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The Concord Conservatory of Music

www.concordconservatory.org

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News at CCM

Free Trial Week—Do you want to learn a new instrument, or take your playing to the next level? CCM is offering free trial lessons during the week of December 5-10. Free introductory lessons are available for voice, trumpet, saxophone, flute, violin, viola, piano, guitar, and bass. Please plan to bring your instrument. Feel free to inquire about other instruments not mentioned. Call us with any questions. **Sign-up today!**

Spring Semester Registration—[Register today](#) for private and group instruction and secure your time slot. Spring semester private lessons start on January 10th and group classes begin on January 23rd. **[There's a class for everyone at CCM!](#)**

Upcoming All School Student Recitals--Here's an excellent way to help motivate your child to practice and successfully learn a piece--watch his or her peers to perform. We invite you, your family and friends to support your child's accomplishments! Please join us for these exciting recitals on:

*Saturday, December 10th, at 1:00, 2:30, and 4:00 pm

*Thursday, December 15th, at 7:00 pm

Save the Date, March 4th! Be prepared to join us to see how we transform the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum into the **CCM Emerald City!**

You can make a difference today!

CCM provides high-quality musical education and performance opportunities to more than 400 students, plus offers financial assistance so that all who want can participate. **[Won't you please give the gift of local music by making a year-end gift to CCM?](#)** Thank you for your generosity!

Behind the Scenes – Joining the Conversation

If one instrument represents one voice, ensemble playing is a conversation.

When a student picks up a new instrument, it's of course not unlike learning a foreign language. That metaphor stretches quite naturally as we think about the path a student takes from learning to play a new instrument to participating in an ensemble, where music becomes a conversation between players—a step that offers tremendous opportunities for growth but also requires foundational learning to make it successful.



A beginning musician first studies the mechanics of this new language: Think back to your earliest days in a foreign language class, learning the fundamentals of accents and vowel sounds, getting an ear for it. In music, a student starts by learning basic fingerings, for example, or how to interpret the notations on a page, how to

connect them, and how to use the instrument to vocalize. From there, with practice, a student moves on to study theory, how to find one's voice in this new language, expanding range and expressiveness, while still building on those fundamentals.

If we extend the metaphor just a bit further, once a student has some mastered some of the basics, participating in an ensemble is like joining a conversation. When we play in a group, we focus as much on listening as on our own playing. We listen to whoever is carrying the melody, we listen for rhythmic and harmonic coordination, we listen and look for the cues between participants to stay together. In this setting, students can learn how to contribute to a conversation, to work together toward a shared goal, where the learning opportunities multiply in number and richness.

Faculty Profile - Margaret Romero, Faculty Member & Ensemble Community Coordinator

Music as Opportunity - *Meet CCM's new trumpet instructor and community coordinator*

CCM's new trumpet instructor and community coordinator, Margaret Romero, will be the first to tell you that music can open doors to new opportunities, but she certainly didn't see it that way as a child. Her family had a rule: piano lessons until you finished eighth



grade, and for Romero it felt like a forced march. Then one day, she accidentally left the door of the kitchen freezer open. Unfortunately for Romero, her mother had spent that summer in DePere, Wis., stocking the freezer with summer berries, pies, and meat for the season ahead. “I left the door open”—and here she sighs heavily—“and everything was ruined.” Her mother came up with what she thought was a fitting punishment: flute lessons. “I ended up loving it,” Romero says.

By the time she left for college at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she had performed in the all-state orchestra and racked up a nice pile of awards. However, at a school like UW-Madison, marching band is the thing; playing flute in the marching band, however, is not a thing. So, she found a trumpet at a yard sale and spent the summer practicing. The next fall, when about 800 kids auditioned for 100 spots, Romero landed one in the trumpet section. “I ended up loving the trumpet,” she says. In short order, she was majoring in music education, which she followed up with a master’s and a doctorate in trumpet performance at the University of Colorado, Boulder. “Switching from flute to trumpet opened up possibilities for me,” she says.

That’s the kind of lesson Romero hopes to share with her students at CCM. She particularly enjoys working with children on skills that are required of musicians but equally helpful in daily life. Take goal-setting and follow-through, for example: Preparing for piano recitals as a child did not cause her to fall in love with the piano, but it did unfold possibilities. “I also didn’t become a professional flute player, but I did become a much better musician, and that led to other things in my life,” she says. Many of the skills that musicians work on are building blocks, leading to incremental progress toward a distant goal. “Goal-setting helps young students become more productive human beings,” she says.

In the new role of community coordinator, Romero is also fostering community involvement at CCM, both internally and within the larger local community. “Our philosophy is that with anything, the more engaged the student and parent are in their music, the higher the level of success and continued participation,” says Kate Yoder, director and founder of CCM. Romero will facilitate collaboration at the school—creating new ensembles, for example, or supporting recital workshops, where students practice

saying their name in front of a group of people or learning how to bow, "which is not a natural thing, believe it or not," says Romero. She'll also be looking for outreach opportunities with the senior citizen community, for example, "to share what we're doing here," she says, "one of the great things about being at a community music school."

