

Notes from The Concord Conservatory of Music

upbeat

Spring 2015



Concert and Lecture Series

Extending our Impact to a Larger Community

Concert attendees don't just listen to the music—they learn, appreciate, and understand the music.

*A*s a community music school, we spend a great deal of time thinking about how we can better serve the needs of our friends, neighbors, and students. How do we reach out and extend our impact? Your valuable feedback and financial contributions have already helped us broaden our reach.

This fall, we rolled out a new program called The Concert & Lecture Series, curated by CCM double bass faculty member Ehud Ettun. Ehud enthusiastically stepped up to lead the series, which focused on the works of J.S. Bach in the fall and The Musical Form in the spring.

Each series is comprised of four concerts & lectures organized around the series theme. Ehud selects music appropriate to the session, assembles a group of musicians (a combination of CCM faculty members and guest musicians), and prepares an engaging lecture around the topic. These talks encourage audience participation, skillfully mixing humor with “aha” moments.

The success of the series is that it appeals to both those with no musical background and seasoned concert goers alike. Many community members

are ticket holders for the entire series, and this is their first experience at CCM. They appreciate the opportunity to learn from our expert faculty, and to listen to some wonderful music. Such outreach wouldn't be possible without your support, and underwriting by Middlesex Savings Bank and additional support from Newbury Court. We look forward to next year's series, which will move to Friday nights and Sunday afternoons—come check it out!



Concert and Lecture Series curator Ehud Ettun's enthusiasm is infectious, and he's able to share that passion with the community through the series.

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The Concord Conservatory of Music

www.concordconservatory.org



Sarah Rodgers, CCM Board Member Ellen Rice, and Suzanne Rutstein(l-r) strike a pose at the Motown party.



Talented CCM student Tori Gittens.



CCM percussion faculty member Jorge Perez-Albela kept us on the dance floor!

Partying with a Purpose

Motown party's success underscores your support

On a brisk March night, we gathered together at the deCordova Sculpture Garden and Museum for CCM Goes Motown, our winter gala and largest fundraiser of the year. It was a fantastic party—with many CCM family and community supporters in attendance. There was a striking feeling as we entered the transformed gallery, swept up in the elegant period atmosphere. CCM's jazz faculty with guest musicians made for a hot Motown band, performing the hits that made this music so memorable. We socialized, danced, and put bids on dozens of silent auction offerings. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to raise \$72,500 that evening, helping us to continue our commitment to superb music instruction for all ages and to strengthen our music community.

Piano faculty member Keith Kirchoff delivered a passionate message to us about the importance of our financial assistance program. "As a young piano student, I was the beneficiary of financial assistance. Those donors made all the difference. They opened a door for me that might have remained shut otherwise; it changed my life. Tonight, you have that opportunity. Please give generously." You certainly delivered; we raised \$10,800 in financial assistance funding that evening so that every talented musician can have the opportunity to learn music.

Our emcee for the evening was the irrepressible David Robichaud, four-time Emmy Award-winning reporter from WBZ TV. He spoke of the timeless songwriting of Motown—themes including love, longing, and striving—and wryly linked them to the present day. The room was full of energy, and the live auction which followed proved that, as so many of you stepped up and bid on the impressive items.

And then Tori Gittens took the stage, looking and singing like a seasoned pro. Tori has studied voice at CCM with her instructor Elizabeth Johnson for over 8 years. She performed fabulous renditions of "Baby Love" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" with the band. Tori is a senior at Wayland High School and hopes to pursue musical theater in college.




Theresa Lober-McIlhenny shares an anecdote with the table.

Your kind donations and enthusiasm make all the difference at CCM, enabling us to create opportunities for talented musicians like Tori—opportunities that shape lives. We sincerely appreciate your continued support and for making our party a memorable night.

We don't always raise money for big, highly visible things like new pianos. Infrastructure is critical to our growth and success, and your donations have allowed us to effect some dramatic changes in important areas. This summer we are pleased to roll out a new, streamlined registration system and a newly designed website.

Rachel Gawell: Striking Chords with Students

High caliber faculty for a high caliber school

 It's 5:00 pm on a Monday afternoon, and Rachel Gawell is holding court. Several young kids gather around her as she gives a pop quiz: "What's the second line on the treble staff?" she asks. The kids raise their hands to answer the question for the prize—a treasured sticker from Rachel's extensive supply. "I go to party stores, art supply stores...wherever. I'm always on the lookout for interesting ones." She's successful in her effort, as the kids won't put the stickers on anything—they want to save them for their own collection.

Rachel grew up in Annapolis, Maryland, in a household that valued music. Her paternal grandfather was the organist and conductor for his church choir. Her father plays piano, and her mother plays guitar. "It's important to create a culture that values music," Rachel says. "It pays off in so many ways."

Rachel began playing violin in fourth grade, but switched to cello, preferring the low notes. "I always had a flair for the dramatic," she says. In eighth grade, Rachel joined the Peabody Sinfonietta at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University. This competitive group tackled some tough music, including Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Mahler's Songs of a Wayfarer. "From that moment on, I never considered doing anything but playing and teaching the cello."

