

SCORE

THE FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC MAGAZINE | 2026

A LASTING
LEGACY

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

DEAN'S MESSAGE



As my time leading the Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music comes to a close, I look back on my 19 years as Dean with profound gratitude for the opportunity to work with so many outstanding faculty, administrators, artists, supporters, and, most of all, generations of students. Together we have built a legacy of innovation, collaboration, leadership, and artistry that has been brilliantly apparent this year.

We celebrated the University of Miami and the Frost School's shared Centennial with a dazzling concert of alumni artists, from established stars like Bruce Hornsby and Jon Secada to young standouts like Alexis Kesselman, Raquel Sofia, and Broadway sensation Joshua Henry. Legendary jazz artist Pat Metheny gave an inspiring masterclass to students and received an honorary doctorate during his performance at the Centennial Celebration. We awarded 100 Frost School Centennial Medals to stellar graduates throughout the music world, fostering a sense of community and achievement across generations.

New York's Lincoln Center presented the Frost Symphony Orchestra, led by Maestro Gerard Schwarz, in a sold-out performance of professor Etienne Charles' magnificent jazz-classical-multimedia work "San Juan Hill: A New York Story," showcasing our students' and faculty's unique capacity to bridge musical genres. We partnered with The Hollywood Reporter on a cutting-edge poll on AI and other technology changing music, garnering national attention; and joined Billboard Latin Music Week to highlight our many successful alumni in this increasingly influential genre.

Pioneering jazz vocal ensemble New York Voices' residency highlighted the strength of our trailblazing jazz vocal program, also seen in major awards for alumnae Carmen Lundy, B.M. '80, and Kate Kortum, B.M. '23. GRAMMY-winning string trio Time for Three opened new musical worlds for our elite Stamps ensembles, while resident guest artist and renowned classical vocal coach Craig Terry helped students to soar.

Alumnus Carlos "Carlitos" Lopez, a multi-GRAMMY winner whose ability to bridge pop and classical music is founded in his three Frost School degrees, is mentoring students like violinist and aspiring music producer Annabella Paolucci. Drummer and senior Brenten Handfield has flourished in Charles' globe-trotting jazz ensemble Creole Soul.

Enabling students to change their lives and the music world is what we do at the Frost School. Being Dean of the school has been the honor of my lifetime, and I could not be prouder of having helped lead that mission.

Warmly,

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

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Shelton G. Berg

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Table of Contents
Dean Berg plays Gershwin. Photo by Kevin Joseph

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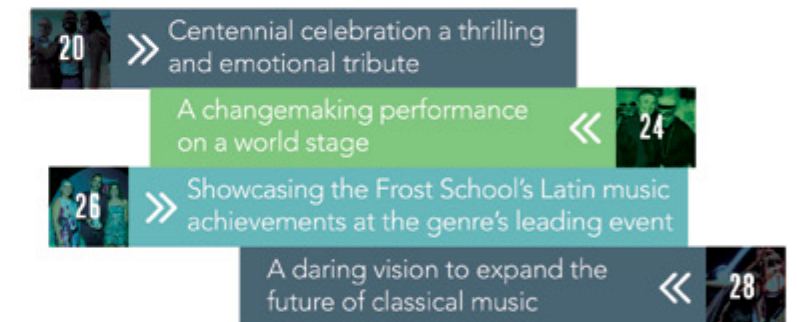


02 Frost News

NFL star Jaelan Phillips gives back through MusicReach ~ Faculty help transform music education in Iceland ~ Famed jazz vocal ensemble New York Voices inspires a new generation ~ Frost School artists in 2025 DownBeat Critics Poll ~ Educator inspires students with the soul of American song ~ Distinguished Alumnus of the Year ~ Music Industry program called one of the best in the country ~ Students get opportunities with major pop music acts ~ Winter Wonderful commemorates a powerful legacy ~ Frost School partners with top music foundation on major scholarship ~ Weeks Music Library marks 20 years as a vital resource

12 Guest Artists

16 Student Stars



29 Famed alum Pharrell Williams draws on Frost School artists for World Series video

30 Frost School co-sponsors national poll on the future of music

32 A tribute to an extraordinary leader

34 Cover Story

A Lasting Legacy

Dean Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg's visionary leadership transformed the Frost School and had a profound impact on music education, empowering generations of students.

42 Alumni Spotlight

47 Faculty in The News

51 Class Notes

56 In Memoriam

57 Leadership List

58 Faculty List

60 Faculty and Staff Updates

62 Supporters during Dean Berg's tenure

64 Coda: A jazz educator for the ages

NFL star Jaelan Phillips gives back through MusicReach

Former Miami Dolphins linebacker and University of Miami Hurricanes defensive lineman Jaelan Phillips is famous for football. But he is also a Frost School alumnus with a lifelong passion for music and a desire to help young people.

“Music has always been a powerful force in my life,” said Phillips. “I’ve done work with homeless people, with juvenile detention centers, and I’ve always felt like you can make the most profound impact working with kids.”

In partnership with the Frost School of Music’s Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program, the Jaelan Phillips Foundation sponsored a scholarship for music engineering major Jack Reilly to teach production, beat-making, and audio engineering to three MusicReach high school students.

The idea grew partly from Phillips’ visits to juvenile detention centers in Broward County. “About three-fourths of the kids wanted to do music,” he said. “But they didn’t know how to put the pieces together to have a career. I feel like many kids in underserved communities see athletes, rappers, or pop stars, and they think that is the only way they can make it. I want to educate them on the music business and show them they could have something attainable and give them hope.”

Music is in Phillips’ blood. His maternal grandfather is a Juilliard-trained pianist, conductor, and dean of Boca Raton’s Lynn Conservatory of Music. His mother was a cellist, and his father a trumpeter. Growing up in Redlands, California, Phillips and his sister took piano lessons; later, he taught himself guitar and basic production skills.

Phillips formed his foundation while recovering from a torn ACL in 2024. His mother, who runs the Jaelan Phillips Foundation, contacted Dean Shelton G. Berg, who told her about MusicReach. “It was perfect,” said Phillips, who attended the Frost School before football forced him to opt for a Bachelor of General Studies degree.

MusicReach director of programs Joseph Burleson praised Phillips’ generosity. “It’s great that Jaelan kept his love for music alive and chose to channel that to the Frost School and MusicReach,” he said.

Phillips thrilled Reilly and his students Harmoni Warren, Jeremiah Aaron, and Kadence Carraisco by visiting them as they recorded a MusicReach student ensemble at the L. Austin Weeks Recording Studio.

“This is what it’s all about—seeing these MusicReach students light up as they grow more confident in their skills,” Phillips said. “People respect and appreciate not only what I do on the field, but what I do in the community. I want to continue that legacy.”

Photo courtesy of the Miami Dolphins.



Photo courtesy of Pétur Jónasson.

Faculty help transform music education in Iceland

(l. to r.) Pétur Jónasson, Daniel Strange, Raina Murnak, Reynaldo Sanchez, and Phillip Doyle.

Last spring, three Frost School of Music faculty members were reminded of how transformative their work is when they spent a week teaching faculty and leaders at the Iceland University of the Arts (IUA) how to implement their own version of the Frost School’s groundbreaking Modern Artist Development & Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program.

The visit by Reynaldo Sanchez, Daniel Strange, and Raina Murnak cemented a bond between the two schools. The Icelandic faculty, many initially skeptical, ended by embracing M.A.D.E.’s experiential and collaborative method for teaching students with and without traditional training.

The IUA’s new Music x Innovation x Technology (MIT) program, which launched last fall, promises to transform music education in this small but culturally influential nation, home to alternative pop stars Björk and Sigur Rós.

“It’s really great when another institution recognizes that something great is happening here at Frost,” said Sanchez, the associate dean for strategic initiatives and innovation and a professor instrumental in the creation of M.A.D.E. His friendship with Phillip J. Doyle, D.M.A. ’18, a Frost School alumnus and associate professor at IUA, led to the exchange between the two schools.

“They saw a huge need,” said Sanchez. “There are more and more kids making music in non-traditional ways. The vast

majority of musicians out there are self-trained. So how do you incorporate that kind of population into what, prior to this, has been a very traditional music school?”

“We needed a place for those who both compose and perform,” said Pétur Jónasson, the dean of the IUA’s music department, who said that Iceland’s only college-level conservatory, in Reykjavik, previously concentrated on traditional classical music training. He praised the Frost School professors’ work. “We were highly impressed,” Jónasson said. “Their level of expertise and ease of communication was amazing, and the way they so generously shared their knowledge and experience with us was productive and inspiring.”

“They have kids with a lot of training and kids with no training,” said Murnak, an assistant professor with M.A.D.E. who directs popular music pedagogy and contemporary voice programs. “Their biggest question was how do you live with both of those in one class? A lot of what we did was show them how that created an ecosystem of peer-to-peer instruction. It’s a different form of teaching.”

The inspiration went both ways. “We learned a lot from them,” said Sanchez. “They respect all kinds of music. That’s a Frost School value we’re trying to model everywhere.”



Famed jazz vocal ensemble New York Voices inspires a new generation

Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

When Kate Reid, director of the Frost School’s jazz vocal program, stepped onstage at the Maurice Gusman Concert Hall to introduce the influential, legendary jazz vocal group New York Voices, she was visibly emotional. “The music of this ensemble shaped my musical life,” she said before the group performed a Valentine’s Day concert with her students. “Thank you for being here to witness musical history.”

The February 2025 visit, part of the 37-year-old ensemble’s extended farewell tour, was a living, singing memorial to the evolution of jazz vocal music that New York Voices has done much to shape. Ensemble members also taught classes and coached visiting high school and community college singers in a daylong Jazz Vocal Invitational.

“The outpouring of ‘because of you, I’m doing what I’m doing’ has been incredible,” said Peter Eldridge, New York Voices baritone. “All the people leading jazz vocal programs have said we were a big part of their journey. You hope you have an impact on people. That’s a real testament that we have inspired people to teach or sing vocal jazz.”

Reid is one of those people. In 1989, she was studying at Western Michigan University under Steve Zegree, a founding father of college jazz vocal programs, who brought in the

recently formed New York Voices to perform and teach. Over the years, Reid has studied, sung, and taught their growing repertoire.

The sold-out concert featured New York Voices joining the Frost Jazz Vocal II, Frost Jazz Vocal I, and Frost Extensions ensembles in a seamless blend of harmonies and generations. “They could all be our children,” New York Voices soprano Lauren Kinhan said of the Frost School students.

“You have this soul and capacity to deliver this music in such a mature way,” said fellow soprano Kim Nazarian. “Vocal jazz is in good hands, people!”

New York Voices has always been devoted to jazz education. All four members have teaching careers and have run a summer workshop since 2008. As they wind down, they have become more aware of their legacy. “This genre tends to connect back to a lot of university and high school programs,” said Darmon Meader, the group’s tenor. “If kids ask where they should go, we have a short list of five schools, and Frost has always been one of them.”

“You want to send good people to good people,” Nazarian said. “Kate knows what she’s doing and cares about kids and music.”

RESULTS ARE IN

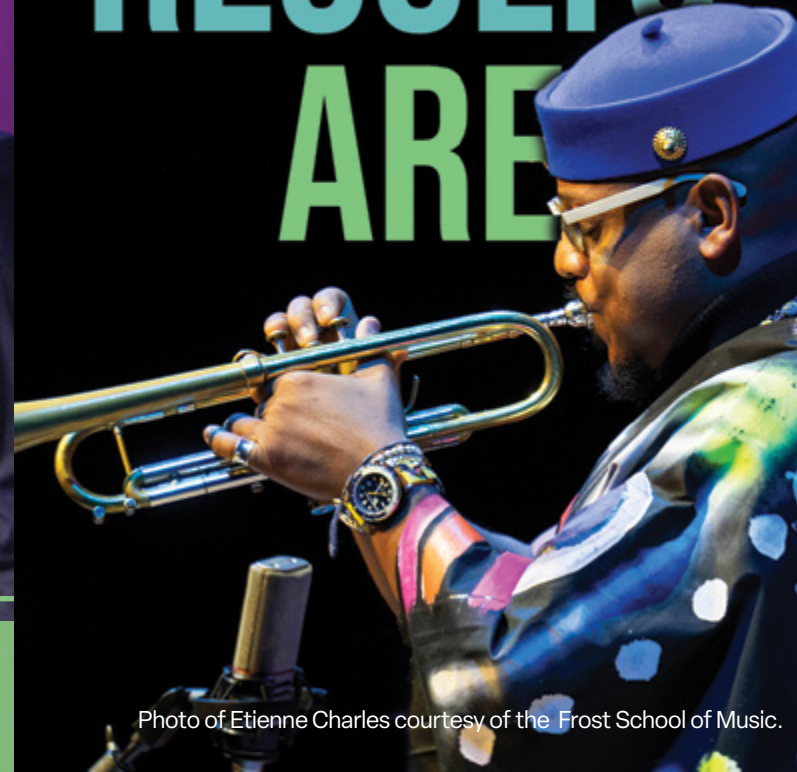


Photo of Etienne Charles courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

Frost School artists in 2025 DownBeat Critics Poll

The Frost School of Music had another banner year in DownBeat magazine’s 73rd Annual Critics Poll, with 19 citations of alumni, faculty, and former faculty.

Professor Etienne Charles registered in four categories: trumpeter, rising star artist, and rising star composer of the year; plus album of the year for “Creole Orchestra.”

Alumnus Emmet Cohen’s “Vibe Provider” was included in album of the year, and he appeared in pianist of the year and group of the year for his Emmet Cohen Trio.

Maria Schneider, artistic director of the Henry Mancini Institute, received nods for composer of the year and large ensemble of the year. Her predecessor Terrence Blanchard made group of the year.

Rising star tenor saxophonist of the year featured alumni Troy Roberts and Tivon Pennicott. Bobby Watson, a 1975 graduate, appeared in alto saxophonist of the year.

Alumnus Pat Metheny appeared in guitarist and composer of the year. Associate professor Dafnis Prieto, like Metheny a GRAMMY winner, scored for percussionist of the year.

Alumna Veronica Swift returned this year in the female vocalist of the year category. Alumnus Matt Pierson made producer of the year.

Named for large ensemble of the year was the Christian McBride Big Band, led by the artistic director of the JAS Academy, the Frost School’s summer jazz program in Colorado.

Educator inspires students with the soul of American song

Black music is woven into the tapestry of American music. It’s foundational to rock, hip-hop, jazz, country, and pop. In Frost School of Music lecturer Nicole Yarling’s class “African-American Song Traditions,” student songwriters study those crucial Black musical genres.

“It’s very important for people to understand that all these things combined is the music we’re listening to now,” said Yarling, a veteran jazz and R&B singer, violinist, and music educator. “Some people get the impression that Black people only do gospel and blues.”

In Yarling’s class, part of the Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program, students explore blues, church music, soul, funk, Black country music, and the Native American/Black music connection. They write songs inspired by those styles, and at the end of the semester they perform at The Fish House Miami, a restaurant with a small jazz and blues club.

The class can help M.A.D.E. students rediscover their own musical history. Sophomore Hannah Padilla’s parents loved acts like Destiny’s Child, Brandy, and Lauryn Hill. “I grew up with this music... that’s what I learned to sing with,” she said. “Then I dove into pop and hadn’t touched back on what I sang when I was little. So coming back to this was full circle.”



Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

Distinguished Alumnus of the Year

When Will Lee arrived at the Frost School of Music in 1969, he was studying flute and French horn. Then a faculty member made the lifechanging suggestion that Lee focus on the electric bass, which he was playing until dawn in gigs six nights a week.

In 1971, Lee joined the jazz-rock fusion group Dreams, launching a career that culminated in his being named the Frost School's 2025 Alumnus of the Year. While best-known as the longtime bassist on the Late Show with David Letterman, Lee has played on hundreds of recordings with a dizzying array of rock, pop, and jazz artists ranging from Aretha Franklin to Billy Joel to Miles Davis. He's in Nashville's Musician's Hall of Fame and has played or recorded with all four Beatles.

"Will Lee is a shining example of the kind of artist that the Frost School endeavors to cultivate," said Dean Shelton G. Berg. "He elevates every musical experience in a way that is palpable to all of those performing with him."

Lee, whose father was William Lee, the Frost School dean from 1964 to 1982, returned for last spring's Centennial Celebration to accept his award and play an electrifying tribute to his legendary classmate, Jaco Pastorius.

"Dig in deep and good things will happen," said Lee. "I just adore playing music all the time."

Music Industry program called one of the best in the country

Billboard Magazine again named the Music Industry program (MIND) at the Frost School of Music to its annual list of the best programs of its kind.

MIND has been honored by Billboard every time they've published the list since 2011. The program's undergraduate and graduate degrees, faculty with extensive industry experience, success in facilitating student internships at major companies, and a speaker series that connects students to industry executives are among the factors that have kept MIND on the list.

"The longevity of our MIND program, and the success of our alumni throughout the many decades, tells you all you need to know about us," said Serona Elton, director of

the MIND program. "While providing current students with a best-in-class educational experience is top-of-mind for our faculty, how graduates turn that into a successful career is what matters most in the long run."

MIND's alumni include Pablo Ahogado, VP of A&R at Concord Music Publishing; Courtney Karnes Sneed, Director of Licensing at Capitol CMG/Universal Music Group; Brian Oliver, Head of Legal and Business Affairs at Rolling Loud; Michael Todd, AVP of Film & TV Music and Visual Media at ASCAP; Randall Foster, Chief Creative Officer at Symphonic Distribution; and Jessie Allen, Managing Director at GRAMMY U.

MIND alumni at the Centennial Celebration.

Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

Students get opportunities with major pop music acts

Students at the Frost School of Music don't just get a superb musical education. They also benefit from a network of successful alumni and well-connected faculty who bring opportunities to work with major pop music acts.

Singer Nicole Acosta, a rising senior in the Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program, joined a recording session in early 2025 for a new song by movie star Will Smith, produced by triple Frost School alumnus Carlos "Carlitos" Lopez.

And on Valentine's Day, Frost School graduate students and violinists Marki Lukyniuk and Michael Ziyuan Wu played with international Latin star Jay Wheeler on "Despierta America," Univision's popular morning show, as Wheeler premiered his new song "Una Como Tú."

Acosta got a taste of working in the entertainment industry as a contestant on Fox's reality show "I Can See Your Voice." When Lopez contacted her to sing on a gospel vocal segment for a new Will Smith song, she leaped at the opportunity.