Master Class with Yo Yo Ma, Our and Instructor



On October 24th, Jordan Hall was packed with students, teachers, string players, board members and the music-loving public, thrilled to be at a Master Class taught by the legendary Yo-Yo Ma with students from the New England Conservatory of Music.

Hyun-ji Kwon, our CCM cello teacher, invited us—two of her adult students, Carol Strasburger and Rebecca Winborn, to attend this event with her. We are grateful for this opportunity to witness such a luminous teacher passing on to another generation of cellists the core of what makes music essential to our lives.

The two-hour program was divided into thirds allowing Yo-Yo Ma to work individually with three student musicians. Each musician and accompanist were greeted on stage by Mr. Ma for a brief exchange about what they were about to perform. As the musicians prepared for their performance, he ran off the stage to find a seat perched on a step in the aisle among the crowded audience to listen and observe. After each of the three performances, he'd hustle back onto the stage to explore the experience with each of the performers.

The first musician, a young man, still an undergraduate, played the first movement from Barber's *Concerto for Cello*, a piece Barber began composing during WWII, not yet knowing what the war's outcome would be. After the performance, Mr. Ma wondered, "Where do you place your mind? What character do you presume before you come out?" He then asked the student to sing while he played a specific section to rework the phrasing. "We don't want to hear how hard this piece is." A bit later he noted, "Niceness sometimes comes out of working through things that aren't so nice." In closing their work

together, Mr. Ma spoke about the importance of learning how to "pull out and emphasize what is significant [in the music]."

The second performer selected to play the first two movements of Bach's *Sonata for Viola de Gamba and Harpsichord*, which he described as "joyful and happy music" after Yo-Yo Ma asked how he experienced the music. After hearing the performance, Mr. Ma asked the student to replay a passage, this time keeping his eyes open, rather than closed as he had initially done. "Don't pull into yourself with closed eyes, connect with the audience. Music is both an internal expression that gets externalized. With eye contact out to us, you are expressing 'I'm open. I'm joyous.'" Along with looking out, Mr. Ma had the young man count aloud on the off-beat to shift the emphasis in surprising ways. "You want to reach people, touch people."

The last student played the third and fourth movements from Elger's *Concerto for Cello* composed in 1919. Mr. Ma noted Elger was "full of grief after World War I" at the time he was creating this work. Once again Mr. Ma spoke of the need to "externalize the internal" and reminded her, "you don't need to do it alone," referring to her piano accompanist. "When you are playing a concerto, make the orchestra or accompanist important, not just yourself," and "When you tell your musical story, decide are you a young person or an old person? Be specific. How old is the narrator? Different ages in different movements?" He urged her to call on personal experiences, films, a friend, as a way into the dark depth of the music. "The more specific you can be when telling a story, the better. The intensity of the story needs to match the intensity of the music. You have to create the relationship."

Following the Master Class Yo-Yo Ma was briefly interviewed by Paul Katz, a cello performer and faculty member at NEC. Both the class and the interview were live-streamed. He spoke about the need to bring creativity, imagination, and inspiration to performing. When asked about his own working process, he described "using all of yourself, everything you've got. Incorporate what you learn into what you do." He went on to emphasize the importance of "freedom of mind so you have clarity in your thinking, feeling secure, and are free to make choices while performing."

A few final inspiring gems from Yo-Yo Ma to end the afternoon:

"You practice so the cello doesn't get in the way."

"Use everything you know in your life in your music—like a circle—so your mind is free to care."

"Food for the soul requires freedom of the mind."

"You use music to make the world a better place."

"We do it to feel alive, to be as natural as possible."

"Can we make something of it so we take away a positive experience?"

"We have to make this moment real."

"Music helps us treasure things which can be easily lost."

"The purpose of performing is to have music live in someone else."

Thank you, Ji. Thank you, Yo-Yo.

Why Music Matters: Why Music? Why Band?

Why do young musicians have an academic and distinct advantage over non-musical students? Tom Lautzenheiser, music teacher, author, composer, consultant and more, explains this in detail. [To read more>>](#)

Did you know...?

Countries have their own unique instruments that make their music culturally distinctive—for example, the African large kettle drums, Caribbean Steel Drums and the Indian Sitar.

[**Browse the vast list of national instruments to see if you can find ones you never knew existed>>**](#)

Upcoming Area Performances

Tufts Jazz Orchestra: Splanky...the Blues and the Abstract Truth, Saturday, December 3, 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm at the Goddard Chapel, 3 The Green, Medford; Free; no tickets required. The orchestra will present a mixture of straight-ahead jazz, selections from the American Songbook and as always hot Afro-Cuban music. Works by Count Basie, Wayne Shorter, and Humberto Ramirez. Joel LaRue Smith, director.

Concord Women's Chorus Concert, Saturday, December 17 at 3:00 pm. At the Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm Street in Concord. The church is handicap accessible. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and students, \$5 for children 12 and under, and can be purchased at [concordwomenschorus.org](http://www.concordwomenschorus.org). A reception follows the concert.

<http://www.concordwomenschorus.org/cms/>