

SCORE

THE FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC MAGAZINE | **SPRING 2024**



SHAPING
THE FUTURE
OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



Message From the Dean

The Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music is celebrating our centennial next year. But we're already looking ahead to the next century, as the dedication, creativity, and talent of our students, faculty, alumni, associate deans, department chairs, and professional staff poise us to reach even greater heights among the world's greatest music schools.

This year saw the achievement of a transformative milestone for our school, the completion of the Knight Center for Music Innovation. A decade in the making, this iconic building is the physical manifestation of the future of the Frost School. Its two innovative performing spaces, the Robert and Judi Prokop Newman Recital Hall, a world-class concert hall overlooking Lake Osceola; and the Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage, a cutting-edge multi-media space; and its state-of-the-art "Windowcast" technology broadcasting shows onto the plaza; provide a host of new possibilities for our students and faculty to forge new creative paths. Generations of illustrious alumni and supporters joined us to celebrate in an opening gala filled with excitement and pride.

More and more, the Frost School's excellence is being seen on the largest platforms. As you will read in this publication, alumnus Carlos Lopez organized and led an orchestra filled with current and former Frost students on the national tour of reggaeton superstar Bad Bunny, breaking musical boundaries and introducing vast new audiences to live classical music. An actor in a Frost School of Music sweatshirt appeared in the hit movie "Mean Girls," our big screen debut, thrilling our students and introducing us to millions via this beloved cultural franchise.

Over 200 PBS stations are airing Maestro Gerard Schwarz and the Frost Symphony Orchestra's innovative multi-media production "Pictures at an Exhibition," merging contemporary art with the beloved Mussorgsky/Ravel composition. Frost jazz pianist Connor Rohrer, graduating with his master's this year, capped off his studies by placing second in the prestigious Herbie Hancock International Piano Competition and touring with GRAMMY-winning jazz vocalist Samara Joy. And these are just a few of the highlights!

You are all part of this journey. I know you share my pride at these accomplishments, and I hope you will help to spread the word about our fantastic school even further.

Warmly,

Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg
Dean, Patricia L. Frost Professor

Photo by Gabriela Gabriellaa



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Photo by Shawn Clarke

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FROST SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH INTERNATIONAL SOCCER TEAM IN MIAMI



Our concept was to produce a 45-second composition/arrangement to be used in a video announcing the signing of Sergio Busquets.



Frost School of Music's Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra performs in the video promoting Inter Miami's signing of international soccer superstar Sergio Busquets

Inter Miami, the professional soccer team based in South Florida, is establishing itself as an international sports brand. The club's signing of Lionel Messi, arguably the greatest soccer player of his era, made a massive media splash.

Since Messi's signing, other significant player acquisitions have followed. Among them is celebrated Spanish soccer player Sergio Busquets, known as "El Maestro," who also keeps Inter Miami in the spotlight of the worldwide sports community.

To mark Busquets's official announcement,

Inter Miami partnered with the Frost School of Music, using the player's nickname to craft a unique and synergistic video collaboration. Assistant professor Stephen Guerra, from the Frost School of Music's department of studio music and jazz, worked closely with Inter Miami's video production and creative manager Nicola Rubino to complete the project.

"Our concept was to produce a 45-second composition/arrangement to be used in a video announcing the signing of Sergio Busquets," says Guerra. "They wanted the music to include the melody

from one of the team's fans' stadium chants."

Audio was recorded at L. Austin Weeks Recording Studio with an orchestra of 25 Frost alumni and students. The video, directed by Rubino and recorded at Gusman Concert Hall, finishes by revealing the face of the conductor, "El Maestro," as Busquets.

"Several programs came together to provide a high-quality product for a well-recognized brand," says Guerra. "It is a testament to all the amazing things that happen at Frost."



Frost Jazz Orchestra Launches Live Album Series



John Daversa (left) with the Frost Jazz Orchestra

The Frost Jazz Orchestra is one of the most enduring and storied ensembles at the Frost School of Music. It has toured the world, shaped generations of musicians, won countless awards, and collaborated with numerous famous guests.

Now music lovers everywhere can experience the group's artistry, via a new annual series of live concert recordings made at Gusman Concert Hall. John Daversa, chair of studio music and jazz and the Orchestra's leader, launched the project in April of 2023 with "Live at Gusman Concert Hall." The second album, recorded at UM Maurice Gusman on April 11, was released this spring. Both feature original music by Orchestra members.

The albums, available digitally on Frost label MSJ Records, will capture the Orchestra's talent for audiences far beyond the Frost School.

"It becomes an international rather than a local stage," Daversa says. "There's nothing like a live album. You really get to hear the nature of the band in its element."

Daversa, an innovative, GRAMMY-winning jazz composer and bandleader, aims to expand not just the orchestra's reach, but its artistic mission and profile. Last year the 18-member ensemble also changed its longtime name of Concert Jazz Band, to better reflect the breadth of its repertoire.

"It needed to be rebirthed," Daversa says. He reveres the Orchestra's rich history and tradition of superb musicianship. "What I felt I could add to that was a level of heart, and a level of creativity and imagination," Daversa says.

"To develop original works, and perhaps develop more emphasis on what's happening now as music and humanity continue to evolve."

The recordings capture students' accomplishments, and their transformative experience at the Frost School, for the future.

"I really want to celebrate the students so they feel proud of what they're doing here during the blink of an eye that is a college career," Daversa says. "We can say 'do you remember that FJO album in 2023 that had [trumpet player] Jason Charos [M.M. '23] on it and now he's doing all these amazing things?'"

Trombonist Sam Keedy, who's getting a master's in studio jazz writing, is proud to have contributed two songs to the first album. "There were a lot of really good writers and players in the group," Keedy says.

"It's nice to have a time capsule of what that was."

The first album included five student compositions. The second will have more, with each student choosing a Miami landmark as inspiration.

They must establish their own publishing, and get to practice sharing and promoting their music.

Eric Law, an alto saxophonist with the Orchestra graduating with a master's degree in jazz performance, had never composed a substantial piece before writing one for the first live album. "I love the creative process of writing music, and hearing that played by other people felt really validating," says Law, who's composing a work for the second album. "My peers were like 'great tune'. It gave me a lot of motivation and pushed me to do a lot more composing."

Photo courtesy of John Daversa



Frost Music Industry Program Honored; Launches New Degree

Billboard magazine has lauded the Music Industry Program at the Frost School of Music as one of the country's top music business schools. "Here's where to find the next generation of executives," the music and entertainment magazine said in its Fall issue—praising Frost's program for its recent launch of a new B.A. degree for non-performers, range of courses, connections to Miami's thriving Latin music industry, and more.

The Frost Music Industry Program (MIND) has made the list all nine times that it has been published since it was first launched in 2011, the year Serona Elton, M.M. '95, became the program's director. But Elton insists they never take the accolade for granted. "We're truly grateful for the recognition," she says. "New programs are started all the time, and existing programs are always working to be better. We view it as a great honor, one we have to work hard to maintain."

A significant addition to the MIND Program this year is the new B.A. degree in Music Industry, which opens the program to those who can't sing or play an instrument but are passionate about music and the business side of the industry. "We realized there are many roles in the music industry where you don't need musical talent to be successful," says Elton.

"We always had applicants who wanted to study with us that we had to turn away because either their musical talent was not developed enough to pass our audition requirement, or because they were not interested in developing those talents further as part of their undergraduate degree. So, we said, 'Let's develop an additional version of our program that they can pursue.'"

The new B.A. degree has already drawn 16 students who transferred from elsewhere in the University of Miami for the 2023-2024 academic year and has applicants for 2024-2025, with a goal of enrolling 15 students per year.

Elton's extensive industry experience includes V.P. positions at Warner Music Group and EMI, and leadership roles in professional and education organizations.

Her background enables her to understand what aspiring executives need from an academic program.

One of MIND's most important assets is faculty with high-level industry experience. Many remain deeply involved in their field, enabling them to bring the realities of the current industry into the classroom. "It's very different learning from a former V.P. or senior executive," says Elton.

"It's so important to have people working in the industry who can bring that current industry knowledge."

MIND students get real-world experience working with student-run enterprises 'Cane Records, the song promotion effort Cat 5 Music, and the newest student operation, Frost Sounds, which produces live concerts. The program's location in Miami, home to the Latin music divisions of multiple major labels and one of the country's major music industry centers, is also an advantage.



Photo courtesy of The Recording Academy

The Recording Academy held an Entertainment Law Initiative 2025 Writing Contest Information and Music Industry Career Advice Session at the Knight Center for Music Innovation.



Kevin Flanagan

Frost Tuba Grads Hit the Right Notes

Small but mighty. That’s the Tuba and Euphonium Studio at the Frost School of Music. Which has racked up some outsize achievements despite its modest size of just 13 students. Since 2021, 15 of the studio’s graduates have landed hard to get positions in symphony orchestras, military bands, and academia. Some have earned two and even three jobs.

What makes this such a major accomplishment is that there are so few of these jobs.

Orchestras with banks of string or other brass players have just one tuba. Some big military bands may have three. Because these positions are so rare, players tend to stay for decades. For so many Frost School tuba graduates to land these unicorn positions is a powerful statement on the quality of their music education.

“In the brass world it’s pretty unheard of to have that kind of success,” says Aaron Tindall, who heads the tuba and euphonium program and is principal tuba at the Naples Philharmonic. “Statistically it’s easier to be a governor or a senator or an NFL quarterback than a tuba player.”

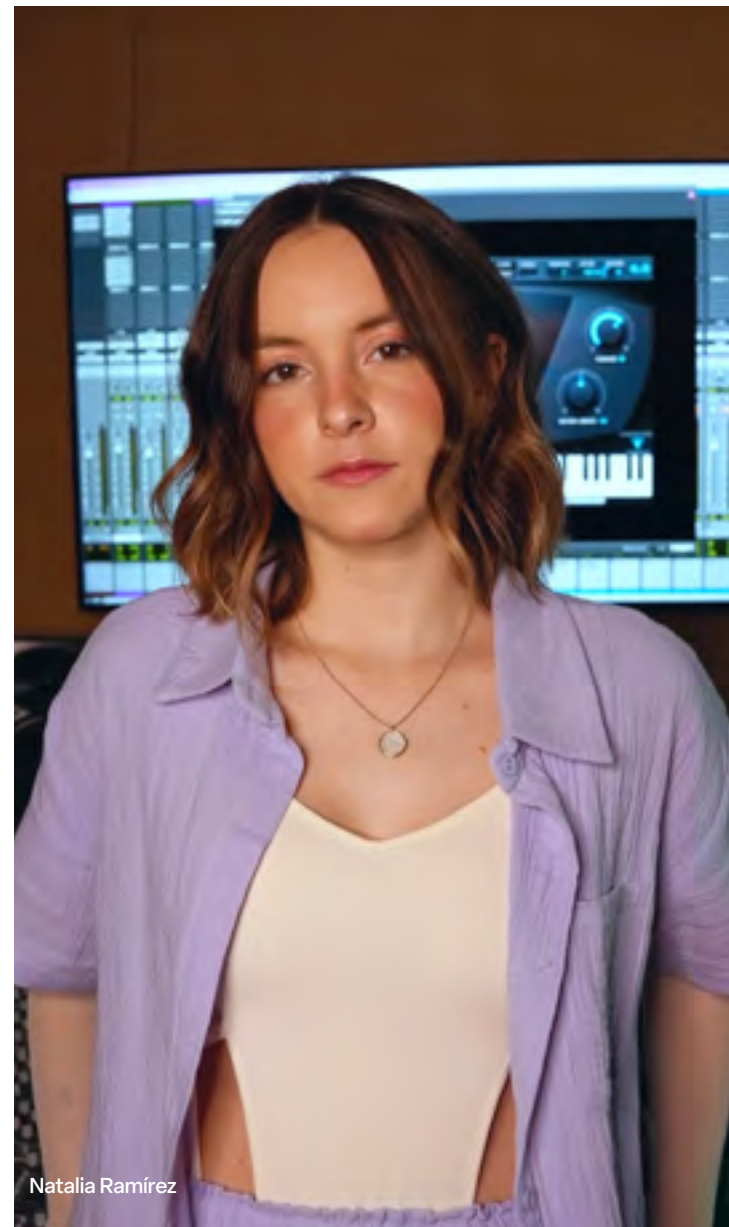
Tindall credits their achievement to a focus on Frost values: technical excellence, deep musical understanding, and adaptability. “I teach perfecting their craft to an insanely high level,” he says. “Every piece of music, we have dissected every interval, turned over every note. When an [audition] committee asks, ‘Can you play that louder, softer, shorter, or a different articulation?’ my students say, ‘no problem.’”

A sense of community and willingness to help each other are also central. “I preach this ad nauseum,” says Tindall. “They are one another’s supporters.”

Kevin Flanagan, M.M. `23, who won two major competitions before graduating, and now plays with the West Point Band, a top military ensemble, says Tindall is a transformative teacher.

“He’s a fantastic educator and mentor,” says Flanagan. “He’s always able to get to the root of what’s going on musically and technique wise. He gets to know your personality, how to get you motivated.”

Photo courtesy of West Point Band



Natalia Ramirez



Julio Bague

Frost Alumni Elected to Recording Academy Board of Trustees

Following its annual Board of Trustees meeting last spring, the Recording Academy announced four new national officers and 19 leaders. Among them were Frost School of Music alumni Julio Bague, B.B.A. `90, M.M. `93, and Natalia Ramirez, M.A. `17.

In partnership with Recording Academy President/CEO Harvey Mason Jr., a producer, songwriter, and film producer and the first African American to serve in this position, the Board of Trustees leads the Academy’s efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, while fighting for artists’ rights, preserving music history, and investing in its future.

This is Ramirez’s third year serving on the Academy’s Board of Trustees. Since graduating from Frost, the multiple GRAMMY-winning audio engineer and arts manager has worked for Sony Music and Arts House in Miami with renowned GRAMMY-winning record producer, pianist, composer, songwriter, and fellow Frost alum Julio Reyes Copello, M.M. `00. Last year, Ramirez launched her own management company, Petite Boss.

Bague is a member of the Frost School of Music’s Dean’s Advisory Committee and vice president of the Latin Division, East Coast, and Puerto Rico at permusic, the world’s largest independent music publisher, which owns or administers over 1 million copyrights and has 38 offices in 31 countries.

“I’m pleased to introduce and welcome the new National Officers and Trustees to our Academy family,” Mason announced at last year’s meeting. “This great new group reflects our eclectic music community and will carry forward our mission of serving all music people.”



Maestro Gerard Schwarz with the Frost Symphony Orchestra

Multimedia “Pictures at an Exhibition” Airs Nationally on PBS

“Pictures at an Exhibition,” the Frost Symphony’s acclaimed 2021 multimedia work, is coming to public television this spring. In March, it became available to all U.S. PBS stations, which have two years to air it. More than 200 outlets nationwide have committed to airing the program, including flagship stations in New York, Los Angeles, Houston, and Miami.

“This program exemplifies our dedication to showcasing the intersection of art, culture, and music, providing audiences with a unique and enriching viewing experience that celebrates creativity and innovation in the world of classical music,” said Joyce Belloise, senior vice president of South Florida PBS.

A major performance project, “Pictures at an Exhibition” presents visual art to accompany a live performance of the 1874 Modest Mussorgsky composition, as orchestrated by Maurice Ravel in 1922. Mussorgsky’s original inspiration for the music was a posthumous art show by his friend, the Russian painter and architect Viktor Hartmann.

Frost Symphony Orchestra conductor and professor

Maestro Gerard Schwarz had the idea to pair the music with images of contemporary art. With Frost School of Music Dean Shelton G. Berg’s encouragement, that led to a collaboration with Jill Deupi, director and chief curator of the University of Miami’s Lowe Art Museum. The project was presented at Miami’s Adrienne Arsht Center during the 2021 Miami Art Week.

Deupi selected more than 50 artworks, as well as works from the Lowe’s collection, to accompany the piece’s 10 movements and five promenades. The performance is 35 minutes, preceded by footage explaining the project’s inspiration, with interviews and performances by the Frost Symphony Orchestra as well as pianist Tingting Wu, D.M.A. ’23.

“‘Pictures at an Exhibition’ is like a lesson in how to take a piano work and make it more colorful and beautiful,” said Schwarz. “To do a new version, incorporating new artworks to each movement, was thrilling. It was a great experience.”

Check your local PBS listings for air dates.

Frost School of Music and Seraphic Fire: Glorious Together

Seraphic Fire and the Frost School of Music have had deep connections for two decades. Many of Seraphic Fire’s original members were graduate students at Frost in 2003, when the GRAMMY-nominated choir was founded.

Last season the Miami-based chamber choir presented their First | Last 20th Anniversary Concert Series, with seven programs containing the oldest and newest pieces in their repertoire.

Seraphic Fire conductor and artistic director Patrick Dupre Quigley used an April 2023 program to highlight those connections. It featured new commissions for composers Sydney Guillaume (who has composed for the Frost Chorale) and David Vess, a doctoral candidate who was the 2022-23 Student Composer-in-Residence with Seraphic Fire, for “To Dream Again,” based on Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Seraphic Fire was joined by the Frost School of Music’s Ensemble Ibis for Frost conductor and associate professor of professional practice Shawn Crouch’s “The Road from Hiroshima,” the first musical work commissioned and premiered by Seraphic Fire.

“I first heard of Marc Kaminsky’s moving poems about life before and after the bombing of Hiroshima over a coffee with Patrick Dupre Quigley, where he and I were both attending the Yale School of Music,” says Crouch.

“These are moving, gripping accounts of nuclear destruction, and over that coffee, we decided to collaborate on something involving Kaminsky’s words.”

The program was commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University.

The Frost School and Seraphic Fire’s collaboration extends to the classroom and studio. “We have created an apprenticeship program [the Ensemble Artist Program] for eight of our singers each year to collaborate in at least one major performance with Seraphic Fire,” says Amanda Quist, director of choral activities. “Additionally, our students are given the opportunity to observe rehearsals and attend concerts.” The choir also has a position for a graduate assistant conductor from Frost, most recently held by Frost Choral Studies D.M.A. candidate Wesley Roy.