The recording took place at Art House, a Miami studio owned by Frost School alumnus and multi-GRAMMY-winning producer Julio Reyes Copello. Acosta was the youngest person in a group of experienced professionals, and credits the M.A.D.E. program with preparing her to deliver without rehearsal or printed scores. "A lot of times in our classes they throw performances or projects at us last minute because they're preparing us for the real world," she said. "No matter who you work with, Will Smith or a TV show, things will be last minute. That's the industry."

A Frost School staffer put Wu and Lukyniuk in touch with Wheeler, whose blend of romantic pop and reggaeton has earned him more than 25 million followers across social media.

"These collaborations can show us, classical musicians, how to break free from a strict classical approach and become more appealing to wider audiences," said Lukyniuk.

Acosta said the Will Smith gig was another example of how invaluable the Frost School network can be for students. In 2024 superstar Bad Bunny tapped Lopez to lead an orchestra for his "Most Wanted" tour. Nearly half the musicians were Frost School students or alumni.

"The professors, the alums, the students are one of the most important parts of being at Frost," Acosta said. "You never know when one of these people will call you and say 'Hey, I have this project,' and that could change your life."

Photos from top: Marki Lukyniuk and Michael Ziyuan Wu with Jay Wheeler; Nicole Acosta (lower right) at Will Smith recording session; Will Smith and Carlos Lopez.



Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



Photo courtesy of Nicole Acosta.



Photo courtesy of Carlitos Lopez.

Winter Wonderful commemorates a powerful legacy

Winter Wonderful is always a moving occasion, as the Frost School of Music celebrates the holiday season while raising money for the Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program, the music mentorship program that reaches over 1,500 Miami-Dade youth each year.

But the event was particularly emotional this year, as a record number of attendees commemorated the visionary 19-year tenure of Dean Shelton G. “Shelly” Berg and his final year hosting the gala that he launched in 2007. The fundraiser, held on Dec. 7 at the JW Marriott Marquis in downtown Miami, drew 361 guests.

The evening’s highlight was a tribute to Berg and his wife, Julia Berg, for their transformative leadership. “As we celebrate the season of giving and gratitude, those of us who love the Frost School know that no one has given more than Shelly and Julia,” said Jeffrey Miller, the chair of the Dean’s Advisory Committee, in a heartfelt speech in which he also thanked naming donors Dr. Phillip and Patricia L. Frost for helping bring Berg to the school and welcomed multiple members of Berg’s family. “You have built a unique culture at the Frost School, something that can’t always be measured. Your warmth, generosity, and heart have inspired us and everyone here.”



(l.) Jeffrey and Tina Miller toast Shelly and Julia Berg.

After the entire room rose to toast the couple, a visibly emotional Berg spoke. “You look at 19 years of your life, and you measure it by the love and friendship that’s been gained,” he said. “Of all the things I’ll miss most, it’s that you’ve made my final Winter Wonderful so extraordinary.”

Joe Bursleson, director of programs for MusicReach, acknowledged donors, guests, and Berg, who created MusicReach in 2008. “Thank you so much to everyone here tonight for believing so deeply in our mission,” said Bursleson. “At its heart, MusicReach is about building community. We’ve been doing this work for almost two decades now, and this year is especially meaningful because it is our last with Shelly as our dean.”

Berg, an acclaimed pianist, composer, and bandleader who is leaving his position to focus on his artistic career, was a warm and passionate host. “Music matters,” he said in welcoming guests. “It connects us, inspires us, and gives us hope for the future.”

Music enveloped guests from the moment they entered, when the Frost Holiday Carolers serenaded them. The Frost Choral Union, with over 80 student singers conducted by Director of



Choral Studies Matthew Brady, and the Holiday Orchestra performed seasonal songs that drew a standing ovation. Berg elevated the evening by accompanying a jazz combo of MusicReach students with a gorgeous performance of his arrangement of “Oh Christmas Tree” on piano.

The Frost Legacy Award went to Miami-based stars Gloria and Emilio Estefan, strong supporters and frequent collaborators with Berg and the Frost School. “I’ve had the joy of working with creative geniuses Gloria and Emilio all over the world, and they’re as good as it gets,” said Berg.

Accepting the Legacy Award on the Estefans’ behalf was alumnus Jon Secada, B.M. ’83, M.M. ’86, who performed “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” accompanied by Berg on piano, which drew cheers.

Guests saluted how Berg had transformed the Frost School and impacted music education. “Shelly brought vision, enthusiasm, and empathy,” said entrepreneur and musician Ted Hall, a member of the Dean’s Advisory Committee. “His natural talent as a musician shows not only when he’s onstage performing, but in the way he envisions the role of the Frost School in the world.”



Alumnus Matt Serletic, B.M. ’92 and M.M. ’94, a successful songwriter, producer, and entrepreneur, said “Winter Wonderful is another reminder of the amazing resonance that Shelly has created across the city, the U.S., and the globe.”

Perhaps the most powerful tribute to Berg came from songwriting student Fritz Sullivan. “Without Shelly, without the Frost School of Music, some kid like me from Kansas could not pursue his dream,” he said. “I’m grateful every single day.”

Sullivan brought tears to people’s eyes with the song he wrote for Berg.

“So go and change the world just like you do, I’ll watch you from a seat with a good view. You’ll go on knowing you have changed my life, Don’t you dare leave without saying goodbye.”

Also attending were sponsors Robert and Judi Prokop Newman and Sasha and Edward P. Bass; as well as Greenberg Traurig, LLP, Jacqueline Simkin, Joseph Deitch, Skanska and Meisner Electric, and Jeffrey Miller’s siblings Stuart Miller and Leslie Miller Saiontz of The Miller Family Foundation.

Frost School partners with top music foundation on major scholarship

The Frost School of Music hosted the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation's annual scholarship award ceremony last August, announcing the first-ever sponsorship of a \$120,000 Gifted Tuition Scholarship between the two institutions and awarding it to vocalist and songwriter Irenda Arano Diaz. The reception at the Knight Center for Music Innovation celebrated the award of \$1.3 million in scholarships for 50 Latino music students from around the world.

The event highlighted the growing relationship between the Frost School and the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Miami-based Latin Recording Academy, producer of the Latin GRAMMY Awards.

"We're here because of a shared belief between the Frost School of Music and the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation—that access to music education transforms lives," said Serona Elton, the Frost School's interim vice dean and director of the Music Industry Program, as she welcomed sponsors, Latin music industry figures, and family members of the scholarship winners. "At the Frost School of Music, we are committed not only to excellence in music education but also to expanding access, ensuring that gifted students from all backgrounds can grow, learn, and thrive."

The partnership is part of a three-year strategy devised by the Frost School's marketing and communications department to elevate the school's reputation as one of the world's top music schools.

Raquel "Rocky" Egusquiza, the executive director of the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation and a University of Miami alumna, applauded the collaboration. "Partnering with an institution as prestigious as the Frost School of Music allows us to not only provide important financial support through our scholarships, but also to connect our recipients with world-class faculty, resources, and opportunities that can shape their careers right here in Miami," Egusquiza said.

An evening highlight was a performance by Latin GRAMMY winner and GRAMMY-nominated artist Elena Rose with an ensemble of current and former scholarship winners. On hand was her musical director, Frost Online alumnus Danny Flores. The event's musical director was Frost School triple graduate Carlos "Carlitos" López, a Latin GRAMMY and GRAMMY-winning producer, composer, and conductor.

Diaz, who studies in the Modern Artist Development & Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program, is a powerful example of how the Foundation scholarships can change lives. "I was born loving music," said the largely self-taught 18-year-old. "My dream is to become a songwriter." She hopes to give back someday. "Music for me is like medicine," she said. "Songwriting... is such a beautiful thing to give to society."



Photo of Irenda Diaz by John Para/Getty Images for the Latin Recording Academy.



Weeks Music Library marks 20 years as a vital resource

Top libraries manage to be simultaneously timeless and up-to-the-minute, a balancing act that the Frost School of Music's Marta and Austin Weeks Music Library fulfills. The \$9.9 million, 22,500-square-foot facility opened in 2005, offering a broad and impressive range of artifacts and top-line recording, listening, and network facilities—a world-class student resource.

"When Weeks was built, it was with an emphasis on embracing technology," said Sara Manus, director. "We are working to keep up with that as we go forward. The library offers access to music-production software, and in the last five or six years, we've added two state-of-the-art production booths where students can record. We anticipate continuing to keep abreast of new trends, building on what came before us."

Weeks Library marked its 20th anniversary last April with a celebration featuring the unveiling of a portrait honoring former head librarian Nancy Zavac, one of the most important figures in its history. Zavac worked for 40 years at Weeks and its predecessor, the Alfred Pick Music Library, before retiring in 2018.

Zavac began her career in 1978 while pursuing her master's degree at the University of Miami. Manus said she deserves most of the credit for the depth of the library's archival collections. She was also a key player in designing



Photo courtesy of University Archives, University of Miami Libraries.

Weeks to maximize its effectiveness.

Zavac and her husband Jeff (a saxophonist and Frost School alumnus) also performed on the program.

The old Pick Library's in-the-round design became a problem as its archive outgrew the building's storage capacities. Frost School Dean Emeritus Bill Hipp described Pick as "antiquated" and cramped. He described those shortcomings in a meeting with the Weeks. "At the end of that meeting, Marta informed us in her typically understated style that she and Austin had decided to contribute \$8 million to construct the new music library," Hipp said. "What a moment that was!"

Nowadays, the music library's permanent collection includes more than 40,000 books, 73,000 scores, 70,000 recordings, and 4,200 videos, as well as theses written by Frost School students.

"It's a very impressive library," said Charles Eckman, the University of Miami's dean of libraries and university librarian. "The setting is beautiful, lovingly overseen, and the two sound production booths have been so popular that there are plans for a third. The new tech features get a lot of attention, but we're also thrilled with the library's special collections. We aspire to keep those growing. They're a key pillar."

TIME FOR THREE



Photo by CDeborah.

Renowned genre-bending string trio demonstrates a new path.

The members of Time For Three may have trained in the elite traditional classical programs at the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School. But violinists Charles Yang and Nicolas Kendall and bassist Ranaan Meyer's GRAMMY-winning success comes from their dynamic, original blend of Americana, singer-songwriter, jazz, pop, and improvisation with classical music, and their vibrant, free-wheeling performances.

The group spent two days last March working intensively with the Frost School's elite Stamps String Quartet, Stamps Woodwind Quintet, Stamps Brass Quintet, and Stamps Jazz Quintet, sharing their daringly inventive approach and joining them on the annual All-Stamps Ensemble Concert.

In a masterclass at Maurice Gusman Concert Hall, Time For Three described their constant experimentation and how their unconventional line-up forces them to create original repertoire. Afterward, Kendall spoke about the importance of expanding their field. "Classical music is evolving so much," he said. "Time For Three uses other styles and improvisation for our creativity. Exposing young people to these is important to help them create their own identity." He praised the Stamps students. "We didn't know what to expect," he said. "They're so talented. We could really get into high-level stuff with them."

French horn player Taylor Bowen-Longino said the trio opened up new possibilities for the Stamps Brass Quintet. "My group was able to learn a lot about performing and interacting on stage as well as different ways to interpret the music," she said. "Experiences like this encourage us to continue to push creatively."

Stamps String Quartet cellist Natalie Van Winkle was both challenged and exhilarated. "Their musicality is so captivating," she said. "Their technical mastery is insane; I want to reach that goal. At the same time, they look like they're having so much fun." She said the group's encouraging attitude helped her take risks. "They weren't 'you did this wrong' but 'you did amazing, let's take it up a notch,'" Van Winkle said.

During rehearsal, Time For Three asked students for suggestions, while improvising at a dizzying pace. "What if I do a Stefan Grappelli on steroids kind of thing?" Kendall said. "Are you up for an extended groove?" Ranaan asked, and later, "What if we go ballistic Mingus style?"

They finished with an exuberant jam session, Time For Three dancing and playing at the front, the students clapping and finger-snapping along. "This is just a collision of worlds," Ranaan said. "If this is what your school is all about, I want to come back here."

Visionary music education scholar comes to the Frost School

The assignment that visiting scholar Alice Hammel gave to music education and music therapy graduate students during her visit to the Frost School last September seemed simple: bring in the oldest and the newest journal articles they could find on music education for students with disabilities.

The resulting discussion, however, was anything but straightforward. Hammel led the students in analyzing how the articles illustrated the profound changes in this expanding area of music education since the mid-20th century. Among the most notable was ending use of pejorative terms like "retardation" and "deficiencies," and recent discussions of how to enhance the learning experience for everyone.

Hammel, a music educator, researcher, clinician, and textbook author, has been key to shaping the transformation to an inclusive model that seeks to create the best possible music learning experience for each student, tailored to fit their abilities and background.

"Every student should learn every day," said Hammel, whose warm, animated manner mirrors her welcoming ethos. "If you only know one way of teaching or only teach one type of music, you can only reach one type of kid."

Hammel came to the Frost School through a Visiting Scholar Grant from the Florida Collegiate Music Education Association, which doctoral student Nerissa Rebagay applied for with the support of Stephen Zdzinski, professor in the Music Education program. Hammel's visit also included an undergraduate forum, a movement workshop, a guest lecture, and a networking dinner for graduate students.

Raised in rural Sebring, Florida, Hammel has always been fascinated by human variety. "I loved everything different," she said. "I loved everything musical. In my community, the only music education was what they got in public schools. That made me very motivated that when I became a teacher, I would include everyone."

"She's an amazing teacher," said Rebagay, who has been inspired by Hammel since reading her work, "Teaching Students with Differences and Disabilities" in Zdzinski's undergraduate class.

Zdzinski called Rebagay one of several outstanding music education graduate students focused on working with students with different abilities. They include doctoral student Edward Ercilla, who is deaf, and has become known for his expertise in teaching hard-of-hearing and deaf students in 20 years of teaching music in Miami-Dade.

Hammel hopes that young scholars like Rebagay will create even more inclusive ways of teaching music. "Because change takes so much time, I won't see it in my lifetime," she said. "But I hope that Nerissa will."

Photo by Izzi Guzman/courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



ALICE HAMMEL

JENNIFER ROWLEY



Soaring high notes make a masterclass go viral

Videos go viral for many reasons. But soprano Jennifer Rowley has a theory about why a video of her Frost School of Music masterclass last spring scored 1.8 million plus views: because of how high she and student Haojin Mo were singing.

“To get a lot of views, you need to be good at high notes,” said Rowley. “Last week, I did one just singing a high B for 10 seconds, and it got a ton of views.”

In the video, Rowley gave pointers to Mo, a doctoral student in vocal performance, as she sang excerpts from Offenbach’s “Tales of Hoffmann.”

“Having something go viral like this is beneficial for all of us,” said Frank Ragsdale, chair of the Department of Vocal

Performance. “The students get so much out of it because maybe something clicks because they hear it from someone else. And it helps Jennifer’s profile.”

Rowley’s been an opera-world star since her 2017 debut with New York’s Metropolitan Opera in “Cyrano de Bergerac.” She teaches masterclasses all over the country and runs the Aria Bootcamp in Sarasota, Florida.

Rowley came away from her Frost School class impressed with students’ eagerness and abilities. “Haojin Mo is super-talented,” she said. “What she did in that video was just other-worldly.”

Photo courtesy of Frank Ragsdale.



CRAIG TERRY

Photo by Todd Rosenberg.

MARCOS BALTER

Famed composer helps students forge their own musical identity

Creating music is central to how Marcos Balter, Distinguished Composer in Residence at the Frost School of Music, defines himself. So is helping young artists find their own identity.

“Teaching is really important to me for reasons that have to do with my understanding of what it is to be a citizen of the world,” said Balter, a Columbia University professor of composition whose artistry has taken him from working-class Rio de Janeiro to the heights of the classical music world. “I have a moral obligation to share my knowledge.”

Balter’s works have been programmed by orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Miami’s New World Symphony. Critics have described his music as having “a fiercely imaginative palette.”

Professor Charles Mason, chair of the Department of Theory and Composition, said it was not just Balter’s achievements that led to his being invited, but having an artistic point of view different from the composition faculty. “Do they bring something to the table that we aren’t necessarily bringing?” he asked.

Mason said Balter helped students develop their own unique voice. “All the composers in residence fit our philosophy, which is not, ‘I’m going to teach you my style of music,’ but ‘What is your style, and how can I help you realize it better?’”



Photo courtesy of Marcos Balter.

A resident guest artist teaches classical vocalists to soar

Craig Terry, a resident guest artist in the classical voice program at the Frost School of Music, explains his role as vocal coach in simple, direct terms: “It’s about helping people find the next steps to elevate their art, musicmaking, and singing, to bring them closer to where they’ll want to be in order to be a professional at the highest level.”

Terry is the music director of the Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and he has been an assistant at the Metropolitan Opera. He has worked with a who’s who of classical vocalists, including Joyce DiDonato, with whom he won a 2020 GRAMMY for “Songplay.”

As he coached Frost School singers in audition arias at a masterclass, Terry gave each a rigorously detailed analysis of their aria and their singing, from pronunciation to style, while pushing them to take risks.

“I want you to show me a lot more,” he told senior Brandon Flores, who had just sung “No Puede Ser” from the zarzuela “La Taberna del Puerto,” where the character Leandro agonizes at being betrayed by the woman he loves. “I want the audience to believe you are completely blinded by love.”

“It’s a new way to look at the music,” Flores said. “He showed me that once you have brought the song to a certain

level with your preparation, you can take liberties in the music.”

“Craig’s breadth of knowledge enables him to prepare students for the next step in their development,” said Frank Ragsdale, chair of the Vocal Performance Department. “It brings cachet to the program and an advanced opportunity for the students.”

Terry was precise as he coached soprano Naysa Marrero on the lively “In uomini, in soldati” from Mozart’s comic “Cosi fan tutte.” He stopped her several times to correct the timing of her first breath, before she’d made a sound. But he also talked about her character, the sassy, cynical Despina, in a down-to-earth way that drew laughter from the students.

Zaryah Gourgel, a master’s degree student whom Terry coached in “Depuis le jour” from Gustave Charpentier’s “Louise,” described his style as practical and inspiring. “If I am in an audition and only have 10 or 15 minutes to show off everything I can do, said Gourgel, “I need to know what he is listening for, because these are the things that judges and other maestros are listening for.”

