

FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC

University of Miami • Spring 2021

# SCORE

INSIDE:

**Positive Perseverance**

**Jazz Changes**

**Peak Performance**

## Stronger Together

Rising above a pandemic of epic proportions,  
the Frost community forges a bright path forward.

## Message from the Dean

**Resilient** and **Brilliant**. Those two words perfectly describe Frost School of Music students, alumni, faculty, administration, and staff in a normal year as they fulfill their personal goals and professional challenges. We all know the music profession requires both of those traits, and Frost musicians are consummate examples of each.

This year, after witnessing first-hand our entire Frost music family push through the isolation that ensued after the global spread of the COVID-19 virus, as well as the pandemic's devastating economic impact to musicians of all genres who suddenly found themselves holding handfuls of cancelled contracts, I'm adding another descriptor: **Inspiring**.

**Inspiring Frost Faculty:** Instead of teaching or performing at summer festivals, or diving into their professional research, our 120 inspiring faculty readied themselves over the summer months to return in the fall to teach in person when the virus was

still rampant, and learn to teach in new online/hybrid situations. I was so proud to be among them this year, to see their intense dedication while teaching through cumbersome face masks, when other institutions simply closed their doors and went to an online setting only. Our students grew, and grew, and grew, thanks to you.

**Inspiring Frost Students:** the ultimate heroes this year, who put their fellow Frost musicians first-and-foremost by honoring the intensive health protocols on campus to keep each other safe. Because our music students followed the University of Miami's guidelines so well, the Frost School had no transmission of the COVID-19 virus in any of its classrooms or concert halls, and had the lowest percentage of University of Miami students to contract the disease off campus. That is a stunning statement; I am so proud.

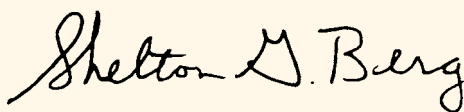
**Inspiring Frost Alumni:** Who, despite a tremendous reduction in their own earnings after the abrupt cancellation of concerts and other professional engagements, not only reinvented

themselves to learn how to more widely share their artistry online, but also performed--time and again--for virtual fund-raisers to help others in the global community that were in need.

**Inspiring Frost Administration and Staff:** I can't say enough about the Herculean efforts of our great Frost management team, from our compassionate associate deans to our incredible executive directors, to our talented video and audio recording personnel and department assistants. You implemented every health and safety protocol with efficiency and grace, and innovated new ways of utilizing our facilities that will shape our efforts going forward.

When the 2020-21 academic year started, my sole focus was on creating experiences for our students that would help them remember this college year as one filled with learning new skills, meaningful music-making, camaraderie, and networking for the future. Through our production of Frost Music Fest '21 and a regular season of concerts by the Frost Symphony Orchestra, Frost Wind Ensemble, Frost Concert Jazz Band and hundreds of chamber music and contemporary ensemble performances, I can truly say that we achieved greatness.

Warmly,



Shelton G. Berg  
Dean, Frost School of Music  
Patricia L. Frost Professor of Music

## FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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### Front Cover

Student Nyla Smith performs at Frost Music Fest '21, wearing a hygienic face mask per University of Miami COVID-19 pandemic health and safety protocols for all on campus. Photography by Jenny Abreu; cover design by Spark It Communications.

Some photographs included in this issue of Score magazine were taken prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Spring 2021

# contents

## FEATURES

### 22 Positive Perseverance

Talented students overcome obstacles during the sudden COVID-19 global pandemic, and discover new ways of connecting with audiences, and each other, with originality, technology, and tenacity.

### 28 Peak Performance

Faculty at the Frost School of Music develop a new school-wide strategic plan with forward-thinking goals to prepare students with the breadth of musical and entrepreneurial skills needed for tomorrow's music profession.

### 32 Jazz Changes

A diverse new generation of master musicians joins the Department of Studio Music and Jazz, ushering in an exciting new era to strengthen Frost's community and cultural connections.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 2 FROST NEWS

Strategic Plan ✦ Governance and Operations ✦ Progress During the Pandemic ✦ Frost Band of the Hour ✦ Friday Nights@Frost ✦ Hire a Frost Musician ✦ New Podcast ✦ Rooting Out Biases ✦ Protest Music ✦ Alicia Hall Moran ✦ Professor Don Coffman ✦ New MAT Degree ✦ Media Writing Successes ✦ Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards ✦ DownBeat Student Awards ✦ Student Song Goes Viral ✦ Stamps Brass Quintet Class 2024 ✦ JAS Academy Expands ✦ Frost School at Festival Napa Valley ✦ Art Inspires Composers ✦ Doctors and Musicians ✦ Tinker Grants ✦ Viola Researcher

### 16 GUEST ARTISTS

Frost Music Fest '21 ✦ Renée Fleming ✦ Frost Symphony Orchestra ✦ John Splithoff ✦ Travis Quinn Memorial Fund ✦ Thalea String Quartet ✦ *Nurse Heroes Live* with Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, Andrea Bocelli, Celine Dion, Gloria Estefan, Emily Estefan, David Foster, Josh Groban, Carole King, Katharine McPhee, Leslie Odom Jr., Stevie Wonder ✦ Tania Léon ✦ Mark Katz ✦ Mnozil Brass Quintet

### 20 STUDENT STARS

Flutist Wins NFA Competition ✦ Compassionate Commencement Speaker ✦ Tuba Artists Win High Honors ✦ Stamps Scholar

### 38 FACULTY UPDATES

Welcoming New Faculty ✦ John Daversa Receives Phillip Frost Teaching Award ✦ Gary Keller Retires ✦ Faculty Highlights

### 41 FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Raina Murnak, Teaching from the Inside Out

### 42 CLASS NOTES

Alumni updates and accomplishments ✦ Distinguished Alumnus Jorge Mejia ✦ Kendall Grady Research in Easter Island ✦ Karen Kennedy Tribute ✦ In Memoriam

### 50 FROST SUPPORTERS

Frost School of Music thanks its donors

### 51 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meet the dean's advisors

### 52 MUSICAL MEMORIES



22



28



32



## Innovation and Achievement Assessed through Strategic Plan



THE FROST SCHOOL is renowned for its innovative academic programs, stellar faculty, alumni, and students.

With over 800 music majors, 90 full-time faculty, 34 part-time faculty, 33 professional staff, and multiple concert venues presenting hundreds of events in an average year, it is an exciting community with complex programmatic, logistics, and facilities challenges.

Through the efforts of seven special faculty task forces, Frost has unveiled a new five-year Strategic Plan that aligns with the University of Miami's Roadmap for a New Century. It was unanimously approved by the Faculty School Council and administration in the fall.

The plan has seven clearly defined strategic goals:

1. Building on our well-established artistic and academic excellence, we will enhance our quality and innovation in teaching and learning while strengthening our position in preparing musicians for today's world and beyond.
2. Strengthen our financial position
3. Achieve administrative excellence
4. Optimize physical infrastructure
5. Engender a culture of belonging
6. Cultivate interdisciplinary potential of music
7. Promote music innovation in the hemisphere

This issue of *Score* illustrates progress on the dynamic student-centric plan and assessment implementation. ||

## Generous Gift Boosts Strategic Plan

A \$1.4 MILLION gift from an anonymous donor was received during the fall to embolden a rapid-speed implementation of the Frost School of Music's Strategic Plan.

The timing of the gift was particularly welcome, as operational budgets were cut deeply and a hiring freeze was implemented across the University for the 2020-21 academic year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The major cash donation enabled the Frost School to move forward and

quickly purchase new digital recording, lighting, video, and audio technology for classrooms and concert halls; hire production staff that in turn trained faculty and students to use the new technology; ramp up innovative pedagogical practices; envision and test new teaching protocols; and implement faculty assessment procedures as new resources were brought on board. The upgrades also helped Admissions and Marketing teams film and edit new YouTube and website videos for prospective students.

The Frost School gratefully acknowledges its anonymous donor for this highly impactful gift. ||



## Governance and Operational Growth

IN TANDEM with its ambitious strategic planning goals, the Frost School of Music is analyzing and optimizing administrative processes that are identified for improvement. Curricular efficiency is also being improved by identifying and eliminating redundancies.

Governance of the Frost School begins with an Executive Council (EC) that leads the school on a day-to-day basis. It is comprised of the dean of music, five associate deans, and four executive directors for Admissions, Business Affairs, Marketing, and Development. New this year: the chair of a faculty-elected School Council is also a member of the EC, along with a rotating faculty member each semester.

The EC collaborates and meets with the School Council, Department Chairs and the full Faculty, plus a Performance Committee, ad hoc curricular committees, and the professional staff. They also receive input from Faculty Senate members, the Student Council, and advisory committees for Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, and School Culture, Equity, and Diversity.

The dean's responsibilities are to inspire excellence, lead the organization, hire and strategize with faculty, oversee the budget, liaison with University officials and other institutions of higher music education, interface with the music industry and alumni, and engage with the community and donors. Shelly Berg, dean of the Frost School of Music, reports to Jeffrey Duerk, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Miami. The dean also interfaces

with University President Julio Frenk, the University of Miami Board of Trustees, an Advisory Board and Academic Review Committee. He also serves on the Academic Deans Policy Council.

Associate Dean for Administration Serona Elton, M.M. '95, supervises faculty loads, course scheduling, facilities management, and this year the COVID-19 safety guidelines; Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Shannon de l'Etoile administers master's and doctoral programs; Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies Steven Moore oversees Admissions and the Undergraduate Review Committee; Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives Reynaldo Sanchez, B.M. '80, M.M. '82, develops academic-business partnerships; and Associate Dean for Research Carlos Abril, B.M. '93, advances scholarship.

There are three Faculty Senators: Dorothy Hindman, B.M. '88, D.M.A. '94; Brian Lynch; Richard Todd; and one alternate Jennifer Grim. Members of the Faculty School Council are: Stephen Zdzinski, speaker; Craig Morris, vice-speaker; Martin Bejerano, M.M. '98; Juan Chattah; Will Pirkle, B.M. '89; M.S.E.E. '91; Marysol Quevedo; Robynne Redmon; and Tian Ying.

Department chairs are appointed by the dean and are listed in the back of this issue of *Score* magazine. ||



## Goal to Raise \$100 million by 100th Anniversary

FUNDRAISING is an essential endeavor at the Frost School as it launches its strategic plan, updates facilities with new technology capabilities, funds new music scholarships, and provides faculty and programmatic support.

With a bold capital campaign goal to raise \$100 million by the school's 100th anniversary in 2025, fundraising is on an upward trajectory: 40% of that target has been raised in the past four years.

Recent estate gifts include over \$750,000 from H. David Garrity and \$250,000 from Richard E. Henning. The Stamps Family Charitable Foundation renewed its substantial support for the Stamps Music Scholars



program, and alumna Sally K. Albrecht, M.A. '77, M.M. '79 made a \$250,000 planned gift.

In memoriam gifts were also received: a Travis Quinn Scholarship Endowment honors a Frost Band of the Hour member, and a Gregory Cardi Memorial Scholarship Endowment honors a graduate conducting student who passed away in July.

Many other generous donors are gratefully acknowledged at the end of this issue of *Score*.

Those interested in making a major gift or pledge to support the Frost School are invited to contact Dean Shelly Berg at sberg@miami.edu or Executive Director for Development Dania Gorris at dgorris@miami.edu. ||



## Positive Progress Despite Pandemic

COVID-19, a highly contagious virus that has claimed over 3 million lives worldwide to date, made its Miami debut last March. Based on safety guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and public health experts including University of Miami's President Julio Frenk, the University closed its campuses and transitioned to online-only instruction for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. Extensive public health safety protocols were implemented over the summer months enabling in-person and hybrid classes to resume in the fall following procedures outlined by the University of Miami's COVID-19 Task Force.

everyone had to play their part in making this a success," says Associate Dean for Administration Serona Elton, M.M. '95, who praised how students excelled given the difficulties. "From changing their performance styles, to even changing the way they practice, there really isn't a single thing that they do that hasn't been impacted," says Elton. "I applaud how everyone has been able to adapt and do the things they love in really meaningful ways. It truly shows the spirit of Frost."

Kyle Elgarten, a graduate teaching assistant and orchestra conducting master's student said it was amazing just to get back to rehearsing together for the first time—outside in a tent, socially distanced. "We all live and breathe music, and a part of you is gone when you lose that. So, being able to be together in a safe way and sharing it with a small audience was surreal," Elgarten says.

Pandemic protocols for Frost concerts limit the number of performers and audience members. All are at least six feet apart and required to wear a mask. Performers bring their own stands, folders, and music. There are specific times when people are permitted to enter and exit a venue in order to avoid any kind of congregating.

Fortunately, livestreaming was scheduled for enhancement this year with multiple new robotic cameras in both Gusman Concert Hall and Clarke Recital Hall and made possible by a major gift to the Frost School's Strategic Plan. "This caliber of technology will definitely be beneficial and will stay with us after the pandemic," says Gerard Schwarz, distinguished professor of music, conducting, and orchestral studies and music director of the Frost Symphony Orchestra. "It's been an enhancement that aides us in showcasing what we do to the world," Schwarz says. ||

## Frost Band of the Hour Marches to a New Cadence

SCHOOL SPIRIT was alive and well amid the COVID-19 pandemic as the Frost Band of the Hour discovered new ways to support the Miami Hurricanes' football season. The band recorded new content for jumbo screen replay at Hard Rock Stadium, and played live at socially distanced campus pep rallies.