Amanda Quist conducting Frost School Chorale students at the Newman Recital Hall

Photo by Shawn Clark, Versatile Light Studios



DOWNBEAT HONORS FROST

Frost faculty and Downbeat Poll winner Dafnis Prieto

ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Frost School of Music came up big in Downbeat magazine’s 71st Annual Critics Poll, one of the jazz world’s most prestigious lists. The list, featured in the magazine’s August 2023 issue, recognizes numerous artists who receive votes in more than 60 categories. Once more, the Frost School was well represented, with 16 current and former faculty members, staff, and alums.

“It really speaks to the consistency and excellence of this department,” says John Daversa, Frost’s jazz department chair. Four current Frost faculty members were on this year’s Critics Poll winners list, led by trumpeter Etienne Charles’s top-10 placement in three categories (including number one in rising star trumpet). Also spotlighted were drummer Dafnis Prieto, trumpeter Brian Lynch, and soprano saxophonist Marcus Strickland.

“They’re all brilliant artists and educators who have dedicated their lives to music,” Daversa says of Frost’s faculty winners. “This shows the excellence of their work.”

Famed Frost alumnus Pat Metheny was among four of this year’s DownBeat Critics Poll winners to be awarded the inaugural Frost Centennial Medals. In anticipation of Frost School’s upcoming 100th anniversary in 2025, these

Centennial Medals were bestowed to “exceptional alumni who have made significant contributions to the elite music school, the music industry, and the possibilities for how music and the arts can benefit society at large.” The other three Centennial Medal recipients sharing the double honor were Frost star alumni: pianist Emmet Cohen, who appeared in three categories, and vocalists Veronica Swift and Carmen Lundy.

Other alumni winners in the Critics Poll list were also saxophonist Bobby Watson in two categories, tenor saxophonist Troy Roberts, guitarist Jonathan Kreisberg, producer Matt Pierson, and tenor saxophonist Tivon Pennicot.

Also scoring on the Downbeat list are the current and former directors of Frost’s Henry Mancini Institute. Current director Maria Schneider was number one in three categories (composer, arranger, and big band), while former director Terence Blanchard placed in the top 10 in four categories, topped by number two composer. Bassist Christian McBride, the artistic director of Frost’s Jazz Aspen Snowmass Academy, appears in five categories, including number one bassist.



Frost students show off school pride at an exclusive screening of “Mean Girls”



SCHOOL OF MUSIC HAS A HOLLYWOOD MOMENT IN “MEAN GIRLS”

In February, eager students from the Frost School of Music packed a nearby movie theater to celebrate their beloved school’s first Hollywood moment: a screening of the hit film *Mean Girls*, featuring an avidly drumming “band geek” in a dark green Frost School of Music sweatshirt, in a key early scene.

Thrilled students eagerly posed for selfies with the movie poster, donned free Frost School sweatshirts, and cheered wildly for their school’s big moment.

The screening was central to a weeks-long marketing campaign, which also included distributing Frost sweatshirts to students, faculty, donors, and alumni, and encouraging them to highlight the moment on social media.

The campaign was a key first step in a much more ambitious enterprise: to ensure that Frost is the first name that comes to mind when people think of an elite music school. The effort is part of a long-term marketing and PR strategy developed by Frost leadership as the school moves into its second century.

“We know we’re one of the greatest music schools



Dean Berg welcomes 250 Frost students to “Mean Girls” screening

in the world,” Dean Shelton G. Berg told the cheering students in a pre-show speech. “People in our industry know it. We want everyone to know it. Millions of people are going to see that image of us in a hit movie,” Dean Berg says.

“It’s one more way we can convey the promise of a best-in-class education at one of the top music schools in the world with an even greater number of people across the U.S. and the globe.”

The new *Mean Girls* film is based on the 2004 original, a favorite for generations of teens and 20-somethings, while incorporating musical numbers from the 2018 hit Broadway musical. For Frost students, this appearance in a franchise that has become a cultural touchstone shows the world what they already know—that the Frost School is a potent force for musical excellence.

“This is so cool, so amazing,” said Ashia Barnes, an ardent *Mean Girls* fan getting a master’s in vocal performance. “It brings me such joy that I’m at such a great school and it’s being represented the way it should be.”



FROST CHORAL STUDENTS APPEAR ON ALBUM BY LATIN MEGAPRODUCER TAINY

Star producer Tainy’s first solo studio album, *Data* released last summer, features huge names like Bad Bunny and J Balvin, who’ve made him a major player in Latin urban and pop music. Plus some unexpected guests—members of the Frost Chorale singing a brief, shimmering vocal loop on the second track.

“It was amazing, my first time working with a choir,” says Tainy. “It was a learning experience for me.” And not just for him. For the 12 singers and Frost School of Music director of choral activities Amanda Quist, being on an album with some of pop’s biggest hitmakers is a thrill.

But the bigger boost was the chance to expand their artistry, versatility, and future as vocalists capable of singing everything from traditional choral masterworks to pop background vocals to joining innovative vocal ensembles like Roomful of Teeth or Miami’s Seraphic Fire.

The recording arose in the spring of 2021, when

producer Richi Lopez, part of Tainy’s team, asked Liana Salinas, B.M. ’12, artistic director of Miami Children’s Chorus and a former Quist student, for help finding a choir for a track on a new Tainy album. Salinas called Quist, who trusted Salinas’s knowledge of Latin pop and instinct for the genre’s creative possibilities for Frost students. The track was recorded at Gusman Hall that May.

Data debuted at number 11 on the Billboard 200 and at number two on the Top Latin Albums chart, with the single “La Baby” winning a Latin GRAMMY for Best Reggaeton Performance.

“In the 21st century, to make a living as a professional singer, you must have flexibility,” says Quist. “What we do really well at Frost is train our singers to have excellent technique that prepares them for the shifts they’ll have to make throughout their professional careers.”

Winter Wonderful Gala Honors Sasha and Edward P. Bass



Frost Chorale illuminate Winter Wonderful
Photos by Jenny Abreu

The Frost School of Music celebrated its Winter Wonderful fundraising gala in December, regaling 325 supporters at Miami’s JW Marriott Marquis with soaring holiday music and honoring benefactors Sasha and Edward P. Bass with the Frost Legacy Award, the Frost School’s greatest honor, presented to donors who represent extraordinary giving and support to the school, its community, and the arts.

The annual event benefits the Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program, a major Frost community outreach effort for Miami-Dade youth which has grown to 1500 students.

Frost director of choral studies Amanda Quist led a jubilant Frost Choral Union and Holiday Orchestra in gorgeous renditions of holiday songs.

The MusicReach Mays Jazz Ensemble, from the Arthur & Polly Mays 6-12 Conservatory for the Arts, also performed.

Frost Dean Shelton G. Berg thanked Sasha and Edward P. Bass, major philanthropists in their native Fort Worth and nationally, who have become significant donors to Frost.

The couple made a major gift in the Dean’s honor for the new Knight Center for Music Innovation at the Frost School of Music, and recently pledged to continue as the underwriting sponsors of The JAS Academy in collaboration with the Frost School of Music and Jazz Aspen Snowmass.

“Your generous commitment to finding ways to expand access to the arts is widely felt,” said Berg.

“The Frost School is the best, and Sasha and I are so proud to be a part of it,” Bass responded.

Also attending were University of Miami President Julio Frenk and his wife Felicia Knaul, Gold Sponsor Allan M. Herbert, and Silver Sponsors Miller

Family Foundation, Joseph Deitch, and Skanska USA. Other notables included Florida governor Jeb Bush and his wife Columba Bush and Ambassadors Sue and Chuck Cobb.



Dean Shelton G. Berg, University of Miami President Julio Frenk and his wife, Felicia Knaul, celebrate with 2023 Frost Legacy Award Honoree Edward P. Bass



Photo by Jenny Abreu

Olga and David Melin

Longtime Frost School of Music Donors Olga and David Melin Fund Fellowship for the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra

Olga and David Melin, among the most devoted and longtime benefactors of the Frost School of Music, have given \$400,000 to create an endowed fellowship for the Henry Mancini Orchestra.

Named the Olga & David Melin Henry Mancini Orchestra Strings Endowment Fellowship, it will provide a perpetual annual stipend for a graduate string student. “I love to support young up and coming musicians,” says Olga Melin.

The couple’s history of giving to the Frost School goes back to 1958, when they made their first donation, of just \$5, soon after Olga Melin earned a bachelor’s degree in science from the University of Miami in 1956. They have donated consistently, and ever more generously, ever since. At the 2019 Winter Wonderful gala the Melins were honored with the Frost Legacy Award, the Frost School’s greatest honor, presented to donors who represent extraordinary giving and support to the school, its community, and the arts.

“Olga and David Melin have been friends and supporters of the last three Frost School deans, which goes back several decades,” says Dean Shelton G. Berg.

“They have been gracious friends to me, and have extended themselves to support our performances and students. I am thrilled by their new gift to permanently endow the scholarship of a brilliant Henry Mancini Fellow at the Frost School of Music. Olga and David understand the impact their contribution will have on the lives and careers of future recipients, and my colleagues and I are exceedingly grateful to them.”

The Melins are also UM Grand Founder Society members, and support the visual and performing arts, human services, conservation, and wildlife as directors of the Olga and David Melin Foundation, Inc. The couple, who live in Miami-Dade, are enthusiastic Frost concert goers.

“We go all the time,” says Olga Melin. “We are music lovers, we love classical and jazz.”

She praised the HMI orchestra in particular. “They can play everything to perfection.”



Photo courtesy of Frost School of Music

David Ake

David Ake Recognized For Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship

Frost School of Music professor and chair of the department of musicology David Ake has been awarded the prestigious Phillip Frost Award for Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship.

Ake was recognized by a selection committee of his peers as an exemplary faculty member for his outstanding contributions as an educator and scholar in his field.

“To get this award from my colleagues means the world to me,” says Ake. “It shows they recognize how important it is to understand music’s cultural and historical impact, and what it means for music to come out of and speak for cultural communities.”

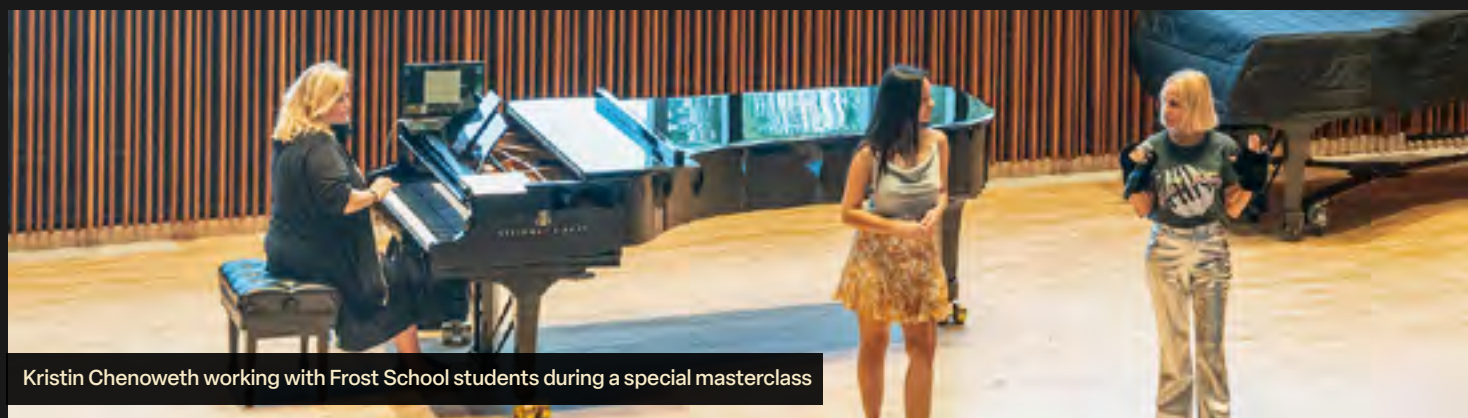
Ake, who joined the Frost School in 2015, previously chaired the Department of Music at Case Western Reserve University and was director of the School of the Arts at the University of Nevada, Reno. He holds a Ph.D in musicology and an M.A. in ethnomusicology from UCLA, and is a 1983 graduate of the Frost School.

He has authored the books *Jazz Cultures*, *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time since Bebop*; and has contributed numerous chapters and articles to the Cambridge Companion to Jazz, *American Music*, *Jazz Perspectives*, and other publications. He has delivered papers to the American Musicological Society, the Society for American Music, and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, and lectured at universities across the US.

Ake has recorded multiple albums as a jazz pianist and composer, and performed or recorded with renowned musicians who include Charlie Haden, Ravi Coltrane, and Ralph Alessi.

“It shows they recognize how important it is to understand music’s cultural and historical impact, and what it means for music to come out of and speak for cultural communities.”

Broadway Star Kristin Chenoweth Inspires Vocal Students



Kristin Chenoweth working with Frost School students during a special masterclass

While masterclasses with visiting performers happen all the time at the Frost School of Music, rarely do they involve a star of Kristin Chenoweth's level. The Tony-winning Broadway star was guest of honor at a December masterclass, where she offered performance pointers, advice, and inspiration to a dozen students who sang for her in a packed auditorium.

Chenoweth came to campus at the invitation of Frank Ragsdale, chair of the vocal performance department, while she was in the area for a concert performance. Ragsdale had personal connections to Chenoweth's world from having previously taught at her alma mater, Oklahoma City University, and also through a Miami alumnus working on *Queen of Versailles* (Chenoweth's new project with her *Wicked* collaborator Stephen Schwartz.)

"She's well-known for her Broadway work and she was also a classical major who sang a lot of opera," says Ragsdale. "We try to train people at Frost to be working musicians, and Kristin is one of the greatest we have out there. She really bridges those worlds."

In addition to her Tony-winning star turn in *Wicked*, Chenoweth's credits include recurring roles on *The Voice*, *Schmigadoon!*, and *Glee*. Sophomore Grace Mineo, from Long Island, New York, was suitably starstruck even before singing the Stephen Sondheim / Patti Lu-

pone standard "The Ladies Who Lunch." "I have been an admirer of hers since I was 12 years old," says Mineo. "I've always loved musical theater, and to be able to sing for her was a dream come true. She was so kind, encouraging, and supportive. We hugged at the end which was awesome, and also funny because she's so small and I'm pretty tall."

For her part, Chenoweth had high praise for the students she heard sing at Frost.

"Working with some of the students, I became hopeful that more and more we are finding young, gifted artists in musical theater and opera coming out of Miami," Chenoweth said in a statement. "I loved my experience and I hope to be back and work with more talent. What an inspiring day we had together!"

Nicole Acosta, a sophomore from Miami, had an equally memorable experience singing "Gimme Gimme" from the stage musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. She had to go first, which was nerve-wracking until Chenoweth put her at ease.

"I'm not gonna lie, I was a little nervous," says Acosta. "But she was so into it when I sang, even stomping and cheering me on. That felt so good. One thing she told me that I'll always remember: 'None of us are singers first, we are actors telling a story. The vocal part will come, focus more on the character

being present in the moment.' She was amazing. Her advice is something I'll use for the rest of my life."



Saxophone Virtuoso Joseph Lulloff Teaches Masterclass



Frost performance major Alexander Waguespack was looking forward to a saxophone masterclass with Joseph Lulloff, a visiting professor from Michigan State University. The experience turned out even better than Waguespack anticipated when he got some extra one-on-one instruction. Before the November class, Waguespack was having a lesson with his Frost teacher, Dale Underwood, professor of saxophone and director of the Frost Sax Ensemble. Lulloff showed up early and walked in as Waguespack was working on "Mai," a solo saxophone work by the Japanese composer Ryo Noda.

"Oh," quipped Underwood, "you're just in time. Why don't you teach this?" "He gave some amazing critiques and feedback, got into the history and interpretation," says Waguespack, a senior from Durham, North Carolina. "I felt like that lesson in conjunction with the masterclass helped skyrocket my progress on the piece. He talked a lot about posture, which was helpful. I have one shoulder higher than the other, which I'd never really thought about before."

During the masterclass itself, Waguespack was one of four saxophonists who played for Lulloff in a session that lasted nearly two hours. Lulloff came away impressed by the students' musicianship. "Usually in a masterclass situation like this, students are at various levels, so you do some work on the basics," says Lulloff. "But Dale's students were all exceptional. When they're that good, you can get into upper-level details of phrasing, tone color, shading, vibrato. They were all very receptive and open to comments. When I asked them questions, they'd come back with very astute comments. I could also hear Dale Underwood's playing in each of them. They'd listened to and absorbed his teachings."

Lulloff was in Miami while on tour as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, one of his regular side gigs in addition to teaching at Michigan State. He and Underwood have known each other since the 1980s, when Underwood was principal saxophonist with the Navy Band. Now Underwood often brings in high-caliber guests like his longtime friend for masterclasses. "It's always a great pleasure to have artists like this come in, who are tops in their field," says Underwood. "Students get to hear great artists and just be around them, ask questions. Seeing people like Joseph standing in front of them and realizing they're real, that's a great thing."

Lulloff was impressed not just by the Frost students' chops, but their work ethic. "One thing that struck me was that they did a Sax Ensemble rehearsal afterward," he says. "There we were at 9:45 on a weeknight, and they were still gonna rehearse for another hour. That's dedication."

In the Classroom: With Artist-in-Residence Brazilian Singer Luciana Souza

Photo by Kim Fox



Luciana Souza

When award winning singer Luciana Souza accepted an invitation to come to Frost last year as an artist-in-residence, students and faculty were thrilled. “The students have had an incredible experience working with Luciana in masterclasses, ensembles, and one-on-one voice lessons during each of her four visits this past academic year,” says Kate Reid, associate professor of studio music and jazz at the Frost School of Music.