A tireless pursuit of opportunities and learning

It's not unusual for professors to fret about how their students will fare out in the world after graduation. Regarding Winston Thayer, a Media Scoring and Production major who graduates this spring, assistant professor Daniel Strange has an unusual cause for concern.

"The only thing I worry about Winston is him getting enough sleep," said Strange, who is faculty advisor for Thayer's Rock Symphonic project. "Seriously, I don't know when he sleeps. I asked him once, 'How do you do all this?' Because nothing seems like too much of a stretch for him."

"All this" starts with a course load that would crush lesser mortals, 20 credits most semesters. Thayer is also minoring in Composition and Music Industry, on top of an impressive number of extracurricular projects. His credits include scoring the 2024 computer game "Ready, Steady, Ship," making a video for the Frost School's Concerts With Humans and Artificial Intelligence (CHAI) project, and co-producing the 2024 student holiday album "A Very Frosty Christmas."

But Thayer's biggest project is Rock Symphonic, which he co-created his sophomore year with fellow student Dawson Fuss. Billed as "A Frost Student Cross Collaboration," Rock Symphonic is an annual concert featuring the school's contemporary and classical students playing together, with student-produced live recordings. The first two performances were so successful that it was added to the regular Frost Music Live programming schedule this season.

"Rock Symphonic is my volunteer baby, a free concert I do for the love of the game," Thayer said. "Initially we didn't understand all the tons of people we'd have to go through to make something. It was just 'There's an empty concert hall, can we use it?' But there were a lot of hoops to jump through. It was Dean Berg's support that made it happen."

Growing up in Minnesota, he was drawn to scores and still composes. But working with fellow students on recording projects has made him equally interested in production.

Thayer plans to move to California after graduation, possibly to attend graduate school and definitely to pursue professional opportunities. After he leaves, Rock Symphonic will continue under the leadership of Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship student Mallory Gravitt.

"I've really enjoyed my time here," Thayer said. "It feels like I've learned the most I possibly could have. Frost is a place where if you do something cool and original, you can really stand out."

Newgrass group finds success with innovative take on a pop hit

The Wire Jays, a newgrass quintet formed at the Frost School of Music last year, have developed the quirky niche of covering pop songs as bluegrass. While they play mostly originals, they've had great responses to covers of songs by Chappell Roan, Maroon 5, and most of all Justin Bieber. Their cover of his 2010 hit "Baby" went viral on Instagram, with views in the millions and nearly 600,000 likes.

"That really put us on the map," said mandolinist Fritz Sullivan. "Our singer Vivienne [Frederick] does a great Bieber vocal impression, and I do the Ludacris rap. It's crazy. I go home and people tell me, 'Oh my God, I saw your band on Instagram, it was amazing!'"

All five Wire Jays are Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship majors, who formed the group with the help of faculty member Brian Russell to earn a required ensemble credit. Tucker Motyka is primarily a pianist, but he also played enough banjo to own one. And Sullivan came to the Frost School as a guitarist who played a little mandolin.

While The Wire Jays didn't earn any direct payment for the viral song, the exposure brought them some windfalls, with better bookings including some festival dates this summer. A club in Louisiana even flew them in to play two shows.

"We would not be getting gigs like that without the online success," said Sullivan. "Clubs can look us up and see we have a solid following. It's been very helpful getting us into higher-profile venues that pay well."

Frederick, Motyka, and guitarist Benji Dienstfrey will all graduate this semester. But they plan to remain in Miami until juniors Sullivan and bassist Nick Grande graduate next year, keeping the band together and eventually relocating to Nashville.



THE WIRE JAYS

Photo by Valentina Gomez.

Mentorship helps percussionist soar

Drummer Brenten Handfield's first exposure to the Frost School of Music came at a young musicians' summer camp on campus in 2018, setting him on a new musical path.

"That camp made the Frost School where I wanted to go," said Handfield, who earned a bachelor's from the Studio Music and Jazz program this year. "It was how I got into jazz, too. It was also the first time I played music with people from outside my country."

Born in Miami, Handfield grew up in the tiny Caribbean territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands. At the Frost School, he connected with professor Etienne Charles, an acclaimed jazz composer, musician, and Trinidadian native who brought Handfield into his renowned Creole Soul ensemble. Their shared Caribbean heritage made for an ideal mentor-protégé relationship.

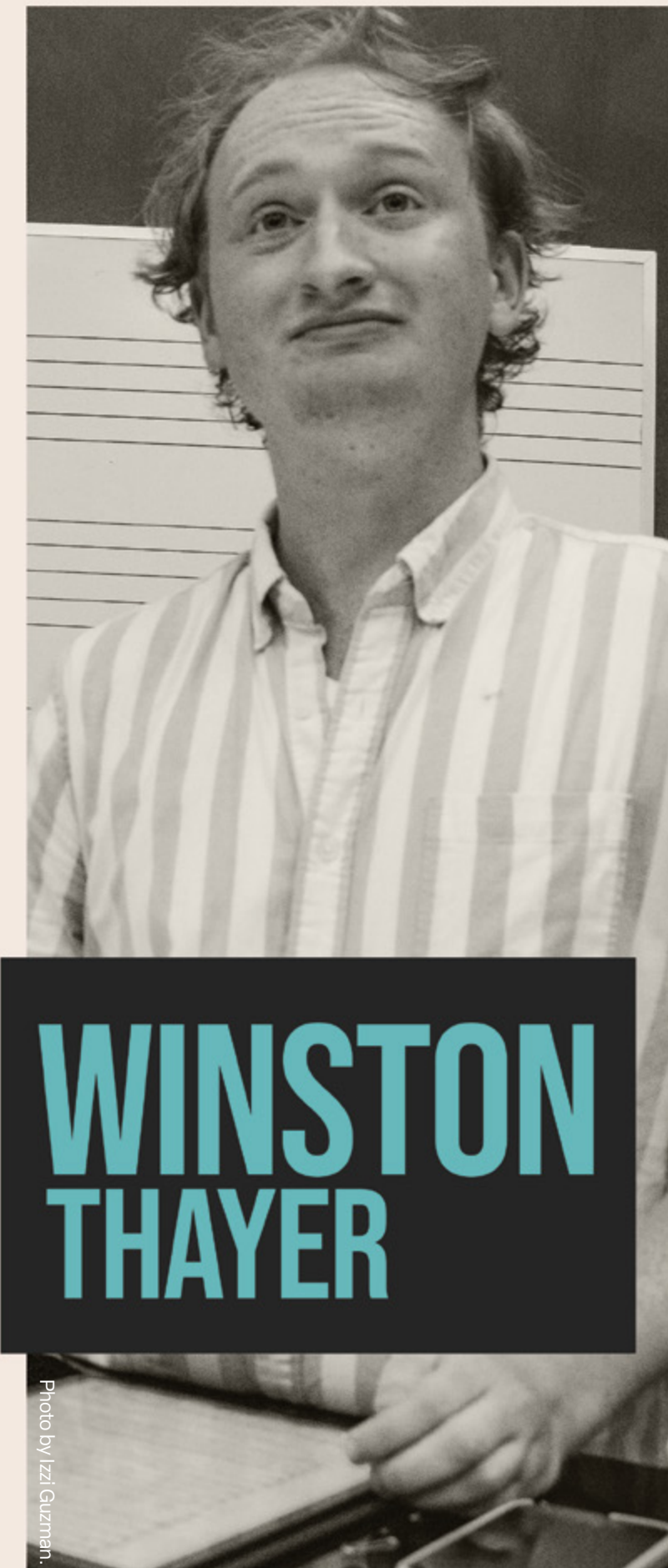
"I do make sure to mentor young Caribbean musicians as I know what it's like to come to this country and have to figure things out musically and socially," said Charles. "It is a culture shock, but that's part of the process. Ten or 15 years from now, Brenten will have his own students playing in his band."

"Knowing him here makes me feel less alien," said Handfield. "He's given me a new perspective, the way he infuses jazz with his Caribbean heritage."



BRENTEN HANDFIELD

Photo by Tristan Sayao.



WINSTON THAYER

Photo by Izzi Guzman.

Newest Stamps ensemble already accomplished



Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

The Stamps Jazz Quintet, the newest Stamps Scholars Program ensemble, joined the Frost School of Music this year. Members receive four-year scholarships and perform together until they graduate in 2029. Mentored by professor Charles Bergeron, these young musicians have recorded original music and performed nationally and internationally.

Bass player Laesio Littlejohn was named Outstanding Bassist at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington Jazz Orchestra competition in 2024 and 2025 and performed with the Monterey Jazz Festival's Next Generation Jazz Orchestra in 2022. Violinist/vocalist Tanvi Kumar led her own quintet at Bay Area jazz venues and was a member of the San Francisco Jazz High School All Stars. Pianist Ben Collins-Siegel was a 2023 YoungArts finalist and a member of the National Youth Orchestra/NYO Jazz in 2025. Drummer Jeremy Baun began playing drums at age 4 and has played in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Youth Orchestra. Guitarist Mason Jerome has participated in the Illinois Music Education Conference and performed at clubs in Chicago and in shows in Portugal and Spain.

Founded by philanthropists E. Roe Stamps, a University of Miami trustee, and his late wife, Penny Stamps, the Stamps Scholars Program brings an exceptional group of musicians to the Frost School each year. The other Stamps ensembles are the Stamps Woodwind Quintet, Stamps String Quartet, and Stamps Brass Quintet.

Seizing opportunities beyond the classroom

In and out of the classroom, the Frost School of Music fosters a mindset that encourages students to be resourceful, proactive, and entrepreneurial as they develop a broad range of skills.

One graduate student in the Media Scoring and Production program who has fully embraced that ethos is Maria Paula Mariño. A composer, producer, engineer, and photographer, she earned her master's degree this year.

While studying composition for film and visual media, Mariño put her skills to work on extracurricular projects that included stage managing the UNSIN Music Festival, co-organizing a Sound & Studio Stories event, and co-founding the Frost School chapter of We Are Moving The Needle, a group that empowers women in the music industry. A recent BMI Foundation's William Goldstein Scholarship winner, she has worked extensively as a studio engineer in Miami and New Orleans.

"The most valuable thing about the Frost School of Music is the network," Mariño said. "The school is so well-connected to the music industry and really pushes students to take advantage of it. They also push you to think in terms of entrepreneurship, business, and marketing, and to try a lot of different things... I feel like I'm being formed into a multi-faceted artist."



Photo courtesy of Maria Paula Mariño.

ANNABELLA PAOLUCCI

A passion for production and violin

Annabella Paolucci is passionate about both playing the violin and producing music—making the Frost School of Music the ideal place for the master's student in Media Scoring and Production. "Ever since I was in high school, attending the Frost School has been a dream of mine," said Paolucci, who grew up in West Palm Beach.

Paolucci, who began studying violin at age 5, initially hoped to be an orchestral musician. But although she still loves playing violin, chronic performance anxiety and a love of Latin pop music led her to production. "I found a new sense of freedom and comfort while producing," she said. At the University of Michigan, she added a bachelor's in music technology to her degree in violin performance.

She found a crucial mentor in Frost School triple alumnus Carlos "Carlitos" Lopez, a producer, classical composer, and conductor with a talent for bridging pop and classical music and helping young people. Paolucci first interned for Lopez in 2022 and has assisted him on recordings of Latin stars Il Divo and Tainy, as well as the Palm Beach Symphony and the Frost Symphony Orchestra. "He is so kind, encouraging, and inspiring, and I have never learned so much," said Paolucci. "Working with him solidified my decision to pursue music production."

In her first year at the Frost School, Paolucci received a Brandi Carlile scholarship from the We Are Moving the Needle foundation, which supports women in music production and engineering, and was chosen for a Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation mentorship program. She took lessons with professor and acclaimed violinist Charles Castleman, and joined student ensemble Café Con Leche, whose album she helped record.

The highlight was when Lopez brought her on to play in the orchestra for the Latin GRAMMY Person of the Year gala in Las Vegas last November, which honored iconic Spanish singer Rafael and featured a host of Latin pop stars. Lopez was the gala's musical director, and another Frost School alumnus, Danny Flores, was the musical supervisor.

Paolucci was extraordinarily grateful. "The music industry can be brutal," she said. "Knowing that the Frost School of Music alumni network is so strong and supportive means everything."

She was thrilled to combine her passions at the summit of the Latin music world, where she hopes to work as a producer, engineer, and studio musician. "I was just so incredibly excited and honored," Paolucci said. "Performing for a room filled with my absolute idols didn't feel real."

Photo of Centennial Medalists by Alexander Tamarago/Getty Images.



Centennial celebration a thrilling and emotional tribute

The Frost School of Music and the University of Miami commemorated their shared 100th anniversary with a spectacular celebration on April 8, 2025. The highlight was a Centennial Celebration Concert featuring a multi-generational array of stellar Frost School alumni artists, who performed for thousands who packed Lakeside Patio and the banks of Lake Osceola on the Coral Gables Campus.

But the day was also filled with other events and affirmations of the Frost School’s potent legacy of achievement, innovation, pride, and community.

“From the beginning, music has been integral to the University of Miami’s identity,” said Dean Shelton G. Berg, who organized the concert and other events. “Today, the Frost School of Music continues to exemplify the promise and prestige of a University of Miami education.”

A centerpiece of the Frost School’s celebration was a gala luncheon and ceremony honoring more than 100 alumni who exemplify the school’s dynamic legacy with Frost School Centennial Medals. The first Centennial Medals were presented to 21 alumni at the grand opening of the Knight Center for Music Innovation in 2023, who included Emilio and Gloria Estefan, Carmen Lundy, and Jon Secada.

“Setting a new standard for what makes a great music school has long been a hallmark of the Frost School of Music,” said Berg. “Our legacy is shaped by those who have made outstanding contributions to the school and the music world. As we prepare to embark on our next century, it’s our pleasure to be able to bestow Frost School Centennial Medals on the alumni who’ve amplified the Frost School’s efforts to create, cultivate, and enhance the future of music today and into the future.”

The medalists included singer-songwriters, composers, educators, executives, pianists, opera singers, producers, therapists, and Frost School faculty. All seemed thrilled and dazzled at the confluence of their own and their peers’ history with the school that did so much to shape them.

“There are so many incredible, unique people here doing so many

amazing things,” said medalist Chad Bernstein, who started the youth music mentoring organization Guitars over Guns while earning three degrees in jazz trombone. “It’s incredible to see what Shelly has built.”

The concert—hosted by famed entertainment and sports journalist Jason Kennedy, a 2004 University of Miami graduate—took place exactly 100 years from the day the University signed its charter and prepared to open in the fall of 1926. The Conservatory of Music, later renamed the Frost School of Music, was one of just two schools comprising the new institution.

Performers included singer-songwriter Bruce Hornsby, who graduated from the Frost School’s jazz program in 1977, and fit right into an adventurous place where faculty and students jammed until dawn. In 2007 Hornsby, who became famous with his 1986 hit “The Way It Is,” helped create the Bruce Hornsby Creative American Music Program (CAM) to foster student songwriters. CAM has since become crucial for students like Alexis “Idarose” Kesselman and Carter Vail, who graduated in 2019 and performed at the concert.

Also featured were Broadway and “Hamilton” star Joshua Henry, pianist and pop rocker Ben Folds, and legendary jazz guitarist Pat Metheny—who was recruited as a teenaged prodigy in 1972, and was awarded an honorary Frost School doctorate onstage after his electrifying performance.

Berg was the dynamic heart of the show, conducting an orchestra of Frost School students and playing piano with a powerhouse alumni medalist rhythm section of bass, guitar and drums.

For the Miami-raised Secada, whose family fled communist Cuba when he was 11, the Frost School was a gleaming symbol of musical excellence. “I was just enthralled when I was accepted,” said Secada, who earned two jazz vocal degrees in the 1980s and became a cross-cultural star with 1991’s “Just Another Day/Otro Dia Mas Sin Verte.” “It was a huge privilege.”

“To be part of a celebration of 100 years of excellence and perseverance and making a difference in the lives of young people is really an honor,” said Dawnn Lewis, a singer, actress, and songwriter who graduated in 1982.

Raquel Sofia, a singer-songwriter who graduated in 2009, was astonished when Berg called to invite her to perform. “I’m very emotional about this,” she said. “It’s returning to my roots where I was happiest and met some of the most important people in my life.”

The show closed with Lewis leading all the artists in the Beatles’ raucous “Birthday” and Stevie Wonder’s soulful “Happy Birthday.” It was a moving moment, as generations of artists celebrated the school that did so much to shape them and their music.

Photos by Alexander Tamargo, Getty Images.



Alumna Raquel Sofia performed at the Centennial Concert.



Centennial medalists celebrated together.



Dean Berg congratulated Centennial medalists.



The alumni artists joined together in a birthday finale.



Pop star alumnus Jon Secada thrilled the audience.



Alumni medalists at the Knight Center for Music Innovation.



The Frost School student orchestra at the concert.



An enthusiastic crowd packed the plaza.



Young alumna Alexis Kesselman performed.

Photos by Jenny Abreu/courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

A change-making performance on a world stage

Sadie Carroll couldn't quite believe she was here: backstage at Alice Tully Hall in New York's world-renowned Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, rehearsing with the Frost Symphony Orchestra (FSO) for a sold-out performance of "San Juan Hill: A New York Story," a sweeping jazz-orchestral work by professor Etienne Charles conducted by FSO music director Gerard Schwarz.

"It's surreal," said Carroll, a cellist and junior at the Frost School of Music, who joined 69 fellow students for two picture-perfect fall days at Lincoln Center last October. "I feel so honored to be here. I've been smiling non-stop, just trying to take it all in."

Her awe and excitement were shared by everyone involved in the Oct. 23 concert. For the Frost School's premiere classical ensemble to be presented by one of the world's great cultural centers in an ambitious work commissioned from its faculty represents a new level of achievement.

Lincoln Center commissioned "San Juan Hill" as a tribute to the neighborhood of the same name that was torn down to build Lincoln Center. The work premiered at the 2022 re-opening of David Geffen Hall, when it was played by the New York Philharmonic and Charles' jazz sextet Creole Soul.

Jordana Leigh, Lincoln Center's vice president of programming, said they wanted to keep "San Juan Hill" alive. "We want to establish this piece as part of the canon and continue its musical life," she said. "It's too good not to be heard again."