"Bringing the band back mattered...it was important to the morale of our campus community," says Director of Athletic Bands Jay Rees who along with health experts spent the summer months prior examining the effects of respiratory droplets, aerosol transmissions, mask wearing, and social distancing. Rees then implemented a plan for band members to stand 8 feet apart, mark specific locations on the field, wear special masks,

and use bell covers while playing instruments.

"It was impossible to feel unsafe during practice," says Darien Mazingo, a music therapy major. "It was really a treat to be able to be with my friends, doing what we love, and making an impact on the people around us."

Carly Battipaglia, a junior, says, "My biggest takeaway is to never take what you love for granted, because you never know when it could be suddenly taken away."

"I was knocked out with how happy and joyful everybody was to be making music again," Rees says. "All the band members have been amazingly respectful, professional, and accountable. No one made bad choices." ||



The Frost Band of the Hour practices at the start of the fall semester, one of very few collegiate marching bands to perform during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Left: Complying with pandemic safety protocols, brass students rehearse with special face masks, bell covers, and disposable spit valve pads on floor. Right: Singers with Professor Alan Johnson at piano



## Friday Nights @ Frost

CONCERT PATRONS were also able to stay connected virtually through FridayNights@Frost, a curated YouTube concert series featuring some of the faculty's favorite concerts from the prior year presented by Frost choirs, Frost Opera Theater, Frost Symphony Orchestra, Frost Wind Ensemble, Frost Concert Jazz

Band, Frost Studio Jazz Band, songwriters, contemporary groups, and more. The playlist can be accessed on the [frost.miami.edu/events](https://frost.miami.edu/events) web page, or on the YouTube channel: Frost School of Music UM ||



Above: Frost Wind Ensemble with guest artist Lindsay Kesselman, center, and conductor Robert Carnohan on a Friday Nights@ Frost rebroadcast. Left: Student harpist Marti Moreland at an outdoor event

## Hire a Frost Musician

GIGGING is the lifeblood of Frost students and alumni. The interruption of live in-person performances due to COVID-19 caused financial hardship, so the Frost School launched a successful virtual gig-booking service called Hire a Frost Musician ([frost.miami.edu/hire](https://frost.miami.edu/hire)) to provide a way for music lovers to hire Frost talent for socially distanced live performances, or via Zoom for birthdays, anniversaries,

and other special occasions. Frost musicians also offer online education clinics, private lessons, or coaching sessions in production, arranging, composition, and songwriting. In addition, students across all genres presented pop-up small group concerts under the Sarin Family Gateway at the Patricia L. Frost Music Studios North Building and were also hired by the City of Coral Gables to perform at outdoor locations. ||



## New Podcast Series Spotlights Experts

FROST SESSIONS, a new bi-weekly audio/visual podcast series hosted by Frost faculty, alumni artists, and innovative students, features conversations with top music professionals who share their experiences and discuss what's new and happening in the world of music.

Recent topics include *The Power of Connections*; *Discovering What You're Born to Do*; *Talent, Opportunity,*

*and Discipline in the Music Industry*; *Behind TV and Film Soundtracks*; *Leap into the Future of Music*; *Data Lords* and more.

Sign up for alerts for new podcasts, access past episodes, and make suggestions by filling out our suggestion box at [frost.miami.edu/podcast](https://frost.miami.edu/podcast). ||





## Rooting Out Biases to Strengthen Frost School of Music Culture

THE PROMOTION of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Frost School of Music is paramount to its success.

After the Black Lives Matter protests last spring, and again in summer, Dean Shelly Berg communicated a strong message of support reprinted in part below:

*The Frost School of Music acknowledges and condemns the legacy of racism, values the dignity of all life, and stands in solidarity with the Black community. We are committed to co-creating a caring, equitable, and compassionate world through sustainable long-term structures of curriculum, programming, and a culture that continues to raise awareness and learning of Black lives because they matter.*

*We support digging deep, listening deep, and understanding, followed by action.*

As a first action step, he asked the School Culture, Equity, and Diversity Advisory Committee (SCED)—established in 2019 and currently co-chaired by Associate Professor of Musicology Melvin Butler and Associate Professor of Flute Jennifer Grim—to take an active role in hosting private and public town halls with alumni, students, faculty, and staff to help identify and begin to root out systemic biases.

“One of the aims of the SCED committee is to help foster a feeling of belonging among the faculty, staff, and students,” says Grim. “We also serve as a safe place where they can come to express any concerns or issues of inequity. Having an open line of communication is important if we want to enact positive change.”

Butler says that the “social, psychological, and institutional barriers upheld by systemic racism often seem insurmountable” but is grateful that the SCED committee has facilitated events “where members of our community, especially students of color, can voice concerns that need to be amplified and addressed.”

The SCED examines guidelines and procedures concerning school culture, equity, and diversity of the Frost School. It makes recommendations to the Frost School Council and Administration and posts to its webpage [frost.miami.edu/diversity](https://frost.miami.edu/diversity) about the following:

- a) culture of shared governance with the School Council and Administration;
- b) open, safe, and transparent communication among students, faculty, administration, and professional staff;
- c) priorities and goals concerning gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, race, and disability among students, faculty, administration, and staff;
- d) training programs in



Melvin Butler



Jennifer Grim

school culture, equity, and diversity for administration, faculty, and staff; e) a positive working environment, including examination of salary gender equity, and musicians’ health initiatives, and; f) opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation among programs.

A Frost Unity and Diversity Committee comprised of professional staff members was also created.

Both committees interface with the University of Miami’s Office of Institutional Culture.

“True culture change is not a magic-wand, quick-fix endeavor, but rather a long-term intentional effort to

evolve and create a new institution,” says Berg. “We have been doing that work for many years, and with the dedicated efforts of the SCED committee and everyone in the Frost School, we are finally starting to see the results.”

When Berg arrived in Miami, he was particularly concerned that the Frost School had no full-time Black professors, and almost no Black adjuncts. “Now we have eight full-time Black faculty (10 percent of the total), a

growing number of Black adjunct faculty, as well as more faculty of other ethnicities and backgrounds,” he says.

“And, we have worked very hard to attract Black student applicants and increase financial aid. When I arrived at Frost, only 2- to 4-percent of students were Black. This fall, both the incoming freshman and graduate student classes were 8-percent Black, and international student enrollment was also up. This is a positive result, and it is a point along an upward trajectory,” says Berg. “We have a long way to go, but I am pleased we are moving in the right direction.” ||

## Musicology Student Examines Protest Music

Graduate musicology student Marcus Grant, M.M. ’17 is bringing racial justice to the forefront of his latest research in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement.

While earning a previous master’s degree in jazz drum performance at Frost, Grant composed and performed a suite entitled *#InsertNameHere* for a recital in 2016; it addressed his feelings about black social trauma after hearing the news that Philando Castile and Alton Sterling were killed on back-to-back days. “I was feeling a deep sense of anger and sadness. The hashtags flying around the internet became a blur. I felt like I could be next,” he says. “It was not easy to write, nor easy to perform... the nature of the piece is very emotionally taxing,” he says.

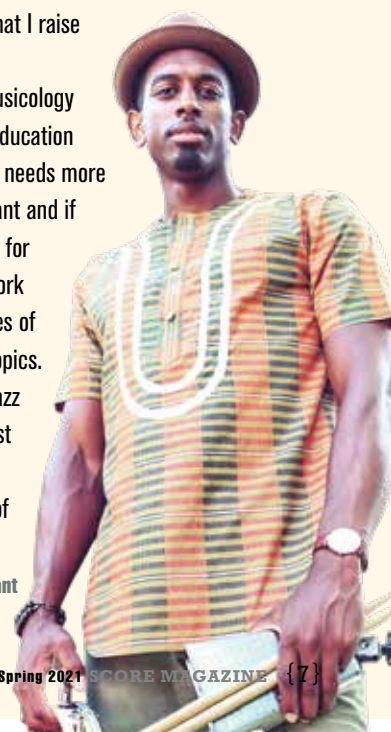
Now, in tandem with his musicological research, Grant is exploring how music plays a role in the ongoing struggle for change, especially in today’s social climate. He asks the question: “In what ways does protest music honor or detract from Black suffering and mortality?”

His thesis focuses on protest music from the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, following the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. “Protest music in and of itself is an expression of grief and trauma,” Grant says. “However, when paired with social media trends

or memes [captioned pictures or videos], things get a bit complicated. Making someone into a meme to spread awareness may do just that, but the nature of an internet trend tends to distract from the actual message of the piece. It’s within the gray area that I raise these questions.”

Grant will begin a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology next year and says a career in higher education is a future goal. “The field of academia needs more Black voices. Representation is important and if I can encourage someone else to strive for bigger goals, I’m all for it. I hope my work will contribute to the other strong voices of scholars talking about these relevant topics. I’d also be happy teaching courses in jazz history, jazz cultures, hip-hop, or Protest music and having a drum studio and teaching ensembles. I’d like to use all of my talents,” he says. ||

Marcus Grant





## Chamber Music Artist-In-Residence Alicia Hall Moran



Alicia Hall Moran

MEZZO-SOPRANO Alicia Hall Moran—a multi-dimensional artist renowned for her technical virtuosity and brilliant interpretation of song in the genres of opera, art, theater, and jazz—was selected as the Frost School’s inaugural Chamber Music Artist-in-Residence.

“Ms. Moran is an exemplar of how artists invent and reimagine ideas, connect, and design ingenious performance experiences,” says Valerie Coleman, assistant professor of performance, chamber music, and entrepreneurship at Frost. “She brings to our students a wealth of information critical to artistry, comportment, and career sustainability while guiding our chamber ensembles towards the vision of building an outstanding career.”

Moran portrayed Bess in *Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess* on Broadway and on a 20-city national tour. Her albums *Heavy Blue* and *Here Today*, as well as new shows like *Alicia Hall Moran + the motown project* and *Black Wall Street*, highlight her originality and joy in working with diverse musicians.

## Prominent Professor Receives Prestigious Award

DON COFFMAN, an admired professor and chair of the Department of Music Education and Music Therapy at the Frost School of Music, was honored by the Florida Music Education Association with its College Music Educator of the Year Award. It was presented at the association’s 2021 virtual professional development conference in January where he was also serving as the

A Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, she is currently developing a new production *Breaking Ice* with a wide range of collaborators including Ice Theatre of New York, shinobue and taiko player Kaoru Watanabe, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

“Alicia has a very special way of connecting with audiences and understanding the underpinnings of that connection,” says pianist Dean Shelly Berg, who has performed with her on numerous occasions.

Working with Frost students this year via Zoom, Hall Moran says, “I am completely humbled by this historic moment in higher education, globally, and I could not be prouder to bear firsthand witness to the ingenuity and courage the Frost School of Music is modeling. The students I’ve already encountered are quite frankly effervescent in their approach to our sessions together. They are open and engaged, and that points to their mutual respect for the moment. I am so thrilled to be a part of this spectacular machine!”

research committee coordinator.

Coffman thanked his current and former colleagues and students for sharing their lives with him, saying “The rewards of teaching come from experiences with others because we teach people, not music. Teaching is an invitation to learning, so how we treat others has to come first.”

Coffman earned a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. An internationally known scholar with over 100 publications and 100 presentations in 13 countries, he has conducted over 300 wind band performances and clinics, and chaired countless professional commissions and committees. Among his many activities this year he presented “They Are Us: Conversations about connection, disruption and inclusion” at the ISME Community Music Activities Pre-Conference.

At the Frost School of Music he teaches instrumental conducting, methods of teaching instrumental school music, and community music programs. He founded the Frost School’s New Horizons Band for adult learners.



Don Coffman



## Media Writing and Production Faculty and Alumni Successes in the TV Biz

WITH NETFLIX, HBO, and other major composing and orchestration credits, faculty and alumni of the Frost Media Writing and Production (MWP) program are well-entrenched in the television and film business. Here are a few highlights from the past year:

### Frost Prof Composes *The Queen’s Gambit*

CARLOS RAFAEL RIVERA, assistant professor and director of the Media Writing and Production program at the Frost School, teamed with director Scott Frank to score *The Queen’s Gambit*, a Netflix limited series that premiered October 23. Rivera received the 2021 Hollywood Music in Media Award for Outstanding Score for a TV Show/Limited Series for his music writing on the show, and a Society of Composers & Lyricists Award for Outstanding Score for a Television Production. He worked previously with Frank on the Netflix series *Godless* for which he earned a 2018 Emmy Award for his



Carlos Rafael Rivera

main title theme, and was nominated for Outstanding Music Composition.

“I have always loved underdog tales like *Rocky*, or *Rudy*,” says Rivera. “The moment I read Scott Frank’s

teleplay for *The Queen’s Gambit*; I knew getting to work with him in telling Beth Harmon’s story would be one of the great thrills of my life. It was something special, and to say the least, challenging, as we were going to have to make the game of chess exciting on screen for those who play it—and even for those who don’t.”

### Alumnus Earns Emmy Nomination

CONGRATULATIONS to Frost Media Writing and Production alumnus Kier Lehman, B.M. ’03, for his 2020 Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Music Supervision for the HBO series *Insecure*, episode “Lowkey Movin’ On.”

Other recent music supervision projects include *Black Lightning* (CW), *Truth Be Told* (Apple), *Spider-Man into the Spider-Verse*, *Lego 2*, *Queen & Slim*, and the upcoming sequels to the *Space Jam* and *Sesame Street* movies.

He credits the Media Writing and Production program for giving him “key early experience in the fusion of music and picture,” and thanks former choral professor Jo-Michael Scheibe and retired associate dean and MWP program director Raul Murciano, B.S.C.E. ’91, M.M. ’93, D.M.A. ’97, for their impact on his education.

Lehman got his professional start working for the music supervision firm Hit the Ground Running where he worked on hundreds of television episodes including the CSI franchise and HBO’s *Entourage*.