“She has shared many different approaches to songwriting, improvisation, solo singing, and song interpretation with us. I’ve seen and heard the students thrive with her teaching and instruction. She has inspired all of the students of the studio music and jazz department with her musicianship, artistry, and her generous spirit!”

“I always enjoy the private lessons and the group classes,” said Souza as she readied for her fourth visit to Frost. “Dr. Reid has supported me, helping create a schedule that allows me to do various things, like talk about singing, arranging, composing, and improvising. Each day is different, and I feel recharged and inspired by being with the students.”

Souza’s masterclasses focus on unique vocal techniques. But her private sessions dive into voice lessons and exercises, providing a rich experience. She focuses on helping students understand something unique about themselves in the journey to becoming a creative artist—what they bring to the lesson and that something special they can take away.

Souza doesn’t believe in a single rule book, so each student session differs. It starts with the student’s sound — their voice. During the 30-minute lessons, she directs the student in what to look out for, what to listen for as they sing, when to project, and when to be silent. She hopes those brief, private lessons will expand the student’s range as they find their voice and master the techniques that have earned Souza eight GRAMMY nominations and worldwide critical acclaim.

Billboard magazine has said Souza’s genre-crossing music: “soulfully reflects, wistfully regrets, romantically woos, joyfully celebrates.”

“The students at Frost are great singers,” says Souza, “They are open-minded and curious, besides being kind and lovely.”

Born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Souza comes from a family steeped in music and lyrics. Her father is a singer and songwriter, and her mother is a poet and lyricist. Souza has performed and recorded with musical icons like Paul Simon, James Taylor, Bobby McFerrin, Danilo Perez, and Maria Schneider. She won a 2007 GRAMMY Award as a featured vocalist on Herbie Hancock’s album “River: The Joni Letters.”

Her GRAMMY-nominated record, “Cometa,” was released on the Sunnyside label last summer.

Music Industry Speaker Series Brings Top Execs and Alumni Successes

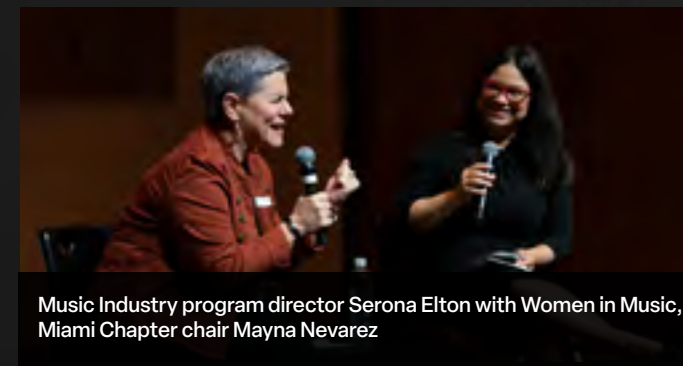
In the Music Industry (MIND) Program, faculty are not the only teachers. A popular guest speaker series regularly hosts top industry executives and successful alumni who share their experience and insight with students, enriching a program already renowned for its music industry connections.

“Students expect to hear from a variety of voices,” says MIND program director Serona Elton, M.M. ’95, a successful longtime industry executive who remains actively involved. “It’s a complement because all our professors are working in the industry.”

“You have to bring in people from the real world who are doing what our students will hopefully be doing as they develop their careers,” says Guillermo Page, MIND’s assistant director. “Someone who can relate to them and show them the way.”



Women in Music panel speakers answer Frost students’ questions



Music Industry program director Serona Elton with Women in Music, Miami Chapter chair Mayna Nevarez

Executive speakers have included Monte Lipman and Avery Lipman, CEO and COO of Republic Records, home to superstars like Taylor Swift and Drake; Mary Megan, CEO of peermusic, the world’s largest independent music publisher; and Matt Serletic, B.M. ’92 and M.M. ’94, Grammy-winning producer, former chairman/CEO of Virgin Records, and director of creative content at Google. Execs from YouTube, Spotify, and SoundExchange; multi-platinum artist Sheila E., and a team from Sony Music’s Miami-based Latin division have also appeared.

The Lipman session was a favorite. “They were very down to earth,” says Page. “The students were so excited to have someone of that caliber talking to them and being so relatable.”

Favorite alumni speakers include Andres Sandoval M.M. ’03, senior manager for Latin music strategic partnerships and

business development at Apple; Kevin Wilson M.M. ’93, music director at ESPN; and John Farrey B.M. ’12, a senior label relations manager at Amazon Music.

“A lot of alumni are looking for a way to stay connected to the school and give back,” says Elton.

Samantha Kopec, a junior in the MIND program, attends the talks regularly.

“It’s great to hear all their perspectives in addition to our professors,” says Kopec. “Each speaker brings something different. Sometimes the way they say something really clicks.”

Kopec was especially inspired by a session co-hosted with the Miami chapter of Women in Music that brought women executives to discuss careers as well as challenges and work-life issues for women.

MIND’s home in Miami, home to multiple music companies and national conferences, provides a deep pool of potential speakers.

But the program’s stellar reputation (Billboard magazine regularly names MIND one of the country’s best music business schools) and extensive faculty and alumni connections are the biggest draw.

“People reach out to us and say ‘I hear the program is amazing, let me know if you are looking for guest speakers,’” says Elton. “The reputation of the program is what draws people to want to interact with our students and connect with us.”



Photos courtesy of Frost School of Music

Pianist Soars in Final Year at Frost



Jazz pianist Connor Rohrer’s final year at the Frost School of Music was an extraordinary one. In the fall, he was a finalist in the 2023 Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition, the world’s most prestigious jazz contest. He’s touring with hot young jazz vocalist Samara Joy, a triple GRAMMY-winner anointed Best New Artist in 2023.

“Frost has given me everything,” says Rohrer, B.M. ’22, who graduates with his master’s degree in music theory and composition this spring. “I’m still pinching myself.”

Associate professor Martin Bejerano, who heads Frost’s jazz piano department and is Rohrer’s mentor, says the young pianist’s extraordinary talent was apparent in his undergraduate audition. “Connor showed an ease and flow

where the piano was like an extension of himself,” Bejerano says. “He took off like a rocket. He has been an utter joy to teach and work with.”

And not just for his talent. “Connor is without an ounce of ego or pretentiousness,” Bejerano says. “His virtuosity and knowledge are always in service to the music.”

Rohrer says Bejerano was crucial to his artistry. “Martin has been instrumental in my development,” he says. “He opened me up to think about all the options.”

Rohrer took full advantage of the opportunities at Frost, constantly honing his musicianship with performances on and off campus, recording sessions, recitals, and accompanying vocalists at Frost, even taking lessons with Dean Shelton G.

Berg. Rohrer’s talent for composition was recognized in a 2022 Downbeat student jazz award for graduate outstanding original composition.

Rohrer had to be persuaded to apply for the Herbie Hancock competition, which takes just 11 semi-finalists from all over the world; he placed second of three finalists. Held in New York City, it has launched numerous careers. “It was an honor to be selected,” Rohrer posted on Instagram, thanking the judges—who included Danilo Perez and Hancock himself—and the other finalists for inspiring him.

Rohrer’s work with Joy also came via Frost. Her trumpet player, Jason Charles, earned his master’s degree from Frost in 2023, and one of her saxophonists, David Mason, will

graduate from Frost with his Master’s this year. Both are close to Rohrer. That led to his tryout weekend tour of the Northeast with Joy in the fall of 2022—with just one short rehearsal.

“I was pretty scared,” Rohrer says. Since then the group, all in their early 20’s, has bonded. “We’re comrades with a goal, that every time we play together it’s gonna be better,” he says. Joy encourages their collaboration and creativity. “In addition to being an extraordinary talent, she’s one of us,” he says. “She listens to everyone. That’s a beautiful thing.”

(Above): Connor Rohrer at the Herbie Hancock International Piano Competition

Photo courtesy of Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz

Frost School of Music Student Angelina Mack’s Songwriting Inspired by Hope

Angelina Mack’s first song, “Free” was her emotional response to bullying in middle school. Her second, “Stop A Fight” was a plea for understanding amidst the racial justice protests of 2020, driven by the teenage Mack’s fears for her mixed-race family. Both songs drew passionate responses—thanks from strangers, YouTube views, and media attention. The experience made Mack realize she wanted music to be her life.

“The feeling that I gave people hope—that’s what I got hooked on,” says Mack, a rising sophomore in the Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program at the Frost School of Music. “Hearing people felt deeply about something I’d created was so validating.”

Last fall, Mack’s hopeful message earned her the Chris Trousdale Dream Award from BMI, a \$2,500 award granted to young artists making a positive impact through music. Mack grew up immersed in music and straddling cultures. Her father, Al Mack, of African and Japanese descent, is a singer, drummer, songwriter, and producer; and her mother, Cristiana, is an Italian journalist; they are Quakers who value social justice and peaceful activism.

As a child in Brooklyn, Angelina studied with acclaimed pianist Edith Hirshtal, sang in the celebrated Brooklyn Youth Chorus, wrote poetry, and fell in love with Stevie Wonder, Carole King, and Miles Davis. Her father’s renowned musician friends and colleagues often gathered at their house for late-night living room jam sessions.

“I was introduced to a passion for music that helped spark my passion now,” says Mack. Her family moved to the Philadelphia area as the shy Mack started middle school, where bullying amplified her struggles to understand her identity, with looking white while her father and older brother were seen as Black.

“I was finding my identity—I was mixed,” Mack says. “I didn’t understand it.”

With her father’s help, she poured out her feelings in “Free,” drawing an emotional response from fellow students and their families. “I wasn’t confident about my song,” Mack says. “So the fact that other people felt so confidently about what I could become was really powerful for me.”

The protests after George Floyd’s 2020 murder brought new anxieties. Mack had had nightmares about her father and brother being arrested after Trayvon Martin’s 2012 killing. She’d heard her father warn her brother how to behave if he were stopped by police.

However, the dangers of COVID-19 made her parents reluctant to let her participate in protests, and posting on Instagram felt inadequate.

“I wrote [“Stop A Fight”] because it was something I could do,” Mack says. “The inspiration came from my entire life.” Her song and story were featured in multiple print and television outlets, while a video drew 17,000 YouTube views.

The reaction convinced Mack that “this is what I’m meant to do—create music that gives people hope or inspires positive change.”



Angelina Mack

João Felipe Da Fraga (far left) performing at Festival Napa Valley.

Photo courtesy of Festival Napa Valley



Violinist João Felipe Da Fraga’s Musical Journey

From a childhood in Brazil to performing in an elite ensemble at the Frost School of Music, violinist João Felipe Da Fraga—who will graduate with a doctorate this spring—is enjoying a career as a performer and educator that speaks to the transformative power of music.

As a member of the renowned Henry Mancini Institute String Quartet, Da Fraga travels extensively in the U.S., performing with Montana’s Billings Symphony and The National Sawdust in Brooklyn. As a graduate student at the Frost School, Da Fraga has gained valuable insights into composers’ most personal expressions. He has developed a deep appreciation for the nuanced artistry of four-string players through his participation in intimate musical experiences.

Studying under Frost professors Jody Levitz and Charles Castleman, for whom Da Fraga is a teaching assistant, has been a dream come true. “Professor Castleman is my mentor at the Frost School of Music,” Da Fraga says. “He is a master of the violin. I am so grateful to him.”

Growing up in Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, Espírito Santo, Brazil, Da Fraga learned the importance of a good education from his parents. But his passion for music was all his. At 13, he started playing the violin and joined a community project called Casa Verde. Two years later, he participated in another program called Orquestrando a Vida.

Orquestrando a Vida is part of El Sistema, a music education community program founded in Venezuela in 1975 by musician, educator, and activist José Antonio Abreu.

Its most famous graduate is Gustavo Dudamel, the superstar conductor who’s been named artistic director of the New York Philharmonic. The program’s “Music for Social Change” motto inspired El Sistema USA, which has 140 member organizations serving nearly 20,000 students and supporting over 1,500 teaching artists.

Later, Da Fraga attended Festival de Música de Santa Catarina (FEMUSC). “This was a wonderful festival that placed musicians of all levels together, enabling kids like me from small cities to be exposed to the highest level of musicianship,” he recounts. He was subsequently admitted to the Brazilian Youth Symphony Orchestra in Rio de Janeiro. This led to an opportunity to study in the United States, and eventually at Frost.

“I am humbled by my success and indebted to those who supported me,” says Da Fraga. “I come from a little town in Brazil and I’ve played with the Florida Grand Opera and the Palm Beach Symphony. It has been an amazing ride!”

Da Fraga has stayed involved with El Sistema, helping to establish music groups, orchestras, and schools for children.

Da Fraga’s amazing ride is just getting started. Education, he says, will always be part of his journey. “Kids can have a better future, and arts is the answer,” he says. “Music gets into your body and vibrates through your soul. Musicians play it, and audiences get moved by it.”



Meet the New Stamps Woodwind Quintet

The Frost School of Music welcomed the new Stamps Woodwind Quintet, Class of 2027, to campus this year. The five young musicians in the newest Stamps ensemble are Clark Walker, bassoon player from Augusta, Georgia; Seth Corlew, French horn, from Jacksonville, Florida; Lia Suk, a flautist from Boston, Massachusetts; Eamon Comiskey, clarinet, from Warwick, New York; and Kareema Colson, an oboist from Fort Myers, Florida.

All were selected via extremely competitive auditions for a prestigious four-year scholarship that covers tuition and room and board, as well as expenses when the ensemble is invited to summer festivals and major residencies. They will play together for their entire time at Frost, and are selected not only for their musical talent, but their leadership potential, academic merit, and exceptional character.

Funded by the Stamps Charitable Foundation, founded by Penny and Roe Stamps, the Stamps Scholars Program brings a new group of exceptional young musicians to the Frost School each year. The other three Stamps ensembles are the Stamps Brass Quintet, the Stamps String Quartet, and the Stamps Jazz Quintet.



FROST | SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
AT FESTIVAL NAPA VALLEY

NATIONAL
SAWDUST



Where Education Meets World-Class Artistry

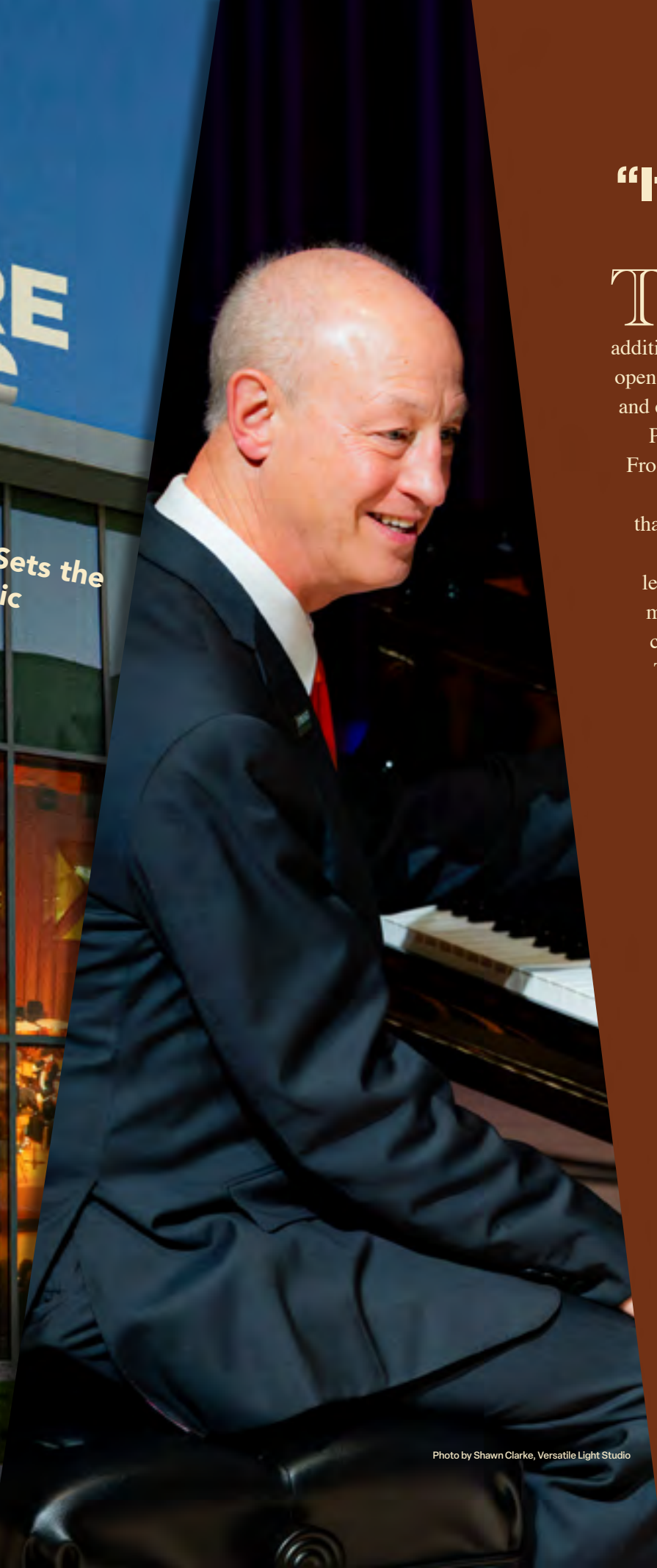
Frost School of Music students and alumni are ever-present on top concert, opera and festival stages, and cutting-edge venues like National Sawdust, composing, producing, and performing for award-winning recordings and television series, and running the corporate offices of top music industry companies.

- Frost Symphony Orchestra - Gerard Schwarz, music director**
- Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra - Maria Schneider, artistic director**
- Grammy, Billboard, and Downbeat recognized Jazz program**
- Bruce Hornsby Creative American Music Program**
- Artistic, technological and entrepreneurial skill training**
- Summer programs in Aspen, Napa, and Salzburg**

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MUSIC

The Opening of The Knight Center For Music Innovation Sets the Stage for the Next Generation of the Frost School of Music

FROST
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



“It is a foundation for our future.”

