



Harmonizing for Health

IMPROVING LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

You probably know someone living with Parkinson's Disease. Parkinson's is a progressive nervous system disorder that affects one's motor functions—it can cause tremors, stiffness, and make it hard for a person to move around and carry out everyday tasks (Parkinson's Foundation, 2018). Along with making movement difficult, Parkinson's can result in difficulty speaking, poor mental health, and social isolation (Elkouzi, 2018).

CCM's mission has always been to build community and bring music into people's lives, and CCM's Singing with Parkinson's program does just that. The class began in the winter of 2019 and is led by CCM faculty Dr. Greta Feeney. She uses classical vocal technique principles to help students work through some of the voice and movement-related symptoms of Parkinson's Disease.

"People with Parkinson's disease can experience a lack of responsiveness in the muscles in their throats and faces, and the exercises we do in our class are intended to address these

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Letter from the Director

BEING IN SERVICE



Kate Yoder, CCM Executive Director and Founder

It has been fifteen vibrant years since The Concord Conservatory of Music first opened its doors. When I look at CCM today, I see a massive difference between where we started and where we are now. Hundreds of people have joined our community either as students, faculty, or donors, and each has added another brick to the foundation we laid way back in 2005. Our faculty has grown from six to thirty-six instructors spanning upwards of 20 different disciplines and dozens of unique offerings for private, group, and ensemble instruction. I've had the joy of introducing new programs like American Roots, the Music Achievement Program, and more to consistently provide new and exciting opportunities for our students.

For our 15th anniversary, we are not only celebrating the events we have held or who we have taught but what we have been able to give back to our community. CCM's purpose has always been one of service. CCM was founded as a home for music education, for students to perform and practice together, so that they may foster potential and support one another. CCM's purpose is to not only build a strong and flourishing community, but also to make that community accessible to all walks of life regardless of background, identity, or age. Learning music enable critical thinking, and our young students learn the collaborative and creative skills to be successful in later years.

Over the years, I have come to see CCM's purpose in a new light. I see it not only as an accessible place for musicians to come together to learn and perform but as a place through which we can give back to the community that has let us flourish all these years. As an institution, we have the obligation of Being-In-Service to our community. To me, this means not only making music education accessible but also going out into the larger community of Concord and its surrounding towns and playing an active role in enacting positive change. It means giving back and supporting those around us, not with passivity, but with intention and effort.

Our efforts to give back have birthed programs such as the Parkinson's Chorus and community performances such as the Rivercrest program; bringing music to those who have difficulty leaving their homes. The arts play a vital role in our community, and there is so much more that CCM will do to meet those needs. We will listen, and we will learn so that we can create innovative programs through which we can do the most good for the people around us.

Looking at CCM today, I could not be prouder of our community of talented, generous, and caring individuals who, even through the hardships produced by COVID-19, have risen to the challenge of providing a reliable and resilient support system. Our school could never have been possible without the unmatched brilliance and generosity of hundreds of faculty, Board members, supporters, staff, volunteers, students, and families, and for this, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. 🎵

A handwritten signature of Kate Yoder in black ink.

changes," says Feeney, "They include exercises designed to stimulate the muscles in the cheek apples (the smile muscles), and to trigger the soft palate (the uvula, or 'yawning space') in the back of the throat."

Dr. Feeney keeps classes fresh and exciting by singing in basic unison and in two, three, and four-part arrangements. "This makes our program unique," says Dr. Feeney, "most comparable programs do not include harmony singing." In addition to singing together in harmony, the class practices sight-singing, rhythm exercises with a metronome, and musical tongue-twisters, which "enhance executive function, gait, and overall mind-body awareness."

Along with improving some of the physical symptoms associated with Parkinson's Disease, classes can address the social isolation that many people living with Parkinson's experience. Classes are a chance for students to come together and build new and lasting friendships. Over this past year, Singing With Parkinson's has helped to keep its students healthy and active and filled a critical social need during the global COVID-19 pandemic by keeping students connected to each other. Even as CCM was forced to end in-person lessons, Singing With Parkinson's has continued to meet virtually once a week for classes, during which they cover a wide range of music.