He then landed a highly-coveted position as in-house music supervisor and creative executive in the music department at Sony Pictures where he worked for five years. He now runs Bad Sneakers, Inc., a full-service music supervision and clearance company for HBO, Fox, ABC, Lionsgate, Sony Pictures, and Warner Brothers.

### Netflix Movie Reaches Number One

JAMIE CHRISTOPHERSON, M.M. ’00, who earned a master’s degree in Media Writing and Production at Frost, composed a Country-tinged score for the Netflix Original movie *A California Christmas* that reached the pinnacle #1 trending spot during the winter holidays. He also co-wrote several original songs and a folksy arrangement of “O Holy Night” for the film.

He says his time at the Frost School was “one of the best decisions I’ve made in life,” and adds the MWP program “was perfectly geared towards preparing me for how the real world of entertainment works. I am very grateful for the lessons of hard work, flexibility, and perseverance that I learned.”

Christopherson’s music can be heard in the feature films *The Ride* and *American Wrestler*; video games *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*; *Dead Rising*, and *Lineage II*; and Showtime television shows *Homeland*, *Ray Donovan*, and *The Affair*; CBS’s *Extant*; and NBC’s *Revolution*.



Kier Lehman



Jamie Christopherson

## New Master of Teaching Degree in Music Education

**A**N ACCELERATED one-year Master of Teaching (M.A.T.) in Music Education degree program is now offered by the Frost School. It provides an excellent path for candidates who already hold a prior music degree to quickly pursue K-12 music teaching certification in the State of Florida.

Students complete all course content as required to pursue music teaching certification in the state of Florida. Following graduation, alumni then secure a teaching position in a Florida School through the State of Florida Professional Development Certification Program. After completing one year of supervised teaching, individuals then complete certification examinations and apply to the Florida Department of Education for certification. Further details at [musiced.frost.miami.edu](https://musiced.frost.miami.edu).



# Grammy® Congratulations Go to Great Frost Musicians

ESTEEMED Frost faculty and alumni were honored again with Grammy wins and nominations at the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards Ceremony on March 14.

Maria Schneider, '83, a multi-Grammy Award winner and nominee who serves as Artistic Director of the Frost School's Henry Mancini Institute received two Grammy wins in association with her latest release *Data Lords*. She now has 7 wins and 16 nominations.

This Grammy season marks the 11th nomination for Studio Music and Jazz lecturer, pianist, composer and producer Gonzalo Rubalcaba, a double Grammy winner, who was nominated this year for Best Latin Jazz Album for *Viento Y Tiempo – Live at Blue Note Tokyo*.

Frost alumni nominees also exhibit incredible range.

Carmen Lundy, B.M. '80, was nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album, her first Grammy nomination.

Chorus Master James K. Bass, D.M.A. '05, a six-time

nominee, received his first Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for *Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua*, a dramatic oratorio of the braiding of two faiths, Judaism and Christianity.

Neal J. Avron, B.M. '87, a Grammy-winning mixer and producer who has worked with artists ranging from Twenty One Pilots, Sara Bareilles, and Linkin Park was nominated in the Best Musical Theater Album category.

Rounding out the Grammy nominee list are Jeremy Adam Levy, B.M. '04, and Pat Metheny, '73, each in separate arranger categories.

"The consistent high achievements of Frost faculty and alumni each year is truly extraordinary and inspiring," says Dean Shelly Berg. "Being acknowledged by your peers for excellence in recording is the ultimate reward in music. I applaud and congratulate our 2021 class of Grammy winners and nominees." ||

**Maria Schneider, '83**

🏆 Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album: *Data Lords*

🏆 Best Instrumental Composition: "Sputnik" from *Data Lords*

**Gonzalo Rubalcaba**

Best Latin Jazz Album: *Viento Y Tiempo—Live at Blue Note Tokyo*  
Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Aymée Nuviola

**Carmen Lundy, B.M. '80**

Best Jazz Vocal Album: *Modern Ancestors*

**Neal J. Avron, B.M. '87**

Best Musical Theater Album: *Jagged Little Pill*

**James K. Bass, D.M.A. '05**

🏆 Best Choral Performance:

Best Engineered Album, Classical:  
Best Contemporary Classical Composition: *Danielpour: The Passion of Yeshua*  
JoAnn Falletta, James K. Bass, Adam Luebke, UCLA Chamber Singers, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra & Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus, Bernd Gottinger, engineer

**Jeremy Adam Levy, M.M. '04**

Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella: "Uranus: The Magician" from *The Planets: Reimagined*

**Pat Metheny, '73**

Best Arrangement Instrumental & Vocals: "From This Place" Pat Metheny featuring Meshell Ndegeocello, Alan Broadbent and Pat Metheny, arrangers

## Frost School Alumni Garner Major Latin Grammys®

SEVEN gifted music alumni received 16 Latin Grammy Award nominations and landed six wins at the 21st Annual Latin Grammy® Awards ceremony held November 19, 2020, the preeminent international honor that celebrates excellence in Latin music and the only peer-presented Latin music accolade.

Alumni who took home the coveted award are: Julio Reyes Copello, M.M. '00, with two wins and George Noriega, B.M. '96, Natalia Ramírez, M.A. '17, Carlos Fernando López, B.M. '12, M.M. '20, and Jose Valentino, M.M. '10, each receiving one for a total of six.

Julio Reyes Copello as producer and engineer and Natalia Ramirez as engineer won Record of the Year for their work together on "Contigo" by Alejandro Sanz.

Carlos Fernando López, along with Jose Valentino, won in the Best Classical Contemporary Composition category for their composition "Sacre," which was part of López's final project to matriculate with his master's

in composition at Frost; he is now pursuing an artist diploma in orchestral conducting.

Singer-songwriter Raquel Sofia, BM '09, and flutist-bandleader Ernesto Fernandez, M.M. '13, D.M.A. '16, received nominations for Best Pop Song and Best Traditional Tropical Album respectively.

"The Frost School congratulates our 2020 Latin Grammy winners! This brilliant group of individuals are representative of the astounding number of talented, high-achieving faculty, students, and alumni that were drawn to the Frost School because of our unique geographical endowment at the crossroads of the Americas," says Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives Rey Sanchez. "These awards are a testimony to their creativity and hard work, and also to the impact of their time at the Frost School. We are enormously proud that our teaching and culture have contributed to the success of these exceptional alumni. ¡Felicidades a todos!" ||

**Julio Reyes Copello, M.M. '00**

🏆 Record of the Year: "Contigo" by Alejandro Sanz from *Tributo a Sabina: Ni Tan Joven Ni Tan Viejo*

🏆 Album of the Year: *Pausa* by Ricky Martin

Album of the Year: *Mesa Para Dos* by Kani Garcia

Record of the Year: "Lo Que en Ti Veo" by Kani Garcia and Nahuel Pennisi from *Mesa Para Dos*

**Ernesto Fernandez, M.M. '13, D.M.A. '16**

Best Traditional Tropical Album: *Pa'lante*

**Carlos Fernandez López, B.M. '12, M.M. '20**

**Jose Valentino, M.M. '10**

🏆 Best Classical Contemporary Composition: "Sacre" from *Lignarius*

**Carlos Fernandez López, B.M. '12**

Album of the Year: *Mesa Para Dos* by Kani Garcia

Record of the Year: "Lo Que en Ti Veo" by Kani Garcia and Nahuel Pennisi from *Mesa Para Dos*

**Raquel Sofia, B.M. '09**

Best Pop Song: "Amor En Cuarentena"

**George Noriega, B.M. '96**

🏆 Best Engineered Album: *3:33* by Debi Nova

Producer of the Year: multiple artists  
Record of the Year: "Tutu" by Camilo and Pedro Capó from *Por Primera Vez*

**Natalia Ramírez, M.A. '17**

🏆 Record of the Year: "Contigo" by Alejandro Sanz from *Tributo a Sabina: Ni Tan Joven Ni Tan Viejo*

Record of the Year: "Lo Que en Ti Veo" by Kani Garcia and Nahuel Pennisi

Album of the Year: *Mesa Para Dos* by Kani Garcia





## DOWNBEAT 44<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL STUDENT MUSIC AWARDS

### FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC CONGRATULATES ITS 2021 DOWNBEAT STUDENT AWARDEES

#### Undergraduate College Winners

**Amy Azzara**, Vocal Jazz Soloist

Kate Reid, faculty mentor

**Frost Funk Ensemble**  
Asynchronous Blues/Pop/Rock Group

Steve Rucker, faculty mentor

**Ben Taylor**, Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist (guitar)

John Hart, faculty mentor

#### Graduate College Winners

**Katie Oberholtzer**, Vocal Jazz Soloist

Chuck Bergeron, faculty mentor

**Frost Extensions**, Small Vocal Jazz Group

Kate Reid, faculty mentor

**The V. Tet**, Blues/Pop/Rock Group

Chuck Bergeron, faculty mentor

**Frost Fusion Ensemble**  
Asynchronous Blues/Pop/Rock Group

Steve Rucker, faculty mentor

**Seth Crail**, “Moon River”

Jazz Arrangement—Studio Orchestra

Stephen Guerra Jr., faculty mentor

#### Undergraduate Outstanding Performance

**Emma Hedrick**, Vocal Jazz Soloist

Kate Reid, faculty mentor

**Maggie Kinney**, Vocal Jazz Soloist

Kate Reid, faculty mentor

**Valentina Shelton**, Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist (piano/vocals)

Chuck Bergeron, faculty mentor

**Kenton Luck**, “Jinrikisha”  
Undergraduate Jazz Arrangement

Chuck Bergeron, faculty mentor

#### Graduate College Outstanding Performance

**Frost Jazz Vocal I**, Large Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Kate Reid, director

## Student’s Song Goes Viral on YouTube

BY DAY, Jasmine Ortiz studies musicianship, artistry development, and entrepreneurship at the Frost School of Music. But by night, she records with producers like the multi-platinum Trackdilla. Now, she is taking the pop industry by storm. With her latest single “Cherry on Top” reaching over 2 million views on YouTube, the bilingual artist is nothing shy of a sensation.

Ortiz found her roots in the hard rock genre while studying jazz guitar and classical piano in high school. Evolving into an energetic, pop vocalist came naturally to her; she learned five instruments before becoming a songwriter. Ortiz now incorporates Spanish, English, and Mandarin into her music to appeal to the masses. Clearly, it’s working. Her bilingual single, “Intentions,” has also reached over 1 million views on YouTube. “It was interesting to see the song blow up in Mexico, or Spain, or Colombia,” Ortiz says, reflecting on her worldwide reach. “I was like ‘OK, wow, this is really cool. People all over the world are listening to my music.’ That was bizarre.”

The pandemic lockdown left little room for inspiration. “For me personally, I always need a lot of social input to have creative output. You can’t cook without ingredients, and my ingredients are seeing people and going out and doing things,” Ortiz says. Still, she used the situation to adapt. “I started learning and growing and taking the time to not only focus on being an artist, but also on being a musician and what that meant to me,” says Ortiz. As her YouTube views and Spotify streams rise, “It’s starting to feel more real to me.” ||



Jasmine Ortiz

## Stamps Brass Quintet Class of 2024

FIVE TALENTED brass players were awarded full scholarships this fall including tuition, room and board at the Frost School and will perform for during their undergraduate years as the Stamps Brass Quintet class of 2024. Pictured below, left to right: Ethan Revere, trumpet; Xinrae Cardozo, horn; Antony Hook, tuba; Terri Rauschenbach, trumpet; Ian Wolff, trombone.

The Stamps Ensemble Scholarships began at Frost in 2009 through the generosity of the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation, with 58 Stamps ensemble scholars to date, including 19 currently enrolled. The recruiting of each ensemble rotates every four years. In addition to the new Stamps Brass Quintet, there is a Stamps Woodwind Quintet class of 2023, Stamps String Quartet class of 2022, and Stamps Jazz Quintet class of 2021. ||



## Frost and Jazz Aspen Snowmass Expand Their Imprint in Aspen

THE JAS ACADEMY in collaboration with the Frost School of Music and Jazz Aspen Snowmass (JAS) is expanding to four weeks in Aspen this summer. International auditions this spring for highly talented, ambitious young musicians revealed a fantastic array of talent that will attend either Combo/Small Ensemble Sessions July 11–25, or Individual Big Band Sessions July 25–August 7.

JAS Artistic Director Christian McBride, Frost Dean Shelly Berg, Program Director Chuck Bergeron, M.M. ’93, and faculty artists Etienne Charles, Rey Sanchez, B.M. ’80, M.M. ’82, Brian Lynch, and D.M.A. candidate Michael Dudley, M.M. ’18, will work with the academy students. Alumnus Emmet Cohen, B.M. ’12, and jazz masters who perform at the JAS Café summer series will also serve as visiting adjunct faculty during both sessions.

Described as a “unique boot camp for the essential technology, marketing, and creative skills that every musician needs to thrive,” the JAS Academy is a full-scholarship program, with travel, lodging, tuition and meals provided. The JAS Academy is supported annually by a multi-year gift from Sasha and Ed Bass.