- Dean Shelton G. Berg

The long-awaited Knight Center for Music Innovation is many things. It is a monumental addition to the Frost School of Music campus. A magnificent new performance venue that opens up a host of new artistic and technological possibilities. A proclamation of ambition and excellence.

Perhaps most of all, the Knight Center is a physical embodiment of the next stage at the Frost School of Music, a pivotal milestone in the school’s long history of innovation.

“It is a foundation for our future,” says Dean Shelton G. Berg. “It is key to the school that we built together and to what our aspirations are. It is core to our core ideas.”

The achievement of a monumental decade-long effort led by Berg and engaging leaders from across the Frost School, the Knight Center opened on Nov. 2. The \$36.5 million building, designed by H3, an Arquitectonica company, is a 25,000 square foot cutting-edge performance and technology innovation hub with two dynamic spaces. The Robert and Judi Prokop Newman Recital Hall is a world-class, 200 seat theater with state-of-the-art acoustics – a sweeping, elegant hall framed by a soaring floor-to-ceiling window overlooking a stunning view of Lake Osceola. The Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage is a high-tech multimedia space for experimenting with virtual and augmented reality, surround audio, video mapping, and other new technology transforming the music and performance worlds. A *Windowcast* system projects HD livestreams of concerts to a massive window facing the outdoors plaza, sharing the artistry inside with the University and wider community.

The Knight Center for Music Innovation is a manifestation of the Frost School’s expanding capacity and aspirations.

“The non-verbal message is we are building excellence, and we are building a place where dreams come true,” says Alberto Ibarguen, the recently retired president and CEO of the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, who shepherded their donation of a key early \$10 million naming gift.

The building opened with a week of festivities from Oct. 28 to Nov. 5, with concerts by the Frost Symphony Orchestra, the Creative American Music program, and the Frost Studio Jazz Band; as well as Frost Tech Day, showcasing the Hormel Stage.

The capstone was the “Shaping the Future of Music” gala on Nov. 2. The grand opening gathered alumni, faculty, University of Miami leadership, donors and supporters to celebrate the milestone. Media interviewed celebrity guests on a red carpet. Generations of graduates buzzed with excitement in a glittering cocktail party in the Hormel Stage, capped by a dazzling, immersive multimedia history of the Frost School, produced by Rey Sanchez, associate dean of strategic initiatives and innovation.

Photo by Shawn Clarke, Versatile Light Studio

Dean Shelton G. Berg performing at the Opening Gala

Photo by João Felipe da Fraga



Inside the Robert and Judi Prokop Newman Recital Hall

International pop star Gloria Estefan, a 1978 University of Miami graduate with an honorary 1993 degree from Frost, was the charismatic emcee presiding over a ceremony in the Newman Hall that mixed speeches with performances by Frost alumni, faculty, and students. “Innovation and dreams are unlimited among Frost School students—past and present,” Estefan told the audience. University of Miami president Julio Frenk paid tribute to what he called “a historic moment for the Frost School and the University of Miami.”

A stellar array of alumni and Frost talent performed, including jazz singer Carmen Lundy, classical pianist Asiya Korepanova, Broadway performer Dawnn Lewis, operatic soprano Sandra Lopez Neill, and jazz/pop singer Jon Secada with jazz pianist and Frost lecturer Gonzalo Rubalcaba.

Berg, the beaming heart of the evening, accompanied many of them on piano. He presented the first Frost Centennial Medals to the performers and others for their contributions to the school and the music world. In-person recipients included Gloria Estefan; her husband, star-making producer Emilio Estefan; Grammy-winning producer and music executive Julio Bague; as well as others who gave thanks via video, including famed jazz guitarist Pat Metheny and singer-songwriters Ben Folds and Bruce Hornsby.

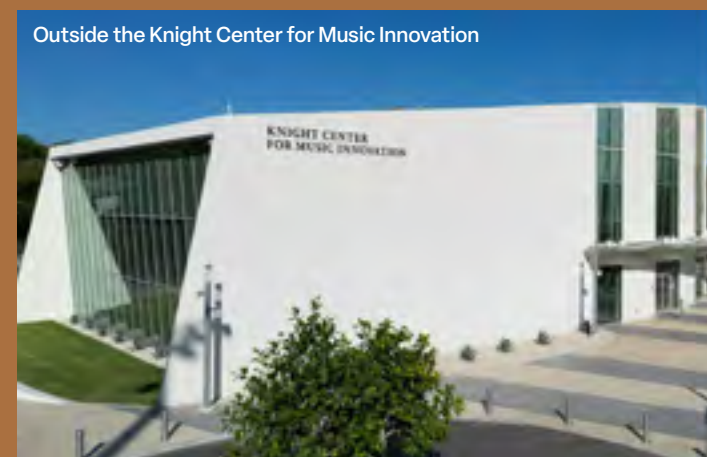
The vision for the Knight Center inspired an outpouring of philanthropy. In addition to the Knight Foundation, the leading donors were the Miller Family, the Newman Family Foundation, the Thomas D. Hormel Trust, the Paul J. Dimare Foundation, Anonymous, Patti and Allan Herbert, the C and A Foundation, Sasha and Edward P. Bass, the James M Collins Foundation, the Christian Family Fellowship, and Dorothy and David Weaver.

Berg says the moment is an achievement for stakeholders across the Frost School, the University, and the community.

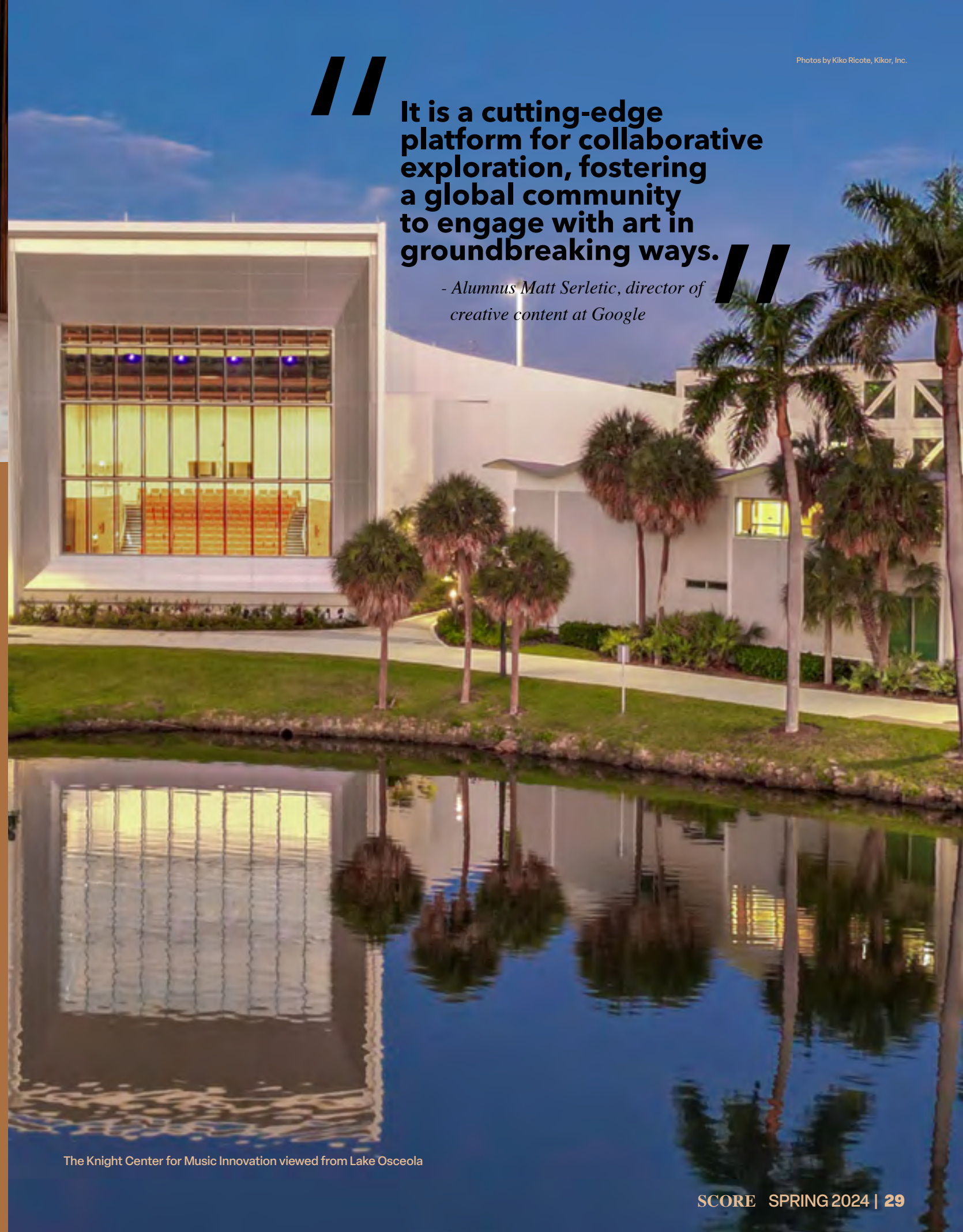
“There’s immense potential in coming together to achieve a common goal,” he says. “Especially when the goal is shaping the future of music for our students, our faculty and all of us.”



Inside the Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage



Outside the Knight Center for Music Innovation



“It is a cutting-edge platform for collaborative exploration, fostering a global community to engage with art in groundbreaking ways.”

- Alumnus Matt Serletic, director of creative content at Google

The Knight Center for Music Innovation viewed from Lake Osceola

Top photo by Smash Pixel Studio, bottom photo by Matt Rice



Multimedia presentation highlighting the history of the Frost School inside the Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage dazzled Opening Gala guests



The technology built into the Knight Center is central to that future.

“Universities are laboratories for innovation,” says Berg. “Having the laboratory space so our students can train for the kinds of situations they’re going to face in the future, or that they’ll need to be leaders, took over a big part of our imagination.”

Rey Sanchez, who’s led multiple innovative efforts at Frost including Frost Online and the M.A.D.E. program, was integral to imagining how that technology would work. He was key to ensuring the Hormel Space’s infrastructure was a versatile grid that could accommodate multiple light, sound, and media configurations, rather than installing fast-evolving technology that soon becomes obsolete. “The idea in that room is that we have a very nice skeleton,” Sanchez says.

“Spaces inform art. The whole idea of a space like this is to do new things.” The immersive Frost history presentation, which Sanchez created, vividly demonstrated the Hormel Stage’s capabilities.

“As the school grows in prominence and programs new buildings are built,” says Sanchez. “The new buildings incentivize more innovation. We see this as part of that continuing cycle.”

Jeffrey Buchman, associate professor and assistant director for opera, is one of the faculty who helped conceptualize the Knight Center. He co-created the chamber opera *Stained Glass*, the first work created for the Hormel Stage, which premiered in March. “The space was part of the creative process,” says Buchman. They filled the empty white walls with video to make the piece fully immersive. The internet and data processing capabilities allowed them to add augmented reality goggles for part of the audience; and to coordinate multiple complex visual streams with the live music.

Buchman says much of the opera world is eager to experiment this way. “Hormel becomes a real lab space for us,” he says. “All of us feel it is enabling and empowering us to do what we know how to do, but in innovative ways.”

The Newman Recital Hall’s exquisite acoustics ensure

Photos by Smash Pixels Studio and Shawn Clarke



Opening Gala (clockwise from upper left): Frost alumnus Jon Secada, emcee Gloria Estefan, Frost alumnus Carmen Lundy; Dean Berg accompanies Lundy; Centennial Medal recipients celebrate onstage; producer Emilio Estefan with Frost alumnus Julio Bague; Frost students in Gala Finale

that everything from a solo pianist to a jazz big band will sound superb. But it is much more than a state-of-the-art concert hall. It has technological capabilities that allow a musician in the hall to interact with an artist on another continent. The *Windowcast* and livestream performances will bring intimate views of the artists onstage to audiences outside, whether on the plaza or on their phone in another city.

Those capacities will propel students to more effectively shape their ensembles, performances and creations for an evolving musical world; expanding the Frost School’s innovative, entrepreneurial ethos.

Matt Serletic B.M. ’92, M.M. ’94, a member of the Dean’s Advisory Committee, says Frost uniquely enabled him to pursue multiple skills and genres of music that propelled him to a very successful career as a songwriter and producer, and now as director of creative content at Google. But he says the Knight Center is a powerful showcase of how the school’s facilities have modernized along with the faculty and curriculum, raising its reputation and standard

for excellence. “The Knight Center empowers modern musicians to ignite their artistry and build their careers, all within a dynamic creative ecosystem,” Serletic says. “It is a cutting-edge platform for collaborative exploration, fostering a global community to engage with art in groundbreaking ways.”

For Berg, the wide engagement and effort that brought the Knight Center to fruition further fulfills the sense of possibility that brought him to the Frost School in 2007. “I knew I was coming to a place where it would be possible to redefine many things about a music school,” he says. “I’m thrilled that my colleagues and I have done that.”

The Knight Center brings that sense of inspiration to new heights. “I’m hearing from students and faculty on a daily basis about what a gamechanger this is,” Berg says. “That makes me feel really good, because my job first and foremost is to empower students and faculty. This is a great thing we’ve all done together. We’re not done. But I sure like the trajectory.”

FROST ALUMNUS CARLOS LOPEZ BRINGS FROST FLAIR TO SUPERSTAR BAD BUNNY'S TOUR

Carlos Lopez conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra Project at the opening show of Bad Bunny's U.S. concert tour



Bad Bunny



The fans filling arenas across the United States for reggaeton/pop superstar Bad Bunny's hotly anticipated "Most Wanted" tour this spring encountered something they did not expect: a conductor leading a 23-piece orchestra in a soaring blend of pop and classical music forged at the Frost School of Music.

The conductor is Frost School of Music triple graduate Carlos Lopez, while nearly half the orchestra are current or former Frost students or alumni. Lopez, a Colombian native with a bachelor's in production, a masters in classical composition, and a doctorate in classical conducting from Frost, had already parlayed those disparate degrees into success as a GRAMMY and Latin GRAMMY-winning pop producer and classical composer and conductor.

But the Bad Bunny tour has enabled him to connect what are generally considered completely divergent genres on a massive cultural platform—bringing wide attention to the Frost School's capacity to shape groundbreaking music artists.

"I had an instinct I needed to bridge those two worlds and build an intersection between the classical concert world and pop music for mass audiences," says Lopez. He credits the Frost School for not only giving him the skills, but fostering the mindset that enabled him to do so. "The school has something unique and important," says Lopez.

"The landscape and curriculum allow people to connect with very different fields and navigate many different musical languages."

Lopez's talent led Maestro Gerard Schwarz, the distinguished conducting and orchestral studies professor, to accept him as one of just four doctoral conducting students. "For me the most important thing is to have people with extraordinary potential, and Carlos has that," says Schwarz.

"What Bad Bunny has understood is that Carlos can add a new dimension. It really speaks to who we are at the Frost School of Music."

Last year Bad Bunny's team asked Lopez to compose

music for the Puerto Rican rapper's show at the Coachella music festival, which Lopez recorded with Frost students and alumni in Weeks Recording Studio. Shortly after, Lopez was asked to create music for Bad Bunny's new album, *Nadie Sabe Lo Que Va A Pasar Mañana (No One Knows What'll Happen Tomorrow)*; he is credited as co-producer, co-writer and performer on the album's first song. The singer then asked Lopez to conduct and put together an orchestra for the tour. Shortly before launching, he was tasked with writing an overture for the concerts—which he composed in two days in his hotel.

Lopez is impressed by Bad Bunny's adventurousness. "He's a visionary," says Lopez. "He wants to expand the limits of his creative landscape."

The Most Wanted tour began in Salt Lake City on February 21, and finishes in Miami May 24-26. Concerts open with what's named the Philharmonic Orchestra Project playing the overture on a separate stage, then accompanying Bad Bunny

on several songs; at one point the musicians even play from the audience. The star's PR team has included the orchestra in tour promotion, and fans have posted enthusiastically about it on social media.

Dean Shelton G. Berg is proud of how Lopez and the other Frost musicians are triumphing on this new stage. "If you have this opportunity to be part of Bad Bunny's music, your role is to make people think it was better because of the orchestra," says Berg. "They understand their job is to play great and connect to the audience. That translates."

The experience has dazzled the Frost players. "It's been a whirlwind," says trombonist and composer Connor Frederick, who put off finishing his doctorate at Frost to join the tour. "The roar of all these people is not like anything I've experienced."

"Frost is the place I needed to be to have an opportunity like this."



Photos courtesy of Frost School of Music



Donor Carmine Parente



FROST BAND OF THE HOUR ALUMNUS FUNDS MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

University of Miami math major Carmine Parente, B.S. '89, spent four years as a performing member of the Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music's Band of the Hour. Now, because he wants every band student to participate without financial constraints, Parente has pledged a \$1 million challenge gift to encourage matching donations for band scholarships.

The Frost Band of the Hour includes the marching band, which performs at football games, and the smaller pep band, which performs at men's and women's basketball games as well as select volleyball games. They are among the University of Miami's highest-profile and most dynamic student groups. Students from across the institution participate, regardless of their major.

"I was in the band for four years, including one year as drum major," recalls Parente, who believes his time with Band

of the Hour prepared him for his future as well as anything else he did in college. "As a band member, you learn how to follow, you learn how to lead, how to communicate with people, how to work with men and women, all those things I learned helped me be successful in my life."

Parente owns and operates a manufacturing company that operates across Florida and North Carolina. His business career has enabled him and his wife Eileen, to support the band that meant so much to him.

"Long before this amazing gift, Carmine Parente has for decades dedicated his time and resources to his alma mater and the Frost Band of the Hour," said Dean Shelton G. Berg. "I couldn't be more grateful to Carmine for the leadership he continues to exemplify. This scholarship support will change lives and positively affect countless students over time. We are all in for raising the additional \$1 million."

Violin Virtuoso Charles Castleman Endows Music Scholarship

A 1951 episode of *The Frank Sinatra Show* features a prodigiously gifted 10-year-old classical violinist named Charles Castleman. Before performing a solo, Castleman gamely participates in a sketch with comedian Jack Benny. The broadcast would have been a heady experience for any child, but Castleman was not just any child. He first performed in public at the age of four. At seven, he soloed with the Boston Pops Orchestra, and at 12 he played with the New York Philharmonic.