For "San Juan Hill," Charles did extensive research on a neighborhood that was home to a unique mix of Black Southern, Cuban, Puerto Rican, West Indian, Italian, Irish, and Jewish residents, fostering culture-shifting music and artists including jazz greats Thelonious Monk, Benny Carter, and Charleston creator James P. Johnson.

Charles incorporated that rich range of styles, as well as archival and contemporary film and photos, animation, graphics, live poetry, and even a hip-hop turntablist, to create a grand musical and multimedia tapestry. "It was significant because it was such a big project," he said. "Not just to write for orchestra, but because I wanted to do storytelling."

Photos by Lawrence Sumulong, © Lincoln Center.



Gerard Schwarz and Etienne Charles backstage.



Schwarz, a veteran interpreter of classical scores, was challenged by the mix of rhythms and styles. "The great education for me was spending time with Etienne," he said. "He would play or sing every phrase and every rhythm so I could digest it and communicate what was intended."

Though from very different generations and backgrounds, both Charles and Schwarz attended The Juilliard School. Charles has played frequently at Jazz at Lincoln Center, which had commissioned him once before. Schwarz began his career as co-principal trumpet with the New York Philharmonic and led the Mostly Mozart Festival for many years. He also taught at Juilliard, where one of his students was Jazz at Lincoln Center director Wynton Marsalis.

"Lincoln Center has a long and wonderful relationship with Etienne Charles," Leigh said. "It's such a wonderful, full circle moment to have Maestro Schwarz back, conducting this important piece."

The two artists bonded working together and bringing a new generation of students to a place that fostered them. "It's a great thing to see these people studying with me play here," said Charles.

Those students were uniquely qualified to fulfill Charles' vision. A number of FSO members are familiar with jazz, whether as members of the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra or other ensembles. Others have backgrounds that made styles like mambo or Venezuelan waltz familiar. "Once they got the feel of what Etienne wanted they ran with it," Schwarz said. "At the Frost School, we do this organically, because it's the right thing to do musically. And when you do that it's really successful."

For HMI fellow Justin Kinchen, who plays classical violin and jazz trumpet and composes in both genres, "San Juan Hill" validated his ambition to work in both. "It's very impactful to perform with these worldclass musicians who are doing exactly what I want to do with my career," he said.

On the night of the performance, hundreds of people filled Alice Tully Hall, including a beaming Dean Berg and his wife Julia, a number of Frost School donors, staff, and faculty, and proud parents of FSO musicians from as far away as Taiwan.

The audience was rapt as "San Juan Hill" unfolded, starting with Creole Soul in segments that were lyrical and swinging by turns. As the orchestra joined them, the sound swelled, massive, yet rhythmically agile and melodically rich.

For the finale, Charles invited the audience to imagine a gathering of "everybody from everywhere" in San Juan Hill, as the orchestra swung from ragtime to mambo to calypso to funk. The audience responded with a standing ovation, while Charles and Schwarz stood, visibly emotional, arms across each other's shoulders, surrounded by the awed-looking musicians.

In coming together to bring a community and an era to musical life, these Frost School artists opened the way to another era for the school itself.

Showcasing the Frost School's Latin music achievements at the genre's leading event

The Frost School of Music joined the Latin music world's top industry event last October, the annual Billboard Latin Music Week in Miami, strengthening its connections to an important and growing musical genre with which the school has a long history.

The Frost School cosponsored a VIP event, Billboard Latin Power Players, showcasing alumni and supporters who've made an impact in Latin music, with one, publishing executive Jorge Mejia, B.M. '96, receiving an award from Billboard alongside other top industry leaders.

Students, alumni, and faculty and staff members attended the conference, held Oct. 20 to 24. The Frost School was the only educational institution at The Industry Roundtables, a networking event, and a Billboard magazine article highlighted the school's role in the Latin music world.

Leila Cobo, Billboard chief content officer, Latin/Español, welcomed the Frost School at the Latin Power Players event, where the magazine presented awards to some of the most influential figures and companies in Latin music, including the heads of Universal Music Latin and Interscope Capitol Miami. "So many executives from our business are graduates from the Frost School," Cobo told the crowd.

The invite-only party, at Casadonna, a glamorous venue overlooking Biscayne Bay, included executives from streaming companies, record labels, and the Latin GRAMMYS. They mingled with stars like J Balvin, a Colombian urban and electronic artist; Peso Pluma, a Mexican singer and rapper; and legendary producer Emilio Estefan, a Frost School supporter, honorary doctorate recipient, and Dean's Advisory Board member.

The Frost School joined the Billboard event as Latin music continues to be among the fastest-growing genres in the U.S. An October 2025 report from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) said this is the 12th year in a row Latin music has expanded, becoming the fourth-largest genre in the U.S., demonstrating not just its strength among Hispanics, who are 19 percent of the population, but its increasing appeal to general audiences.

"Latin music in the U.S. continues to gain popularity and generate increased value thanks to the incredible artists whose music connects across language and geographical barriers," RIAA vice-president of research Matt Bass said in a statement.



Emilio Estefan attending the event.



Jorge Mejia accepts award.

Mejia, a Latin GRAMMY-nominated classical pianist and composer who is the president and CEO of Sony Music Publishing Latin America and U.S. Latin, thanked the Frost School and paid tribute to Latin music's successes as he accepted Billboard's Power Player award for his company as publishing corporation of the year.

"This award also has the name of this Latin music industry that we have all built together," Mejia said. "It's amazing what we have become and what we are becoming."

Mejia was one of several Frost School alumni showcased at the conference, hosting a Q&A with Sony artist Danny Ocean, a star singer-songwriter. Fellow alumnus Julio Reyes Copello, M.M. '00, one of Latin music's top producers, joined Spanish pop star Pablo Alboran in the "Making the Hit, Live" panel, a top daytime event. An Icon Q&A featured Emilio Estefan and his wife Gloria, the pioneering Latin pop crossover star who holds an honorary doctorate from the Frost School.

The Frost School's long history with Latin music goes back to the 1980s, when multiple alumni played or worked with the Estefans' Miami Sound Machine. Among them was singer Jon Secada, B.M. '83, M.M. '86, whom the Estefans launched as a multi-million-selling crossover star.

As Miami became the capital of the U.S. Latin music industry in the 1990s, Frost School graduates naturally found opportunities here. They've included Julio Bagué, M.M. '93, a producer and top executive at peermusic, the world's largest independent music publisher; Lee Levin, B.M. '89, a multi-GRAMMY-winning drummer, producer, and musical director for numerous stars; Lester Mendez, B.M. '82, a GRAMMY-winning producer and songwriter; and George Noriega, B.M. '95, a songwriter, producer, and label owner. One of the school's longest-serving professors, Reynaldo Sanchez, B.M. '79, M.M. '82, is a former music director for Latin pop star Chayanne and continues to connect students with the Latin music world.

That history continues to draw bicultural and genre-crossing students to the Frost School. More recently they've included leading producers, such as Lopez; Copello; Federico Vindver, B.M. '08, the 2025 Latin GRAMMY producer of the year; and Natalia Ramirez, M.A. '17, an A&R manager and Latin GRAMMY-winning engineer; as well as executives like Pablo Ahogado, M.M. '14, vice president of A&R for Concord Music Publishing.

The partnership with Billboard is part of recent efforts by the Frost School to expand and highlight its relationships in the Latin music world. For two years, it has hosted the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation's annual scholarship awards ceremony at the Knight Center for Music Innovation. This year, it cosponsored a four-year, \$120,000 scholarship with the nonprofit organization, for singer-songwriter Irenda Arano Diaz.



Interim vice-dean Serona Elton, alumnus Jorge Mejia, Billboard's CCO Leila Cobo, and Frost School director of marketing and communications Stephanie Hernandez.

Photos courtesy of Billboard, LLC.



A daring vision to expand the future of classical music



AyseDeniz Gokcin loves classical music so much that she goes to radical lengths to explore the possibilities technology presents for her art form. The pianist-composer showcased her efforts last September at the Newman Recital Hall at the Knight Center for Music Innovation in *Classical Regenerated*, a first-of-its-kind concert exploring the potential that artificial intelligence (AI) holds for classical music.

“I’m fascinated by what AI can do,” AyseDeniz (her artist name) said. “It totally opens new doors. Most artists hate AI. I’m one of the very few who doesn’t.”

AyseDeniz began experimenting with AI in 2024. “It’s good as a musician to figure out what’s happening with these tools and how to use them, instead of ignoring where the real world is going,” she said. “I never use AI in my compositions. I look at it as more for research and interaction.”

A native of Turkey and a former child prodigy who has performed around the world, AyseDeniz’s work with AI has been showcased at TED AI, the Aspen Institute, the Kennedy Center Creativity + Tech Summit, and the CogX Festival.

The Frost School’s cutting-edge exploration of music and AI, led by Tom Collins, an associate professor of music engineering technology, enabled the school to collaborate with AyseDeniz in ways that expanded her efforts, while highlighting its leadership in this expanding arena.

“At the Frost School of Music, we are uniquely positioned to innovate, to critically study this moment in music history,” Collins wrote in a program note. “Positioned between technology, ethics, and artistry, we are charting a new course for music in the age of AI.”

AyseDeniz has long experimented with ways to draw more people to classical music. Her 2012 arrangement of Pink Floyd’s music in the style of Franz Liszt went viral. The Encyclopaedia Britannica included AyseDeniz, Jacob Collier, and Kendrick Lamar in their 2022 list of 20 Under 40: Young Shapers of the Future of Music and Dance. Her music has been featured on National Geographic and Disney+ and she has over 600,000 social media followers.

In *Classical Regenerated*, AyseDeniz played pieces by Frédéric Chopin and her own compositions, as well as “AI Tributes” to Chopin, Vivaldi, Bach, and Mozart. She also performed with first-year engineering student, singer, and songwriter Fabiana Lorenzo Perez on songs Perez composed with the help of AI, and with doctoral composition student and pianist Richard Chang on custom-made AI versions of his music.

Famed alum Pharrell Williams draws on Frost School artists for World Series video

The Frost School of Music helped hype the country for one of its great sporting rituals—baseball’s World Series—thanks to one of the world’s most famous musical artists.

Last fall, Major League Baseball (MLB) rolled out “October Hits Different,” a marketing campaign centered on a music video led by the 13-time-GRAMMY-winning and Academy Award-nominated producer, artist, and entrepreneur Pharrell Williams, which features an orchestra of 25 Frost School students, alumni, and faculty alongside famed gospel choir Voices of Fire.

The video, of the soaring song “Are You Ready?” from Voices of Fire’s album “OPHANIM,” shows Williams conducting the singers and Frost School musicians swaying under the brilliant nighttime lights of Miami’s Loan Depot Park, interspersed with shots of baseball superstars while a voiceover intones “time to let these maestros of the diamond shine.”

“With ‘October Hits Different,’ we wanted to capture the spectacle of the postseason through music that feels just as monumental,” said Uzma Rawn Dowler, MLB chief marketing officer and senior vice president of Global Corporate Partnerships.

An orchestra from the Frost School was a natural choice for Williams, who has not only collaborated with the Frost School multiple times but also received a master’s degree in

Music Industry in 2023 through online study.

“It is very exciting to see Frost School musicians in this highly visible television spot,” said Dean Shelton G. Berg. “Pharrell Williams first collaborated with a Frost School orchestra 13 years ago for a momentous musical work and video, “i am OTHER,” and subsequently he has turned to the school again and again as a collaborative partner, including for the documentary film “Hydration.” Pharrell recognizes the unique, cross-genre abilities of Frost School musicians, so much so that he attended the school to receive his master’s degree.”

This is the third time in recent years that the Frost School has collaborated with a major sports organization. Last September, Stephen Guerra Jr., assistant professor in the Department of Studio Music and Jazz, arranged “Panthers Pulse,” the goal song for NHL team Florida Panthers, for the Palm Beach Symphony, who were joined by Frost School faculty members in a live recording at Gusman Concert Hall.

In 2023, Guerra collaborated with Inter Miami, the Major League Soccer team featuring international superstar Lionel Messi, to record a music and video tribute at the Frost School, celebrating the signing of Spanish soccer star Sergio Busquets, nicknamed “El Maestro.”

FUTURE OF MUSIC



Frost School co-sponsors national poll on the future of music

Photos courtesy of The Hollywood Reporter.

The music world is always changing. But it may never have been in such a state of flux as it is now, as the surging use of artificial intelligence generates a flood of AI-generated music and raises crucial questions about musical creativity, the role of artists, and a host of other issues that promise to profoundly affect the future of music.

These seismic shifts inspired the Frost School of Music to create a partnership with The Hollywood Reporter (THR), one of the country's top entertainment media outlets, to examine the public's thoughts on music and AI and other key issues. The two organizations created an exclusive, nationally representative poll of 2,244 U.S. adults, administered by leading decision intelligence firm Morning Consult. The THR/Frost School of Music Future of Music Poll was a groundbreaking effort to understand the ramifications of AI, listening habits, pay for



artists, and other forces.

The issues it raised were further highlighted in a panel and reception for approximately 100 music industry leaders at the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles on Nov. 20. A highlight of the event was a keynote conversation between Yungblud, a GRAMMY-nominated British rocker whose powerful music and maverick attitude have made him a sensation, and THR music editor Ethan Millman.

The THR partnership is the Frost School's latest endeavor under the University of Miami's Great Schools and Colleges Initiative, aimed at establishing the Frost School as a thought leader, not only in music education, but in the broader music world.

"I don't take the topic of the future of music lightly," said Dean

Shelton G. Berg, who welcomed guests to the GRAMMY Museum event. "I know how important music education

Among the THR/Frost School of Music poll's striking revelations:

52% of respondents say they aren't interested in listening to music created with AI, even if made by their favorite artist.

32% of respondents are interested.

66% of respondents say they never listen to music made with AI.

62% of respondents say that creators making AI music should get permission from the original artist when replicating their voice.

23% of respondents say they shouldn't.

Most respondents said that original music creators should be paid when their style is mimicked in the creation of AI-generated music, with **58% of Baby Boomers** (born between 1946-1964), **52% of GenXers** (1965-1980), and 50% of Millennials (1981-1996) feeling that way. **Less than half, or 46%, of GenZers** (1997-2012) agreed.

Majorities in all age groups say that AI should not be used to create music without human contributions, with **75% of Baby Boomers**, **63% of GenXers**, **57% of Millennials**, and **52% of GenZers** holding that opinion.

is to opening our eyes to what's possible as an artist and professional—and to make sure everyone can make a career doing it too."

"Now we are examining what it means as AI has emerged as a force in the music world, and how to understand the best way to harness this new technology while maintaining music's unique capacity to create authentic, personal connections with others."

The poll also asked where people found new music, with social media (45%), radio (44%), and recommendations from family and friends (34%) leading the list; and critics/blogs (7%) and awards shows (6%) at the bottom. Rock was respondents' favorite genre at 22%, followed by country (16%), rap/hip-hop (14%), and pop (10%).

Artist pay was another survey topic, with pluralities agreeing that artists were paid fairly by streaming services and concert promoters. Most artists, however, say that the

tiny fractions of a cent per stream that they receive has made it much more difficult to make a living.

The intricacies of how AI might affect this already complex scenario were a major topic for the panel, which included Frost School interim vice dean and chair of the music industry department Serona Elton; Myman Greenspan Fineman Fox Rosenberg & Light partner Audrey Benoualid; Range Music managing partner Evan Winiker; Isabel Quinteros, senior vice-president of marketing industry relations at Jen AI; and songwriter and producer Roahn Hylton.

"At the Frost School of Music, we prioritize preparing our students for today and the future," said Elton. "There is no denying that the way we create and perform music, and the ways that listeners discover and experience music, are constantly evolving."



A tribute to an extraordinary leader

How do you capture 19 years of transformative leadership? Retiring dean Shelton G. “Shelly” Berg did it with music—and the help of faculty, supporters, alumni, and students who embodied the extraordinary era he created at the Frost School.

“This is a moment for people that mean a great deal to us, from cherished colleagues to cherished friends,” Berg said at “A Lasting Legacy,” the tribute to his impact on the Frost School held at the Knight Center for Music Innovation on March 21.

The celebration culminated with the unveiling of Shelly Berg Way, with the Frost Band of the Hour and University of Miami mascot Sebastian leading hundreds of guests, faculty, and staff in an exuberant parade to the new monument sign marking the drive-in front of the Knight Center.

The evening featured a dinner and performance in the Knight Center’s Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage, with speeches filled with gratitude and reminiscences. Frank Ragsdale, chair of the vocal performance department, emceed.



Shelly and Julia Berg accept the Legacy Award.

Naming donors Phillip and Patricia Frost were among the many major supporters attending.

“Shelly, Pat, and I are really appreciative that you have dedicated your life to this school and to the university over these 19 years,” Phillip Frost said.

“It is difficult to overstate the impact that one man can have on a music school, a university and a community,” said E. Roe Stamps, the donor behind the Stamps Scholars Program. “We in Miami have seen this firsthand over the last 19 years, as Shelly Berg has brought greatness to the Frost School, the U, and to our beloved city.”

Supporter and chair of the Dean’s Advisory Committee Jeffrey Miller presented Berg and his wife, Julia, with a special Frost School Legacy Award in recognition of their having raised over \$175 million for the school. “Legacy is about succession,” said Miller. “Shelly has created a strong foundation that the next dean can build upon.”

Pop icons Gloria and Emilio Estefan—honorary doctorate holders, strong supporters, and frequent collaborators—joined guests on a red carpet. “Dean Berg is one of the most incredible musicians and human beings that I’ve had the pleasure and honor of working with and calling friend,” Gloria Estefan said.

Singer Jon Secada, one of the Frost School’s most famous alumni, said Berg created a new model for music education. “His progressive vision, his commitment to bring to the forefront so many programs that deal with what musicians really need—that was his commitment from day one,” Secada said.

Berg, a multi-GRAMMY nominated pianist and composer who is leaving to focus on his music, curated a musical program that captured his time at the Frost School, introducing each number with warm personal anecdotes and giving a virtuosic, deeply felt performance.

He and Ross Harbaugh, the cello professor who was on Berg’s search committee, gave a passionate rendition of Astor Piazzolla’s “Le Grand Tango.” Berg introduced GRAMMY-winning trumpet player, composer, and professor John Daversa, Berg’s teaching assistant in his final year at the Thornton School of Music, by explaining how he’d invited Daversa to apply to be chair of the Studio Music and Jazz Program in 2013. “I called him up and said ‘John, I need your heart,’” Berg said. That heart was laid bare in their intimate, sensitive duet on Stevie Wonder’s “Love’s in Need of Love Today.”