Rey Sanchez, associate dean for strategic initiatives

and innovation at the Frost School, says, “As faculty at Frost, I’m used to being around highly talented, ambitious young musicians...and the talent at the JAS Academy is off-the-charts! But talent and ambition are not enough. Musicians aspiring to a professional life in music today need a strong foundation in business and technology, along with the entrepreneurial spirit to forge their own creative path. This is my role at the JAS Academy,” he says. To that end, in addition to intensive combo and big band interactions, Frost School curricula will be introduced including classes in recording, arranging, production, touring, agent representation, artist management, contracts, website development, and digital rights. ||



Above: JAS Academy Frost students  
Janelle Finton, trumpet, Emma Hedrick, vocals, Michael Ramos, bass, with NYU drummer Anton Kot  
Left: Michael Dudley, trumpet, in JAS Academy Big Band

## Frost School at Festival Napa Valley

A NEW STYLE of summer music training academy is launching in Northern California this July for 50 advanced classical music students who were selected by audition: The Frost School @ Festival Napa Valley.

Co-produced by the Frost School of Music and Festival Napa Valley from July 8–25, The Frost School @ Festival Napa Valley will provide chamber music and large ensemble coaching, master classes, career training, and idyllic concert opportunities hosted by festival sponsors throughout Napa Valley including five orchestra concerts, and much more.

Frost Associate Professor Jennifer Grim is the artistic administrator for this uniquely Frost program and will work in tandem with Festival Napa Valley to oversee the student experience, including curricular highlights from The Frost Method.® Grim and ten other Frost professors will serve on the summer faculty, along with a dozen other faculty from prestigious orchestras. All academy students will receive free airfare, housing, meals, and a per diem.

The Frost School @ Festival Napa Valley is funded this summer by generous donations by Frost Advisory Board members Jeffery Miller, Adam Carlin, and other steadfast supporters. ||



BOB MCCLENNAN

## Art Inspires Composers

DOROTHY HINDMAN, B.M. ’88, D.M.A. ’94, associate professor of composition, was instrumental in launching a new interdisciplinary project with the Frost School of Music and the University of Miami Lowe Art Museum entitled “Composing the Collection: Sonifying the Lowe Art Museum’s Musical Instruments and Art Works in Written Music and Live Performance.”

Student composers Melissa D’Albora, Logan Larson, Ryne Siesky, Wesley Thompson, Greg Watson, and Rachel Weiss premiered new music based on objects from the Lowe’s Musical Instruments and Art Works Collections and University of Miami Libraries Special Collections. Students selected two objects: an instrument and an artwork. Through research, digital recording, and spectral analysis, students obtained modern representations of their chosen instrument’s sounds. Funded in part by The Andrew W. Mellon CREATE Grants Program, the original audio samples, recordings of the new works, and other sonic documentation of the source objects will form the basis of an audio companion to augment the Lowe’s Guide by Cell self-guided tour program. ||





## Doctors and Musicians Team Up to Study Ideal Vocal Warm-up Time

IT TAKES ONLY MINUTES of vocal warm-up for classical singers to perceive vocal ease prior to practice, according to a recent study by the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Frost School of Music researchers published in the *Journal of Voice*.

“There is little research on singers’ perceptions of the benefits of warm-up and the ideal amount of time to do so. Yet, the amount of warm-up can be important for vocal health and quality,” says the study’s senior author, Adam Lloyd, SLP-D, CCC-SLP, M.M., assistant professor of otolaryngology and speech pathology at the Miller School. “Too much can cause fatigue or sores to form on the vocal folds, while not enough warm-up may lead to limited range and loudness capabilities or

injury, similar to what would happen to an athlete who does not warm up before an event.

“Our goal was to discover what amount of time of warm-up provided singers with the greatest ease of usage.”

The researchers reported on a prospective cohort of nine Frost School of Music classical vocal performance majors to determine if specific warm-up durations of 0, 5, 10, or 15 minutes would change subjective and objective voice measures. The singers completed a modified Voice Range Profile and the Evaluation of the Ability to Sing Easily scale and blindly rated 10-second recorded audio clips. Four independent expert blinded listeners also rated the audio clips.

“We included several levels of randomization and blinding so that participants and raters would be less biased in their scoring. This strengthened the results of the study and improved reliability,” Lloyd said. “Professionals in the fields of voice pathology and vocal peda-

gogy acted as our blind raters, which again reduced the risk of bias and made the results more reliable.”

They found that vocally warming up has a self-perceived benefit for singers compared with not warming up at all. And 5 or 10 minutes of warm-up seems to be sufficient to begin a practice session. Participants did not perceive long warm-up routines to be more beneficial.

“It was no surprise that vocally warming up makes singing feel more comfortable. As vocal teachers, we always tell our students the importance of warming up the voice before practicing to make singing easier and avoid injury,” said the study’s first author, Frank W. Ragsdale, D.M.A. ’04, associate professor of music and chair of the Department of Vocal Performance at the Frost School of Music. “I found it interesting, however, that the 15-minute warm-up time did not make a difference in the self-perceived ease of singing over the 5- or 10-minute times. I think this finding will encourage students to warm up, knowing that as little as 5 to 10 minutes is sufficient.”

Future research should include a larger population of singers with different levels of education and singing genres, the authors wrote.

“One of the benefits of collaborative research is through the Frost School of Music, as well as the Department of Theatre Arts from the College of Arts and Sciences, we have access to student vocalists from a broad range of backgrounds: classical, jazz, contemporary, and musical theatre, to name a few. We have already learned from some of our other ongoing research that different musical training can affect the likelihood of vocal injury over time,” said study author David E. Rosow, M.D., associate professor of otolaryngology and director of the Division of Laryngology and Voice at the Miller School. “We are constantly expanding this study and perhaps we will find that these groups respond differently to vocal warm-ups.”

Coauthors on the study are Judy O. Marchman, D.M.A.; Michelle M. Bretl, M.S., CCC-SLP; Jennylee Diaz, M.S.; Mursalin Anis, M.D.; Hang Zhang, M.S.; and Mario A. Landera, SLP-D, CCC-SLP. ||

*Courtesy of Special to UM News*



Dr. David Rosow, associate professor of otolaryngology at the Miller School of Medicine, with student Yashwanth Ramanujam

## Grad Students Awarded Early Career Field Research Grants

EACH YEAR the University of Miami Institute for the Americas invites graduate students to apply for Tinker Foundation Field Research Grants to help them “develop cutting-edge research projects and gain firsthand knowledge of Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Two students from the Frost School of Music were awarded Tinker Grants this year, which may help them secure external funding for subsequent research.

Hannah Junco, a master’s student in musicology, was awarded a Tinker Grant for her proposal “Investigating Latin American cultural politics and music following the Cuban Revolution of 1959.” More specifically, it is an ethnomusicological look at how *rikudim* (Israeli circle dancing) in synagogues of Havana, Cuba is playing a role in rebuilding the dissipating religious community of the Cuban Jews; the Jewish population dwindled from 15,000 to 1,200 following the Cuban Revolution of 1959. “In a reparative effort, the *Jubano* [pronounced Jew-bahn-o] community is using strongly nationalist symbols like dance to negotiate this interaction of religion and nationality in the context of a socialist state,” Junco says.

Due to the pandemic, her travel to Cuba was not approved. Nevertheless, she conducted virtual interviews with rikudim organizers and participants residing in both Havana and Miami. “I am more than thrilled that the Tinker Foundation selected my project about this fascinating and tenacious community, especially during these times when community is sometimes all that is holding us together,” Junco says.

## Doctoral Candidate Wins First Prize in Viola Research

VIOLA STUDIO teaching assistant and doctor of musical arts candidate Angela Kratchmer won first prize in the 2020 David Dalton Viola Research Competition. Kratchmer was selected for her paper “The Widmann Viola Concerto: Harold in Italy for the Postmodern Age.” The paper will be published in a future edition of the peer-reviewed *Journal of the American Viola Society*, which publishes research of lasting historical value. The competition is named in honor of the journal’s first editor and offers attractive prizes.

“The impetus for this project occurred during a

Victor Manuel Rubio Carrillo, a Ph.D. candidate in music education was also awarded a Tinker Grant for his proposal “Understanding the Education of Music in Ecuador” to examine multiple

schools of music after infrastructure and sustainable state funding was recently compromised across Ecuador, he reports. His research design involves methods of immersive observations in sampled schools in different provinces, interviews with students, musicians, administration, and document analysis.

In Ecuador, a specialized track for professional musicians is available for students starting at age seven. It is a school diploma that takes 11 years to complete. Students who attend these vocational music schools do so in the afternoons after their general classes, and when they graduate secondary school, they receive two diplomas—general sciences and musical arts. Institutions accredited to grant these degrees are publicly funded by the Ecuadorian state, so the capacity of the schools to generate their own income is limited. Carrillo could not travel to Ecuador during the pandemic, but aims to “gather enough information to facilitate actionable plans to help remediate problems and develop sustainable solutions.” ||



Hannah Junco



Victor Manuel Rubio Carrillo



Angela Kratchmer



## Frost Music Fest '21 Brings Music Back to 'Live' in Bold Festival



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNY ABREU



**Above left:** RENÉE FLEMING, the internationally renowned soprano and one of the most honored singers of our time, made her first live outdoor appearance since the pandemic began, singing with students at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami (UM) on March 20. The U.S. National Medal of the Arts recipient and four-time Grammy winner performed with the Frost Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gerard Schwarz. She performed beloved arias with the orchestra such as Puccini's "O Mio Babbino Caro," and a sensational rendition of "(Somewhere) Over the Rainbow."

**Above right:** Socially distanced students enjoy the festival

**Center:** student pianist Eric Stern with the Frost Concert Jazz Band

"As we approached a year of living through the pandemic, our students missed the joy of performing for live audiences," says Dean Shelly Berg, who also performed as a piano soloist with the orchestra. "We have had great success with our COVID-19 safety measures

and decided to bring music back live in a spectacular way —and it doesn't get any bigger than performing with Renée Fleming."

The festival line-up included a host of talented Frost School students performing in various music ensembles of jazz, pop, classical, Latin, R&B, and more, led by many

## Travis Quinn Memorial Scholarship Fund

**T**ip jar proceeds during the Frost Music Fest '21 live stream benefited the Travis Quinn Opportunity Scholarship Fund established at the Frost School of Music to provide scholarships to high-achieving and talented music students who have overcome substantial economic or educational hardship to apply to, attend, and remain at the music school. It was named in memory of Travis Quinn, a gifted young musician and educator following his untimely tragic passing in May 2020.

Quinn, pictured center right as a member of the Frost Band of the Hour, was a beloved mentor for under privileged aspiring young musicians and personified the mission of this scholarship

fund. Born and raised in Miami, his love of music began at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center in Liberty City where he became band director of their Heritage Band, a music apprentice program for youth ages 9–17. A multi-instrumentalist who directed the Miami Heat Street Band, he was a freelance musician and educator while attending Florida A&M University and Miami Dade College; he then auditioned for the Frost School.

The fund was established by generous separate donations from Kent Savage and Carmine Parente.

To give please visit: [support.frost.miami.edu/giving-portals](https://support.frost.miami.edu/giving-portals). ||



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNY ABREU



of the school's award-winning faculty including Director of Choral Activities Amanda Quist.

In addition, faculty artists John Daversa, Brian Russell, and Svet Stoyanov also performed.

John Splithoff, B.M. '13, closed the celebratory festival with the American Music Ensemble.

Frost Music Fest '21 was held live outdoors on two large festival-style stages and was also simulcast for free on YouTube. A limited audience was permitted on the



intramural field to abide by COVID-19 protocols. Staging was managed by Frost events and recording services teams, professional vendors, Student Affairs and others.

News reports of the event on *CBS Sunday Morning* and other major media outlets garnered over 45 million unique views and visitors (Source: [newsexposure.com](https://www.newsexposure.com)). ||

**Above left to right:** Singer-songwriter Nanseera Wolff; John Splithoff and the American Music Ensemble; Frost Percussion Group in action

**Center left:** Latin pop group Café Con Leche

## Strings Master Class Reveals Riveting Insights

PRAISED for their "vibrant performance" and "sincere expressivity" the Thalea String Quartet was honored this year with the Fischhoff Ann Divine Educator Award.

Coaching Frost School students on February 14 via Zoom from their various home studios, the members of the Thalea Quartet conducted a master class with two student string groups livestreaming from Gusman Hall.

First up was the Stamps String Quartet Class of 2022 in a noteworthy performance of two movements of Bartók's String Quartet No. 3, followed by a second string ensemble in a striking rendering of the first movement of Dohnányi's Piano Quintet in C minor, opus 1.

"Playing on Zoom means you need to be very arresting in the drama of spaces," cellist Titilayo Avangade said in her opening remarks to the Stamps Quartet. "You play so well together, but in this piece, I almost want more 'weird'...by leaning into the dissonances... perhaps something more creepy-in-the-night." She asked the undergraduates to "bring more drama with your crescendos and really explode in the fortissimo passages; make more of silences, or shock me in the explosive sections." The students repeated sections of the Bartók employing her suggestions, and the impact was instantly spine-tingling.

Christopher Whitley, a violinist with the Thalea

Quartet, encouraged the student ensembles to think about the concept of 'command' during performance. "There is something so gripping when a quartet has command of their gestures and sound... their physicality, and choreography. Hold your audiences' hand about your version of the work."

Luis Bellorín, violist, shared the Thalea Quartet's approach to leadership. "Everyone has a 24.5% role and the leadership rotates around." Violinist Kumiko Sakamoto added, "Think of yourself as a pilot. Don't have one person always lead and everyone else follow. This way, the energy comes from each of you, and is unstoppable."

The Thalea Quartet, who also presented a Zoom concert later the same evening, is known for premiering new compositions and working to diversify chamber music audiences. Whitley says they often look outside the classical music world for collaborators. "Our most recent commission was a spoken music response piece. We're on the lookout for people making great things." ||

TITILAYO AVANGADE



**Thalea String Quartet, left to right:** Luis Bellorín, Titilayo Avangade, Kumiko Sakamoto, Christopher Whitley



## Frost School Joins Star-Studded Salute to Benefit Nurses Heroes

CELEBRITIES and musicians from the Frost School of Music joined forces in *Nurse Heroes Live!*—a virtual benefit concert on Thanksgiving Day that raised significant funds to support the nonprofit organization Nurse Heroes Foundation ([nurseheroes.org](http://nurseheroes.org)).