A glittering career followed. Castleman soloed with major orchestras around the globe and won medals in two of the most prestigious classical music competitions for early-career virtuosos: the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Russia and the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Belgium. His discography includes some of the most complex, difficult works ever written for violin.

In 2014, Castleman was appointed professor of violin at the Frost School of Music. He is committed to helping talented violinists reach their potential and, as he puts it, "express things that he or she could not express without the violin."

To bring that opportunity within reach of future generations of Frost School violin performance majors, Castleman has made a planned bequest to establish the Charles M. Castleman Endowed Music Scholarship. His generosity will provide valuable financial assistance to exceptional violin students that will enable them to pursue their goals at the Frost School. "This is something I am doing that will have an impact years from now," he says. "I've done very well in terms of having an impact within my lifetime. But I am interested in perpetuating it a little longer than that."

Dean Shelton G. Berg praised Castleman's contribution. "By endowing a scholarship, Professor Castleman entrusts his legacy to the Frost School, to empower new generations of brilliant students."

Castleman's gift is part of the University of Miami's Ever Brighter: The Campaign for Our Next Century. The most ambitious in the institution's history, the \$2.5 billion campaign is set to conclude in 2025, when the University will celebrate its centennial.



Henry Mancini Institute Joins Composer's 100th Birthday Celebration

This year marks the centennial of the birth of Henry Mancini, the composer whose music for so many films and television shows, from the bittersweet yearning of “Moon River” to the antic mystery of the “The Pink Panther Theme,” has become a cultural mainstay. And the Henry Mancini Institute (HMI) at the Frost School of Music—looking toward its own centennial next year—is joining in the commemoration of Mancini’s timeless music.

“Our mission is to celebrate this 100th birthday,” says singer Monica Mancini, the composer’s daughter, a renowned interpreter of his songs who regularly performs with the HMI Orchestra. “We’re doing everything we can to bring a name and face to the music.”

The festivities kicked off in November, when Monica sang with the HMI Orchestra in a 100th Birthday Celebration at Miami’s Adrienne Arsht Center. The multimedia event was co-produced by her husband, multi-Grammywinning producer Gregg Field, and Frost Dean Shelton G. Berg. Guests included guitarist John Pizzarelli, Broadway star Dawnn Lewis, and fiddler and recent HMI Fellow Rosie Weiss, M.M. ’23.

Field and the composer’s daughter joined the HMI Orchestra for a Mancini 100 concert at Boca Raton’s Festival of the Arts BOCA in March and do so again for a performance at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC this September. The couple are producing a tribute album, due out in June, with a host of musical luminaries, including film composer John Williams, producer Quincy Jones, jazz stars Herbie Hancock and Frost alumnus Pat Metheny, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and pop star/flautist Lizzo. And jazz fusion band Snarky Puppy, who recorded Mancini’s “Baby Elephant Walk” in Miami.

The Hollywood Bowl opens its season in June with a Mancini 100 celebration.

“His music moves people from generation to generation, and it creates a relevance to the music that’s not nostalgia,” says Field. “When Beyonce sings “Moon River” those lyrics and melody resonate with contemporary audiences.”

The HMI expands the vitality of that legacy. The Institute has done multiple television specials, recordings, and multimedia concerts featuring clips of films Mancini scored and of Mancini himself. HMI students sometimes write new arrangements of his songs. “We continually re-imagine his music,” says Berg. “Great music holds up to a lot of different ways of being performed.”

The Institute applies the Frost ethos of embracing multiple genres, not just with virtuosity and dedication, but with imagination and joy, to Mancini’s legacy. “The Mancini Institute makes a lot of different kinds of music, everyone’s music,” says Berg. “Which is what [students] are going to need in the world, and which the world will need from them. This is one of the things I’m most proud of.”



(left to right) Dean Shelton G. Berg, Etienne Charles, Dawnn Lewis, Judi Prokop Newman, Gregg Field, Monica Mancini, and Robert Newman



Singer and Frost School Alumna Dawnn Lewis performing at the Jazz Roots: Henry Mancini 100th Birthday Celebration

Monica Mancini sang with the Henry Mancini Orchestra at her father's 100th Birthday Celebration at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts



Anne and Alfred Camner

Camner Family Donates Musical Treasure

Personal letters and complete opera scores - Tin Pan Alley ditties and classical masterworks notated by Arturo Toscanini - a 1795 edition of Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito* and a manuscript of Puccini's exquisite art song "Sogno d'Or" ("Sweet Dream").

These are just a few of the treasures that will join the Alfred Camner, Anne Camner and Camner Family Music Collection, thanks to a third donation of rare early musical editions, autographed and noted scores, signed letters, and other items from the family. Housed in the Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library and Technology Center at the Frost School of Music, this gift to the University Libraries collections encompasses works spanning nearly four centuries.

The family's latest gift comprises 62 printed music scores, signed letters, and other musical ephemera. Though the trove focuses primarily on classical works and accompanying items from the 18th and 19th centuries, 20th-century popular and art music is also represented.

"We salute the Camner Family for their understanding of the scholarly value of this superb collection," said University of Miami Libraries Dean Charles Eckman. "Their generosity has created a teaching and research resource on a par with some of the most important such collections at other leading universities."

The items will be logged into the University of Miami Libraries catalog and made accessible to music students and researchers around the world via the WorldCat library database.

"Words cannot fully express our profound gratitude to the Camner family," said Frost School of Music Dean Shelton G. Berg. "This new gift builds on an extraordinary collection, offering insights into the thoughts and ruminations of leading figures in music history as well as original sources of iconic musical works for study and performance."

"The Camner Collection is a magnificent resource that will enlighten and inspire generations of students, faculty, and researchers."

Photo by Edin Studios



Jeffrey Buchman



Shawn Crouch

GROUNDBREAKING NEW OPERA THROUGH THE LENS OF EXTENDED REALITY

Innovation, learning, and pushing the boundaries of knowledge isn't only for the classroom. Frost School of Music professors Shawn Crouch and Jeffrey Buchman's world premiere production of a new opera, *Stained Glass*, attests to that. The visionary work combines real and virtual environments using Extended Reality (XR) technology.

In the summer of 2022, School of Communication associate professor Kim Grinfeder approached composer and conductor Shawn Crouch, associate professor of professional practice at the Frost School of Music. Grinfeder, who had read about Crouch's innovative work, leads the UMverse Initiative, an interdisciplinary community of students and faculty that uses augmented, virtual, and mixed reality technologies to innovate solutions in their fields. Grinfeder and his team asked Crouch about developing a project that combined XR and music.

Intrigued, Crouch signed on right away. As he pondered ideas, he became convinced that incorporating technology into theater productions could elevate performances and enhance the audience's experience. He envisioned a new opera for the Knight Center for Music Innovation.

"Premiering this new opera with architecture and innovation at its core in the new Knight Center for Music Innovation, the latest addition at the Frost School of Music campus, will be the perfect setting for the inaugural year of the new building," thought Crouch.

He contacted his Frost School peer and acclaimed opera director Jeffrey Buchman, assistant professor and stage

director of the Frost Opera Theater.

Buchman was Crouch's first choice, not only because of his success directing operas but also because of his experience in incorporating augmented reality technology into live performance.

Crouch and Buchman won a \$10,000 XR Faculty Award grant to craft a groundbreaking new opera using XR technology. To complete their crew, Crouch commissioned Dana Kaufman, D.M.A. '18, an acclaimed Los Angeles-based composer, to co-write the libretto. The opera explores the tragic story of Mamah Borthwick, the lover and partner of famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who was frustrated in pursuing an intellectual life of her own and was murdered at Taliesin, the home Wright built for them. *Stained Glass* premiered in late March 2024 at the Knight Center's Hormel Innovation Stage.

One of the benefits of incorporating this technology into musical theater productions is the ability to merge the live performance with the augmented reality seen through XR glasses. The immersive experience this creates for the audience is potentially a significant advancement in the field of performance.

"With the help of XR technology," says Crouch, "a small opera department could potentially mount a production without worrying about the high costs of building elaborate sets. They can simply provide audience members with XR glasses to enhance the storytelling. The Frost School of Music is at the forefront of exploring the potential of this promising innovation."



Musicians and producers inside the L. Austin Weeks Recording Studio at the Frost School of Music



Julio Bagué, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and Jon Secada producing the album with the help of Frost School students

Most North Americans revere Nat King Cole as a superb interpreter of the American songbook. But people throughout the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, especially Cubans, adored Cole as an American star who performed in glamorous pre-Revolutionary Havana and recorded three albums of their most beloved boleros in Spanish between 1958 and 1962—a crossover artist before the word was invented.

“I grew up listening to Nat King Cole in Spanish—my parents just loved those records,” says Miami-raised Cuban-American singer and Frost School of Music alumnus Jon Secada, B.M. ’83, M.M. ’86, who shot to stardom in the early 1990s with the dual-language hit “Just Another Day”/“Otro día más sin verte.” “Later on I realized why I really enjoyed this guy. More than the fact that he sang in Spanish, his voice and musicality were so beautiful.”

Last fall Secada joined Frost studio music and jazz lecturer Gonzalo Rubalcaba—one of the greatest Cuban-born jazz pianists—and producer/music executive Julio Bagué, M.M. ’93, a member of Dean Shelton G. Berg’s Advisory Committee, at Weeks Recording Studio. There they created an album that radically re-imagines Cole’s recordings in Spanish for a contemporary era.

The three men gathered at Miami’s peermusic offices to talk about a project that is deeply meaningful to them.

“What I think really moved us to do this was the challenge of what already exists, and of what we are looking for,” says Rubalcaba. “But always with a lot of respect and love.”

The project evolved from two other Cuban music albums Bagué produced with Secada, arising from Bagué’s position as a vice president at peermusic, a production and publishing company whose history is interwoven with the island. The first, recorded with Secada in 2017, was a Latin GRAMMY-winning tribute to legendary Cuban singer Beny Moré (whose publishing was with peermusic.) The second, with Secada and Rubalcaba, was the GRAMMY-nominated *Solos*, an album of classic Cuban romantic songs.

Because company founder Ralph Peer persuaded Cole to record in Cuba—from the company’s Cuban catalogue—also helped make the third album a natural follow-up. Extending the bi-lingual, bi-cultural inspiration, half the tracks are Hoagy Carmichael standards like “Stardust” and

“Fascination,” which Cole also performed regularly. “You come full circle,” says Bagué. “I also wanted to bring a project of this level, with artists of this level, to Frost.”

Dean Berg quickly approved. The team brought in world-class players: legendary Latin jazz percussionist Giovanni Hidalgo, drummer Clarence Penn, and bassist James Genus. Guest artists were celebrated Cuban vocalist Aymee Nuviola and virtuoso Venezuelan cuatro player Jorge Glem. The album was produced by Bagué and Mary Megan Peer, Ralph Peer’s granddaughter.

The L. Austin Weeks Studio offered not just state-of-the-art equipment, but a layout that allowed for an old-school recording session, with the musicians recording live for just three days.

Rubalcaba did the last few arrangements the night before the final session. “There was no time for rehearsals,” says Bagué. “We went there in the spirit of jazz.”

Another asset was Bagué’s 2022-23 intern, Frost student Grecia Daniel Rivera Carrasquillo, who organized students to take on the chore of setting up and packing up instruments and equipment.

Plans are to release the album in 2024, as well as a documentary on the project and Cole’s Cuban history (something peermusic did for the Beny Moré album). A tour is also in the works.

Growing up in communist Cuba, Rubalcaba couldn’t listen to Cole’s music until he left in 1991. He was inspired by the challenge of reinventing Cole’s classic recordings of boleros like “Quizás, quizás, quizás” (“Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps”) that are etched in Hispanic consciousness.

“These memories are so strong it’s difficult to get them out of your head,” says Rubalcaba. “But there’s no sense in repeating what has been done.”

Secada says the project pushed him to new artistic heights. “This recording was the most challenging vocally that I’ve ever done,” he says. “At the same time, the beauty and satisfaction, the feeling and passion are there.”



I also wanted to bring a project of this level, with artists of this level, to Frost.

- Frost alumnus and producer Julio Bagué



Jon Secada



Jon Secada, Julio Bagué, Gonzalo Rubalcaba at Weeks Recording Studio

Carlos Rafael Rivera Garners Hollywood Award

Grammy and Emmy-winning composer Carlos Rafael Rivera, chair of the media scoring and production department at the Frost School of Music, has added to his long list of prestigious accolades by winning the Society of Composers & Lyricists (SCL) award for outstanding original title sequence for a television production. The prize was for Rivera's Main Title theme for the Apple TV+ series *Lessons in Chemistry* (for which he was also nominated for best score), the latest in a long and growing list of critically acclaimed hit shows for which Rivera has created music.

The award, given at the 5th SCL Awards in February, was presented to Rivera by none other than Monica Mancini, the daughter of iconic film and television composer Henry Mancini and frequent collaborator with the Frost School of Music's Henry Mancini Institute.

Held at the Skirball Center in Los Angeles, the SCL Awards honor original scores and songs in visual media. Many of the nominees attended, including Billie Eilish and Finneas, who won for outstanding original song for a comedy or musical for "What Was I Made For?" from the megahit *Barbie*. Their presence indicated the growing importance of the SCL awards in Hollywood.

Rivera's score for Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit*, starring Anya Taylor-Joy, one of the network's most-watched and critically acclaimed series, earned him a Primetime Emmy Award and his first Grammy Award. He garnered another Emmy for his score for the Netflix series *Godless*.

An associate professor at the Frost School, Rivera has composed scores for the Peabody and Emmy-winning series *Hacks* for HBO Max and for the international hit *La Reina Del Sur* for Netflix/Telemundo. More recently, he composed the score for the Netflix series *Griselda*, starring Sofia Vergara, which tells the story of notorious drug queenpin Griselda Blanco and her Miami reign.

Carlos Rafael Rivera

Photo courtesy of The SCL

Amanda Quist Conducting Debut at Carnegie Hall

Amanda Quist, Frost School of Music's director of choral studies, made her conducting debut at New York City's Carnegie Hall last year as part of the Octavo Series, a festival chorus performance featuring choirs from Miami, San Francisco, Maryland, and Long Island, New York.

The experience was a landmark in Quist's long career. "It's hard to say exactly when the first time I stood in front of a choir and actually conducted was," says Quist. The conductor and director of the Frost Chorale recalls being about 19 when she conducted her first piece. "I do remember that it felt magical."

For the Octavo Series, Quist selected a repertoire of traditional and spiritually themed music from W.A. Mozart, Rosephanye Powell, Stacey V. Gibbs, Kim André Arnesen, and Susan LaBarr, in addition to Quist's original arrangement of "Wildflowers," a piece based on songs by Tom Petty and Stephen Foster, and co-written with her husband, Frost alumnus Tim Brent.

While the Octavo Series marked Quist's debut on the Carnegie Hall podium, she has prepared choirs — including the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Westminster Symphonic Choir with the Berlin Philharmonic — to perform there. But leading a massive choir at this storied venue brought back the magic of her start.

"I feel truly honored to have this chance to conduct at Carnegie Hall," says Quist. "I had the opportunity to hear Beethoven there last April after having prepared the chorus, and I was absolutely amazed at the acoustical power of the hall. There really is nothing like it. And to think of some of the people who have performed on that stage is truly humbling."

Amanda Quist

Photo by Addiel Perera Photography & Videography



MusicBiz President Portia Sabin presents award to Serona Elton

Photo courtesy of the Music Business Association

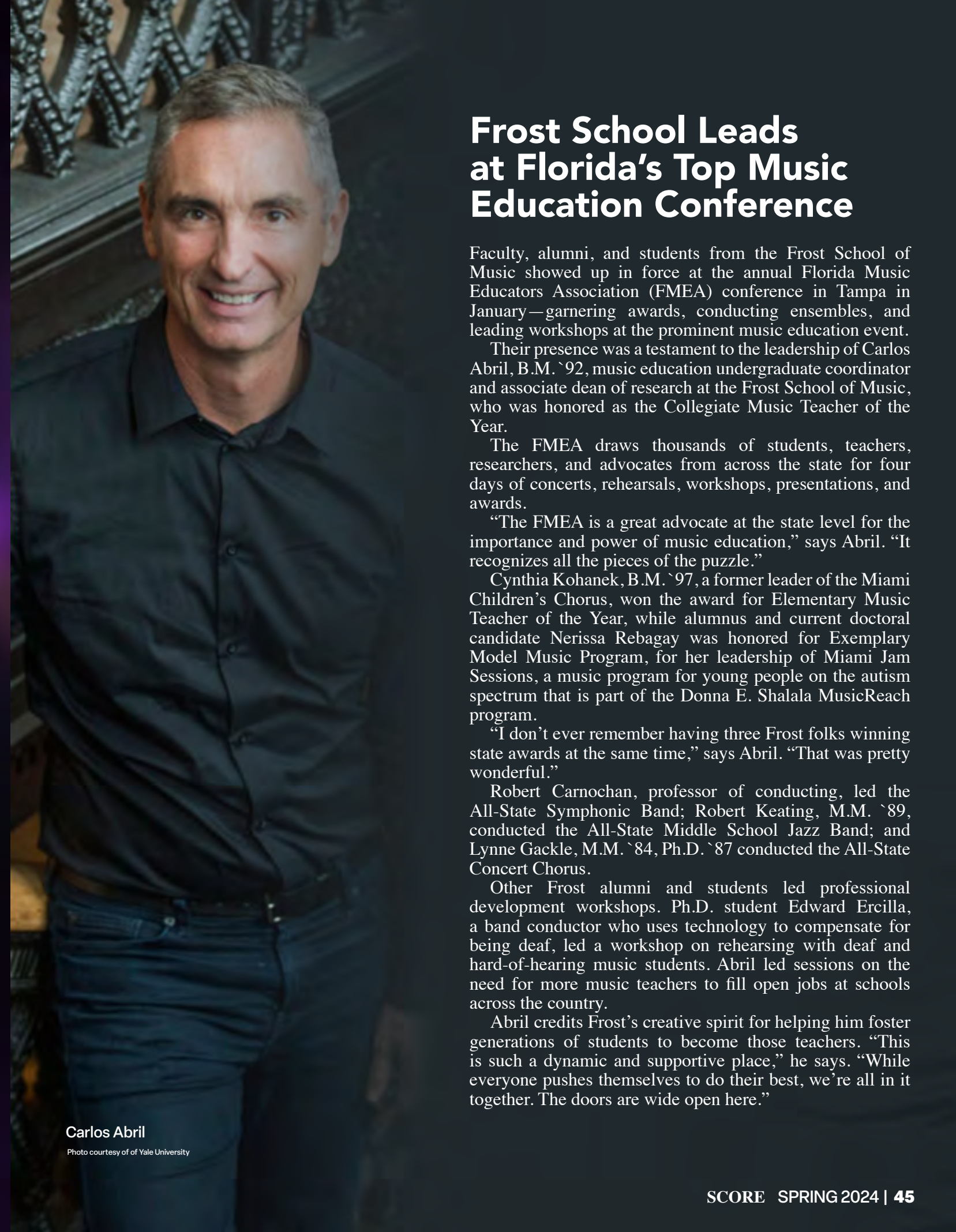
Serona Elton Named Music Business Educator of the Year

Frost School of Music professor and director of the Music Industry (MIND) program, Serona Elton, was honored with the first-ever Music Business Educator of the Year award, celebrating a music business educator who inspires students to enter the music industry. The honor was announced during the Bizzy Awards at the Music Biz 2023 conference in Nashville.