Kim Josephson, the opera singer and professor of vocal performance, joined Berg on “A Simple Song” from Leonard Bernstein’s “Mass,” which they’d performed as undergraduates at the University of Houston.

Alumni Jenna Rubaii and Trent Saunders, successful Broadway artists who graduated in 2012, sang “A Whole New World” from “Aladdin.”

Gloria Estefan sang the Gershwin classic “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,” from her and Berg’s GRAMMY-nominated album “The Standards.” She was accompanied by Berg and faculty members Rey Sanchez on guitar, Dafnis Prieto on percussion, Chuck Bergeron on bass, and master’s student Justin Kinchen on violin.

A 16-member student choir joined them for the finale, Berg’s arrangement of Eric Clapton’s “Change the World,” which he and Sanchez presented in his first year at the Frost School.

“This is my full circle moment,” said Berg. “Nineteen years ago Rey and I cooked this up. We said ‘we’re gonna change the world.’ And we did!”



Berg and students perform.



Photo by Gabriela Gabriela.

A LASTING LEGACY

Dean Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg's visionary leadership transformed the Frost School and had a profound impact on music education, empowering generations of students.

When Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg came to interview for the job of dean of the Frost School of Music in April 2007, he was curious but not committed. He'd had a rewarding and successful 16 years as a professor and chair of the jazz program at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, and was planning to reduce his role in higher education so he could devote more time to performing and composing.

But fate and opportunity intervened. At the Frost School, Berg saw an opportunity to realize a sweeping vision for reshaping music education that he had been developing for years.

"All the pieces you needed to create the music school of the future were here," Berg recalled. "The amazing thing was coming to a place that not only could do it but wanted to do it. That really lit a fire in me."

And he lit a fire at the Frost School. Professor Ross Harbaugh, a renowned classical cellist on Berg's search committee, remembers asking how he saw the future of music schools. Berg's response mesmerized the group. "It was so alive and crackling with energy," Harbaugh said. "He had a vision that was really exciting to everyone. He's like a power

source people want to plug into."

In the 19 years since, Berg has not only led a transformation of the Frost School that has elevated it to the first ranks of music schools worldwide, but had an enormous impact on music education and, through countless alumni, the music world. The lasting legacy he has created has, in many ways, also defined his own distinctive legacy in music.

As he prepared to step down from the deanship and finally devote himself to his own music, Berg reflected on his time at the Frost School, even as he looks forward, at 70, to a new chapter.

"I think we've changed what's possible for music in higher education," he said. "I've dealt with thousands of students. Whatever part of you they take with them, there's a ripple effect."

That effect is momentous, said Gregg Field, a multi-award-winning producer, musician, and educator married to singer Monica Mancini, daughter of the namesake of the Henry Mancini Institute. "I don't think even Shelly understands the impact he's had and will have globally," said Field, who has worked frequently with Berg as a musician. "Shelly's imprint on the Frost School will be there for a very long time."

A vision for transforming music education

Two months after his first interview, Berg walked into the dean's office at the Frost School and had an uncharacteristic moment of doubt. "It was summer," Berg said. "There were no students here. There were no faculty. And I thought, 'What does a dean do?'"

For him, it was revolutionizing music education. And Berg's once-radical ideas have not only become increasingly influential in music education, but common practice in much of the music world.

"I knew that music education needed to be more experiential, which is a buzzword now, but wasn't then," Berg said. "You don't learn to do things in a lecture."

"I knew that music majors needed to feel that they were creators and not just high-level replicators. I knew people were experiencing multiple styles and genres, and that the silos between them shouldn't exist. I knew that musicians needed other skills in addition to playing and singing well to be successful."

At the heart of Berg's vision is the idea that students learn by doing in myriad ways that make them proactive and creative agents of their own destiny. They learn to compose and improvise, to understand music theory through the music they play. They learn a wide range of professional skills, from analyzing digital income streams to producing and arranging. They are encouraged to try different genres, collaborate with peers in other programs, and create independent projects.

Harbaugh remembers Berg coaching the Stamps String Quartet in a Hayden composition. "They were on fire after that," Harbaugh said. "It opened up their imagination about what the music was saying, and they also understood why the music was saying that."

Berg worked closely with faculty to develop his ideas into what became the Experiential Music Curriculum (EMC) in 2011, and the C.R.E.A.T.E. Throughlines, an acronym for a set of skills embedded into every class and ensemble, adopted in 2016.

"There's a saying that you can do things faster if you do them on your own, but you'll go farther if you do things with others," Berg said. "When you say that you're going to change the paradigm, it takes a while. Along the way, there were important lessons about how to communicate and have the faculty feel valued."

The school's pioneering history provided a foundation for that new paradigm. It included a renowned, exuberantly creative jazz program and the first university programs in music engineering, the music industry, and media scoring and production. The groundbreaking Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program and the Creative American Songwriting minor were being developed.



There was also a crucial spirit of cooperation. "At most music schools, you get that attitude of 'oh, they play that other kind of music,'" Berg said. "That was not the case here. There was not only collegiality, but respect across disciplines."

Professor Rey Sanchez, associate dean for strategic initiatives and innovation, said Berg's ideas found fertile ground in the school's record of creativity and collaboration.

"We had the DNA," said Sanchez, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees here in 1979 and 1982. "Shelly brought the vision to really make that who we are and translate it to the vision and mission of the school."

Berg made the Frost School a leader in music education, said Roger Brown, an entrepreneur who served as president of Berklee College of Music from 2004 to 2021. "Part of the role of a leader is to survey the landscape and come up with a vision about what needs to be done," said Brown, who said he and Berg advised each other when they took over their respective institutions. "At Berklee, we worked hard to get integration between departments and faculty, but Shelly and the Frost School took it further than any other place I know. The big challenge is how do you help students pursue their dreams instead of infusing your dreams in them? Shelly had big ideas and ambition and the tenacity to not get worn down, combined with the political skill to say, 'let's make this happen.'"

Making magic from an unconventional life

Berg's vision evolved from his own boundary-breaking history. A child prodigy who studied classical piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music, he learned jazz with his father, an accomplished avocational trumpet player, and jammed with the likes of Sonny Stitt and Arnett Cobb. The family moved to Texas when Berg was 15, and he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance from the University of Houston. He also got what he calls "a nighttime education" playing and arranging jazz, pop, and Latin music in a popular bar band called Larry, Marilyn, and the Brass Connection, mastering multiple musical styles and skills. "I learned things that I was going to need for the rest of my career," he said.

When he graduated, he was married with two young children, and he opted for teaching at San Jacinto College



instead of a late-night performer's life, discovering a passion for teaching. When he joined the faculty at Thornton in 1991, he proved himself as a professor at an elite institution and as a jazz artist at a school that was then focused on classical music. A 1999 story in the Los Angeles Times named Berg one of three educators for the new millennium.

Berg flourished in the high-powered Los Angeles music scene, building a prolific, successful career as a pianist, composer, arranger, producer, and music director, a multiple GRAMMY nominee who's worked with countless major artists, from Quincy Jones to Natalie Cole—invaluable experience and connections he brought to the Frost School. His artistic prowess inspired students and gave him key credibility with faculty and guest artists.

Those factors also proved crucial in fundraising, a new arena that proved one of his greatest achievements. Berg has worked closely with his wife, Julia Berg, to inspire and forge warm relationships with donors, raising over \$175 million as of March of this year.

"Good leaders are great communicators," said Michael Lazarus, a venture capitalist and business leader on the Dean's Advisory Committee, and a jazz lover who is the former board chair of SFJAZZ, a performance center in San Francisco. "They've got the vision thing down. Everyone knows where they're going."

"There's an old saying, 'it's not what you say or do, it's how you make people feel.' Shelly is a Pied Piper. He has that magic which is hard to find."

Transforming the campus and raising the bar

Berg's magic enabled the Frost School to build the Patricia Louise Frost Music Studios, two graceful buildings filled with much-needed faculty offices and rehearsal spaces, which opened in 2015; and the Knight Center for Music Innovation, a state-of-the-art performance venue, which



Berg speaking at commencement.

opened in 2023.

He persuaded the Mancini family to let him bring the Henry Mancini Institute (HMI) here from Los Angeles, creating a unique program for graduate fellows who play classical, jazz, and film scores in an orchestra that records and performs with famous guests. He installed the Stamps Scholars Program, with four ensembles of elite-level scholarship students. He created the Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program, a community outreach effort in which Frost School students mentor over 1,000 Miami-Dade schoolchildren each year. He launched partnerships with Jazz Aspen Snowmass for an elite summer jazz program in Colorado and with the superb classical music program at Festival Napa Valley in California.

He raised the musical and academic standards for students and hired faculty with new levels of expertise and achievement. Master's degrees became a bridge to a career, rather than to a doctorate.

"He is leaving this institution humming at a much faster rate than when he came here," said John Daversa, the multi-GRAMMY-winning chair of the Studio Music and Jazz program.

Inspiring and supporting students

Now the Frost School is uniquely suited to nurture students like Justin Kinchen, an HMI Fellow who plays

classical violin and jazz trumpet and composes in both genres. "People care about who you are here, and were really able to help me focus on all sides of my identity," said Kinchen, who graduates in 2027 with a double master's in violin performance and studio jazz writing, and has also studied film scoring and conducting. Kinchen is creating a program to lead a jazz ensemble in performing with orchestras on tour, both playing his compositions—a format he successfully debuted in his hometown of Indianapolis in 2025. "I've been able to craft the career I want," Kinchen said.

Berg has inspired students like the luminary jazz and cross-genre singer Veronica Swift, B.M. '16. "He reminded me of why I was here, not just at the school, but on the planet," said Swift, who has performed with Berg frequently and says he has boosted her career. "To me, a great leader is someone you respect for being themselves. He understands that we're all trying to make some meaning out of life and have something to teach each other."

For Berg, the ethos he's worked to create is embodied in endeavors like Rock Symphonic, undergraduates Winston Thayer and Dawson Fuss's ambitious concert project uniting a classical orchestra with pop and rock bands, which was greenlit by Berg. Rock Symphonic, which had its third edition this spring, has been an overwhelming success.

"It was so cool that the dean was so into something we wanted to do," said Thayer. "He was there for the whole concert last year and had the biggest smile on his face."

Berg was glowing at Lincoln Center last October, as illustrious conductor and professor Gerard Schwarz led the Frost Symphony Orchestra in professor Etienne Charles' jazz-classical-multimedia piece "San Juan Hill: A New York Story," the two artist-educators bonding to bring the work to spectacular life with a student ensemble uniquely capable of interpreting it.

"To me, that's huge, because it means that what we are is inculcated," said Berg. "It's not that I walk out the door and it's gone. This is in our DNA. It's who we are."



Berg teaching at Festival Napa Valley.



All photos courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



Alumnus Emmet Cohen performs with Berg.

STEINWAY & SONS



Berg with guest artist Jacob Collier.



Berg performs with alumna Veronica Swift at The Arsht Center.



Berg and Gloria Estefan after performing at the Frost School of Music.

A new chapter in a lasting legacy

For decades, Berg has balanced demanding academic and music careers to a degree that often dumbfounds others. Now, in characteristic optimistic and ambitious fashion, he is ready to focus solely on his music.

Although he and Julia are well, Berg says some recent health challenges helped propel his decision.

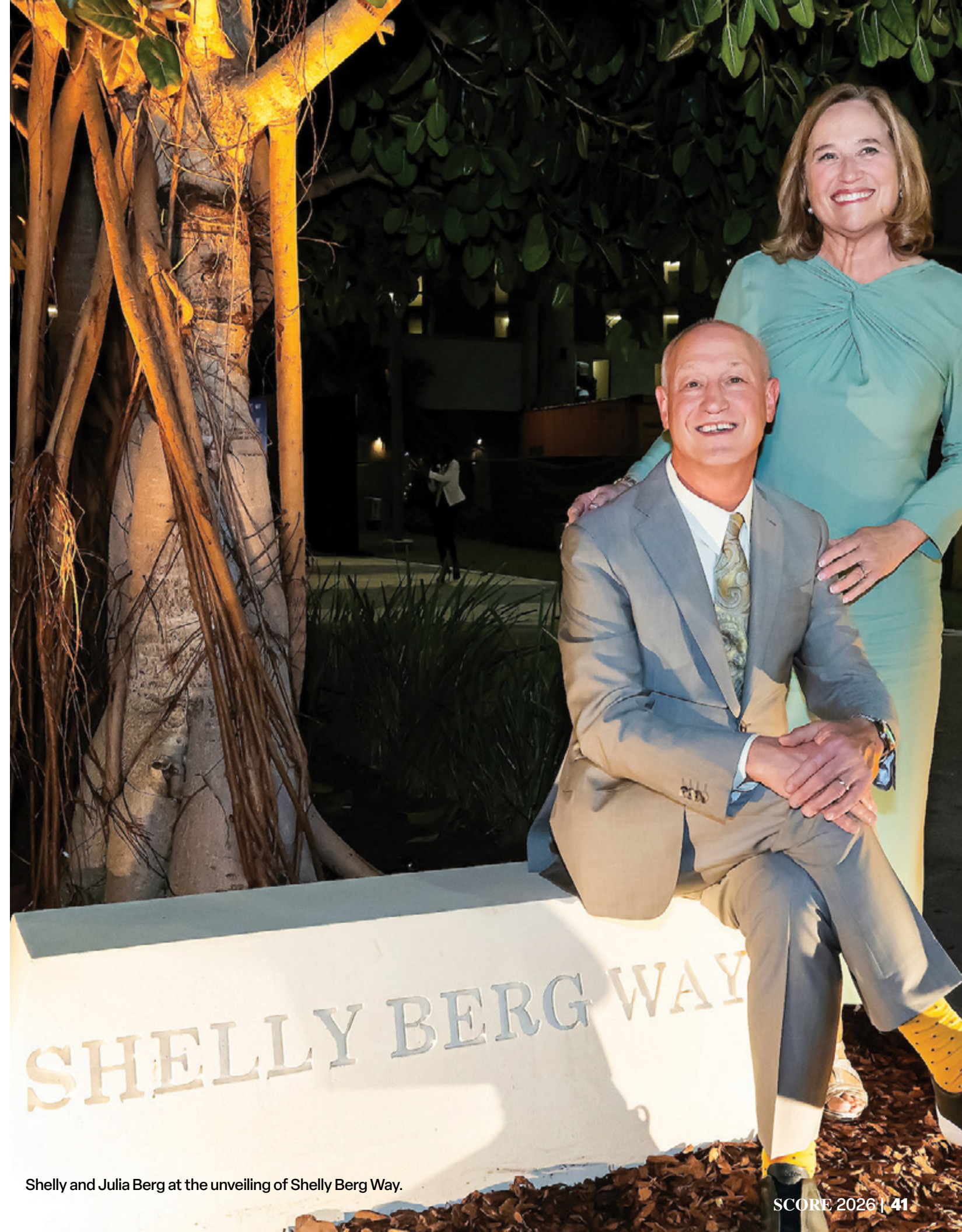
“Nothing is certain,” he said. “What is certain is that I have the time right now. The fingers still work, the brain still works, and Julia and I are together. I think I owe it to myself to pursue where my music can go if I make it my primary vocation.”

It’s time to make that change, said Daversa. “This job is a lot to carry, and he’s been carrying it for a long time. He needs time to enjoy his life—that spark needs to burn bright in this next phase. He’s earned it. My heart is giddy for him.”

A question hovers over this late choice. “If Shelly had only focused on music, I think he would be considered one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time,” said Field.

But just as Berg has reshaped the Frost School, the legacy he created—of innovation, achievement, and possibility, of changing music by changing lives—has become part of who he is. If he has left an indelible mark on students, they have also left their mark on him.

“That’s why we’re in this game,” he said. “So that 20 years from now a student says, ‘you did this, or you said this, or you taught me this, and it changed my life.’ That’s why we do what we do. And that’s what I’ll miss the most.”



Shelly and Julia Berg at the unveiling of Shelly Berg Way.

A Frost School jazz icon connects with a new generation

The performance by legendary jazz guitarist Pat Metheny, one of the Frost School of Music's most famous alumni, was a highlight of the April 8 Centennial Celebration Concert on the University of Miami's Coral Gables campus.

But for students, the bigger thrill was the chance to hear from Metheny in person. The day before the Centennial festivities, he gave a two-hour masterclass at the Knight Center for Music Innovation, sharing his thoughts on everything from composing to artificial intelligence to being in school.

"This is a time when you guys have the luxury of coming up with some new ideas," Metheny told a rapt audience of students and faculty in Newman Recital Hall. "I promise that if one of you comes up with something great and not like anything else, doors will fly open. That's always been true."

Students asked about his practice routine, composing methods, touring, and more. What emerged from Metheny's responses was the picture of an artist who remains awed by the possibilities of his art form and hasn't stopped pushing himself to new artistic frontiers.

To the students' surprise, Metheny said he composed primarily on piano. "It makes no sense at all," he said to laughter. "I'm not a good piano player. But it's much more neutral for me."

He also startled them by urging them to learn about artificial intelligence. "I'm all over [AI] and you guys should be too, because that's what's happening now," he said. "It's just a new tool for us. Musicians, in general, have always been the people who do cool things with technology, and we will be again. But you definitely need to understand it, and now is a good time to jump in."

Charlee Loyst, a master's student in jazz piano performance who also composes, says hearing Metheny humanized a legend. "It was an incredible experience to have an artist like Pat Metheny talk to us face to face," says Loyst. "He might have all these incredible things under his belt, all these incredible people he's played with, all this incredible music. But it also reminds us that he's also a person, and it's not impossible to do what he's doing. That was really inspiring."

Metheny's achievements were recognized with an honorary doctorate in music at the Centennial Concert, with Dean Shelton G. Berg and University of Miami president Joe Echevarria robing Metheny in graduation regalia.



Photo by Alexander Tamargo, Getty Images.

**PAT
METHENY**

An artist finds music industry success behind the scenes

Music has been part of Natalia Ramirez's life since early childhood in her native Colombia. She began playing the violin at age 6 and performed in an orchestra. Between that and her extensive background in the music business, she seems to have the perfect skill set for an artist—except for one detail.