The online fundraiser, which was livestreamed on November 26 and hosted by Whoopi Goldberg, paid homage to nurses caring for COVID-19 patients, raised awareness about a worldwide nursing shortage, and solicited donations for nurse education scholarships.

Frost advisory board member Emilio Estefan was one of the producers along with Bounce Event Marketing.

Dean Shelly Berg orchestrated and conducted four selections performed by Andrea Bocelli, Celine Dion, Stevie Wonder, Gloria Estefan, David Foster, Josh Groban, Carole King, Leslie Odom Jr., Katharine McPhee Foster, and Emily Estefan.

“I was very proud to be associated with everybody who was part of this good cause,” Berg says. “I always feel fortunate to have these opportunities to work with icons. But in this case, the fact that it raised a lot of money for nurses at a time when it is much needed, supersedes every other thing that makes me feel good.”

The Frost School’s Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra also had an opportunity to collaborate on this landmark project. “The Mancini Orchestra recorded a variety of arrangements for the concert; and personally, as a dean, there is nothing that makes you prouder,” Berg shares. “One of the things we do at Frost is we cross-train musicians to give them real work experiences so that they step off into the world and they know how to do a variety of skills at a high level.”

He recounts how special it was to see Frost students so excited to be part of the recording session and concert. “The delight and the thrill were in the air. It was a priceless moment to see them recording arrangements along with stars like Stevie Wonder,” says Berg. “We want our students to know that this is the kind of career they can pursue once they graduate.”

The event also highlighted a stirring performance by a volunteer choir of 50 nurses from Northwell Health.

Berg says the virtual concert was an embodiment of the power of music. “When you see all these stars singing along with these nurses and offering hope through music, it truly is so powerful,” said Berg. “Music is so uplifting, and I’m sure every audience member enjoyed this unique concert while supporting a great cause.” ||



Top: Actor Leslie Odom Jr., center, and nurses sing for the Nurse Heroes virtual benefit  
Right: The Henry Mancini Orchestra video recording for the show



## Tania León is 2021 Frost Composer-in-Residence

CELEBRATED composer Tania León is the 2021 Distinguished Composer-in-Residence for the Frost School of Music. Hailing from Havana, Cuba, León is also a conductor, educator, and advisor to arts organizations. Recent commissions are with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, League of American Orchestras, and the New Music USA Amplifying Voices Program.

A founding member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and a City of New York University Professor Emerita, León instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series, co-founded the American

Composers Orchestra’s Sonidos de las Américas Festivals, and is the founder and artistic director of the nonprofit Composers Now.

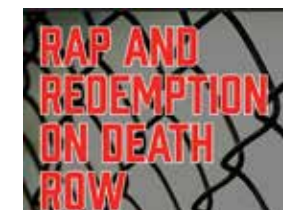
During her Frost residency, León will provide lessons to composition majors, as well as in-depth coaching to Ensemble Ibis and other student groups who will concertize some of her works this fall.

Honored by the appointment, León says, “I look forward to working with the diverse representation of students and faculty. Miami has special meaning for me as it was my first stop when I arrived in the United States. This is truly a dream come true!”



## Music’s Role as Self-Therapy for Rapper on Death Row

RAP AND REDEMPTION on Death Row was the subject of the 8th Annual Dr. Robert Kelley Memorial Musicology Lecture at the Frost School of Music. It was presented virtually on March 5 by musicologist and author Mark Katz, the John P. Barker Distinguished Professor of Music and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The prominent lecturer discussed his latest research exploring the life and work of Alim Braxton, a.k.a. Rrome Alone, a rapper on North Carolina’s Death Row.



For Braxton, music is the key to self-therapy. Using the prison telephone as his microphone, he collaborates with producers on the outside who record his vocals and provide beats for his rhymes.

The purpose of this talk was twofold: to introduce a musician who seeks both redemption and justice through his music, and to offer reflections on the ethics of a white, privileged scholar working with a Black man awaiting execution.

Braxton, who accepted responsibility for his crime, participated remotely in the talk via prison telephone. ||

## Austrian Brass Septet Encourages Melodic Performance

MNOZIL BRASS conducted a Zoom master class on March 14 with Frost brass ensembles. Tubist Wilfried Brandstötter focused on using a singing tone. “Playing on a brass instrument is maybe the greatest thing in the world, but one thing is much better...singing! When you are listening to singers it is always touching you, immediately. There is no instrument between you and the

audience, it is very clear. So listen to singers; when you sing phrases, it becomes very clear how to play them.”

First-year trumpeter and Stamps music scholar Terri Rauschenbach says, “I learned about the importance of musical lines in every voice, no matter the melodic prominence. Every member of a chamber group helps to shape phrases, even if their role is only accompaniment.” ||





## Undergraduate Flutist Wins NFA Orchestral Audition Competition

AARON RIB, a fourth-year instrumental performance major at Frost, was named the 2020 National Flute Association Orchestral Audition and Masterclass Competition winner during the association's annual conference held virtually in August 2020.

Last spring, Rib and other accomplished flutists submitted a recorded round of pre-selected orchestral excerpts to the National Flute Association (NFA) for review by a panel of judges, and Rib advanced as one of three finalists for the competition. The next stage would normally have been a mock orchestral audition held at an NFA convention space in August, followed by a masterclass with a guest clinician.

In lieu of that process, due to the pandemic, the three finalists submitted a new, continuously recorded take of a different set of excerpts selected by the NFA, and then performed in a live Zoom masterclass open to NFA members.

"I found the particular selection of orchestral excerpts chosen by the NFA to be unique in that they are less commonly asked for, and were also more challenging as a set—challenging to make each one convincing when

placed next to one another, rather than individually," Rib says, whose livestreamed performance in the masterclass was the first time he had performed publicly over Zoom. "It was much harder to feel nervous standing in my mom's home office!" After he was announced the winner, he felt "an enormous boost of confidence to succeed on the national level."

A student of Frost Associate Professor Jennifer Grim and Associate Professor Emeritus Trudy Kane, he was also an accepted fellow at the 2020 Round Top Festival Institute, and a 2020 Big Arts 1st prize recipient.

He says the most memorable part of the masterclass was the Q&A with 2020 NFA clinician Elizabeth Rowe, principal flutist of the Boston Symphony. "Ms. Rowe has an incredible reputation as a flutist, and in more recent years as a gender equity advocate and social justice spokesperson within the classical industry. Rather than asking flute-related questions, the other two finalists and I asked questions about increasing equity, access, and opportunity in the orchestral field. It was a terrific example of the mindset shift in young artists toward assuming personal responsibility to make classical music a more diverse and inclusive space," Rib says. ||



Aaron Rib

## Autistic Graduate Student Commencement Speaker is a Compassionate Advocate for Others

KAYLAH TAYLOR, M.M. '20, a multi-talented musician, businesswoman and educator, served as the student speaker at the University of Miami graduate ceremony hosted virtually in December; she graduated with a Master of Music Business and Entertainment Industries.

Growing up with autism and recently diagnosed with lupus, she quoted from abolitionist Frederick Douglass, reminding students that "if there is no struggle, there is no success." She related her own challenges of living in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami with her mother, older sister, and



Kaylah Taylor

"a determination to make my own way."

"I like to say that 'I am autistic and artistic,'" said Taylor during the ceremony. "I'm a music teacher for K-6 students, a musician, a singer, a lupus butterfly—and I will do my part to stand and advocate for others."

Taylor urged her fellow graduates to do the same and

to share their knowledge with whomever they can. "Use it, share it with others around you—to help a neighbor, friend, colleague, or to instill in the next generation," she said. "Find new ways to connect with your community around—they deserve to know graduates like you." ||

## Terrific Tuba Artists Earn High Honors in New Zealand

TWO BRILLIANT undergraduate brass students at the Frost School achieved extraordinary heights at the prestigious 2021 New Zealand International Brass Festival Solo Competition this January.

Jason Donnelly, a senior majoring in Instrumental Performance was named first prize winner in the Professional Artist category, and Kendra Luedke, a sophomore studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Music, placed second in the Young Artist Category.

"I am incredibly proud of how consistent Jason Donnelly and Kendra Luedke have become with every detailed aspect of their playing and with their preparations for international competitions such as these," says Associate Professor of Tuba and Euphonium Aaron Tindall. "It's remarkable that they are both doing this during their undergraduate years. The results are showing for many in the tuba/euphonium studio, with so many big wins in competitions, and earning jobs in the last few years. They are truly building themselves here at the Frost School of Music!"

"Being among so many talented and supportive peers and mentors continuously motivates me to practice harder and work towards bigger goals as a musician," Leudke says, who performed at the 2019 International Euphonium Tuba Festival and posts videos to YouTube.



Jason Donnelly



Kendra Luedke

Donnelly agrees. "Frost has engrossed me in an environment of talented performers, educators, and students who are dedicated to their craft," he says. "I am motivated and inspired by these people every day." Donnelly has also earned artist soloist prizes from the International Tuba Euphonium Conference and the International Euphonium Tuba Festival, and was a winner of the 2020 Yamaha Young Performing Artist Competition that recognizes outstanding young musicians who excel in jazz, classical and contemporary genres. "The fantastic specialized instruction I receive at Frost has been absolutely paramount to my artistic successes," Donnelly says. ||

## Stamps tubist creates mobile app for musicians

Stefan Hopman, a senior in the Frost School of Music and a Stamps Scholar, has created and released an app for musicians called Practica: Tuner and Metronome. It can be previewed on YouTube or downloaded via the App Store.

His mission was to provide "a digital toolbox for musicians with a user-interface that makes sense," says the enterprising tuba player. "From beginners to pros, whether you are a vocalist or play a woodwind, brass, or string instrument the application provides numerous well-designed practice tools to improve musicianship."

For example, the tuner contains multiple displays like pitch graph and strobe tuner and can also read decibels to measure your perceived loudness. A simple-to-use drum machine with 30 well-sampled instruments allows you to create complex rhythms, change the beats-per-minute or groove of a backing track,

instead of needing to use a Digital Audio Workstation. A full list of features may be found online.

"Creating Practica required a rich and diverse talent pool. Few if any schools other than Frost can boast such an array of skilled colleagues and professors. I am fortunate that I chose to attend the Frost School of Music as Practica would not exist without this decision," says Hopman. ||



Stefan Hopman





# POSITIVE PERSEVERANCE

BY ANA VECIANA-SUAREZ



With passion and purpose, Frost music students and faculty overcome huge obstacles during a global health crisis to originate new ways of sharing their artistry.

When Ashley Shalna stepped onto the stage for the first time after several months of a pandemic-imposed exile, her body tingled with excitement, delight but, most of all, gratitude. Like many of her fellow Frost School of Music students, the soprano had worried she would finish her studies before live performances would ever return to campus.

Shalna, a second-year graduate student, pictured left in the role of Eurydice in *Les Malheurs d'Orphée* ("The Misfortunes of Orpheus"), performed in one of seven short operatic masterworks presented by Frost Opera Theater under the production banner *Masquerade 2021* at the Gusman Concert Hall March 5 and 6.

"The first day of rehearsal was the first time that I had sung in person in front of my peers with live accompaniment since the pandemic started," says Shalna, her voice nearly breaking at the memory. "It was so emotional. There's nothing like singing for people, nothing like a story coming to life—and I think it was even more so then because of what we had all gone through."





In March 2020, when COVID-19 forced the world to lock down, Frost Opera Theater's spring performance of *L'amico Fritz* by Pietro Mascagni was cancelled. Shalna was devastated. She had been rehearsing her role of Suzel for months under the tutelage of faculty lecturer Sandra Lopez Neill, B.M. '96. "It was very, very disappointing because we had gone so deep into the learning process," she recalls. "And then we saw how hard the arts were hit by the closings. We all wondered: What's going to happen to our careers? What will become of live performances?"

Frost Opera's longtime music director Professor Alan Johnson and award-winning stage director Assistant Professor Jeffrey Marc Buchman were asking the same questions. Both faculty members knew that adapting to this unexpected situation was the key to moving forward. Or as Johnson framed it: "We understood that we had to roll with the punches."

Actually, they did more than roll, viewing the constraint of social distancing as "a wonderful opportunity to think in broader terms," Buchman says. While music conservatories around the country cancelled classes and productions, the veteran directors chose to take a different approach, thinking small, contained, and "a little outside the box."

As students returned to campus in the fall, Buchman and Johnson asked the opera students to sing, record, and produce their own videos, to the music of



Graduate student Nicholas Skotzko, singing the role of Orphée in *Les Malheurs D'Orphée*, wears a theatrical mask atop a special hygienic singer's mask in Frost Opera Theater's live spring production, *Masquerade 2021*.