Last year, Music Biz, formerly known as the National Association of Recording Merchandisers, invited members of the music community to nominate candidates based on their impact on the music industry. Guillermo Page, assistant director of Frost’s Music Industry program and an assistant professor of professional practice, nominated Elton, stating, “Serona has earned the respect of many of our colleagues in education for her collegiate work and leadership.”

“Music Biz has long supported education,” says Elton. “Since 1966, its Scholarship Foundation has awarded scholarships to college students, regardless of their field of study. In 2015, they established an Academic Partnership membership category, and we were among the first schools to participate.”

On winning the award, Elton said, “I am so grateful to be named as the first-ever Music Business Educator of the Year. It is a huge honor. I am very proud to bring home another first for the Frost School of Music, to go alongside our being the first ever music business program at a university in 1966. The creation of this new category of Bizzy Award reflects how the industry at large has tremendous respect for what we do as educators in our programs.”



Carlos Abril

Photo courtesy of Yale University

Frost School Leads at Florida’s Top Music Education Conference

Faculty, alumni, and students from the Frost School of Music showed up in force at the annual Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA) conference in Tampa in January—garnering awards, conducting ensembles, and leading workshops at the prominent music education event.

Their presence was a testament to the leadership of Carlos Abril, B.M. ’92, music education undergraduate coordinator and associate dean of research at the Frost School of Music, who was honored as the Collegiate Music Teacher of the Year.

The FMEA draws thousands of students, teachers, researchers, and advocates from across the state for four days of concerts, rehearsals, workshops, presentations, and awards.

“The FMEA is a great advocate at the state level for the importance and power of music education,” says Abril. “It recognizes all the pieces of the puzzle.”

Cynthia Kohanek, B.M. ’97, a former leader of the Miami Children’s Chorus, won the award for Elementary Music Teacher of the Year, while alumnus and current doctoral candidate Nerissa Rebagay was honored for Exemplary Model Music Program, for her leadership of Miami Jam Sessions, a music program for young people on the autism spectrum that is part of the Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program.

“I don’t ever remember having three Frost folks winning state awards at the same time,” says Abril. “That was pretty wonderful.”

Robert Carnochan, professor of conducting, led the All-State Symphonic Band; Robert Keating, M.M. ’89, conducted the All-State Middle School Jazz Band; and Lynne Gackle, M.M. ’84, Ph.D. ’87 conducted the All-State Concert Chorus.

Other Frost alumni and students led professional development workshops. Ph.D. student Edward Ercilla, a band conductor who uses technology to compensate for being deaf, led a workshop on rehearsing with deaf and hard-of-hearing music students. Abril led sessions on the need for more music teachers to fill open jobs at schools across the country.

Abril credits Frost’s creative spirit for helping him foster generations of students to become those teachers. “This is such a dynamic and supportive place,” he says. “While everyone pushes themselves to do their best, we’re all in it together. The doors are wide open here.”

Etienne Charles: Exploring the Music of New World Migration



Etienne Charles

When David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City reopened in the fall of 2022 after a long hiatus for renovations and the pandemic, it celebrated with a performance of Frost School of Music associate professor Etienne Charles's composition, "San Juan Hill: A New York Story."

Performed by Charles, his group Creole Soul, and the New York Philharmonic, the immersive multimedia work told the history of San Juan Hill, a neighborhood that was once home to African-Americans and Puerto Rican and Afro-Caribbean immigrants who created a vibrant musical culture, which was razed to build Lincoln Center.

Chronicles of musical vitality and loss are central to the Trinidadian-born Charles, who uses performance, composition, and storytelling to explore the Caribbean and South American diaspora experience. A 2015 Guggenheim Fellow and 2022 Creative Capital Awardee, his extensive research involves travel to meet with musicians and cultural leaders, immersing himself in the social norms, rituals, and daily life of the cultures he studies.

His lush trumpet, complex rhythms, and textured compositions create an enthralling experience for listeners while taking on controversial subjects. Migrations are risky, often tragic attempts to escape horrific situations—war, violence, or dire poverty. Fueled by the desperate dream of a new life, migrants abandon their homeland and often suffer loss, alienation, or worse.

"The theme of loss is there," says Charles. "Yet also those of wandering and of gain because you're in a new land and a new space and you've become part of a new hybrid culture. My music is all about a new world because I don't work within the confines, as a composer or musician of Western European models. I don't use those confines simply because I am of the New World and a product of numerous Creole cultures."

Charles continues to delve into the refugee experience on his eighth album, *Traces*. The 2023 recording is a musical exploration of African and Sephardic migrations between the Caribbean and South America. He was joined by a trio of superb French, Venezuelan, and Israeli musicians, on cello, cuatro, and bass, who are shaped by their own migrant histories.

Traces extends Charles's decade-long exploration of the African diaspora and the connections between the regions at the roots of migration. "It's about all of the different things that contribute sonically, culturally, and physically to the Creole experience," says Charles, emphasizing that "Creole" by definition refers to anyone, regardless of racial designation, born in the colonies of the so-called "New World."

2023-2024 Faculty and Staff Updates



Corin Overland

Associate professor of professional practice for music education has been appointed associate dean of undergraduate studies at Frost School of Music, bringing his leadership and commitment to excellence to improve the educational experience of undergraduate students and bolster their sense of community and pride in the Frost School.

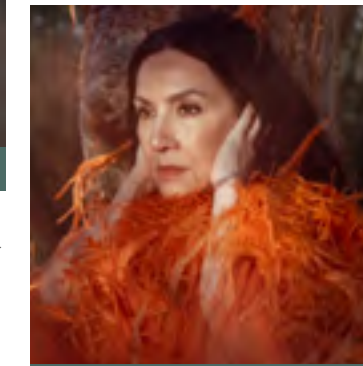
The group, which has 572 members in the United States and internationally, advocates for the quality teaching of popular music.



Sara Manus

As the new director of the Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library and Technology Center, Manus will continue to promote the Libraries' services, collections, and spaces.

Counterpoints: Vanguardia Musical in Global Networks, which maps the intellectual and artistic networks Cuban composers forged between 1940 and 1991 by exploring specific moments that shed light on composers' aesthetic and political agendas at local and international levels.



Roxana Amed

Argentine-American lecturer of contemporary voice, received a Latin Grammy Nomination for Best Latin Jazz/Jazz Album for her album *Unánime* at the 24th Latin Grammy Awards, held in Sevilla, Spain in November, 2023. *Unánime*, whose collaborators include Chucho Valdes and Frost alumnus Julio Reyes Copello, M.M. '00, was also nominated for Argentina's 2023 Gardel Award.



Gerard Schwarz

Music director of the Frost Symphony Orchestra signed a new three-year contract to extend his tenure as music director of the Eastern Music Festival, a nationally recognized classical music festival in North Carolina, through 2026. Schwarz joined EMF in 2005 as music advisor and rose to music director in 2008.



Frank Ragsdale

Associate professor of vocal performance has taken on the pivotal role of associate dean of administration, playing a crucial part in guiding and enhancing the organizational functions of our esteemed university.



Teresa Lesiuk

Professor of music therapy was a speaker at the "Music as Medicine: The Science and Clinical Practice" event by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, which was divided into two action-packed days, six scientific sessions, and a musical performance highlighting the scientific theme.



Brian E. Russell

Lecturer in contemporary guitar / musicianship, artistry development, and entrepreneurship currently serves on the APME Board and their Journal for Popular Music Education editorial committee.



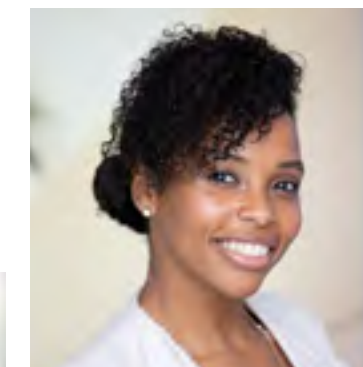
Raina Murnak

Assistant professor of contemporary voice / MADE and program director of the popular music pedagogy master of arts program, was named the vice president of the Association for Popular Music Education.



Marysol Quevedo

Assistant professor of musicology published her first book, *Cuban Music*



Cassandra Claude

Lecturer in modern artist development entrepreneurship was a presenter at this year's Pan American Vocology Association Symposium, which advances the scientific and interdisciplinary study of vocalization across species, through research, training, and dissemination of knowledge.



Juan Chattah

Associate professor of theory and composition released his new book, *Film Music: Cognition to Interpretation* (Routledge), exploring the counterpoint between a film's elements and the audience's perception and construction of meaning.

Instrumental Performance

Conducting and Chamber Music

Robert Carnochan (Chair)
 Bassoon – Gabriel Beavers
 Cello
 Ross Harbaugh
 Jeffrey Zeigler
 Chamber Music/Entrepreneurship – Jeffrey Zeigler
 Clarinet
 Margaret Donaghue, Woodwind Coordinator
 Mark Nuccio
 Conducting
 Robert Carnochan, Director of Bands, Frost Wind Ensemble
 Jay Rees – Director of Athletic Bands
 Douglas McCullough, Assistant Director of Athletic Bands
 Bands
 Gerard Schwarz, Frost Symphony Orchestra
 Double Bass – Brian Powell
 French Horn – Richard Todd, Brass Coordinator
 Flute – Jennifer Grim
 Guitar - Rafael Padron
 Harp
 Allegra Lilly
 Bridget Kibbey
 Oboe – Robert Weiner
 Percussion
 Svetoslav Stoyanov – Percussion Coordinator
 Joseph Petrsek
 Saxophone – Dale Underwood
 Trombone – Timothy Conner
 Trumpet – Craig Morris
 Tuba and Euphonium – Aaron Tindall
 Viola – Jodi Levitz, Strings Coordinator
 Violin
 Charles Castleman
 Scott Flavin
 Karen Lord-Powell
 Bettina Mussumeli

Keyboard Performance

Keyboard Pedagogy

Naoko Takao (Chair), Keyboard Pedagogy Coordinator
 Kevin Kenner
 Santiago Rodriguez
 Tian Ying
 Oleksii Ivanchenko – Collaborative Piano

Media Scoring and Production

Carlos Rafael Rivera (Chair)
 Randall Barlow
 Pauly German Torres
 Camilo Rodriguez

Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (Bruce Hornsby Creative American Music minor)

Daniel Strange (Chair)
 Bass – Martin Quinn
 Contemporary Media – Rohan Bhatia-Newman
 Drums – Steve Rucker

Guitar

Brian Russell
 Mitch Farber

Keyboards

Daniel Strange, American Music Ensemble
 Franchesca Romero

Songwriting

Craig Carothers
 Reynaldo Sanchez

Voice

Raina Murnak – Popular Voice Coordinator
 Roxana Amed
 Cassandra Claude
 Stephen Gleason
 Ian Holljes
 Laurah Merisier

Voice/Violin – Nicole Yarling

Music Education

Don D. Coffman (Chair)
 Carlos Abril
 Corin Overland
 Brian Powell
 Stephen Zdzinski

Music Engineering

Christopher Bennett (Chair)
 Tom Collins
 Dave Poler
 Justin Matthew
 Dana Salminen

Music Industry

Live Entertainment Management

Serona Elton (Chair), Music Law, Licensing, and Metadata
 Olga Cardona, Publishing and Licensing
 Guillermo Page, Marketing
 John Redmond, Publishing and Licensing
 Reynaldo Sanchez, Entrepreneurship and Music Production
 Gary Wood – Live Entertainment Management Program Director
 Pablo Abogado
 Melissa Lesniak

Music Theory and Composition

Charles Mason – Chair
 Juan Chattah
 Shawn Crouch – Experiential Music Curriculum
 Dorothy Hindman
 Juraj Kojs
 Lansing McLoskey
 Donald Scott Stinson
 Dwight Banks
 Santiago Diazgranados Berenguer
 Samuel Brooks
 Steven Eckert
 Jack Frerer
 Karen Lord-Powell
 David Mendoza
 Benjamin Montgomery

Federico Musgrove
 Mirjana Petrovic

Music Therapy

Teresa Lesiuk (Chair)
 Shannon de l'Etoile
 Yani Rubio, Clinical Training Coordinator

Musicology

David Ake (Chair)
 Melvin Butler
 Mark Lomanno
 Matteo Magarotto
 Marysol Quevedo
 Brent Swanson
 Christopher Cary
 Ana Ivanchenko
 Nicole Yarling

Studio Music and Jazz

John Daversa (Chair), Frost Jazz Orchestra
 Composition and Arranging
 Martin Bejerano
 Etienne Charles
 John Daversa

Stephen Guerra – Studio Jazz Writing
 Program Director
 Double Bass – Charles Bergeron
 Drums

Dafnis Prieto – Drums Coordinator
 David Chiverton
 John Yarling
 Harvel Nakundi, Ensemble Coach

Guitar

John Hart – Guitar Coordinator
 Joshua Bermudez, Ensemble Coach

Jazz Pedagogy – Charles Bergeron, Program Director
 Piano

Martin Bejerano – Jazz Piano Coordinator
 Shelton G. Berg
 Gonzalo Rubalcaba
 Franchesca Romero

Saxophone – Marcus Strickland
 Trumpet

Brian Lynch – Trumpet Coordinator
 Etienne Charles
 John Daversa

Theory and Aural Skills
 Nick Rosen

Will Wulfreck
 Trombone - Dante Luciani
 Instrumental Program Coordinator
 Voice

Kate Reid, Jazz Voice Program Director
 David Anderson II

Vocal Performance

Dance

Frank Ragsdale (Chair)

Choral Activities and Conducting

Amanda Quist – Director of Choral Activities
 Matthew Brady
 Anita Castiglione – Accompanying

Dance

Carol Kaminsky – Dance Program Coordinator
 Letty Bassart
 Arthi Devarajan
 Keiko Fernandez
 Petagay Letren
 Jorge Morejon
 Nicole Perry

Frost Opera Theater

Jeffrey Buchman – Stage Director
 Alan Johnson – Opera Theater Director
 Elaine Rinaldi

Voice

Kim Josephson
 Sandra Lopez-Neill
 Frank Ragsdale
 Robynne Redmon
 Jeanette Thompson
 Sarah Nachbauer
 Jenny Snyder – Accompanying

Henry Mancini Institute

Maria Schneider – Artistic Director
 Scott Flavin – Resident Conductor
 Megan Riccio – Managing Director

Frost Online

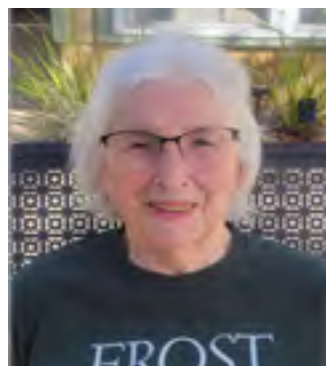
Serona Elton
 Scott Flavin
 Brian Lynch
 Gonzalo Mejia
 Raina Murnak
 Guillermo Page
 John Redmond
 Javier Sanchez
 Reynaldo Sanchez
 Simon Villareal
 Gary Wood



Photo courtesy of Frost School of Music

CLASS Notes

1950's



Betty Booth Merchant
B.M. '54 Armed with her degree, she embarked on a successful career as an educator that spanned over 30 years. She was an active member of the Chorale Society of Pensacola and became a soloist and choir member at the First Baptist Church in Milton.

1960's

Stu Krams
B.M. '61 in Music Education is former band director and instrumental music educator in the Spackenkill School District, Poughkeepsie, New York. Played bass with the Big Band Sound of Dutchess County, New York.

1970's

Sam Ruttenberg
B.M. '78 in Instrumental Performance (Percussion) did a recent drum clinic with drumming legend Bernard Purdie and presented his drum clinic in Valencia, Spain.



Sally Albrecht
M.A. '77 in Musical Theater, M.M. '79 in Chamber Music is a choral composer, conductor and clinician who has conducted hundreds of honor choir events, including at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and led school choral publications at two major educational music publishing companies.

Warren Smith
B.M. '77 in Studio Music and Jazz is a retired music educator. A composer at Honeyhead Music, he has composed several large projects and written a technical drum set instruction book.

Robert Hart
B.M. '71 in Instrumental Performance is a flutist who in 2022 composed and executive-produced the opera *Contemplating Fire - Joan of Arc* with Michigan's Shoreline Music Society.