In addition to their regular repertoire, this summer, the "Singing With Parkinson's" class took part in a worldwide initiative to create a compilation of vocal students with Parkinson's Disease singing together. "It is an honor to be asked to sing in the Parkinson's Disease Virtual Chorus, which includes over 160 singers from across the globe, and is spearheaded by Dr. Elizabeth Stegemoller at Iowa State University," says Dr. Feeney. The virtual chorus performed Dionne Warwick's "What the World Needs Now" on September 8th for Renée Fleming's Music and Mind Webinar. "Fleming is a renowned American opera singer who now serves as Artistic Advisor at large to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts," explains Dr. Feeney, "Her live webinar, a collaboration with the National Institutes of Health, is a Sound Health Initiative that explores intersections between music, health, and neuroscience."

This fall, Singing With Parkinson's will continue to meet online at 11AM with both familiar and new exercises being practiced every week. The class is excited to prepare for holiday selections with the PD Virtual Chorus. The chorus is partially funded by a grant from the APDA-MA Chapter. "Feel the Rhythm: Music Therapy and Parkinson's Disease." *Parkinson's Foundation*, 2018, www.parkinson.org/blog/research/Music-Therapy-Parkinsons-Disease-Feel-Rhythm.

Elkouzi, Ahmad. "What Is Parkinson's?" *Parkinson's Foundation*, 2018, www.parkinson.org/understanding-parkinsons/what-is-parkinsons.



Phil Sargent

BEYOND ROCK AND JAZZ

You know that incredible feeling when you turn on the radio and your favorite song is on? That's the feeling CCM guitar faculty Phil Sargent wants to inspire in his students. He says, "I don't care if it's Beyonce or Metallica... I want [my students] to be psyched about whatever it is they are doing." His biggest fear as a teacher would be to have a student leave a lesson less inspired to play than when they came.



Sargent was initially drawn to guitar when he was 12 years old. He began playing by ear, mostly the hard-rock and heavy metal of the mid-eighties, and his playing and passion for music took off from there. "I would practice all day long, I was obsessed," says Sargent. He finds his inspiration from everything, not just music. Phil says inspiration "could be a really great book...or a Shostakovich string quartet, or a great guitar solo". He thinks of inspiration as having two parts: "there's the intellectual, and then there's the emotional, heart-strings part of it." These days, Sargent performs largely jazz-inspired improvisational music.

Another little-known side of Phil's music studies and ongoing interest is Balkan music, mostly Bulgarian. "I initially got introduced to the music through the "downtown avant-garde" movement out of NYC. Artists like Masada, Brad Shepik, Chris Speed, Pachora. I was fascinated with the odd meters used in the music, so for years, I would study the music of Brad Shepik (a guitarist for famous Bulgarian musicians Yuri Yunakov and

Ivo Papasov) and eventually studied with him down in NYC." Last year, Sargent performed with Czech violinist/vocalist/composer Iva Bittova and the MIT Symphony Orchestra, where they performed a pair of pieces by Czech female composers, including Bittova's Zvon. Sargent played with a jazz combo, performing "all classical guitar with the odd Balkan meters, a mix of modern jazz and classical movements. It was very interesting!"

In addition to teaching private guitar lessons, Sargent instructs CCM's Rock Lab ensembles. "It's really easy for me to be pumped teaching [Rock Lab]," he says, "I remember being that age and that first time playing with a drummer in a band... and that was it for me". He loves the energy that his students bring when they experience playing in a band for the first time themselves. "The kids just light up," he says. Sargent works with three different Rock Lab groups, and he decides what they'll play by the kids' interests. His students come up with a list of songs that they are interested in, and from there, Sargent picks songs and arrangements that will push his students to improve technically. He makes sure to strike a balance between being technically challenging and fun to play to have all the excitement and energy of playing what interests them and improve as musicians. 🎵



We're All in This Together



TOP Instructor Chieko Loy is prepared to teach onsite wearing her new CCM mask.