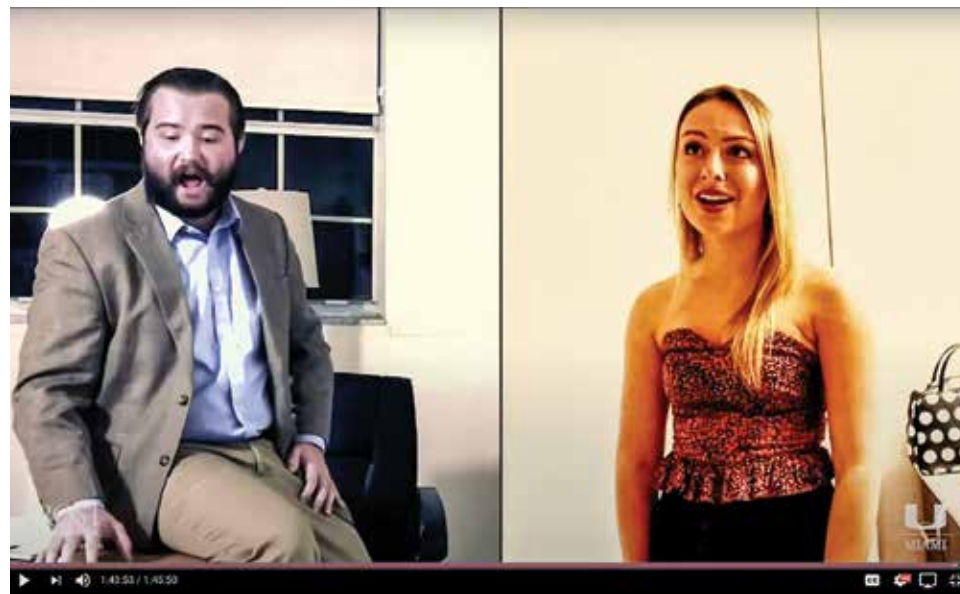
American composers Gian Carlo Menotti and Samuel Barber. It was the best way to meet the stringent safety protocols while providing the vocalists an opportunity to continue practicing their art.

Their decision was unusual. Unlike other Frost School vocalists, such as jazz and contemporary singers, most opera students had never put on headphones or recorded in a recording studio. Nor had they ever produced short videos. Under Johnson's supervision, however, students recorded at Weeks Recording Studio using health safety protocols, and then created their own videos around those excerpts, mentored and edited by Buchman.

Nicholas Skotzko, a tenor who studies voice with Professor Kim Josephson, was

one of them. It was his first experience in a professional sound studio. "Singing into a microphone was very different for us," he says. "But it was thrilling and something we all learned from. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity." He believes the experience will come in handy once he receives his graduate degree. "The art form is changing. We're trying to reach a broader audience, and one way to do this is through a digital format."

The *South Florida Classical Review* critic Lawrence Budmen, who watched the students' 90-minute YouTube video of *Menotti ReMixed*, called it "brilliant and imaginatively conceived." He commended them for turning "a challenging situation into a successful and innovative production."



"The art form is changing. We're trying to reach a broader audience and one way of doing this is through a digital format."

— Nicholas Skotzko

Nicholas Skotzko and Olivia Rich in *Amelia al ballo* ("Amelia Goes to the Ball"), a digital production they conceived and filmed for a livestream, *Menotti Remixed*

Though Buchman acknowledged the pandemic experiment forced a steep learning curve on the students, he was so pleased with the outcome that he wants to incorporate short video recordings into their educational experience moving forward. "I think it's an incredible component," he says. "We are in a world of content creation and this opportunity gives students that kind of experience."

Frank Ragsdale, chair of the Department of Vocal Performance, agrees. "I do believe there will be alternate ways to watch, and that technology will become an integral part of every performance. A benefit of this is that we will attract a new audience and revitalize the art form."

There is, however, no substitute for an actual audience, and both Buchman and Johnson recognize that. "The culmination of a project is when you perform before a live audience," Johnson says. "This is when everything comes to fruition."

To that end, Buchman and Johnson began planning for this possibility in the fall of 2020, knowing that going live would require a detailed logistical roadmap to keep singers and musicians safe at all times, including during rehearsal.



Samantha Taylor as Hen, and Thomas Valenti as Fox, sporting head-mounted masks by designer Jeff Semerling, in a live Frost Opera Theater pandemic-era production of *Fox Fables*

By the beginning of the new year, when students and faculty had had plenty of practice in mask-wearing and social-distancing, the two staged a live spring production called *Masquerade 2021*, with approval from the University COVID-19 task force to do so.

The seven short operas selected for *Masquerade 2021* required between two and 12 singers, with the largest cast onstage at any one time numbering only four.

Theatrical masks that hid singers' protective face masks were incorporated into the production by making them part of the costumes. But robbed of the use of facial expressions, students were forced to learn a different way to project their voices and emotions. "It put an emphasis on how important the body is to express emotion," Buchman says.

Johnson also brought in a sound designer to maximize the quality of his students' voices. As he ruefully notes, "Just getting the sound out was challenging."

Skotzko, who played Orphée in *Les Malheurs D'Orphée*, says he understood

the importance of proper diction more than ever. And while the all-important breathing techniques have remained the same, "I had to trust myself, trust my system. The last thing you want to do is force yourself to sing into the masks."

Though it meant extra effort, he is thankful for the opportunity. "I feel extremely lucky," he adds. "Frost has put a lot of resources to make this possible. Most places aren't doing any live performances."

In the end, the challenge was not the repertoire but the loss of rehearsal time and the choreography.

"The culmination is when you perform before a live audience. This is when everything comes to fruition."

— Alan Johnson

Mia Flora and Emily Finke in theatrical masks worn over hygienic masks, as sisters Carol and Noelle in a live performance of the micro operetta, *Scrapbookers*





## Masquerade 2021

### Neoclassic Classics

*Les Malheurs d'Orphée* ("The Misfortunes of Orpheus") by Darius Milhaud, 1926

*Hin und Zurück* ("Back and Forth") by Paul Hindemith, 1927

### A Menotti ReMixed Encore

*A Hand of Bridge* by Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti, 1959



### Early Minimalism

Excerpts from *The Four Note Opera* by Tom Johnson

### 21st Century Operas

*Opera 101* (An opera 'spoof') by Dennis Kam, 2009

*Fox Fables* (Three Short Tales of Conscience) by Peter Winkler and Rhoda Levine, 2011

*Scrapbookers* (A Micro Operetta) by Leanna Kirchoff, 2015

Because other large Frost ensembles needed to use the same stages, cooperation among the different faculty directors was essential. Once a rehearsal calendar was finalized, all the ensembles agreed to follow strict safety measures to keep the halls clean. This entailed rehearsing for 30 minutes and then leaving the room for another 10 to 15 minutes to allow large-scale purifiers to scrub the air. Appropriately-spaced performers always entered on one side and exited on another.

Like the opera theater program, other large ensembles faced pandemic-related issues. Frost Symphony Orchestra director Gerard Schwarz recalls "the utter shock" of canceling the last of his concerts in 2020 and then having to plan a program for the fall while complying with COVID-19 restrictions. Limiting the number of students who could rehearse (and perform) at the same time meant his usual cast of 85 had

to be chopped to 48. What's more, because some students were not able to return in the fall, he had to find music pieces that could be performed with the particular number of available students on campus.

The orchestra's first concert included only string and percussion sections, with everyone spaced while wearing masks. "Everyone knew what was at stake and did everything they needed to do to comply," he says. "It's given me tremendous pride."

Eventually the orchestra performances incorporated wind and brass players, all of them wearing special masks with mouth slits. While the productions were both live and streamed, only a limited number of University of Miami students and faculty could attend in person.

When more students returned to

"Our video and audio are better than ever, and this is something we will carry forward after the pandemic." It has helped us showcase what we do to a broader audience."

— Gerard Schwarz

The Frost Symphony Orchestra's concert with Professor Santiago Rodriguez as soloist on Beethoven's 'Emperor' Piano Concerto No. 5 has received 97,000 YouTube views, a record for the school (Source: YouTube analytics)



"In spite of the tremendous hardships, challenges and obstacles we've had to confront, there have also been new opportunities and wonderful gifts."

— Jeffrey Buchman

campus in the spring, Schwarz divided his student musicians into two groups, the Frost Symphony Orchestra, and a smaller Frost Chamber Orchestra. "The idea was to allow everyone to participate," he adds. "The students have been remarkable. They've understood the problems and the solutions and have gotten together to make sure everything works."

In spite of all of the hurdles, Schwarz calls the experience "unforgettable," an opportunity to appreciate fellow musicians and the forward-looking outlook of faculty and staff.

For instance, the orchestra, as well as other Frost programs, benefitted tremendously by the addition of multiple robotic cameras in Gusman Concert Hall and the Clarke Recital Hall. This has helped train students about the demands and benefits of enhanced production technology.

"Our video and audio are better than ever, and this is something we will carry forward after the pandemic," Schwarz says. "It has helped us showcase what we do to a broader audience."

The new technology has also enabled the Frost Choral program to increase its visibility. Director and Associate Professor Amanda Quist says the Choral Studies program's first livestream concert garnered more than 5,000 views, a broader audience than her ensembles normally expect with in-person concerts. Increased viewership has helped offset some of the sting of cancelled live concerts, and introduced innovative Frost choral programming to new audiences across the country.



Stephen Pitters as The Sage in the Frost Opera Theater's live production of the neoclassic short opera *Hin und Zurück* ("Back and Forth") by Paul Hindemith

To comply with spacing requirements—10 feet for singers—Quist divided her singers into five small groups to work on student-led madrigals. The experience of these smaller groups was so rewarding that she plans to keep using them. "The student-led experiences, turned out to be really useful," she says. "They got to know each other better, and they took greater ownership of their process and performances."

On a broader canvas, Quist believes her students have learned about the importance of resiliency. "The pandemic has affected the anxiety level for each of us, but I think there is encouragement in the knowledge that this is temporary," she says. "Everyone is learning to be adaptable and flexible, and these are life skills that serve our artistic community."

This newfound flexibility was true for the Frost Wind Ensemble as well.

In past years, Professor Robert Carnochan, the wind ensemble's director and chair of the Department of Instrumental Performance, had as many as 68 students onstage. The pandemic restricted this to 42, and the necessary separation was compounded by masking.

"We're used to playing close to each other, listening to each other, but this year we haven't been able to do that," he says.

But like other directors, Carnochan has found the dark pandemic cloud to have its own silver lining. Students showed "a tremendous growth in technical prowess" as they recorded concerts for streaming and posting to social media.

"From the beginning I didn't want to use this as an excuse to not have high standards," he says. "I wanted us to come out stronger on the other end."

These months, says orchestra director Schwarz, have also provided the time and space for invaluable introspection.

"We've had to focus and think hard about who we are, what we're doing and why, and more importantly how we can do better," he says. "It's quite possible that we will come out of this feeling a lot more gratitude for what we have, and an appreciation for this great artistic world and university community we're all part of."

Buchman echoes those sentiments: "In spite of the tremendous hardships, challenges and obstacles we've had to confront, there have also been new opportunities and wonderful gifts." ||



# PEAK PERFORMANCE

BY KATHY L. GREENBERG

The faculty of the Frost School of Music revealed a new strategic plan this academic year with forward-thinking goals, concise strategies, and assessment metrics that will guide each program area as they prepare students for the music professions they aspire. The Frost Strategic Plan was created in tandem with the University of Miami's Roadmap to a New Century. Faculty committees worked together with dedication and expertise, and Frost students are now beginning to reap the rewards.

**A**s soon as the Frost Strategic Plan was finalized at the start of this academic year, the classical instrumental performance and piano faculty were especially eager to get started. Their programs prioritized the first of the plan's seven objectives for some test piloting:

*Building on our well-established artistic and academic excellence, we will enhance our quality and innovation in teaching and learning while strengthening our position in preparing musicians for today's world and beyond.*

With an increased emphasis on technology, branding, marketing, performance, and connecting with audiences, their work so far has done just that.

Gabriel Beavers, associate professor of bassoon in the Department of Instrumental Performance, is on a mission—along with his students such as Melanie Ferrabone, pictured left—to make the bassoon more well known to the public. Using technology to share their artistry is a prime way the bassoonists plan to expand awareness and appreciation for the instrument's beauty and versatility.

"As part of the strategic plan, I'm integrating more technology into my teaching, using things like multitrack recording and video editing," Beavers says.

This fall Beavers, a recording artist, chamber and orchestral musician, tasked his bassoon students to create multitrack recordings of Mozart's Bassoon Concerto and incorporate their own computer accompaniments into videos. He also coached them on how to work on the mix, and improve technical aspects such as reverb and panning.



Jeff Doucette, a junior bassoonist, made a multitrack for an online/hybrid chamber group. Mastering the various techniques challenged him, but he found it worthwhile. "I had never recorded myself using a DAW [digital audio workstation] before, and while I am still not particularly comfortable with the technology yet, it's getting easier," Doucette says. "This



## "AS PART OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, I'M INTEGRATING MORE TECHNOLOGY INTO MY TEACHING, USING THINGS LIKE MULTITRACK RECORDING AND VIDEO EDITING."

experience will be highly beneficial in the future, since being able to record yourself well is a necessary skill in today's music industry. Learning how to properly mic the bassoon has been essential," Doucette says.

Beavers, who taught himself to use advanced music technology to explore new performance realms, focuses on the various ways technology not only records, but transforms sound. In the process, he helped birth a whole new viable instrument...the amplified bassoon. When connected to an iPad and specialized software, the bassoon produces a surprisingly bold rock-and-roll sound.

Beavers encourages his students to give the amplified bassoon a try and his career-broadening exercises encourage experimentation, versatility, and creativity. Now, his students' amplified bassoon videos are populating YouTube and other online sites.

For example, Jason Sluder, a sophomore mechanical engineer and bassoonist, produced a mashup of the Britney Spears hit "Toxic" featuring the amplified bassoon. Sluder uploaded his video to YouTube, where it's received over 70,000 hits to date.

"It wasn't just Jason playing the melody on the bassoon. It was him recording all of the parts," Beavers says. "I learned from Jason. I had nothing to do with making

that video, but I like to think I created an environment in my studio where people feel free to make that kind of art."