"I actually have stage fright," said Ramirez, who earned a 2017 master's in Live Entertainment Management from the Frost School of Music. "And that's why, even though I was a good performer, playing in front of people didn't seem like what I should do. But I also knew music was going to be my entire life. So I became an audio engineer."

Ramirez has amassed studio credits for artists including Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, and Ricky Martin, earning three GRAMMY Awards.

Ramirez recently expanded her career with a new job at peermusic, as A&R manager for Miami and Puerto Rico, working under fellow Frost School alumnus Julio Bague. Peermusic is the world's largest independent publishing company. Ramirez's job involves matching songs with artists as well as licensing music for other projects. She also continues to keep busy with studio work as a vocal tuning specialist.

"Artists will record multiple takes, and we take the best part of each phrase, syllable, breath, saliva, everything in performance and create a single take with the music and tuning," she said. "It's very artistic work, creating the perfect take with just the right background music."

Ramirez's introduction to the Frost School came through another alumnus, superstar producer Julio Reyes Copello, for whom she interned while an undergraduate at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia. Impressed by her work, Copello steered Ramirez toward the Frost School and associate professor Gary Wood's Live Entertainment Management program.

"Natalia is an artist," said Professor Wood. "Not just in the literal sense of music and art itself, but in her capacity to make meaningful things happen that would otherwise be missing. Her ability to anticipate needs, solve problems, and bring attention to the small things that matter made a remarkable difference."

"I feel a responsibility to leave this industry a better place for women and people from different places," Ramirez said. "I want to be a role model, let people know there's not just one path. I want to influence people in the right way. And also do fantastic great music, of course."



Photo by Carlos Felipe Ramirez.

**NATALIA
RAMIREZ**

Outstanding alumna named a living legend of jazz

Carmen Lundy, B.M. '80, a Miami native who was one of the Frost School's first jazz vocal graduates, is one of the most acclaimed jazz artists of her generation. Now the two-time GRAMMY-winning singer and composer has crowned her stellar career by being named a 2026 NEA Jazz Masters Fellow, given to living legends who have made exceptional contributions to the music.

Lundy thanked the National Endowment for the Arts for the recognition. "My life's work is a sum of many parts," she said. "I'm truly grateful to be standing on the shoulders of the teachers, the ancestors, the veteran musicians, and singers who have come before me and helped shape the beautiful, rich sounds and stories revealing the infinite possibilities and power in the art of creating great jazz music."

Lundy's artistry has been praised by the likes of the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, as well as Downbeat, Jazz Times, and Jazziz, where her many recordings have topped the Best Album and Top Ten Album lists. She has composed more than 150 published songs recorded by artists such as Kenny Barron, Ernie Watts, and Regina Carter, and has recorded or performed with a host of renowned artists, including fellow Frost School alumnus Bruce Hornsby, Ray Barretto, Kip Hanrahan, Roy Hargrove, and Ron Carter. In 2016 Lundy was given the Lifetime Achievement Award in Jazz by Atlanta's Black Women In Jazz & The Arts; and in 2022 her first documentary film, "Nothing But The Blood—The True Story Of The Apostolic Singers Of Miami," on generations of gospel singers in Lundy's family, won the Best Music Documentary Award at its world premiere at the DTLA Film Festival in Los Angeles. She is a master teacher and clinician who has taught worldwide.

Lundy credited the Frost School with providing a foundation for her artistry. "My jazz journey's earliest beginnings were the result of the invaluable lessons learned from faculty and classmates," said Lundy, who was given one of the inaugural Frost School Centennial Medals when she performed at the opening of the Knight Center for Music Innovation in 2023.

"Without [the Frost School's] vision and commitment to being one of the first to offer a formal degree in high quality jazz vocal studies ... I can't imagine myself realizing my truest destiny in becoming a composer and vocalist," Lundy said. "You've helped make dreams come true for so many."

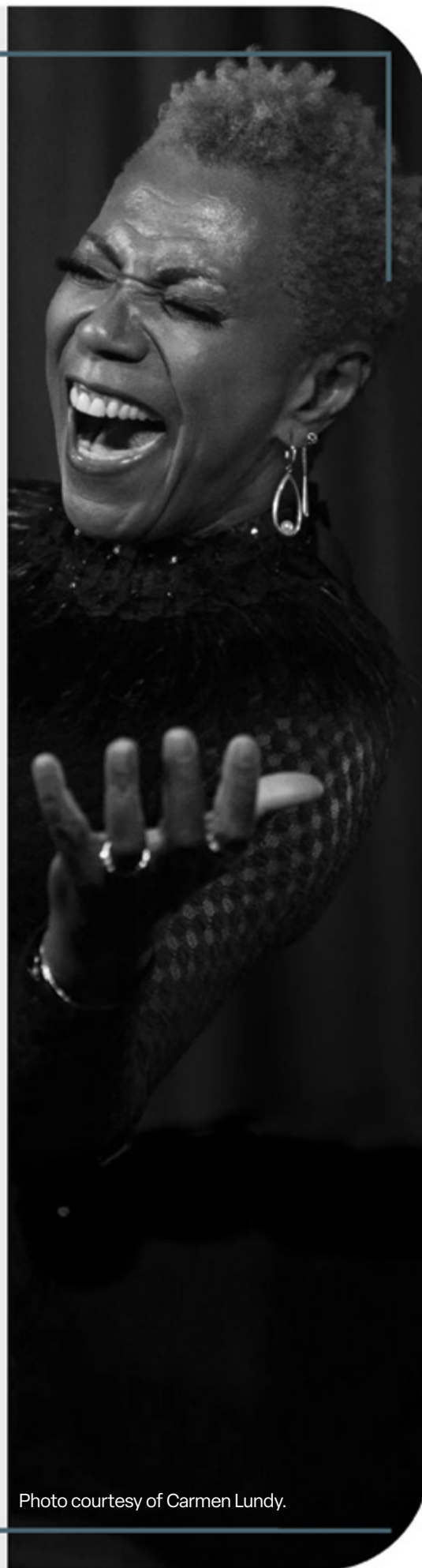


Photo courtesy of Carmen Lundy.

**CARMEN
LUNDY**

Recent graduate wins top jazz vocal award

Kate Kortum, B.M. '23, is the latest Frost School jazz vocal graduate making her mark. The rising young singer won the 2025 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, the world's leading contest for jazz singers. Previous winners of the "Sassy Awards" include multi-GRAMMY winner Samara Joy (whose band includes several Frost School alumni), and fellow alumna Arianna Neikrug.

This is the latest accolade for Kortum, who has received multiple DownBeat Awards, and performed at legendary venues such as the Newport Jazz Festival, SXSW, Birdland, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. The Houston native, who also holds a master's from the Juilliard School, has collaborated with fellow "Sassy" winner Cyrille Aimée and acclaimed pianist and Frost School alumnus Emmet Cohen.

Kortum's 2023 debut album, "Good Woman," which has been streamed more than 3.5 million times, and its 2025 follow-up, "Wild Woman," garnered attention not just for her warm, singular style and adventurous arrangements, but for re-imagining jazz standards written by men from a female perspective. She's been praised by critics for having "a distinct sound with total command" and "an old soul but a young heart."

But winning the Sarah Vaughan contest was a new level of affirmation for Kortum. "I've watched this competition from afar for so many years and I never even thought I would make it to the top five," she said. "It meant a lot to simply be up there honoring Sarah Vaughan in front of so many inspiring and legendary musicians."

Kortum was empowered by a jazz vocal program with a direct throughline from its founder Larry Lapin, a pioneer in jazz vocal education, to current program director Kate Reid, who earned her master's and doctorate under Lapin.

"Frost turned me upside down as a musician," Kortum said. "There were so many fundamentals I learned that allowed me to do what I do today."

But it was not just the musical skills Kortum learned that inspired her.

"Though the classes and mentors I had there were amazing, what really shaped me was the student body," she said. "I had never been in an environment where your friends help push you and make you a better musician. The community I found at Frost was one of the biggest parts of my development as a musician and person—the people I met there are still some of my closest friends and musical collaborators."



Photo courtesy of Kate Kortum.

**KATE
KORTUM**

A musical bridge builder at the heights of pop and classical music

When Carlos “Carlitos” Lopez arrived at the Frost School of Music at age 32, he’d already had a full musical life as a classical pianist and educator in his native Colombia. But he wanted to grow creatively and professionally.

The Frost School enabled that growth. Lopez earned a bachelor’s in music production in 2012 and quickly became a successful producer and engineer for Latin stars such as Marc Anthony and Alejandro Sanz. He returned for a master’s in classical composition in 2020, winning a Latin GRAMMY for a piece he composed for his degree. In 2023 he earned a doctorate in classical conducting and was selected to lead an orchestra that accompanied global superstar Bad Bunny’s 2024 “Most Wanted” tour.

Lopez said the Frost School was unique in enabling him to explore disparate musical worlds. “The school that embraced people from different backgrounds was Frost,” he said. “I found an environment that embraced who I am—a classical musician who also does popular music.”

In 2024 and 2025, Lopez was the musical director for the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation’s annual celebration of their scholarship awards, directing their young recipients in performances at the Knight Center for Music Innovation. In September, the foundation brought Lopez to work with the jazz and classical ensembles at Miami’s New World School of the Arts (NWSA), an acclaimed public arts magnet school.

“It’s very satisfying,” said Lopez of helping young musicians. “It resonates with my past.” He said the visit to NWSA “was an immense opportunity to build the students’ confidence and skills... To try to be a mentor and light a spark in them. I was in a conservatory too. Something I have learned since then is that my vision of the music world was very narrow. So it was very fulfilling to see how their confidence grew, how they were challenged, and how their awareness increased about careers in music.”

In 2025 Lopez won a regional Emmy for audio production of a PBS broadcast of a Palm Beach Symphony concert, and was nominated in the same category for a PBS production of the Frost Symphony Orchestra’s performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

“I hope to continue growing,” said Lopez. “Learning is what brought me here, and I need to keep learning. By learning, I mean my own, as well as helping others learn. I would like to be involved in an educational context with a lot of creativity. But I’m open to what comes next.”



Photo courtesy of Carlos Lopez.

**CARLOS
“CARLITOS”
LOPEZ**

Leading groundbreaking work in the community and onstage

Composer and Frost School of Music associate professor Shawn Crouch has been named executive artistic director of IlluminArts, a nationally known arts group based in Miami.

Crouch’s leadership of IlluminArts, which collaborates with museums, galleries, and community organizations to create original, site-specific performances that interact with visual art, establishes a connection that promises to expand opportunities for Frost School students and deepen the school’s reputation for adventurous creativity.

“I am deeply honored to serve as the new executive artistic director of IlluminArts,” said Crouch. “I look forward to building on its extraordinary legacy by creating bold, innovative programs that fuse music with visual art, architecture, movement, and multimedia.”

“I am ecstatic to have Shawn taking over,” said IlluminArts founder and original artistic director Amanda Crider. “I know that he will build on my vision for the organization through his own passion for music and for developing how performances are presented in the 21st century.”

Crouch, who teaches composition and theory and is artistic director of Ensemble Ibis, the school’s new music ensemble, has long admired IlluminArts. “I love the way Amanda thinks about pairing music and art, which aligns with the way I think about music,” said Crouch, who was commissioned to compose for IlluminArts’ 2022 production “To Reach the Light,” with vocal ensemble, dancers in original choreography, and mixed media, at the Rubell Museum. “I’m always thinking visually—I think in blues and greens, not in sharps and flats.”

Crouch is thrilled at the prospect of expanding his interest in storytelling and new technology, which intensified when he composed “Stained Glass,” a chamber opera using advanced virtual and augmented reality technology.

“Stained Glass,” which has a libretto by doctoral alumna Dana Kaufman and was produced and directed by Frost Opera Theater director Jeffrey Buchman, premiered at the Frost School’s Thomas D. Hormel Music Innovation Stage in April of 2024. Last fall “Stained Glass” won The American Prize in Composition, the Thomas Putsché Award, part of The American Prize National Nonprofit Competitions in the Performing Arts, the nation’s most comprehensive honor for the performing arts.

“I’ve always been interested in storytelling, whether in choral works, song cycles, or instrumental music” said Crouch, who has also received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, ASCAP, BMI, Yale University, and Meet the Composer. “But Stained Glass was my first time telling a story in a narrative way. Working with IlluminArts is a new and exciting project in line with where I am as a composer now.”



Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



Hollywood accolades make a dream come true

Frost School professor Carlos Rafael Rivera has received many accolades, including three Primetime Emmys and a GRAMMY. Last May, he was awarded two BMI Film, TV & Visual Media Awards for his work scoring Netflix’s “Griselda” and HBO Max’s “Hacks.”

But no honor has thrilled Rivera as much as being named to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which inducted him last June. Joining the ranks of Oscar voters, he said, was a dream come true. “I felt like Charlie when he got the golden ticket to the chocolate factory.”

Last summer Rivera also gave a scoring-for-the-screen masterclass at Festival Napa Valley, part of its collaboration with the Television Academy Foundation. His presentation kicked off the Foundation’s new series, “Access: Behind the Screens,” a program designed to inspire students interested in careers in the entertainment industry.

Rivera chairs the Media Scoring and Production program. His work includes scores for Netflix’s “The Queen’s Gambit,” and Apple TV’s “Lessons in Chemistry.” Last year he received another Emmy nomination for his work on the hit Netflix series “Dept. Q.”

Rivera’s passion for teaching was highlighted last fall in a feature on the CBS Miami affiliate. “You could say it’s a calling,” he said. “I really like the idea of sharing knowledge.”

Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.



Margaret Donaghue recognized for excellence in teaching and scholarship

Associate professor Margaret Donaghue, director of the woodwind program at the Frost School of Music, was awarded the 2025 Phillip Frost Award for Teaching and Scholarship.

The beloved educator, who has taught at the Frost School since 1994, was selected by a committee of faculty peers for the school’s most prestigious honor.

“I am humbled to receive an award from my peers, and I am so appreciative of my amazing colleagues,” Donaghue said. “What we do here at the Frost School is, of course, all about the students. I am perpetually grateful to every one of my students for the many ways they have enriched my life over the years. This award is a testament to them.”

Donaghue is a member of several chamber groups including Miami Clarinet, and is the executive director of the Blue Ridge Chamber Music Festival. She has performed across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and her original compositions have been performed internationally. She has recorded for the Centaur, Albany, Altarus, and Living Composers labels.

Donaghue holds a doctorate from the University of Illinois, a master’s degree from the University of Michigan, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of New Hampshire. She previously taught at Central Michigan University and the University of Connecticut.

Photo courtesy of Margaret Donaghue.



Faculty members Cassandra Claude (left) and Raina Murnak backstage at the Vatican with a fellow choir member.

Joining a chorus of faith in a historic Vatican concert

Two Frost School professors were part of a historic musical celebration of faith and joy, performing with a renowned gospel choir in the massive Grace for the World concert at the Vatican in Rome last fall.

Vocalists and Frost School faculty members Raina Murnak and Cassandra Claude were personally invited by famed producer Pharrell Williams to sing in St. Peter’s Square with Voices of Fire, the powerhouse gospel choir he co-founded with his uncle, Bishop Ezekiel Williams.

Williams co-directed Grace for the World with famed singer Andrea Bocelli, a practicing Catholic. The first-ever concert to be held at the Vatican drew more than 300,000 people to an unprecedented celebration at one of the world’s great centers of faith. Grace for the World closed the third World Meeting on Human Fraternity, a global gathering of leaders that called for peace, support for the planet, and hope for the future.

Williams led Voices of Fire, backed by hundreds of additional singers, in an electrifying performance of his song “JOY (Unspeakable),” which filled the vast plaza, while an enormous drone light show illuminated the sky above the Vatican.

For Murnak, a dynamic performer and innovative music educator who is the studio director of contemporary voice in the Frost School’s Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship (M.A.D.E.) program; and Claude, an in-demand vocal teacher and lecturer in M.A.D.E., it was a once-in-a-lifetime moment where years of teaching, artistry, and passion came together in front of a global audience.

Bocelli opened the concert with “Ave Maria” and sang duets with Colombian pop star and songwriter Karol G and American singer Teddy Swims. The evening also featured stars John Legend, Jennifer Hudson, Jelly Roll, and Angelique Kidjo.

This is the second time in recent months that Williams, who has a master’s degree in Music Industry from the Frost School through online study and has collaborated with the school multiple times, has drawn on Frost School artists for a project. He also brought in a 25-member orchestra of Frost School students, alumni, and faculty for “October Hits Different,” a music video celebrating Major League Baseball’s World Series, which also featured Voices of Fire.

The complete Grace for the World concert can be streamed on Disney Plus.

Photo courtesy of Raina Murnak.

The Frost Chorale performs around the world, but few venues compare with last May's tour of Italy. Thirty-eight members of the Frost School's leading choral ensemble spent 12 days singing well-received concerts in some of the country's most iconic spaces. For some, it was their first time abroad.

"Trips like this open the world for our students," said Matthew Brady, who joined the Frost School faculty in the spring of 2024 and was soon appointed director of choral activities. "It was also to expose our students to Italy's wonderful history as the birthplace of the Renaissance, where the Western choral tradition started."

The Frost Chorale tours domestically every other year and internationally every four years. The Italy trip offered cultural immersion and a taste of professional choir life, with visits to the Museo del Violino in Cremona, an artisanal cheesemaker in Parma, and performances in Padua, Florence, and Lucca.

"Being in places where all this history occurred, you can't learn that from a textbook," Brady said.

The tour concluded at Cremona's famed Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta after a workshop with renowned composer Ivo Antognini. "That was a unique opportunity I'll never forget," said doctoral student Kyra Starr.

"It was the trip of a lifetime," said senior Nicole Ferretti.

Photo courtesy of the Frost School of Music.

An Italian tour opens the world for choral students

Pioneering research on children and singing

Students from the Frost School of Music were part of a groundbreaking international study investigating whether singing makes children happier.

"Much research has examined the relationship between music education and intelligence and academic achievement," said Carlos Abril, professor of music education and associate dean of research at the Frost School. "But we don't know as much about the relationship between music learning and well-being. It's not something that's been on the radar of music education researchers."

Abril co-supervised the study and facilitated the Frost School joining research sites in Chicago, Mexico City, and England in Northwestern University's Music for

Childhood Well-Being Initiative, which looked at whether singing and breathwork can improve children's health and state of mind.

