you're good at it. With fencing and soccer, too, practice makes it more fun.

Many people quit music in high school because they think they don't have the time for it, but music can actually be a huge stress-reliever. Even just half an hour of piano at night after homework, whether I'm practicing or playing random pieces for fun, lets me wind down from busy high school days.



**STUDENT: ZOE DETTELBACH**

Instrument: Clarinet

Sports: Soccer, Basketball

I've been playing soccer and basketball through all four years of high school. I was the captain of the women's basketball team this winter. At CCM, I study the clarinet with Liz Leehey, and I also play clarinet for the Concord-Carlisle High School concert band.

It has been great to have the balance of sports and music in my life. High school students can be stressed from school work and planning for the future, and for me, music has been an incredible way to alleviate stress, in the same way that sports can. Having band during the school day means that, for an hour, I'm able to put down my pencil and paper or computer and just focus on making music. It allows me to relax and express myself through my instrument with a group of my peers. It's an entirely different environment than the classroom, which is one of the things I love about it. Sports alleviate stress for me, too, through competition; while band does so through working with others to make music. I can't imagine my high school years without them, and I intend to continue my involvement with both when I head off to college this fall.



**STUDENT: LYDIA YODER**

Instrument: Cello

Sport: Nordic Skiing

I have been playing the cello for 13 years and have been cross-country skiing for about eleven years. I learned cello first, and the rhythm really helped my coordination and technique with skiing because it relies largely on timing. Skiing, in turn, made me a much more organized person because I had to manage my workouts with school and cello. It forced me to stay organized and think about what I needed and wanted to get done during my day. I am a captain of the cross-country ski team at my high school, and the leadership skills I have developed from that helped me take a leadership role in music groups and mentoring programs. Balancing both athletics and music can be a logistical nightmare at times, but the trouble is well worth the enjoyment I get from both activities.



# Fiddling Away a Saturday

## CCM TAKES ON AMERICANA MUSIC



One Saturday afternoon in March, a group of 17 musicians, ranging in age from single digits to not-polite-to-ask, and on instruments ranging from violin to ukulele, gathered for an Old-Time Americana Fiddling Workshop. Participants learned to play the tune, “Sail Away Ladies,” without a sheet of music in sight. The workshop was led by renowned fiddlers Laura Cortese and Valerie Thompson, both from the band Laura Cortese and the Dance Cards.

The pair first introduced the group to Americana fiddling, teaching the basics of playing by ear, then split the musicians into two groups—one for the violin players and the other for ukulele, guitar, mandolin, banjo, cello, and bass. Each group had fun perfecting their own parts. The violin group even created a few original verses of their own about a frog to teach their fellow workshop attendees. Much laughter ensued while the group came up with many different rhymes about the frog landing on their heads. Within two hours, the group had reassembled to play and sing the tune all together, almost like magic.

For those who have never played by ear before, there can be a learning curve, Cortese says. “You have to take the time to hear the melody, internalize it, then get your fingers to play that melody,” she says. “But once you do, it’s like those songs you sang as a child that will be with you forever.”

Andrew West was among those at the workshop who had never learned by ear before. The banjo player says he has taught himself an assortment of children’s songs to play for his infant son, “but I’ve never learned a tune in a group like that,” he says. “It was really fun.” When he got home, he continued to tinker on the tune, working out a few kinks and feeling “super pumped” about what he had learned.



Laura Cortese and Valerie Thompson brought pure fun to the jam session at CCM!



A diverse group of musicians gathered to create their own version of an Old-Time Americana Fiddling song.

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*“It’s about connecting with others and enjoying playing music with them”*

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Cortese says the process of learning by ear is adjustable, based on the mix of players and abilities in the room, and the fun is in this mix. “I’ve always enjoyed the fact that this music is something that someone can start playing when they’re very young or in retirement or anywhere in between. This music is not about being virtuosic player, it’s about connecting with others and enjoying playing music with them,” she says. “You might learn a tune because the melody is beautiful, or you might learn it because you know your friend likes to play that tune, and you want to have a shared repertoire so you can play music together.”

Kate Yoder, CCM executive director and founder, hopes that this workshop is just the beginning, and that multigenerational groups will return for more opportunities to explore this music, so different from traditional or classical offerings. And so much fun in the mix.



Andrew West’s enthusiasm helped energize the group.

# There's No Place Like CCM

The winter party on March 4th offered guests the rare chance to spend an evening inside the glittering Emerald City. Getting there was as easy as navigating to the deCordova Museum in Lincoln, with none of the hazards of traveling by tornado. The evening's theme was a tribute to the iconic song of the *Wizard of Oz*, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," which the American Film Institute ranked first on its 100 Greatest American Movie Music list. "It's an important genre of music and one that's fun to celebrate with the families in our community," says Kate Yoder, CCM's executive director, and founder.