Rachel loves to teach at CCM, and finds meaningful challenges in the variety of students she works with. Setting appropriate goals for each student is satisfying, and enables her to reflect back on her own learning process. Rachel says, "For example, maybe a reasonable goal is to develop a decent vibrato. When you succeed, that's a huge achievement." Teaching young kids is something Rachel truly

enjoys. "They're trying to figure out how the world is constructed, and you need to back up sometimes because they're not on the same page as you. I was giving one of my youngest students some feedback on their left hand position, and then I realized that they weren't sure which hand I was talking about!"

Teaching is one strong component of Rachel's makeup; playing cello professionally is another. She's excelled in many musical genres: classical, of course; bluegrass with Harpeth Rising; an experimental noise improvisation group from the Netherlands called Anorak; an indie folk group called The Ballroom Thieves; and Baba Sonya, a new indie rock project. Add to that studio projects and a wedding here and there, and Rachel definitely keeps her cello skills fresh. "You've got to convince yourself that learning is a challenge, and take that on. I wanted to record Bastille Pompeii—there's lots of rhythm elements in that piece, and I wasn't even sure it was

"You've got to convince yourself that learning is a challenge, and take that on."

playable as a solo cello. I taught myself the techniques I needed to make that happen. And if I feel like my classical technique needs to be challenged, I return to Prokofiev—that's impossibly hard."

Regarding CCM, Rachel praises Kate, the board, and the donors. "They have put such a solid structure in place. The generosity of the donors enables the conservatory to run well. It kind of comes down



Rachel Gawell brings boundless energy, high spirits, and musical virtuosity to her students at CCM.

to the nitty gritty—the staff makes scheduling easy for the faculty. The registration system is good and the music is so highly valued by Kate, the staff, parents, and students alike. It's a terrific place."

The ability to attract and retain superb faculty members such as Rachel Gawell depends on many factors: infrastructure, a caring community, and a strong sense of mission. Underlying all these important elements is a strong financial foundation, without which nothing else is possible. You should feel proud of what your generous support brings about here.

Board of Directors Adds New Members

Bringing additional enthusiasm and commitment to the CCM vision



Andrea Darling brings a broad range of expertise (and some violin skill!) to the CCM Board.

Andrea Darling

We extend a hearty welcome to Andrea Darling, who moved to our area recently with her family. Her older son Alex plays the piano and takes lessons with Keith Kirchoff, and younger son Nicholas studies violin with Perry Tal. "It's remarkable to see how both my boys have progressed since they began lessons at CCM this fall. The caliber of the faculty is extraordinary." Andrea earned her undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College, a master's degree

in Romance studies from Duke Graduate School, and also holds a law degree from Duke University. She practices law as assistant general counsel at Mathematica Policy Research, a social policy research company. Andrea admires that CCM is the whole package—a community-centered organization dedicated to providing first-rate musical education to students of all levels. "I'd like to help CCM get the word out about its great faculty and variety of music education options. Over time, I'd like to see more collaboration with other local groups and schools to bring music into the lives of everyone in the community."



Peter Blum's experience as a long-time CCM student gives him a valuable perspective for our board.

Peter Blum

We are pleased to announce that Peter Blum has also joined our board. Peter has been a piano student at CCM for 7 years, and currently studies with Lorna Henderson. ("One good measure of Lorna's success is that I'm motivated to practice every day," says Peter.) He earned his undergraduate degree from Trinity College, and holds an MBA from The Harvard Business School. Peter is a founding partner of Mayo Capital

Partners, LLC, a Boston-based investment management firm. His long affiliation with CCM as a student gives him a terrific perspective. "The flow of students in and around the conservatory is energizing. I really enjoy hearing the sounds of piano and violin floating out of the building as I approach the place." Peter strongly believes that CCM can become the preeminent musical fixture in Concord and the surrounding towns, and continue to attract a broad reach of students—from beginner to expert. "CCM is a great investment," Peter says. "There's an opportunity to strengthen an enduring, thriving musical presence in the region. Concord has terrific art and theater, a hospital, fantastic schools and libraries...we have the chance to shape the future of our musical community."

Appreciation for the Straight Shooter

For the past five years, Joyce Meadows has kept the CCM train running on time. As our finance manager, Joyce was responsible for all student billing, the payroll, and business administration. But her influence was much greater than the sum of the many roles she played here—she's a straight shooter, and we all relied on her take on things. Joyce slogged here on many a snowy day to be sure that the payroll was completed on schedule, and accurately. She has decided to retire and create a bit more time for herself. She's an avid sailor and is anticipating the arrival of her first grandchild. We'll miss her, and we're encouraging her to visit frequently. We welcome Karen Kashian as our new finance manager.

The Concord Conservatory of Music is a non-profit institution dedicated to providing excellence in music education for students of all ages in the Concord area.

Located in the West Concord Union Church, our offerings include Early Childhood Programs, Group Classes, Adult Offerings, Jazz Combos, Ensembles and Private Lessons in piano, strings, jazz, percussion, voice and woodwinds.

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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