Abril selected graduate and undergraduate students to work with children ages nine to 11 at the Little Havana Leadership Learning Center, an outreach site in the Donna E. Shalala MusicReach program. They conducted surveys, taught songs, and used specially designed biometric sensors to create a complex picture of how singing affected the children physically and psychologically.

"I thought it would be a great learning opportunity for our undergraduate music education students to see how research works and to be involved hands-on," said Abril.

CLASS NOTES

1970's

Alfred Monaro

B.M. '72 in Studio Music and Jazz is a United States Navy musician with 26 years of service. Alfred has performed in many Broadway shows and the national tour of "Annie Get Your Gun" as well as with bands including Guy Lombardo & His Royal Canadians.

Marvis Martin

B.M. '77 in Vocal Performance was named University of Miami Frost School of Music 1987 Distinguished Alumna. Marvis is an African American operatic soprano best known for her concert performances and recitals.

1980's

Ralph Raymond Hays

B.M. '86 in Music Industry, J.D. '89 was selected from an international audition to compose a chamber work that premiered at the Vienna Contemporary Composers Festival in June 2025. Ralph co-composed "Reunion of the Elements," a suite for multiple percussion, string quartet, and alto saxophone which was nominated for the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in music composition.

Mark Drews

B.S. '83 in Music Engineering Technology is an educator, audio engineer, and bassist entering his fourth decade as leader of Music Production & Recording (MPR) studies at

the University of Stavanger, Norway—a program he helped create on a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship in 1993 and 1994. To date, students from 50+ countries have graduated from the MPR program.

Frederic Glesser

M.M. '82 in Music Theory and Composition had four world premiere performances in October 2025 at the National Symphony Hall in Lviv, Ukraine. All four scores were composed between 2021 and 2024 and were performed by members of the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra.

Daniel Adams

M.M. '81 in Music Theory and Composition is retired from Texas Southern University after having served on the music faculty for 36 years. His article "Pitch, Rhythm, and Performance Technique as Formal Elements in Stephen Chatman's Quiet Exchange" was published in the fall 2024 Journal of the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors.

Carmen Lundy

B.M. '80 in Studio Jazz Vocal has been named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, the highest national honor for jazz musicians and advocates. A multi-faceted artist, vocalist, composer, and arranger, Lundy's five-decade career includes more than 150 published songs and a profound influence on modern jazz.

David Ruttenberg

B.S. '86 in Music Engineering Technology is a renowned cognitive neuroscientist and AI ethics specialist with a research focus on med-tech interventions for sensory processing, attentional regulation, anxiety, and fatigue. A holder of 10 patents, his work integrates clinical neuroscience with ethical AI frameworks to develop empirically validated assistive technologies.

Lewis Cleale

B.M. '89 in Vocal Performance played the roles of Joseph Smith/Mission President in "The Book of Mormon" on Broadway for over 14 years and more than 5,000 performances, more than any other actor still performing in their original principal role.

John Easterlin

B.M. '84 in Vocal Performance is a multi-GRAMMY and Emmy Award winner and a Guinness World Records holder (for performing the most magic tricks in an opera production) who has set the gold standard as an artist who combines world-class singing and acting.

Jim Papoulis

M.M. '82 in Choral Studies has made significant contributions to choral music by revitalizing the choral repertoire with songs whose roots are classical and world, with voicing that incorporates lead vocalists with choirs, vocal percussion, and world rhythms.

Steve Bailey

B.M. '84 in Studio Music and Jazz is a known bassist and educator, currently chair of the bass department at Berklee College of Music.

1990's

Albert Sterling Menendez

B.M. '90 in Instrumental Performance is keyboardist for Shakira. Albert has also worked with Huey Dunbar, Paulina Rubio, Jon Secada, and many others.

JT Kane

M.M. '97 in Instrumental Performance is the inaugural dean of instrumental studies and orchestral performance at the Manhattan School of Music. JT works closely with world-class faculty and guest artists to present annual masterclasses and partners with distinguished conductors to shape programming across MSM's large ensemble offerings.

David Cutler

D.M.A. '93 in Studio Music and Jazz, is a professor of music entrepreneurship and innovation at the University of South Carolina. He is the author of "The Savvy Musician 2.0: Amplifying Impact, Income, & Inspiration," the most comprehensive book to date on music entrepreneurship, innovation, and career models.

Ron Castonguay

B.M. '93 in Music Theory and Composition is the author of "Rhythmic Sight-Reading: The Tik-A Tee Method" and

founder and CEO of Ron Castonguay Music, LLC. An accomplished educator, conductor, composer, author, and performer, he currently serves as director of the arts and music director at the Frederick Gunn School in picturesque Washington, Conn.

Brendan Buckley

B.M. '96 in Instrumental Performance was named the pop category winner in Modern Drummer's 2025 Readers Poll.

John Warren

D.M.A. '99 is a professor of music and director of the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University, where he was director of choral activities for 20 years.

Raul Midón

B.M. '90 in Studio Music and Jazz is a contemporary singer-songwriter who has collaborated with such heroes as Herbie Hancock, Stevie Wonder, and Bill Withers, along with contributing to records by Queen Latifah and Snoop Dogg.

2000's

Stephen Danyew

B.M. '06 in Music Theory and Composition is a composer and conductor who continues his nearly 20-year collaboration with Chung Park, who conducted the premiere of Danyew's "In the Still Early Light." The composition was commissioned for the opening of the 2025 St. Olaf Christmas Festival, which attracted 9,000+ live concertgoers over three performances, one of which was broadcast live on Minnesota Public Radio.

Julia Mortyakova

D.M.A. '09 in Instrumental Performance is a pianist

who was awarded the 2026 Performing Artist Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission—a prestigious award that honors Mississippi artists who demonstrate the ability to create exemplary work in their chosen field. Dr. Mortyakova also received the 2025 Kossen Faculty Excellence Award from the Mississippi University for Women (The W), where she serves as professor and chair of the department of music.

Josephine Camacho

B.M. '01 in Media Scoring and Production, is director of bands at Osceola Creek Middle School in Palm Beach County, Fla. and a certified solo and ensemble brass judge with the Florida Bandmasters Association. She continues to perform on horn with local ensembles and writes and produces music, such as her song "Philanthropy," which teaches preschoolers about charitable giving and is featured by the Learning Experience during its annual collaboration with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Robert Phillips

D.M.A. '02 in Instrumental Performance retired from his positions as guitar instructor at the Lois Cowles Harrison Center for the Visual and Performing Arts and guitar professor at Southeastern University. Dr. Phillips, who has been composing solo music for classical guitar, is pleased to announce that he recently signed a publishing contract with the Danish music publishing house of Bergmann Edition.

Kevin Babuder

B.M. '01 in Media Scoring and Production has seen his arrangements and

orchestrations performed around the world. Last February he conducted the Wichita Symphony in a concert performance of "Remember When Rock Was Young," a tribute to the music of Elton John, which sold out the Century II concert hall.

Jessica Muñiz

B.M. '08 in Instrumental Performance is a consultant, composer/producer, percussionist, and assistant professor of music business at the University of North Texas. She was recently re-elected to the board of governors of the Recording Academy's Texas Chapter.

Federico Vindver

B.M. '08 in Studio Music and Jazz received 2025 Latin GRAMMYs for Producer of the Year, Best Pop Song, Best Alternative Song, and Best Alternative Album.

Raquel Sofia

B.M. '09 in Studio Music and Jazz was nominated for a 2025 Latin GRAMMY for Best Traditional Pop Album for "Después de los 30."

David Birrow

B.M. '05 in Music Education is an experienced percussionist, general music teacher, and published author. David has over 18 years teaching K-12 general music in both public and private schools as well as individual and group percussion instruction.

Tobin Sparfeld

D.M.A. '09 in Choral Conducting has taught at Glendale Community College since 2015. Tobin has also sung with many ensembles including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Seraphic Fire, and the St. Louis Children's Choirs, and under the batons of conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Franz

Welser-Möst, Helmuth Rilling, and Michael Tilson Thomas.

Julio Reyes Copello

M.M. '00 in Media Scoring and Production and multi-GRAMMY and Latin GRAMMY winning producer was nominated for Best Roots Song and Album of the Year at the 26th Latin GRAMMY Awards. In June 2025, he produced the Broadway musical album "Real Women Have Curves."

Andres Sandoval

M.A. '03 in Music Industry is the senior manager of Latin Music Strategic Partnerships & Business Development at Apple.

Armen Shaomian

M.M. '05, D.M.A. '08 in Keyboard Performance is an active concert pianist with an extensive background in performing arts, higher education, and entertainment management consulting. Armen is part of the faculty at the University of South Carolina.

Cristian Măcelaru

B.M. '03 in Instrumental Performance recently released a new album, devoted to the music of Elsa Barraine. The recording offers a much-needed presentation of a beautiful voice that contributes meaningfully to the complex musical identity of 20th-century France.

BriAnne Weaver

M.M. '07 in Music Therapy is a board-certified music therapist with over 15 years of clinical experience. Currently BriAnne is working at the Cadenza Center, integrating psychology and creative arts therapies for all ages.

2010's

Mateja Kalajian-Murphy

B.M. '15 in Instrumental Performance frequently substitutes for violinists in orchestras such as the South Florida Symphony and Symphony of the Americas. In 2025, she performed for two shows as part of the History That Doesn't Suck tour with Greg Jackson.

Kathryn Severing Fox

B.M. '13, M.M. '15 in Instrumental Performance recently released an album of original music entitled "Sweet Beginnings." As part of her Weary Ramblers duo, she and her duo mate were voted Best Group/Duo in the 2025 International Acoustic Music Awards, Americana Song of the Year from the 2025 Josie Music Awards, and Winners of the 2026 International Blues Challenge for Best Solo/Duo.

Carl DuPont

D.M.A. '14 in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy is an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins University Peabody Institute. He is co-author of "The Presence Principle: Embodying Executive Presence to Lead with Impact," a book that explores the essential qualities of leadership and offers practical strategies to enhance executive presence through authenticity.

Sandra Sanchez Adorno

M.M. '12, Ph.D. '17, received the Florida Music Education Association's 2025 College Music Educator of the Year Award. Additionally, she earned tenure at Florida International University, where she serves as an associate professor and area coordinator of music education.

Genevieve Burgess

B.M. '08, M.A. '11 in Music Industry, is currently the senior manager of the license management operations team at SoundExchange. Her team processes over \$1 billion in sound recording royalties yearly.

Nerissa Rebagay

B.M. '15 in Music Education and Music Therapy, and a current Ph.D. student, published an article in 2025 highlighting her music therapy program, Miami Jam Sessions, in the International Journal of Community Music. She also published her first book, "Q&A for Teaching Band to Students with Differences and Disabilities," with GIA Publications.

Kat Reinhert

M.M. '07 in Jazz Pedagogy, Ph.D. '18 in Music Education is a professor of songwriting at Berklee College of Music, and along with Dr. Sarah Gulish, she released a book with Oxford University Press entitled "How to Release Music: A Guide for Educators, Mentors and Artists." In October 2025 she released an EP entitled "Normal"—the first project in which she is the sole producer, arranger and artist.

Ksenija Komljenović

D.M.A. '18 in Instrumental Performance is a faculty member at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and was awarded the James L. and Blanche Bruton Barnhardt Professorship.

Tomás Cotik

D.M.A. '13 in Instrumental Performance is the 2025 winner of the American Prize for String Performance, Professional Division, Strings, selected

from applications reviewed nationwide. The American Prize is the nation's most comprehensive series of nonprofit competitions in the performing arts, recognizing outstanding performers, ensembles, composers, and directors across the United States.

Liana Pailodze Harron

D.M.A. '13 in Instrumental Performance has joined the University of Maryland, Baltimore County as an assistant professor of piano and has performed at prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the United Nations. Blending Georgian heritage with American spirit, Dr. Harron's work has been praised by Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Tim Page as "smashingly effective."

Leah Goldstein

B.M. '18 in Music Therapy is a board-certified music therapist and the founder of Chai Notes Music Therapy, a private practice serving the Miami-Dade community.

Eli Feingold

B.M. '18 in Jazz Instrumental Performance, M.M. '21 in Studio Jazz Writing is an award-winning composer, arranger, orchestrator, music editor, songwriter, producer, trombonist, and pianist based in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is this year's recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Johnny Mandel Prize.

Diana Ramírez Rosales

M.M. in Instrumental Performance is an accomplished professional violinist with broad orchestral experience internationally, recently playing violin during the NFL's Super Bowl Halftime Show.

Kevin Forte

B.M. '18 in Music Business and Entertainment is the product manager for the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation Scholarship.

Brian Oliver

J.D./M.M. '15 is the general counsel, director of legal and business affairs, and chief government and public affairs strategist at Rolling Loud Festival.

Stephanie Epstein

M.M. '14 in Music Therapy is the owner of Harmonic Health Music Therapy with a mission to make evidence-based music therapy accessible to medically fragile and neurodiverse children across South Florida, using music as a pathway to connection, growth, and hope.

Ashley Pezzotti

B.M. '18 in Studio Jazz Vocal is the adjunct professor of jazz vocal at Florida International University and a rising star in the New York jazz scene, blending the elegance, rhythmic sophistication, and infectious joy of the great jazz vocalists who came before her.

Carter Vail

B.S. '19 in Music Engineering Technology and Creative American Music Program toured alongside Yung Gravy on the "Grits & Gravy" tour and has sold out his own headlining shows across North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom.

Stephanía Martínez

B.S. '13 in Music Engineering Technology, developed her skills not only as a songwriter and vocalist but also behind the scenes as an engineer and producer. Drawing from pop, Latin, and urban influences, she creates songs that are

rhythmically light, melodically direct, and grounded in personal storytelling shaped by migration and cultural crossover.

Kimberly Ganong

D.M.A. '16 in Instrumental Performance is oboe and English horn player and current music professor at Boise State University.

Theodore Schaper

M.A. '17 in Live Entertainment Management is a touring musician and proud owner of an independent music venue called Deep Dive in Ithaca, N.Y.

Christine Jobson

D.M.A. '19 in Vocal Performance & Pedagogy is a Jamaican American soprano who has performed in Spain, Portugal, Austria, Russia, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and throughout the United States.

Joseph Franco

B.M. '15 in Music Education is a teacher, composer, pianist, and the director of orchestras and choirs at Edgewood Jr./Sr. High School in Merritt Island, Fla.

Matthew Evan Taylor

M.M. '11, D.M.A. '15 in Music Theory and Composition serves as an assistant professor of composition at the University of California, Berkeley.

Sara Cowley

B.M. '09 in Music Business and Entertainment, M.M. '12 in Music Education, is a passionate and collaborative conductor committed to musical excellence, inclusive artistry, and community engagement. She currently serves as assistant director

of the South Florida Pride Bands, where she helps lead one of the nation's premier LGBTQ+ community music organizations.

John Farrey

B.S. '12 in Music Business and Entertainment is the senior label relations manager—dance and electronic lead at Amazon Music.

Marlén Rodriguez-Wolfe

M.M. '15 in Music Therapy is the Co-Founder/COO of We The Panda, where she builds a music-driven platform that harnesses the power of music for healing, creativity, and connection. We The Panda is reimagining artist development and music industry culture by centering on wellness, inclusion, and the transformative potential of sound.

2020's

Max Schwartz

B.M. '21, M.M. '22 in Studio Music and Jazz is a session and performing musician who has appeared on NBC's The Voice playing banjo alongside Kelsea Ballerini, and on Apple TV's Palm Royale, Season 2 playing bass. He teaches a free, community guitar class through the Pico Union Project, a 501(c)(3) housed in the oldest synagogue in L.A.

Michael Dudley Jr.

M.M. '18, D.M.A. '22 in Jazz Instrumental Performance can be heard as a lead trumpet player on multiple GRAMMY-winning recordings by the John Daversa Big Band and the Brian Lynch Big Band in addition to their self-produced single ("Another Star") featuring vocalist Makayla Forgione and saxophonist Melvin Butler.

Dr. Dudley was named the 2025 recipient of the inaugural ASCAP Foundation Johnny Mandel Prize for Early-Career Arrangers.

Margaret Flood

Ph.D. '21 in Music Education is an assistant professor of music and coordinator of music education at Florida Southern College and the president-elect of the Florida College Music Education Association. Dr. Flood founded two immersive, ongoing student study abroad collaborative experiences for music and arts students: the first is an exchange program with Mozarteum University in Innsbruck; the second brought music and art students to the Netherlands, working with renowned art curator and music advocate, Willem Hoogsteder.

Roy McLerran

M.M. '22, D.M.A. '25 in Conducting Instrumental Performance, has earned a tenure-track position as the director of bands at the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania at Mansfield, where his courses include Wind Ensemble, Marching Band, and Instrumental Music in the Schools. He has been invited to present at the 2026 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association and the Eastern Regional College Band Directors National Association conferences.

Tina Beveridge

Ph.D. '22 in Music Education is an assistant professor and director of undergraduate music education at George Mason University where she also serves as the faculty advisor for George Mason's National Association for Music Education chapter. She recently published her

dissertation in the Journal of Historical Research in Music Education on tax policy and music education in Portland, Ore., as well as a study on music instruction in Miami-Dade County comparing access and course offerings between charter and public schools.

Marina McLerran

M.M. '21, Ph.D. '24 in Music Education has earned a tenure-track position at Towson University, had two articles accepted by the Music Educators Journal, and presented her research at the Maryland Music Educators Association and the Society for Music Teacher Education. Marina has been appointed as the research chair for MMEA and was awarded an AI teaching fellowship from Towson for the 2025-26 school year.

Colin Williams

D.M.A. '22 in Instrumental Performance is the associate professor of percussion at Florida International University.

Giulia Ripani

Ph.D. '25 in Music Education is the assistant professor of music and music education in the Department of Arts & Humanities at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Asher Lurie

B.M. '25 in Music Theory and Composition started his master's program at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University on full scholarship this fall, one of just three students accepted out of approximately 200 applicants.

Samantha Kopec

B.M. '25 in Music Industry was the Overall Outstanding Senior and the Outstanding Senior for her program while also minor-

ing in business law and communications. She is currently studying at Brooklyn Law School.

Isadora Figueroa

B.M. '22 in Music Industry with a minor in songwriting, was nominated for Best New Artist at the 2025 Latin GRAMMYs.