A full community of musicians, students, teachers, families, and friends came out to enjoy the festivities—kicked off with a cocktail hour, then dinner, silent and live auctions, and a raffle, thanks to two CCM student volunteers, Olivia Boyle and Julian Dai, worked the crowd selling tickets. Live music included performances by faculty member Gabriela Martina—a jazz singer originally from Switzerland who must be the rare performer to jazz up "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" with a yodel—and the Bayside Band, featuring CCM's Chaim Burstein. Special thanks go to Master of Ceremonies Geoff Edgers and auctioneer Ailie Byers as well as those who brought the decorations to brilliant life.

In all, the emerald evening raised more than \$62,000, which supports CCM's musical programming, gives strength to the talented faculty, and ensures CCM's continued stability. More specifically, it allows us to replace well-worn keyboards for



Charlie Morrison, Lucy McBride, Nancy Morrison and Bob McBride enjoying the cocktail hour at the CCM Emerald City.

the group classes and provide critical financial assistance for students. "This year we have granted over \$22,000 in financial assistance, which is \$6,000 more than last year. The demand continues to increase, and it is our mission to make excellent music lessons accessible to all who want to participate," says Yoder.

Particular thanks go to our sponsors, Avison Young, Cambridge Savings Bank, and Woodman & Eaton, P.C. *Especially with their help, dreams really do come true.*



CCM faculty member Gabriela Martina performed the feature song, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.



Each beautiful flower centerpiece was adorned with a *Wizard of Oz* quote to inspire us all!



Auctioneer Ailie Byers and CCM Executive Director Kate Yoder got the generous crowd excited to support CCM.

# Later-in-Life Learners

## TAKING UP MUSIC LESSONS IN ADULTHOOD

Jane Anderson started piano lessons when she was in grammar school but, like many before and after her, stopped sometime in high school. Her interest never stalled, though, and Jane enjoyed music throughout her life. After retiring from her career as a software engineer, she took a long hard look at the piano occupying her living room, the same instrument her parents had purchased when she was a child. "It was just sitting there," she says. "I thought I'd like to go back to playing it again." She started taking lessons with CCM's Keith Kirchoff about three years ago. Jane is one of a growing number of adult students of music who are either picking up where they earlier left off or taking up a new instrument for the first time in retirement.

Practicing music is good for the body and soul for countless reasons, of course, but there are particular benefits for those of a certain age: Studies suggest that music can have a positive effect on brain function, physical dexterity, and—particularly for those who performed in CCM's adult recital and social in April—the sense of community that comes from shared experience. The recital featured a number of individuals, as well as ensemble groups, which offer a natural point of connection for CCM's adult students.

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*"I certainly spend more time practicing now than I did many years ago"*

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Jane performed Mendelssohn's "Venetian Boat Song," and she doesn't mind admitting that the idea of performing makes her nervous. "I'd be much more comfortable just staying home in my living room, but this is part of learning. I think it's good to force yourself to do this," she says.

Like other adult students, Jane says the learning process is a bit different at this stage of life. For starters, she has the luxury of time to practice and the discipline to see that it happens. "I certainly spend more time practicing now than I did many years ago," she says, and with that discipline comes the benefit



of progress. The use of technology can be a revelation for those who haven't studied an instrument since the time when phones were used only for phone calls. Anderson has been trying to unlearn the habit of depressing the pedal too early, for example. "Keith can take a video on his phone of me playing, and I can see immediately if I'm putting my foot down at the right time, or I can see my hand position. Hearing the music back is really helpful, too, and of course we didn't have that in the old days," she says.

Many retirement-age students point to another indispensable aid, decidedly more low-tech: drugstore reading glasses. Jane says she never needed glasses when she studied piano as a child, but now she wears bifocals. "And they don't work at the piano at all. The music is at one distance, the keys are someplace else, the window is never in the right place," she says. But a simple pair of drugstore readers solved that problem. "I cannot play without them," she says.

Like eyesight, memory can also diminish with youth, making one's ability to memorize music more challenging later in life. And unfortunately there is no technological solution to that one (yet). But the mental exercise of learning music by memory is a worthy challenge that, like playing music itself, helps keep a person young.

# Coming to CCM in the Fall

## Bluegrass & Old-Time Classes

This upbeat, and lively music is coming to CCM! Grab your fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bass, or banjo and join this group class and jam session. Folks learn by playing in this song-based setting. All levels are welcome.

## Music Achievement Program

Designed to provide enrichment activities that encourage students to seek a well-rounded music education beyond their private lessons and also connect with other musicians.

## 1st Annual Piano Festival

A concert featuring CCM's accomplished piano students.



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The mission of the Concord Conservatory of Music is to foster a sense of community through music by providing accessible, high-quality music education and performance opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels.

Located in the West Concord Union Church, our offerings include group classes and private music lessons for children and adults, from beginners to advanced. We also host the monthly Concert & Lecture Series.

We welcome you to explore our programs online at [www.ConcordConservatory.org](http://www.ConcordConservatory.org), or give us a call at (978) 369-0010

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