BOTTOM Learning how to hold a bow properly in an online lesson, demonstrated by violin instructor, Eric Mugrala.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has persisted throughout the summer and into this fall, CCM's faculty and students have needed to be both flexible and innovative in their approach to music education. At CCM, we have remained dedicated to not only the safety of our students and faculty but also Concord and the surrounding towns, which we all call home. This means that over the summer, all classes were held online. It also means that as we enter the academic year, CCM is prepared to meet faculty as well as students and their families wherever they feel comfortable in terms of continuing education throughout the duration of COVID-19. For some, this means returning to in-person lessons while following strict social distancing and sanitation measures. For others, this might mean continuing to take lessons via the Distance Learning Program for the foreseeable future.

CCM Director Kate Yoder has been hard at work researching how to implement the best possible social distancing and sanitation practices as recommended by the CDC as well as Massachusetts state and local officials. Yoder jokes, "I never expected to become an expert in air purification when I founded CCM, but here we are."

While private instruction can maintain proper social distancing within CCM's current classrooms, larger group ensembles and classes have needed to get a bit more creative. CCM has used the outdoor spaces at our school so that group classes can resume practicing in-person, but outdoors.

CCM has needed to get creative with more than just a classroom set-up. Our first ever online recitals took place throughout May and were a resounding success. While not the same as an in-person performance, online recitals proved to have some unique benefits of their own. Some students remarked that it was nice getting to redo their recordings until they got it perfect, and many families were excited to find that their friends and relatives could tune in and watch them perform from all over the world! The Adult Soiree, the annual adult student only recital opportunity, was also online in the spring and even used the Zoom breakout rooms for pre-recital socializing with cocktails.

CCM has also used the Distance Learning Program as an opportunity to develop new programming for our students like Track Builders, which teaches students to use GarageBand, and Songwriters, where students learn to compose their own music.

COVID-19 has proved to be a challenging obstacle in everyone's lives, but the CCM community has certainly risen to the occasion. Students and faculty have learned a host of new ways to implement technology in the classroom and have developed their skills using the internet as well as cool new apps. Technology has also let CCM stay connected as a community even while in isolation. Group classes like the Girls Chorus have found that the Distance Learning Program is an excellent way to stay connected with friends without ever leaving their homes. And with the Distance Learning Program being entirely virtual, some students have been able to take part in classes from across the country! 🎵

2020 Making a Difference

This year, it became more apparent than ever that CCM has an extraordinary group of faculty. They are not only talented musicians but, most importantly, they care about our students, inspire their learning, and are dedicated to creating a culture of learning music. CCM is also supported by a kind and dedicated staff that makes everything we do possible. We are not CCM without these two groups of amazing people. There was a time before the COVID-19 when we were together and sharing our best year to date. CCM student enrollment and participation in activities beyond private lessons was at its highest, with more students participating in our Music Achievement Program and group classes.

After the shut-down, CCM continued to provide excellent music education because of our faculty, staff, and you, our supporters. CCM continues to make a lasting impact on the lives of individual students and families and to enrich our community's engagement with music. Thanks to your support, we could strengthen current programs, fulfill our financial assistance commitment, and keep our faculty whole. Thank you for helping our children and adults find their musical talents and the joy of making music.