1980's

Stephen Toback
B.M. '84 in Music Engineering Technology has

been the enterprise media architect, senior producer for academic media production at Duke University for the last 17 years. He's recently taken on an additional role as a lecturer in Artificial Intelligence focusing mainly on how AI is impacting the work force.



Juan Punyed
B.M. '88 in Music Engineering Technology is a classical guitarist, songwriter, and audio engineer. Worked with Sony Broadcast with Audio/Video Broadcast Support Engineering and as sales director for Latin America. Currently working with AoIP with Telos Alliance as sales director and specialist for Latin America.

Daniel Adams
M.M. '81 in Music Theory and Composition is the author of *Four Drums, One Player: The Artistic and Pedagogical Merits of the Unaccompanied Concert Tom-Tom Solo*, NACWPI Journal, Volume 70, Issue 1, Fall 2022.

Frederic Glesser
M.M. '82 in Music Theory and Composition. His

piece "Piano Trio No. 2" had its New York City premiere at the Weill Recital Hall in May 2023. The extraordinary Trio Casals ensemble will perform the work as part of its Parma/Navona CD launch concert for the last installment in a multi-part series of recordings.

Nancy Strelau
M.M. '85. As of Jan 1, 2024, is conductor of New Horizons Symphony Orchestra and Virtuosi Orchestral Training Orchestra through the Eastman Community Music School program.

Seth Wexler
M.M. '83 in Instrumental Performance has been a freelance percussionist and teacher for the past 10 years. Before that, he was a percussion and band director at the North Broward Preparatory School and was a member of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra. Currently teaches at the Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach and the New World School of the Arts in downtown Miami.



Dawnn Lewis

B.A. '82 in Theatre, founder and first graduate of Musical Theatre Program, actor, singer, composer, producer. Her awards include the Frost Centennial Award in 2023, the Women Songwriters Hall of Fame, an honorary doctorate in 2019; Grammy; multiple BMI, ASCAP, and IMAGE Awards. Recently starred on Broadway in *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical* as Zelma Bullock. Dawnn is also the founder and CEO of the A New Day Foundation, a 501c.3.

Chuck Webb
B.M. '82 in Studio Music and Jazz served as musical director for the innovative cirque/musical theater production *Cabaret Zazou* in Chicago. Chuck also performed (double bass and electric bass) for the Lyric Opera.

Orlando Jacinto Garcia
M.M. '82, D.M.A. '84 in Music Theory and Composition is a composer, conductor, and educator. Currently the composer in residence and distinguished university professor for the Herbert and Nicole Wertheim School of Music at Florida International University. During the coming year, he will be completing new works for the New World Symphony Orchestra and the National Orchestra in Costa Rica.

Noah Herschman
B.M. '84 in Jazz Guitar Performance has been a pioneer in e-commerce since its inception in the mid 1990s and has held leadership positions at Amazon, eBay, and Groupon, as well as offline retail management positions at Tweeter/Sound Advice and Staples China. Currently, Noah is the lead retail industry architect for Microsoft based in Hong Kong.

Ella M. Fredrickson
B.M. '85 in Instrumental Performance plays the violoncello (and theremin!) and has resigned from her position as principal librarian of The Florida Orchestra to pursue creative work as a self-employed music copyist and editor specializing in preservation engraving of orchestra works.



Kristian Truelson
B.M. '81 in Musical Theatre has been a professional actor since his time at Frost, working on stage and in film and TV across 10 states and six Canadian provinces. He has composed music for numerous theatrical productions, including songs performed for 13 years at Walt Disney World.

1990's

Christy Crowl
B.M. '92, M.M. '95 is currently a full-time senior music producer for Disney Live Entertainment, with 20-plus years of A-level experience in Los Angeles.

Alyse Korn
B.M. '90 in Studio Music and Jazz, is a pianist, composer, arranger, producer, sound therapist, and educator who released a new album of original compositions, *Tuesdays Child* with her husband Robert Kyle. Alyse also teaches online piano

lessons for kids and group music classes for babies and toddlers.

Mark Poesz
B.M. '97 in Studio Music and Jazz combined his experience as both a musical director and professional certified coach to create the first professional development course for current or aspiring touring musicians, called "The Big 3: Steps to the Big Stage."



Wayne Dillon
M.M. '99 in Jazz Pedagogy is the former director of bands at Elizabeth High School in New Jersey where he was named the state of New Jersey Governor's Teacher of the Year. He was also named the New Jersey Outstanding Jazz Educator in 2021. Currently teaches part-time at Tarpon Springs Leadership Academy in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

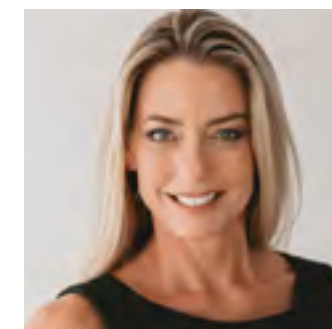
James Dorgan
B.M. '90 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries oversees music negotiations, contracts, and legal matters for Disney Branded Television, helping to create original content and marketing from Disney+, Disney Channel Networks, and Disney Television Animation. James also provides music business and legal advice to select projects from Hulu, FX, and Lucasfilm, including *The Mandalorian*



Alexis D. Kurtz
B.M. '97 in Music Engineering Technology is an INCE board certified noise control engineer and acoustic consultant with more than 25 years of experience in the field of architectural acoustics, vibration control, and sustainable design.

Jerry Placken
B.M. '96 in Music Engineering Technology is a drummer, keyboard player, and songwriter who has been working in the professional audio industry since graduation. He has always maintained a home recording studio and continues to perform, compose, and record original music.

Ron Petroff
M.M. '94 in Jazz Performance and Pedagogy is a saxophone player, producer, programmer, and engineer who has worked and toured as a sax player. He received a GRAMMY-nomination in 2018 and is a current professor at Apprentice Academy and CEO of Krush Audio.



Cynthia A. Kohanek



Alumni **Spotlight:**

Tianxu Liu

D.M.A. '23

Violinist Tianxu Liu's career has taken her from her native China to San Francisco, Miami, and New York City—where she performed at a self-produced recital at Carnegie Hall in 2022. More recently she joined the Houston Symphony.

Liu credits her mentor Bettina Mussumeli, violinist and chamber music lecturer at the Frost School of Music, with making her recital possible. They met in 2018 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where Mussumeli taught. After Mussumeli came to Frost, she encouraged Liu to continue studying in Miami. Charles Norman Mason, chair of Frost's department of theory and composition, also composed a piece for Liu's Carnegie Hall show.

"When I walked on the Carnegie Hall stage, I didn't feel it was real," says Liu. "It was a packed house! And my professor and mentor, Bettina Mussumeli, was sitting in the first row smiling at me."

B.M. '96 in Music Education is currently a music educator at Pinecrest Elementary and was named the 2024 Florida Music Educator Association's Elementary Music Educator of the Year. Cynthia is a major contributor to the musical community and profession.

Michael Celenza

B.M. '97 in Jazz Performance is a percussionist, composer, and educator with 30 works with ASCAP and an M.A. in percussion performance. Has a residency at the Baked Potato in Studio City, California; performs original compositions with Catatonic, a jazz fusion quintet.

Marko Marcinko

B.M. '93 in Studio Music and Jazz is a drummer, pianist, composer, arranger, and musical director who was recently appointed director of music performance/artist in residence at the prestigious Misericordia University. He serves as the artistic director for the Pa Jazz Alliance Inc., the Pa Jazz Institute, and the Scranton Jazz Festival.

Eric Alexandrakis

M.M. '96 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries received his second GRAMMY-nomination last year in Best Americana Performance. Having collaborated with the likes of Yoko Ono, John Malkovich, David Lynch, members of The Cure, Duran Duran, Dolores O'Riordan, and many others, Eric has also been involved in film production, and was shortlisted in Cannes with a film he conceptualized.

Matt Watson

B.M. '96 in Music Engineering Technology recently joined Analog Devices as vice president of the digital business unit. He has led global semiconductor businesses in the last 15 years across product categories including real-time microcontrollers, advanced microprocessors, and digital signal processors, and markets including automotive, industrial, and consumer.

2000's



Erika Reyes Fernandez

B.M. '07 in Music Education has served in the Florida National Guard's 13th Army Band for the last 17 years. Duties have included principal clarinetist and assistant conductor. Took over as First Sergeant in January 2024.

Katrina Mena Rick

B.A. '08 in Studio Music and Jazz Vocal Performance started her career at the age of 8 with the Miami Children's Chorus. Katrina has over 25 years of diverse experience working in the entertainment industry, having been a professional vocalist, vocal coach, songwriter, casting director, stage manager, production manager, and now creative producer for Disney Live Entertainment.

Nancy Luzko

D.M.A. '05 in Piano Performance is a pianist and composer who recently premiered her latest composition, the opera *Rendez-vous avec Chopin*, co-written with her brother, composer Daniel Luzko. The work was premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra of Paraguay.

Lisa (Marino) Abel

B.M. '03 in Music Education is currently the band director at Simsbury High School and was selected as the 2023 Kathleen Magowan Simsbury Teacher of the Year. After completing the state process, she was honored as a finalist for the 2023 Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Lisa is also an adjunct professor at the University of Hartford and a UCONN Early College Experience teacher.



Dan Belongia

B.M. '96 in Music Education, M.M. '03 in Instrumental Conducting is currently professor of music and director of bands at Arkansas Tech University.

Scott Routenberg

D.M.A. '08 in Jazz Composition, M.M. '05 in Media Writing and Production was invited to reprise his role as a jury member in American Pianists Association Jazz Piano Competition Premiere

Series at The Jazz Kitchen in Indianapolis, where he helped determine the winner of the Cole Porter Fellowship, the largest jazz prize in the world.

Keith Washo

Keith Washo, M.M. '00 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries is a pianist, songwriter, and producer currently teaching music at The Prizery Arts & Theater Center in Virginia, writing new music, and producing another show.

Melissa Lesniak

Ph.D. '05 in Music Education was appointed chair of the performing arts and industries department at Miami Dade College Kendall Campus in September 2023. She also co-founded Miami Community Music Center in 2022 with fellow alumna Wendy Chen Gunther.

David Birrow

B.M. '05 in Music Education is a music teacher and percussionist, who received the Middle School Chair Award for Teaching Excellence at Breck School in Minnesota where he teaches middle and high school music courses. David also presented a session at the 2024 NAMM Show on how to teach bucket drumming.



Jessica Muñiz-Collado

B.M. '08 in Instrumental Performance is a music career consultant, composer/

producer, percussionist, and an assistant professor of music business at the University of North Texas. She is also the Founder/Owner of NIZCO MUSIC, has recently been appointed chair of the Music Industry Council for the College Music Society, and also serves on the committees for both the Music Business Association and the Recording Academy (Texas Chapter).



Randall Foster

M.M. '05 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries is the chief creative officer and GM of Symphonic Distribution's Nashville operation. There he oversees the A&R team, music publishing and YouTube / user-generated content monetization as well as the operations of sister companies, Bodega Sync and Streaming Promotions.

Peter Fielding

M.M. '02 in Music Theory and Composition was promoted to professor of music at Kennesaw State University and continues to serve as associate dean for the College of the Arts.



Alan Chan

B.M. '01 in Music Theory and Composition received a 2023-24 IDEA Opera Grant from OPERA America, to compose his first opera *Immortal Labia*. His "Catch Me at the Canidrome" (2024) for pipa and string quartet will receive its premiere in April 2024. "His Moon Walk" project for jazz orchestra and pipa was selected to be featured at the Jazz Education Network Conference in Orlando, Florida in January 2023.

David Horace Davies

M.M. '04, D.M.A. '07, recently completed a term on the board of directors for the National Association of Schools of Music, serving as chair of region 6. He remains active in composition and is currently the provost of Houghton University in New York.

Stephen Danyew

B.M. '06 in Music Theory and Composition is a composer who was a finalist for the 2023 Sousa Ostwald Award from the American Bandmasters Association. He recently completed commissions for the Oregon All-State Band, a work for choir and wind ensemble, and a work for orchestra and choir for the 20th anniversary of Fond du Lac High School's (Wisconsin) annual holiday prism concert.



Katherine Palmer

Class Notes

Katherine Palmer

B.M. '07 in Instrumental Performance recently joined the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum as senior director of education and community engagement. She also manages the Taylor Swift Education Center, supports the museum's education council, and most recently held the position of curator of education at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

Marie-Élaine Gagnon

D.M.A. '05 in Instrumental Performance is an avid chamber player and a strong advocate for music education and outreach; currently teaching at the Crane School of Music of SUNY Potsdam since 2017.

Kathy Kerstetter

M.M. '02, Ph.D., '06. Affectionately known as "Dr. K" was selected as an awardee for Miami's Local 10 (WPLG) Tribute to Teachers in May 2023. She currently teaches elementary general music for Broward County Public Schools, recently serving as the Broward County Elementary Music Teachers Association president, and as the current president-elect of the South Florida Orff Chapter.



Sam Howard

B.M. '03 in Studio Music and Jazz resides in Nashville, where he is a studio

musician, composer, and producer/engineer. He has performed or recorded with Grammy-winning artists including Bluegrass superstar Molly Tuttle, Joy Williams, Joe Henry, and Aoife O'Donovan, and JUNO Winners Ruth Moody and The Wailin' Jennys.

Jamie Perez Sutta

M.M. '09 in Jazz Vocal Performance is a music educator and nonprofit leader who founded The Children's Voice Chorus (CVC) in Miami in the Fall of 2011 out of a desire to bring the joy of vocal music to any child who wanted to sing, regardless of their zip code.

Catherine Tu

Ph.D. '09 in Music Education is associate professor of music and coordinator of student teaching at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. She was appointed to the 2019-2020 Texas A&M University System Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Educators for her outstanding dedication to excellence in teaching.

Christopher Ragsdale

D.M.A. '06 in Instrumental Conducting has been named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Athens State University. In this role he oversees the social, behavioral, health, mathematical, natural, and computer sciences as well as the visual and performing arts at the Alabama Center for the Arts. Prior to this appointment, he served 16 years on the faculty at the University of Alabama in Huntsville as professor and chair of music and theatre.

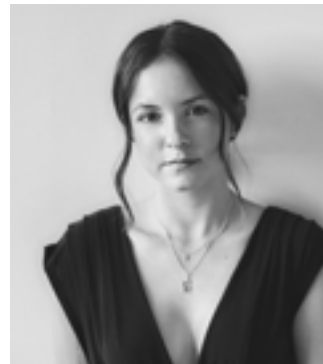
2010's

Elizabeth DiFronzo

M.M. '17 in Classical Vocal Performance, is a mezzo-soprano based in New York City. In addition to her opera and choral engagements, she maintains a full private studio of voice and piano students.

Diosan Borrego

B.M. '10 in Media Writing and Production, currently a video editor for Q Link Wireless and director/producer for Seaglass Consulting Group. Responsible for graphics in addition to all production work.



Natalia Ramirez

M.A. '17 in Live Entertainment Management, currently manages multiple artists' careers and businesses in the music industry, including all the brands for Art House Society in Miami (Art House Studio, Abbey Road Institute Miami, and Art House Academy). Natalia is also a vocal engineer known as Natituner. She's been awarded several Grammys and Latin Grammys.

Jessica Hawthorne-Mata

M.M. '16, D.M.A. '19 is a trombonist, educator, and arranger. She has played with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, as well as with multiple production shows in Las

Vegas. A recipient of the Nevada Arts Council Grant, she performed a recital series of unaccompanied music for trombone. She maintains a private studio and is a published arranger with Cherry Classics.



René Mark

M.A. '16 in Live Entertainment Management is the current digital marketing lead for the world's biggest K-pop artists, including Grammy-nominated BTS, SEVENTEEN, NewJeans, and LE SSERAFIM. She has led the digital marketing strategy for several chart-topping albums and singles that continue to break records worldwide.

Simón Gómez Gallego

B.M. '08, M.M. '10 in Instrumental Performance, is a member of the Chicago Philharmonic, Illinois Philharmonic, and South Bend Symphony Orchestras. This season he has played as guest principal timpanist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestras, and the Mainly Mozart All Stars Orchestra.

Craig McKenzie

D.M.A. '19 in Instrumental Performance Conducting, has been appointed the new associate director of bands and athletic band director of the Frost School of Music. He was previously music director and

principal conductor of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park Band.

Sandra Lopez Neill

M.M. '17 in Vocal Performance sang the title role for the premiere run in Spain of Daniel Catan's opera *Florencia en el Amazonas*, and was the principal soprano for the world premiere of Luis Gonzalo Prado's opera *Miami Transfer*. In her capacity as conductor, she was the music director and conductor of the Miami Classical Music Festival's production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at the Faena Forum in Miami Beach, Florida.

Rachel Dean

B.M. '15 in Music Theory and Composition is a composer and music director who works as a pianist on Broadway at *Hamilton* and *Moulin Rouge*. She has received commissions, many productions of her musicals (including internationally), and an ASCAP award.

David Pegel

D.M.A. '14 in Music Theory and Composition is the winner of the Avivo Prize, a \$5,000 award given annually to a music educator who demonstrates noteworthy creativity in teaching and the ability to provide students with a strong foundation in musicianship skills.



Nick DaCosta

M.M. '19 in Music Business and Entertainment

Industries is a singer/songwriter, dancer, and actor who works as a strategic communications coordinator at YoungArts in Miami. Founded in 1981, YoungArts identifies exceptional young artists, amplifies their potential, and invests in their lifelong creative freedom.

Isabel Thompson

D.M.A. '15 in Instrumental Performance created a catalog of Latin American compositions for clarinet and piano.

Allison Cawthon

B.M.E. '19 in Music Education is a current music educator in Boulder, Colorado. She also spends her summers as an arts liaison and researcher for the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma where she continues her work on indigenous culture and music's place in public schools in the U.S.

Ahmad Rithaudin Md Noor

M.M. '07, Ph.D. '14 in Music Education. He is currently faculty member of the University Teknologi Mara in Malaysia.