## THE WHOLE PACKAGE

To help more students find freedom in making their art, Raina Murnak, associate professor of contemporary and popular voice, was appointed this year to take on new responsibilities related to implementing the Frost strategic plan.

With classical students, she is focusing on advancing the presentation skills of chamber music groups and solo artists.

First, Murnak employs positive psychology techniques to really understand who her students are. Using a character strength assessment, she encourages them to explore and identify their innate qualities. Then she shows them how to use those attributes to build a brand that expresses who they are as artists, market themselves, and present classical music as a relatable product to diverse audiences.

"The moment they are aware of their strengths, students feel empowered to use them," says Murnak. "There's a super-talented horn player whose number-one strength is humor. Now he's bringing forth really funny ideas. He showed me a video of a flash mob, where the trombonist kept playing on a smaller and smaller trombone until it was a dollhouse-sized instrument. It was cool and engaging."

"It's fun," she adds, "because I'm activating the students to mine themselves for their own beliefs and artistic sensibilities."

Murnak has been helping bassoonist

Melanie Ferrabone fulfill her mission to unify Latin American musical culture and culture in general. Together they designed a marketing, branding, and business plan in preparation for new recitals. They built a website with metrics to track followers and subscribers. And they sought commissions to give Ferrabone opportunities to perform in new venues.

"What I really like about working with Dr. Murnak is that she's a very creative person," says Ferrabone, a doctoral candidate who also performs in the Khaos Wind Quintet. "She's not changing my ideas. She's shaping them."

## SPOT ON PIANISTS

As a first step toward helping piano students hone their presentation skills for future career opportunities, the Department of Keyboard Performance revised its end-of-semester jury exams for all undergraduates. Where students once simply practiced and played their juries, they now are expected to write a research paper and perform a correlating recital where they speak and engage with the audience.

They also video-record their presentation and conduct a self-evaluation of the video, scoring themselves on presentation, technique, memorization, and artistic profile.

Santiago Rodriguez, professor of piano and department chair, was intrigued to first learn what piano students would do on their own, with few instructions and virtually no coaching on how to create their videos—a Beta test, if you will.

The piano students passed handily. Their video submissions revealed performers who were tech-savvy, aware of appropriate attire, and mindful of what constituted a professional presentation. The results suggested that revising the piano jury format was spot on.

Piano major Jonathan Reichenberger is enthusiastic about the change. "Students are provided with the opportunity to not only learn more about themselves, but to learn more about the music and to talk about what they're playing. Audiences want to hear that."

Rodriguez says, "Our piano faculty feel this new type of jury is important for students, especially if they go out in the world and become performers. We're very happy that we were given the impetus to start this at the undergraduate level. By the time they become graduate students, it's going to be second nature to them."

## WAVE OF THE FUTURE

"Chamber music is where the notion of modern music is headed today," says Valerie Coleman, assistant professor of chamber music and entrepreneurship and director of chamber music for the Frost School who founded Imani Winds.

The beauty of chamber groups is their versatility, Coleman says. Small and portable, they can perform anywhere, at almost any time. Their size also allows for experimenting with multiple instrumentations; their flexibility increases opportunities to make a living.

To help advance the strategic plan,

Coleman is also set on implementing best practices to improve career outlooks across all classical areas of the school by designing initiatives to connect students with Frost's network of influential professionals.

For instance, an undergraduate clarinet trio workshopped a piece composed for them

by Stacy Garrop. "This student trio can literally take this collaboration and launch their careers tomorrow," says Coleman. "It's a powerful testament to what chamber music can do."

This year, chamber music students began presenting more pop-up concerts on campus, learning to entice audiences to listen amid foot traffic.

For the first-year Stamps Woodwind Quintet, Coleman tapped Murnak to help the group design a program to "surprise and enchant concertgoers." Murnak paired the players with film students to create a two-minute documentary. Instead of distributing printed program notes, each student narrated information over visuals that were projected on stage.

"Bringing people in, making them feel at home, and breaking down barriers are necessary and useful skills for our students. Because at the end of the day, there needs to be a level of versatility. Our students should be able to read a narration, be storytellers, but at the same time be world-class performers. They should be able to introduce even the weirdest music to an audience but connect them to that," says Murnak.

And, a new Artist Launch Program conceived by Coleman will also be integral in realizing the strategic plan. Selected by audition, finalists are groomed for professional showcases and more.

Artist Launch faculty are contributing personal insights to what Coleman calls

"little recipe books"—individualized student manuals that list ingredients to launch a successful artistic career. "This goes back to the idea of teaching students



Ashley Shalna

Deco Sax Quartet

Antek Olesik

Valerie Coleman

Frost students selected as Artist Launch winners include soprano Ashley Shalna, Deco Saxophone Quartet, percussionist Antek Olesik, and pianist Priscila Navarro. Also pictured, Assistant Professor Valerie Coleman in a coaching session.

## "STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO BE VERSATILE, HAVE VISION, AND CONNECT WITH AUDIENCES."

how to be versatile, have vision, and connect with audiences," says Coleman.

It's early yet, so quantifying the long-term benefits of the strategic plan is just getting underway. A project manager has been hired to help keep the plan moving forward, and a faculty assessment committee has been formed to assess the plan's full impact and viability. If success is measured in increments of progress, then Frost School students are positioned well to grow, improve, and secure a healthy career in "today's musical world and beyond." ||

Lisa Sedelnik contributed to this article.



Jason Sluder



Khaos Wind Quintet



Raina Murnak





# JAZZ Changes

Etienne Charles Joins a Diverse New Generation  
of Studio Music and Jazz Faculty at Frost

BY JORDAN LEVIN



In Trinidad, trumpet player Etienne Charles grew up immersed in music. His father and uncles played steel pan. The sounds of calypso and soca, the consuming celebration of Carnival, the drumming at community events and religious ceremonies—were all integral to the Caribbean island’s culture.

“Music is just a part of people’s life,” says Charles.

As he went on to a stellar career as a jazz musician and educator, Trinidadian and Afro-Caribbean music remained integral to Charles, earning him acclaim as an artistic innovator, uniting jazz and the music of the African diaspora.

“Being a jazz musician allows me the freedom to bring everything back together,” says Charles. “I see everything as Black expression. When people say “this is American music” and “this is Caribbean music”—to me there’s so much interplay and migration, it’s hard to divide the two.”

Charles will bring his profound understanding of the connections between jazz and Black cultural heritage to the Frost School of Music this fall, where he will become a tenured Associate Professor of Studio Music and Jazz, after teaching for 12 years at Michigan State University.

He is a key figure in a new group of jazz faculty who represent a generational shift as longtime professors retire. All bring extensive accomplishment as working artists to the classroom. A number are

Black artists who bring an important diversity, and awareness of Black artists’ primacy in jazz, to a department whose faculty has been almost entirely white in the past.

**“When people say this is American music, and this is Caribbean music – to me there’s so much interplay and migration, it’s hard to divide the two.”**

The Frost School’s Dean Shelly Berg, who has known Charles and supported his career for 15 years, says he and the Frost executive council have been pushing to diversify the faculty throughout the school for some time, supported by University of Miami administration. That has resulted in some significant new hires in recent years,

like Valerie Coleman, assistant professor of performance, chamber music, and entrepreneurship; Jennifer Grim, associate professor of flute; and Melvin Butler, associate professor of musicology.

However, the infrequency of full-time faculty job openings and the demands of international academic searches mean change is only now reaching the Studio Music and Jazz program.

“This has been something we’ve been working on for a long time,” says Berg, whose hiring of Charles has been in the works for over a year.

Meanwhile, Frost added several Miami-based jazz artists in part-time positions, such as Trinidadian-born steel pan and jazz musician Leon Foster Thomas and

drummer David Chiverton, a Miami native.

Saxophonist Troy Roberts, M.M. ’07, an alumnus with a prominent performing and recording career, joined as a lecturer.

Nicole Yarling, a Miami-based singer and violinist who taught at Frost some years ago, returned as a lecturer in both contemporary and jazz programs.

Charles is an exemplar of the artistic and professional innovation Frost is seeking in their new faculty. “Etienne is emblematic

Newport and Monterey; toured as a member of the SF Jazz Collective; and played with the Count Basie Orchestra,



MARIA NUNES

and recording project, delved into how colonialism affected indigenous people and descendants of enslaved Africans in Costa Rica, California, and Trinidad.

He does extensive research not only on music, but culture and history.

“I go and meet with the people,” Charles says. “Spend time with them. Put energy into their community. Learn from them, take part in their rituals.”

Charles was certainly drawn to the “talent that is through the roof” at Frost. He’s performed in South Florida multiple

**“I go and meet with the people. Spend time with them. Put energy into their community. Learn from them, take part in their rituals.”**

of what we strive for,” says Berg. “If you’re going to be an artist, be as good as it gets. But also—what do you create for yourself? How are you entrepreneurial? Etienne has been hired for all those qualities and also for creating opportunities for himself. And he’s a great teacher and loves to teach.”

## DISTINCTIVE Dimensions

Charles, 38, discovered jazz as an undergraduate at Florida State University. He then earned a master’s at Juilliard while balancing a busy performing schedule. He has been a featured bandleader at numerous major jazz festivals, including

pianist Monty Alexander, and Frank Foster’s Loud Minority Big Band, among many others. As a ardent music educator, he has done residencies at countless music schools and community organizations.

But his passion for exploring the musical heritage of the Caribbean, and the intricate web of cultural and musical links between jazz and the Black diaspora in the Americas, gives him a distinctive dimension that makes him perfectly suited for Frost and multi-cultural Miami. This winter, he collaborated with pianist Jon Baptiste on a music and video project on the Carnivals of Trinidad, New Orleans and Brazil. His recent album *Carnival: The Sound of a People, Vol. 1*, explored traditional music and rituals in Trinidad and Tobago, while his *San Jose Suite*, an extended composition

times, including on The Jazz Cruise; and has played with Leon Foster Thomas and Martin Bejerano, M.M. ’98, associate professor of jazz piano. He praises innovative Frost educators such as John Daversa, Brian Lynch, Dafnis Prieto, and Gonzalo Rubalcaba as “unbelievable artists.” That he has family in South Florida, including a favorite uncle and young nephews, was another draw.

But equally alluring were the artistic possibilities he sees in this city filled with fellow Caribbean immigrants. He is eager to connect with Miami artists and cultural groups, to expand his artistic resources and diversify Frost’s community connections.

“One thing that got my attention was when Shelly talked about Frost being a hemispheric school, in a hub for the



hemisphere,” says Charles who travels regularly back to Trinidad. “It’s like the music I do, connecting the sounds of the diaspora.”

## NEW Generations

Charles and the other new jazz faculty are indicative of a broader generational and cultural shift, says Assistant Professor Stephen Guerra Jr., D.M.A. ’16, a busy arranger who this year replaced 40-year veteran Professor Emeritus Gary Lindsay, M.M. ’78, as director of studio jazz writing; he served previously at Frost for 14 years as a jazz lecturer and big band director.



David Chiverton



Troy Roberts

Guerra says that as the definitive jazz artists of the 20th century pass on, maintaining jazz’s traditions while adapting to a changing music world is more complex.

“When I was coming up, I heard stories from people who played with Miles Davis,” says Guerra. “We’re seeing that generation passing on... the new hires are one step away from that tradition.”

But they also integrate tradition with extensive contemporary experience.

“It’s not a complete break, and we wouldn’t want it to be,” says Berg. “But it’s an important evolution. The school needs to match the opportunities, and the opportunities have definitely evolved.”

Berg notes that today there are fewer touring jazz bands and jazz clubs, but more festivals and gigs at performing arts centers; more music is being streamed, and fans are being cultivated online. Meanwhile, the need for musicians to do it all: play, compose, produce, promote, and more, continues to grow.

“The future of music,” says Berg, “is the future musicians make.”



Stephen Guerra

“Because I’ve spent most of my time on the road, I think I’m bringing a fresh perspective.”

—Troy Roberts

New Frost faculty will help create that future for their students.

“Our new faculty bring a vast amount of experience, they’re deep artists, and they bring a perspective that’s so needed in this music,” says Daversa, chair of the Department of Studio Music and Jazz and a progressive multi-Grammy-winning jazz artist known for encouraging collaboration, imagination, creativity, and free thinking. “Now it’s time to weave our new colleagues’ rich diversity of thought and expression into the fabric of everything we do at Frost.”

Like two-time Grammy nominee Troy Roberts, who has been teaching jazz saxophone and graduate composition, and has played at major jazz festivals with artists like Joey DeFrancesco, Kurt Elling, and Pharoah Sanders—plus popular artists Van Morrison and Aretha Franklin.

“I’ve had a great education on the bandstand,” says Roberts. “Because I’ve spent most of my time on the road, I think I’m bringing a fresh perspective.” That includes intangible but essential skills like being able to immediately pick up an artist’s style. “Learning how to be quickly creative and authentic,” says Roberts. “All those things that can get or lose you a gig in a second.”

Drummer David Chiverton started at Miami Northwestern High School, a public school with strong arts programs. His low-key demeanor belies a career playing with everyone from trumpeter Arturo Sandoval and singer Nicole Henry to pop artist John Legend and reggaeton stars. In his jazz drumming classes, he aims to teach adaptability and respect for all kinds of music. “Getting out of your comfort zone and being open-minded musically are keys to learning,” Chiverton says. “Being a chameleon, adjusting to any



Leon Foster Thomas



Nicole Yarling

situation, [and] performing with different artists who are not from your background,” are all important to him.