Anisha Saikia

M.A. '23 in Music Industry is the specialist in artist rights management at SoundExchange.

Emilee LaRose

B.M. '23 in Music Therapy is a licensed and board-certified music therapist serving senior adults in the Washington, D.C. area. Recently, in addition to singing the National Anthem for the Washington Nationals, she accepted a position as director of creative arts therapies at the Kensington in Bethesda where she will establish and oversee in-house music therapy and brain health programs.

Valeria Osuna Yrizar

M.A. '23 in Live Entertainment Management is a violist, vocalist, songwriter, and live entertainment producer who recently performed with the GRAMMY-nominated artist Yandel. In addition to working with the Ruben Blades Orchestra, fellow alumna Melanie Ferrabone, and Maestro Javier Mendoza, Valeria serves as a principal violist and section leader for various orchestras such as the Millennial Choirs and Orchestras, the Flower Mound Symphony Orchestra, and most recently with the international artist Kygo.

Aron Stornaiuolo

B.M. '25 in Media Scoring and Production with a principal in Jazz Voice,

has been named a DSCVR Artist To Watch. Now in its twelfth year, the list is a hand-picked, highly curated selection of global artists that Vevo, the world's leading music video network, has tapped to break through to the mainstream.

Gianna Milan

B.M. '23 in Instrumental Performance, is an arts professional based in Washington, D.C. She most recently managed the Washington Musical Pathways Initiative, an enrichment program for talented high school student-musicians of color.

Ben Afferton

B.M. '23 in Music Industry is an artist resolutions specialist in Washington, D.C. He also plays bassoon in the Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra.

Claire Geho

B.M. '20 in Instrumental Performance, was appointed Rotating Tutti Violin in the Auckland Philharmonia in September 2025.

Marcello Carelli

B.M. '21 in Studio Music and Jazz is a drummer, composer, and bandleader who released his second album, "First Impressions" on the Cellar Music record label on June 13, 2025.

Kevin Bryson

D.M.A. '24 in Studio Music and Jazz is director of jazz studies and an assistant professor of music at the University of Arkansas at Monticello.

Maria Quintanilla

D.M.A. '25 in Jazz Vocal Performance has joined the Frost School of Music's studio music and jazz faculty as a lecturer in jazz vocal.

Jameson Falconer

B.M. '25 in Studio Jazz

Vocal won third place in the international 2025 Ella Fitzgerald Jazz Voice Competition.

Natalie Colegrove

B.M. '25 in Instrumental Performance was named the program's Outstanding Undergraduate, the 2025 Concert Artists Guild Competition semi-finalist, and the 2024 Yamaha Young Performing Artist, celebrated for her rich, resonant sound and sensitive lyrical playing.

Mason Soria

M.M. '22 in Instrumental Performance recently participated in the U.S. Army Band Tuba Euphonium Workshop and had the honor of performing as a soloist with the U.S. Army Pershing's Own Orchestra and Band.

Ryan Baker

B.S. '24 in Music Engineering and Technology is an avid musician skilled on electric bass, upright bass, guitar, mandolin, banjo, and lap steel. In 2025, he was the AES MATLAB Hackathon gold prize winner, where in 28 hours he developed a VST in MATLAB that helps podcasters achieve professional sound quality while removing background noise.

Niaz Ellie

B.M. '22 in Music Industry is the SiriusXM music programming coordinator, helping execute a seamless 24/7 listening experience on six channels including two partner channels: Life with John Mayer and Unwell Music.

Seongwoo Jeong

D.M.A. '25 in Instrumental Performance was part of a jury of 11 distinguished professors and artists at the Concert Star International

Classical Music Competition, held at Carnegie Hall in New York. In addition to serving on the jury, he performed on viola in the Judges' Showcase Concert.

Alberto Bade

D.M.A. '25 in Instrumental Conducting received a Suncoast Regional Emmy for his hosting role on MDC-TV's "Video Game Concert 2025," which received the award for Special Event Coverage.

Carlitos López

D.M.A. '23 in Instrumental Conducting won a Suncoast Regional Emmy for Audio Live or Post-Production for the Palm Beach Symphony's production of "The Carnival of MORE Animals."



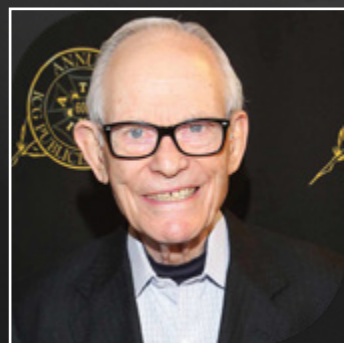
REMEMERING THOSE WE HAVE LOST



Allan Herbert, a major longtime benefactor to the Frost School of Music and the University of Miami, passed away on May 11, 2025, at the age of 89. A former member of the Frost School's Dean's Advisory Committee as well as the University's Board of Trustees, Herbert's life was entwined with the institution where he earned a bachelor's, a master's, and, at age 88, a doctorate in business. A successful hotelier, accountant, and entrepreneur, Herbert met his wife Patti McBride on campus in 1954, and the couple gave over \$100 million to many of the University's schools and programs. Their gifts included \$1 million for the Frost School's summer opera program in 2017, which was renamed the Patti and Allan Herbert Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg. After Patti Herbert passed away in 2020, Allan Herbert pledged \$1 million to the capital campaign for the Knight Center for Music Innovation, where the second-floor lobby was named the Patti and Allan Herbert Promenade in the couple's honor.



Carolyn Beatrice Stanford Adams, a professor emeritus of voice, celebrated mezzo-soprano, and esteemed educator, died peacefully on June 15, 2025 at age 96. Adams joined the Frost School of Music faculty as an associate professor in 1978 and left as a full professor in 1994. During her time at the Frost School, she chaired the Department of Vocal Performance and was the founder and director of the Musical Theater program. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Adams toured internationally and sang with the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera Mini Met, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and many other renowned institutions.



Alan Bergman, who, along with his wife Marilyn Bergman, penned some of the 20th century's most enduring songs, including the iconic "The Way We Were," passed away at age 99 on July 17, 2025. The Bergmans won three Oscars, four Emmys, two GRAMMYS, and were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Marilyn died in 2022 at age 93. Bergman's passing was a blow to Frost School dean Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg, who was close to the couple. "Through their timeless lyrics, Alan and Marilyn Bergman found a way, over and over again, to express the deepest crevices of human experience," said Berg.



Donald Oglesby, Professor Emeritus Donald Oglesby passed away April 19, 2025 at age 77 from complications related to Alzheimer's. He joined the Frost School's faculty in 1977 as a choral director. An expert in Baroque and early music, he served as the long-time artistic director and conductor of the choir for the Miami Bach Society and director of choral music at the historic Plymouth Congregational Church in Coconut Grove. Oglesby held a bachelor's in music from Birmingham-Southern College, a master's in musicology from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in music from Indiana University.

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Instrumental Performance

Conducting and Chamber Music

Jennifer Grim (Chair)
 Bassoon – Gabriel Beavers
 Cello
 Ross Harbaugh
 Clarinet
 Margaret Donaghue, Woodwind Coordinator
 Mark Nuccio
 Conducting
 Michael Hancock, Director of Bands, Frost Wind Ensemble
 Craig McKenzie
 Sheldon McLean
 Gerard Schwarz, Frost Symphony Orchestra
 Double Bass – Brian Powell
 French Horn – Richard Todd, Brass Coordinator
 Flute – Jennifer Grim
 Guitar - Rafael Padron
 Harp – Anna Kate Mackle
 Oboe – Robert Weiner
 Percussion
 Svetoslav Stoyanov – Percussion Coordinator
 Pablo Rieppi
 Leonardo Soto
 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

Naoko Takao (Chair)
 Kevin Kenner
 Santiago Rodriguez
 Tian Ying
 Oleksii Ivanchenko - Collaborative Piano
 Ana Ivanchenko - Keyboard Studies Coordinator
 Inesa Gegprifti
 Keyboard Performance and Pedagogy - Naoko Takao, Program Director

Media Scoring and Production

Carlos Rafael Rivera (Chair)
 Randall Barlow - Undergraduate Program Director
 Pauly German Torres
 Camilo Rodriguez - Graduate Program Director

Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship

(Bruce Hornsby Creative American Music minor)

Daniel C. Strange (Chair)
 Bass - Martin Quinn
 Contemporary Media – Susie Green
 Drums – Steve Rucker
 John Yarling
 Guitar - Brian Russell
 Mitch Farber

Keyboards

Daniel Strange, American Music Ensemble
 Sean Trent Fournier

Songwriting

Craig Carothers
 Reynaldo Sanchez

Voice

Raina Murnak – Popular Voice Coordinator
 Roxanna 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
 Susie Green
 Dana Salminen
 Dave Poler
 Vicente Martinez

Music Industry

Live Entertainment Management

Serona Elton (Chair)
 Olga Cardona
 Guillermo Page
 John Redmond
 Reynaldo Sanchez
 Matt Buser
 Gary Wood – Live Entertainment Management Program Director

Music Theory and Composition

Charles Mason – Chair
 Juan Chattah
 Shawn Crouch – Experiential Music Curriculum
 Dorothy Hindman
 Juraj Kojs
 Lansing McLoskey
 D. Scott Stinson
 Dwight Banks
 Catalina von Wrangell
 Samuel Brooks
 Connor Federick
 Karen Lord-Powell
 David Mendoza
 Matteo Magarotto
 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
 Nicole Bartholomew
 Ana Ivanchenko
 Nicole Yarling

Studio Music and Jazz

John Daversa – Chair, Frost Jazz Orchestra
 Martin Bejerano – Jazz Piano Coordinator
 Charles Bergeron – Jazz Bass Coordinator, Jazz Pedagogy Program Director
 Etienne Charles – Studio Jazz Band, Jazz Trumpet
 Tal Cohen – Jazz Theory, Jazz Piano
 Stephen Guerra – Studio Jazz Writing Program Director
 John Hart – Jazz Guitar Coordinator
 Dante Luciani – Instrumental Area Coordinator
 Brian Lynch – Jazz Trumpet Coordinator
 Maria Alejandra Quintanilla – Jazz Vocal Program
 Kate Reid – Jazz Voice Program Director
 Gonzalo Rubalcaba – Jazz Piano
 Marcus Strickland – Jazz Saxophone Coordinator
 David Anderson – Ensemble Coach (adjunct)
 Brandon Lee Lewis – Jazz Drums (adjunct)
 Avery Linderman – Guitar Ensemble Coach (adjunct)
 John Yarling – Jazz Drums and Ensemble Coach (adjunct)

Vocal Performance

Frank Ragsdale (Chair)
 Choral Activities and Conducting
 Matthew Brady – Director of Choral Activities

Anita Castiglione – Accompanist
 Carol Kaminsky – Dance Program Coordinator

Letty Bassart
 Marisol Blanco
 Petagay Letren
 Christina Leyva
 Christine Mazeppa
 Jorge Morejon
 Sarah Nachbauer
 Rebecca Russ
 Andrea Sandahl

Frost Opera Theater
 Alan Johnson – Opera Theater Director
 Jeffrey Buchman – Stage Director

Voice

Alexandra Colaizzi
 Kim Josephson
 Sandra Lopez-Neill
 Frank Ragsdale
 Robynne Redmond
 Jeanette Thompson
 Jenny Snyder – Coaching

Henry Mancini Institute

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

Frost Online

Master of Arts in Music Industry Online (incl. Certificates)

Serona Elton (Chair & Program Director)
 Guillermo Page
 John Redmond
 Reynaldo Sanchez
 Michael DeMarco

Master of Arts in Live Entertainment Management Online (incl. Certificates)

Gary Wood (Program Director)
 Guillermo Page
 Michael DeMarco

Master of Arts in Popular Music Pedagogy Online

Raina Murnak (Program Director)
 Daniel Strange (Chair)
 Scott Flavin
 Stephen Gleason
 Corin Overland
 Marysol Quevedo
 Brian Russell
 Steven Rucker

Master of Music in Media Scoring and Production Online

Carlos Rafael Rivera (Chair)
 Camilo Rodriguez (Program Director)
 Reynaldo Sanchez
 Randall Barlow
 Pauly German Torres
 Simon Villareal
 Ray Kim
 Gonzalo Mejia

Artist Development (Online Certificate)

Gary Wood
 Gonzalo Mejia
 Raina Murnak
 Scott Flavin
 Kathy Acosta Zavala

Online Micro-Credentials

Shannon de l’Etoile (Music Therapy)
 Teresa Lesiuk (Music Therapy)
 Chuck Mason (Music Theory - Classical)
 Raina Murnak (Music Theory, Audition Prep - Contemporary)
 Stephen Gleason (Music Production)
 Cassandra Claude (Artist Development)
 Matteo Magarotto (Academic Writing)



Roxana Amed

Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship lecturer, was honored with a Konex Awards mention as one of the 5 Best Jazz Solo Artists of the Decade (2015–2025).



Scott Flavin

Senior lecturer in violin performance and violon conductor for the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, was concertmaster for Andrea Bocelli in a sold out (15,000 people) performance at the Kaseya Center in Miami, Fla.



Kevin Kenner

Professor of keyboard performance and world-renowned pianist, performed “Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2” with the Palm Beach Symphony, conducted by Maestro Gerard Schwarz.



Brian Powell

Associate professor of double bass, arranged Stravinsky’s “Pulcinella” for double bass, and recorded and released an album of Stravinsky’s music, “Suite Italienne for Double Bass and Piano.”



Daniel Strange

Chair of the Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship program and assistant professor of contemporary keyboard, was named a 2025 Yamaha Performing Artist.



Matthew Buser

Lecturer in the Music Industry program as well as an attorney and accomplished singer and musician, was selected by his peers as a Super Lawyers Rising Star for the third consecutive year.



Jennifer Grim

Chair of the Instrumental Performance department, was chosen as the president of the National Flute Association, the world’s largest organization for a single instrument.



Teresa Lesiuk

Chair of the Music Therapy department, is a co-principal investigator along with Frank Penedo, Ph.D. (PI) on an NIH grant to study Mindfulness-based Music Therapy for Patients with Allogeneic Stem Cell Transplant.



Dafnis Prieto

Associate professor of jazz percussion, performed with his Sí o Sí Quartet at the 50th Anniversary of the Percussive Arts Society, dedicated to educating and supporting percussionists and drummers.



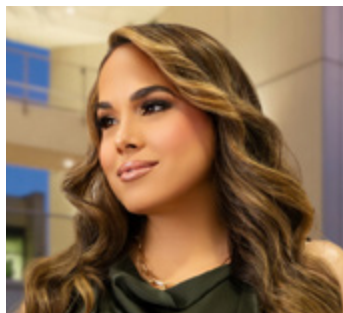
Aaron Tindall

Professor of tuba and euphonium and acting principal tubist for the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, toured in Asia with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel.



Tom Collins

Associate professor of music engineering technology, along with assistant professor Raina Murnak, led a group of students who placed among the top 10 global finalists for the AI Song Contest in the Netherlands.



Stephanie Hernandez

Director of Marketing and Communications was nominated by the American Marketing Association for their “Emerging Marketer in Higher Education” award, a national nod for executing Great Schools and Colleges initiatives.



Mark Lomanno

Assistant professor of musicology, celebrated the release of “The Improvisor’s Classroom,” which he co-edited. Published by Temple University Press, it looks at improvisation as a powerful tool for teaching, learning, fostering community, and creativity.



Yani Rubio

Assistant professor of music therapy, co-presented the first professional development workshop for the Music Therapy department to gain an in-depth understanding of Musical Sensory Orientation Training, a neurologic music therapy technique.



Tian Ying

Associate professor of keyboard performance served on the jury for the Fou Ts’ong International Concerto Competition, organized by the Foundation for Chinese Performing Arts.

2025 FROST STAR AWARDS



Carlos Abril



Craig Mckenzie



Raina Murnak



Federico Musgrove



Hildee Wilson

Carlos Abril, professor of music education and associate dean of research; Craig Mckenzie, associate director of bands and director of athletic bands; Raina Murnak, assistant professor of Modern Artist Development and Entrepreneurship and studio director of contemporary voice; Federico Musgrove Stetson, director of music operations; and Hildee Wilson, executive manager in the office of the dean; received the 2025 Frost Star Awards.

The Frost Star Awards are given annually to recognize faculty and staff for their exceptional work, dedication, and service.

A LASTING LEGACY

With deep gratitude we recognize the supporters during Dean Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg's tenure whose gifts have supported, invested, and shaped the future of music leaving a lasting legacy.



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Photo by Gabriela Gabriela.

A jazz educator for the ages

DownBeat magazine, the world's premier monthly jazz publication, has inducted Frost School of Music Dean Shelton G. "Shelly" Berg into its Jazz Education Hall of Fame. The honor reflects Berg's impact on jazz music education, including his nearly two decades leading the Frost School of Music.

DownBeat highlighted the accolade in a November profile, which related how Berg's first teaching experience came as a teaching assistant in music theory while earning a master's in piano performance at the University of Houston. "After being a TA," he told DownBeat, "I knew how much I loved to teach, because you can see when those light bulbs go off that you're changing people's lives."

Berg taught at San Jacinto College in Houston for 10 years, followed by 16 years at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, and ultimately the Frost School of Music, which recruited him in 2007. His former piano students include contemporary jazz innovators Gerald Clayton, Taylor Eigsti, and Frost

School alumnus Emmet Cohen, who has featured Berg on his popular online and in person concert series "Live From Emmet's Place."

The DownBeat article highlighted a 1999 profile in the Los Angeles Times citing Berg as among their "Educators for the Millennium." Over the years, Berg has also been honored by the Los Angeles Jazz Society, Ronald McDonald House, the International Association of Jazz Educators, and with a DownBeat Jazz Education Achievement Award in 2011. Additionally, he has recorded five studio albums under his own name and garnered six GRAMMY nominations as a composer, producer, and/or arranger.

The DownBeat recognition comes as Berg prepares to retire from the Frost School and devote himself to music full-time. Working in music education has been profoundly rewarding, he told DownBeat. "I could not possibly have had a more fulfilled life," he said.



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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**
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

“That’s why we’re in this game. So that 20 years from now a student says, ‘you did this, or you said this, or you taught me this, and it changed my life.’ That’s why we do what we do. And that’s what I’ll miss the most.”

SHELTON G. "SHELLY" BERG
DEAN, PATRICIA L. FROST PROFESSOR