Annemarie Smith

M.M. '11 in Music Education is a saxophonist and conductor currently in her tenth year as a high school band jazz director and a recent retiree after 20 years in Army National Guard Bands.

Ashley Wright

M.M. '14, in Music Education, currently works at the United States Army Garrison on Kwajalein Atoll, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. She



Alumni Spotlight:

Thandolwethu (Thando) Mamba

M.M. '22, A.D. '23

Thandolwethu (Thando) Mamba had a dream come true in the fall of 2023, when he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the chorus of "X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*." The baritone singer, a native of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), credits Frost vocal professor Kim Josephson for inspiring him to leave medical school to pursue a musical career at the Frost School of Music. Mamba has also performed with the Opera Wilmington, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and the Florida Grand Opera, and sung solo recitals in North Carolina, Florida, and Pennsylvania. South Florida Classical Review praised his "magnificent voice."

"Sometimes the dreams that come true are the ones that we weren't even capable of having," says Mamba. With music, he has discovered a vehicle to heal people "in a different way and on a much larger scale."



Alumni **Spotlight:**

Jack Joseph Hontz

D.M.A. '23

The 2022-23 Frost Graduate Student of the Year, instrumental Conducting graduate Jack Joseph Hontz was recently appointed visiting assistant professor of wind conducting at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, where he conducts the wind ensemble, teaches music courses, and helps recruit student musicians.

A busy arranger and transcriptionist, Hontz has transcribed from symphony orchestra to wind ensemble for the University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble and the University of Texas at Austin Wind Ensemble. He has also produced recordings for the West Chester University Wind Ensemble.

Among his numerous takeaways from Frost School of Music is the importance of kindness. "The depth of musicianship will always be limited if you don't treat other people with respect and kindness," he says. "You can't be a great musician without being a good person."

is one of 10 worldwide recipients of the International Society for Music Education's 2023 Parsons Music Advocacy Award, for her project providing elementary music classes and teacher training in the Marshallese public school system.

Tomás Cotik

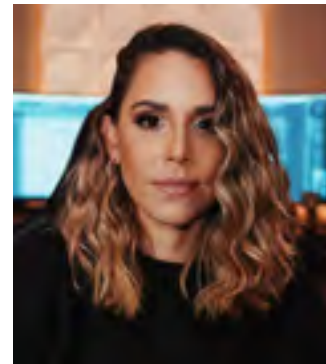
D.M.A. '13 in Instrumental Performance currently holds the position of violin professor at Portland State University. He has been honored with various awards, including the Dean's Council Award for Research, the Kamelia Massih Outstanding Faculty Prize, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, and a Fulbright Scholar Award to Spain.

Gustavo Padrino

B.M. '15 in Music Instrumental Performance, M.A. '17 in Music Business (minor) and Live Entertainment Management is the senior manager of community relations at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

Jonathan Wisner

B.M. '14 in Instrumental Performance joined the Seattle Symphony as second percussion.



Stephanie Martinez

B.S. '13 in Music Engineering Technology is a music engineer and

creative, and has been working as content director for an audio-based fitness app called Aaptiv. She is also involved in contract work as senior product manager for audio tech startup, GPU Audio, and as head of content for Indaband, a music collaboration app.

Alyssa Stone

B.M. '14, Music Therapy, Music Education, has won the AMTA GLR Service Award for her dedication to the field of music therapy. Alyssa hosts the Coffee and TheraTEA podcast to share all things music therapy with a wide audience. She also provides clinical supervision to students and professionals, as well as business coaching to fellow creative arts therapists.

Lauren Gamiel

B.A. '16 in Instrumental Performance, recently finished performances in *Lighthouse the Musical*, the longest-running off-Broadway musical at the SoHo Playhouse in New York City. Thanks to her training at Frost, she was also able to serve as the vocal captain for the cast.

Nerissa Rebagay

B.M. '15 in Music Education and Music Therapy, was included in the 2023 cohort of Yamaha's 40 Music Educators Under 40. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in music education at Frost and directs Miami Jam Sessions, which was named the 2024 FMEA Exemplary Model Music Program.

Alissa Musto

M.M. '19 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries, made UM's 30 Under 30 list.

Andrew Wang

B.M. '15 in Music Education

is an educator with a focus on music in New York City and Westchester public schools. Collaborated with the author of *Yonkers – The Lost City of Hip Hop* after connecting through Yonkers Public Schools. Together, they formed a small team dedicated to sharing the vibrant history of Yonkers and its musical culture.



David Hartman

M.M. '19, is president of Mostly Baroque, Inc., president of Constitution Records LLC, and a conductor and violinist performing on the baroque and modern violin. Produced, conducted, and performed in concerts in South Florida including the operas "Serva Padrona" and "Game of Werewolf" (Florida debut) as well as classical symphonies and chamber music.

Eric J. McConnell

B.M. '15 in Vocal Performance, made several debuts with opera companies across the U.S. in 2023, including Sarasota Opera, Opera Saratoga, and the Missouri Symphony. In 2024 he reprises Figaro with Opera Fort Collins, Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* with Opera San Luis Obispo, and others.

Jacky Seguí

M.A. '16 in Arts Presenting and Live Entertainment Management, is an arts

administrator and performer, and a WESTAF 2022-2023 National Leaders of Color fellow for the State of Georgia. She is currently director of community impact at Aurora Theatre, the second largest theatre in Georgia.

Jose Leonardo Leon

M.M. '11 in Instrumental Performance is a sought-after trombonist for orchestral, chamber, and solo performances. Currently, he is a visiting professor of music (applied trombone) and founder and coordinator of the Initiative for Arts Performance and Entrepreneurship at Florida Atlantic University. Moreover, he has won three Global Music Awards in the categories of Contemporary Classical Albums (twice), Producer, and Composition.

Brandin Kreuder

M.M. '18 in Instrumental Performance is living a fulfilling freelance career as a violist. Following his time at Frost he went on to spend two summers at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center. Brandin is currently in a one-year position with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

2020's



Mitso Floor

M.M. '21 in Instrumental Performance joined Friction Quartet, an ensemble dedicated to expanding

and modernizing the string quartet repertoire. He is also an active orchestral musician, playing assistant principal viola in the Santa Rosa and Vallejo Symphonies, section viola in the California and Berkeley Symphonies, and substituting with the San Francisco Symphony.

Stephen Pitters

B.M. '21 in Vocal Performance became a professor of musical theatre voice at the AMDA College of Performing Arts in Hollywood, California. In the past year, Stephen joined the Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble Tonicity, presented a professional recital with the Prima Voce Emerging Artist Concert Series in Pasadena, and won an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition's San Diego District in November 2023.

Scott AuCoin

D.M.A. '23 is a conductor and composer who is currently serving as interim director of choral and vocal activities at Haverford College. In April, he presented the U.S. premiere of Australian composer Cassie To's "Songs of the Reef" with the Haverford-Bryn Mawr Chorale and Orchestra.

Cannon McClure

B.M. '22 in Vocal Performance was a featured soloist with the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra and had her debut as Hänsel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* at Longy. She is also currently an active church musician in the Boston area.



Carly Poloskey

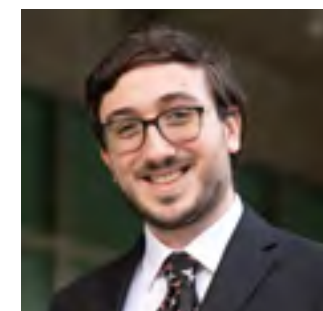
B.M. '20 in Music Therapy, published her master's thesis, entitled "The Experience of Mad Music Therapists: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis" and has been invited to present on the topic at venues including the Southeastern Regional American Music Therapy Association Conference and SUNY Fredonia. She is currently a music therapist and counselor at the Cleveland Clinic Maroon Cancer Center.

Fabian Carrera

M.M. '21 is currently pursuing a D.M.A. in Instrumental Performance in classical guitar at the Frost School of Music. He is a first-generation University of Miami graduate and actively volunteers at local hospices, homeless shelters, and clinics, where he uses his musical talents to make a difference.

Colin Raab

B.M. '23 in Music Engineering Technology is currently pursuing an M.A. in music technology at McGill University.





Alumni Spotlight:

Joshua Shepherd

D.M.A. '11

After earning his doctorate in viola performance and conducting at the Frost School of Music, Joshua Shepherd enjoyed a successful career playing with everybody from Aretha Franklin to the *Phantom of the Opera* Broadway orchestra.

But when the pandemic stopped performances in 2020, Shepherd pivoted and formed the People's Orchestra of Nashville, comprised of college students, faculty, community members, and professional musicians. The project illustrates the resilience, inventiveness, and versatility that are hallmarks of the Frost method.

The People's Orchestra has earned accolades including national finalist for the American Prize in Orchestral Performance. Shepherd was a national finalist for the community orchestra division of the American Prize in Conducting. "The People's Orchestra offers performances for people who don't usually attend orchestral concerts," says Shepherd. "We've tried to pick music and present at places that are community-friendly."

M.M. '23 in Media Scoring and Production is a percussionist, film composer, audio engineer, and administrator who is currently working as a freelance recording engineer and percussionist in New England and is the recording engineer for the Rhode Island Recording Ensemble and assistant timpanist/personnel manager for the Connecticut Symphony Orchestra.

Jeffrey Summers

D.M.A. '20 in Instrumental Performance, was named associate director of bands and director of athletic bands at the University of Arkansas.

Jasmine Ortiz

B.M. '22 in Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship is multi-lingual, multi-talented, and is rapidly rising as a pop singer and songwriter.

Shannon McDonald

D.M.A. '21 in Instrumental Performance is currently adjunct professor of music at Texas Woman's University. She and her research partner, Cecilia Kang, received the 2023 Research Competition prize at the International Clarinet Association.

Anjali Shinde

B.M. '21 in Instrumental Performance has been accepted to Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect fellowship position. Until 2025, Anjali will participate in this program that prepares extraordinary young professional classical musicians for careers combining musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Ellee Kennedy

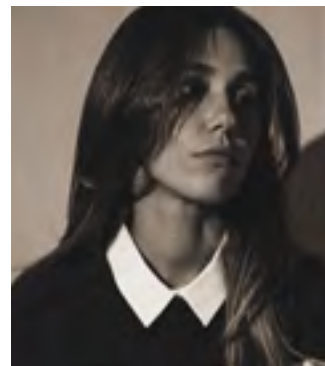
M.A. '21 in Live Entertainment Management has won this year's Miss Miami Beach title.

Derek Ganong

D.M.A. '15 in Jazz and Classical Trumpet is currently director of jazz and assistant professor of trumpet at Boise State University in Idaho. Recently honored as a Yamaha 40 Under 40 music educator recipient. Derek stands out as an exceptional educator by taking on an à la carte system with his students, focusing on the performing aspect, incorporating career education, open discussions, and mentoring students in music industry skills.

Dominic Grande

B.M. '20 in Instrumental Performance won the principal percussion and timpani audition for the Reno Chamber Orchestra.



Sofia Rebull

B.M. '22 in Vocal Performance is a Miami-based singer-songwriter.



Kara Iwanowski

B.M. '23 in Music Education received several accolades for her achievements during her time at Frost, including the Outstanding Senior Award for Music Education, and was one of four recipients of a national conducting honor for undergraduates at ACDA. Currently building a choir and modern band program for 6th through 12th graders in South Florida.

Mason Soria

M.M. '22 in Instrumental Performance won the tuba position with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in May 2022



Samantha Price

B.M. '23 in Music Industry, is a production assistant and classical soprano. Samantha works with Nu Deco Ensemble, Miami's 21st-century orchestra. She also sings with the Master Chorale of South Florida in her free time.

Akshada Bandekar

M.S. '23 in Music Engineering Technology is an audio engineer and singer, currently working as an audio engineer at Motorola Solutions, developing and testing audio software and hardware architecture in the realm of public safety devices such as two-way radio systems for mission-critical audio scenarios.

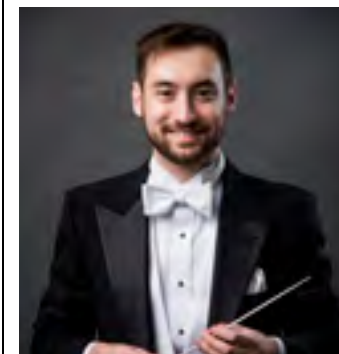


Greg Smith

M.M. '21 in Music Business and Entertainment Industries. Singer-songwriter inducted into the Lowcountry Music Hall of Fame as part of their 2023 class.

Victoria Nieto

D.M.A. '23 in Choral Conducting is a choral conductor and singer; received a Tinker Research Grant from the University of Miami to further her research in traditional Venezuelan music. She is currently the visiting director of choral activities at Hamilton College.



Matthew Cooperman

A.D. '21 in Orchestral Conducting is currently the assistant conductor of Florida Grand Opera and Palm Beach Symphony. He is the 2023 conductor/clinician of the Miami-Dade County Superintendent's Honors Music Festival High School Orchestra and a preliminary juror for the 2023 Rosen-Schaffel Competition for Young and Emerging Artists.



Alumni Spotlight:

Ksenija Komljenović

D.M.A. '17, A.D. '18

Percussionist Ksenija Komljenović started the 2023-24 academic year by joining the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, one of the leading conservatories in the U.S., as chair of the percussion department, taking over from percussion icon John R. Beck. Born and raised in Serbia, Komljenović was previously an assistant professor of percussion at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

A prizewinner of the International Percussion Competition Luxembourg, Komljenović is one half of the critically acclaimed Vesna Duo (with pianist and Frost peer Liana Pailodze). Komljenović has performed in Hong Kong, England, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Poland; and taught more than 50 masterclasses internationally.

Komljenović is grateful for the training and the support she found at Frost. "Professor Svetoslav Stoyanov is still such an important lighthouse in my life," she says. "Conversations with him are crucial when I have serious decision-making to do in my career."

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In Memoriam



Marta S. Weeks Wulf As the first woman to chair the University of Miami’s Board of Trustees and a passionate advocate for academics, the arts, healthcare, and research, Weeks Wulf’s generosity touched nearly every aspect of UM. Her philanthropy to the Frost School of Music is arguably her greatest legacy to the University, and alongside her husband Austin provided a naming gift to help build the Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library and Technology Center. She also made a naming gift for the L. Austin Weeks Center for Recording and Performance. Weeks Wulf gave generously to the Rosenstiel School; the School of Nursing and Health Studies; the Miller School of Medicine; and the Debbie Institute at the Mailman Center for Child Development.

Gil Acosta B.M. `64, after graduating from Key West High School, he went on to higher education in Tampa, Louisiana, and finally his cherished alma mater, the Frost School of Music. He was very dedicated to the university, a lifelong ‘Canes fan, and would often volunteer there with the summer band camp.

Ruth W. Greenfield Ph.D. `76, musician, civil rights pioneer, instrument of change, and founder of the Fine Arts Conservatory in Miami, spent two years at the Frost School of Music before going to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to get her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music, later obtaining a degree from Frost.

James W. R. Hacker B.M. `89, after completing his bachelor’s of music in trumpet performance, Hacker continued his education by working as a teaching assistant to Gilbert Johnson for two years while pursuing his master’s. During this period, he also served as the lead trumpet for the University of Miami Concert Jazz Band, directed by Whit Sidener, for five years.

John B. Jamison B.M. `52 and M.E.D. `56, while attending the University of Miami, was a member of the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Music Fraternity and a captain in the college band.

Hilda S. Mitrani B.M. `84, an exceptionally well-rounded person who trained as a classical pianist.

Carl Nalls M.M. `66, began playing trombone at the age of 10 and developed a love of big band and jazz music. Carl received his bachelor’s from Concord College and his master’s degree from the Frost School of Music, which led to a career as a music instructor for 30 years.

Audrey K. Pilafian B.M. `51, B.A.M. `51, M.E.D. `72, discovered her passion for the cello in high school, earning a college scholarship due to her exceptional talent. At the Frost School of Music, she obtained a master’s degree in education, followed by a remarkable teaching career.

John Alan Wicker B.M. `76. The trumpet captured his heart and drove his musical journey. After graduating cum laude from the Frost School of Music with a degree in Music Education, John’s passion for music education spanned over 45 years until retirement.



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Photo courtesy of University of Miami

Investigating the Future of Music and AI with Tom Collins

Tom Collins, Ph.D. is the principal investigator at the Frost School of Music's Music Computing and Psychology Lab. Long fascinated by people's ability to write music and how that creative process can be duplicated with artificial intelligence, Collins leads research into the development of machine learning techniques and music-generative tasks. His projects have led to research papers as well as collaborations with grammy Award-winning artists on songs co-created with AI.

"All my life, music has been my focus. But I pursued a Ph.D. in computer science, where I was able to model that creative process with computers," says Collins. "When I saw the position at Frost School of Music advertised, I thought, this is a match made in heaven!"

Collins's initial musical experience was playing his great-grandmother's piano and then the guitar in bands in a small town south of London. Growing up in the '90s in the U.K., he listened to Brit-pop, like Oasis, Blur, and the Spice Girls. After attending Cambridge and Oxford, he earned his Ph.D. in computer science at Open University before going on to postdoctoral work in California and Austria, where he explored music and AI.

"I want to give students the ability to critically evaluate things they listen to," he says. "What we teach is just a part of their toolset when they leave the Frost School of Music to pursue various career paths so that they're well equipped to deal with that fast pace of change."

If the future of music is at the intersection of technology and creativity, then the Knight Center for Music Innovation, the Frost School's new, cutting-edge performance and technology space, is the perfect laboratory for Collins and his students to experiment with emerging tools and new musical forms as they evolve.

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Bailey Hinkley Grogan, Vocal Jazz Soloist
Kate Reid, faculty mentor

Frost Fusion Ensemble, Blues/Pop/Rock Group
Steve Rucker, faculty mentor

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Dylan McHann, Original Composition
(Small Ensemble), "Stinger"
Chuck Bergeron, faculty mentor

Graduate College — Outstanding Performances

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