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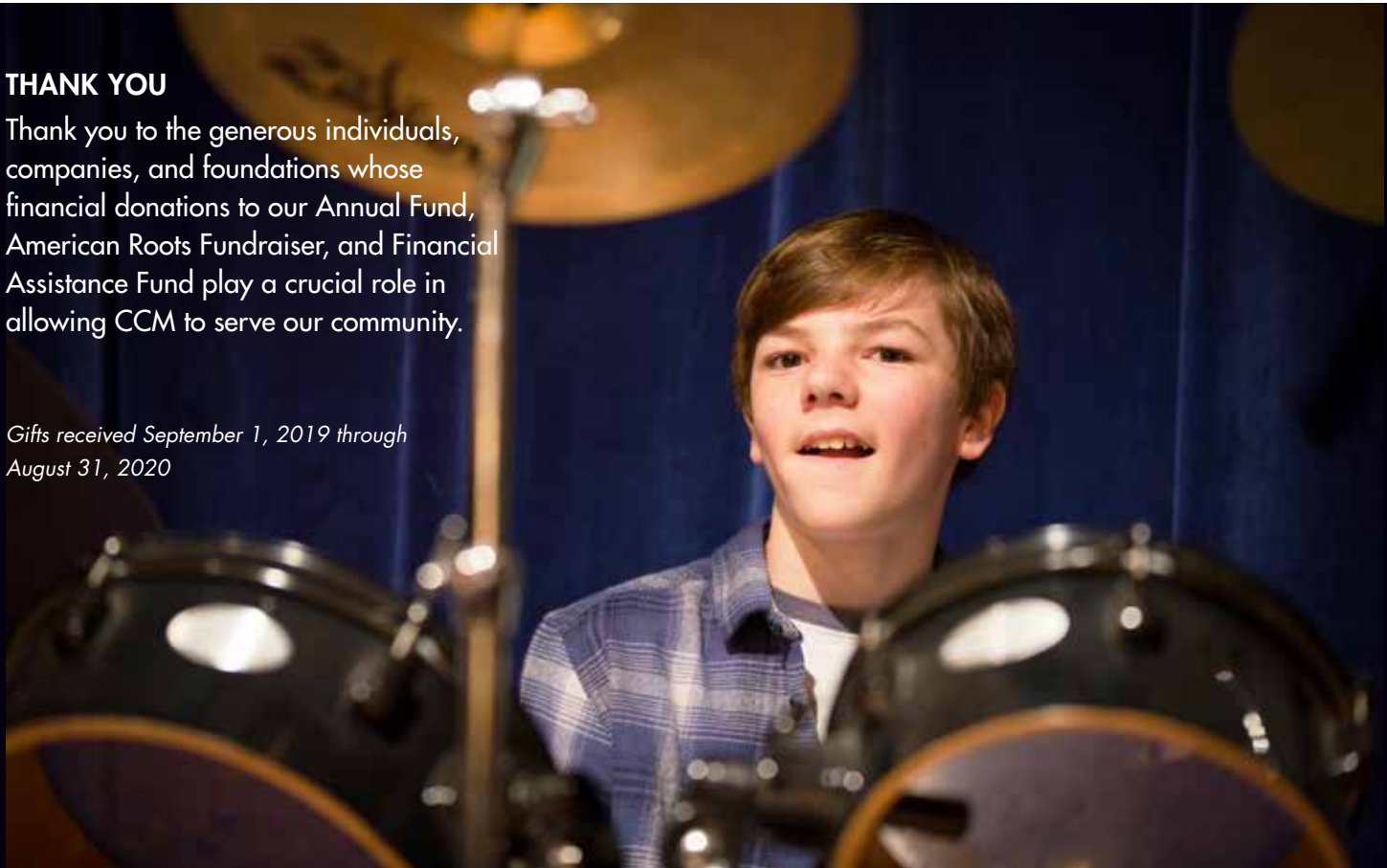
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THANK YOU

Thank you to the generous individuals, companies, and foundations whose financial donations to our Annual Fund, American Roots Fundraiser, and Financial Assistance Fund play a crucial role in allowing CCM to serve our community.

Gifts received September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020





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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, workshops, private lessons, and jam sessions for children and adults, from beginners to advanced. We also host a Faculty Concert Series featuring CCM Faculty and local and nationally acclaimed artists.

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

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