Recruited by Daversa, Chiverton is honored to teach at Frost. “Whatever the reasons we were brought in, we’re all going to capitalize on the opportunity and make the best of it,” Chiverton says. “The faculty here have done incredible things, and we want to be a part of that legacy.”

## FOSTERING Talent

The newly hired faculty are also helping to address the contradiction that Frost’s jazz faculty and students, as in most university and high school jazz programs, have been predominantly white over the years, even as they practice a music underpinned by Black artists and culture.

While the Frost School is making

“We don’t only fight against the idea of being Black but being from the Caribbean.”

—Leon Foster Thomas



Alexandria DeWalt

strides with recruiting more faculty and students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, progress has been slower than some current students would like.

Last year’s Black Lives Matter protests helped inspire Frost students to speak up about those frustrations, and to form a support group for Black music students.

“Students have been thinking about this for a long time,” says talented jazz vocal senior Alexandria DeWalt, who praises her fellow students as supportive, and faculty as sympathetic, but says that the low number of Black—and female—jazz teachers and peers needs to grow faster.

“We play a Black music,” Dewalt says.

Thomas understands the frustration of aspiring young artists like DeWalt. He didn’t always have electricity or running water growing up in Trinidad; he received a scholarship to Florida Memorial University where he discovered jazz, and it “literally” changed his life. A steel pan virtuoso who has performed with an astonishing range of artists from the late South African icon Hugh Masekela to American jazz trum-

peter Randy Brecker, he has created his own vibrant blend of Caribbean and jazz music. But Thomas says his accomplishments and culture have not always been respected in academia; which helped propel him to get a Master’s degree.

“We don’t only fight against the idea of being Black but being from the Caribbean. A lot of people don’t think we’re up to par,” he says.

Yarling brings four decades of musical experience to her new position here. She also brings a particular passion for jazz mentoring through youth school programs.

Yarling hopes that more Black faculty will help attract more Black students to the Frost School, and raise awareness of the importance of fostering Black jazz talent in public schools. In turn, she thinks students will gain perspective from African-Americans. “At top schools, a lot of the faculty and students playing jazz happen to be white. I know there are equally talented [other] kids, but they don’t have the resources,” she says.

Charles shares Yarling’s passion for musical and educational outreach. His teaching portfolio at Frost is still being decided. But he is overflowing with ideas and ambitions. “I have so many mandates in my head,” he says. “To excite people about music, about culture, to help make musicians advocates for the arts and for their own enterprise. Teaching students to use music to activate their communities.”

As he looks forward he says people are hungry for experiences that enrich their lives. At Frost, he’ll continue to be inspired by the combined power of music, community and tradition he grew up with in Trinidad. “Communities resist adversity when they’re strong, and the arts make communities strong,” he says. “And the only way the arts survive is by teaching.”



# Welcoming New Faculty

**NEW FACULTY AT THE FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC BRING A BROAD RANGE OF EXPERTISE RANGING FROM JAZZ TO COMPOSITION AND BEYOND. THEIR VIRTUOSITY AMPLIFIES THE SCHOOL'S MISSION TO INSPIRE AND EDUCATE THE BEST MUSICAL LEADERS OF TOMORROW.**



LAURA FERRERA

**Etienne Charles** will join the Frost faculty in fall 2021 as associate professor of studio music and jazz. He brings a careful study of myriad rhythms from the French, Spanish, English, and Dutch speaking Caribbean to his compositions. He was written into the U.S. Congressional Record for his musical contributions to Trinidad and Tobago and the World. A dynamic trumpeter and bandleader, he has been featured at the Library of Congress,

Carnegie Hall, Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, Pittsburgh JazzLive International Festival, and numerous international festivals. As a sideman he has performed with Roberta Flack, Marcus Roberts, Count Basie Orchestra, Frank Foster's Loud Minority Big Band, to name a few. Named a Guggenheim Fellow in the Creative Arts in 2015, he has been commissioned by Chamber Music America, Charleston Jazz Orchestra, and others.



**Stephen Guerra Jr.** D.M.A. '16, was appointed to the position of assistant professor and director of the Studio Jazz Writing Program this year after an international search. Guerra was previously a full-time lecturer at Frost and director of the Frost Studio Jazz Band; he also served as general manager of the Henry Mancini Institute. An in-demand arranger and orchestrator, he has been commissioned to write for Dave Koz, Ben Folds,

Carmen Bradford, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the Air Force Band of the West. As a saxophonist he has performed alongside many jazz greats, including Phil Woods, Al Grey, Snooky Young, Marshall Royal, Louis Bellson, and Jeff "Tain" Watts. In addition to earning a D.M.A. from Frost, Guerra holds a M.M. from Eastman, a B.M. from the Clark Terry International Institute of Jazz Studies, and a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire.



**Troy Roberts**, M.M. '07, lecturer of studio music and jazz, is a two-time Grammy nominated saxophonist and composer, known internationally as one of the music industry's most sought-after performing and recording artists. He has toured the world with a wide spectrum of artists including Joey DeFrancesco, Kurt Elling, Aretha Franklin, Van Morrison, Christian McBride, and his own band Nu-Jive, and has also presented master classes and

clinics. Hailing from Australia, Roberts received three DownBeat Student Music Jazz Soloist Awards and was a semi-finalist in the Thelonius Monk international Jazz Competition. He also performed in an international septet comprised of jazz giants Wayne Shorter, Richard Bona, Vinnie Colaiuta and Zakir Hussein for Herbie Hancock's launch of International Jazz Day at the United Nations, and Hancock's 2014 International Jazz Day held in Osaka, Japan.



**Nicole Yarling**, lecturer of contemporary music and musicology at Frost, is a recipient of the Jazz Journalists Association's Jazz Hero Award, and is an inductee into the South Florida Jazz Hall of Fame. As a result of the WDNA radio concert series Jazz Encounters, she received a \$10,000 Knight Arts Champion award, which she used to create the Jazz Education Community Coalition, where she mentors young musicians with an interest

in studying jazz. She also serves as educational director and host of a monthly jazz jam for young musicians, First Friday Jam, sponsored by the Gold Coast Jazz Society, and served as curator of the student stage for the South Beach Jazz Festival. Yarling's education is extensive, ranging from a Masters in Music Education at Columbia University to a B.A. in music from Baruch College, as well as private training in composition, arranging, voice and violin.

**David Chiverton**, lecturer for studio music and jazz, has been called one of South Florida's greatest musicians. While focusing on his college career, Chiverton ventured into other genres of music, from Hip-Hop to R&B, and was the featured drummer at Miami L.I.V.E. at Santos Miami, where he shared the

stage with artists ranging from John Legend to Lil Wayne. David served as an intricate player in their Big Band and performed with such notable artists as Arturo Sandoval, Ingrid Jensen and Nicole Henry, and has toured internationally with various notable artists including Lauryn Hill, Jon Secada and Donnie McClurkin.



**Petagy Letren**, lecturer of dance, is a lover of the visual and performing art. Letren believes in the strength of vulnerability, the human capacity for growth, and the power of dreams. Through her choreography, she tells stories that explore the depth of the human experience. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English

Literature from New York University, a Post Graduate Diploma in Arts and Cultural Enterprise Management from the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Trinidad and Tobago, and a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography/Dance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



**Benjamin Montgomery**, D.M.A. '20, lecturer of music theory and composition, focuses on developing students' curiosity and personal connection to the music. He aims to develop more complex individual understandings and interpretations by approaching music from a variety of different perspectives. His music has been programmed by ensembles and organizations

such as Seraphic Fire, the Michigan State University Symphony Orchestra, the New York City Electronic Music Festival, Duo Cortona, The NED Ensemble, Kaleidoscope MusArt, and the Skylark Vocal Ensemble. He has been in residence at festivals such as New Music on the Point, the Cortona Sessions for New Music, and the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium.



**Nicole Perry**, lecturer of dance, is a certified laban/bartenieff movement analyst through Integrated Movement Studies. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dance, a degree in Music from Eastern University, and a Master of Fine Arts in Spirituality and the Arts from Ocean Seminary. She is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and the Association of

Theatre Movement Educators. Professional highlights include the US premiere of "The Glass Piano" at Theatre Lab, the 6th Annual Somatic Dance Concert Series, Center City Opera Theater's World Premiere of "The Always Present Present", and two full seasons as the resident choreographer at Hedgerow Theatre, including their World Premiere of "An American Tragedy!"



**Joseph Petrasek**, lecturer of instrumental performance, joined the Kansas City Symphony as Associate Principal Percussionist in August 2009. Before his appointment, he served as a percussion fellow in the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida. Joseph has also performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra,

and the Pacific Symphony. Originally from Southern California, Petrasek earned his Bachelor's degree at UCLA studying under Mitchell Peters, former timpanist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. He went on to get a master's degree at Temple University, studying with Philadelphia Orchestra percussionists Alan Abel and Angela Zator-Nelson.



**Leon Foster Thomas**, lecturer of studio music and jazz, has appeared worldwide, playing with such diverse artists as Melton Mustafa, Nathan Davis, Richard Smallwood, Nicole Henry, Dolly Parton, Cyril Neville, and Richard Bailey. In 2002 and again in 2004, he won the titles of World Steelband Music Festival

Soloist and Duet Champion. His composition for steel pan soloist Shiron Cooper won him top prize at the 26th Biennial Trinidad and Tobago Music Festival. As an arranger, for Miami Pan Symphony Steel Orchestra, he won the 2005 and 2006 Miami Carnival Bomb Competitions, and Miami's 2009 Panorama Competition.





## John Daversa Receives the Phillip Frost Award for Excellence

AWARD-WINNING Professor John Daversa, chair of the Department of Studio Music and Jazz at the Frost

School of Music, received the prestigious Phillip Frost Award for Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship this academic year.

Daversa was recognized by a selection committee of his peers as an exemplary faculty member for his outstanding contributions as an educator, scholar, and an internationally respected artist in the music industry. “The gratitude I feel for both the gifts and challenges of service through the muse of music—my love and passion—fills my soul beyond capacity and guides my inner

mission and purpose,” Daversa says. “To be recognized with this prestigious honor by Frost faculty, staff and

students, for whom I have tremendous respect and admiration, is an honor I hold close to my heart.”

Daversa is a three-time Grammy® Award winner for his 2019 recording *American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music and Freedom*. He also received three Grammy nominations in 2017 for his big band release *Kaleidoscope Eyes: Music of the Beatles*.

He has appeared on *The Today Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, and *Oprah Winfrey* as well as major festivals including Live 8 in Berlin, Monterey Jazz Festival, Montreal Jazz Festival, Montreux and Playboy Jazz. He has recorded with Herbie Hancock, Fiona Apple, Sheryl Crow, Andraé Crouch, Regina Carter, and The Yellowjackets.

Daversa earned a D.M.A. from the USC Thornton School of Music and taught previously at California State University Northridge. Additional accolades include winning the National Trumpet Competition and ITG Jazz Soloist Competition; he was also a finalist in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition. ||



## Inspiring Jazz Saxophone Professor Announces Retirement

GARY KELLER, M.M. '80, professor of professional practice, who joined the faculty of the Frost School of Music in 1982 as a lecturer and professor of saxophone and has served on the faculty for almost four decades, will retire at the end of the spring semester 2021.

“It is hard to imagine the Frost School without Gary Keller,” says Dean Shelly Berg. “He has been a guiding force and inspiration on our campus, a brilliant talent and educator that has launched the professional careers of hundreds of our students. On behalf of all of us at the Frost School, I want to express our deep gratitude. I will be enthused to hear about the accomplishments in the next chapter of Gary’s life and career.”

Immediately after Keller graduated from the Frost School with his master’s degree in jazz performance, he took the third tenor chair with the Woody Herman Orchestra.

Since his arrival in South Florida, he has become a fixture in the music scene, logging thousands of performances on saxophones and woodwinds and backing up major artists on stage and in

studio recordings. Keller has also made multiple appearances with the Frost Symphony Orchestra and Henry Mancini Orchestra, and appeared at local, national, and international clubs and festivals.

Saxophone lecturer Troy Roberts, M.M. '07, a two-time Grammy nominee who studied with Keller, says, “For the last 19 years, I have had the gift of studying under Professor Gary Keller as his student, teaching assistant, adjunct faculty member, fellow full time faculty member, and as a professional musician. I say ‘studying under’ for all of these roles, as I have never ceased to learn from this man—the most giving and focused teacher I’ve ever had.”

Keller has spawned the careers and shaped the lives of a long list of current and seasoned professional musicians and educators. His name is listed on the

liner notes of prestigious chart-topping releases around the globe, acknowledging him as a most influential mentor.

“A brilliant mind, still so freshly in love with his subject after 39 years of teaching, Gary Keller leaves behind him a massive legacy, and shoes seaming impossible to fill,” Roberts says. ||



## Teaching Inside Out

THERE’S NO QUESTION what drives Raina Murnak, assistant professor and director of contemporary voice and performance artistry at the Frost School of Music. She announces it upfront, loud, and clear, on her artist website: “I’m on an endless quest to speak truth in art and free the artist from his or her self-limitations. I do this as a teacher, and in my own creativity and self-expression.”

In her 20-plus-year career as a performer, educator, choreographer, and vocal coach, Murnak has adopted proven methods for helping others realize their best artistic selves. Her vision, innovation, and intuition have led students and clients to place in competitions like *The Voice*, *American Idol*, *America’s Got Talent*, and *La Banda*, as well as sign on with record labels and tour worldwide. These results are why she was recently appointed faculty leader in performance artistry and engagement at Frost, helping to implement its Strategic Plan (see *Peak Performance* feature, page 28).

In this role, she’s expanded her focus from contemporary performance to include the classical arts. While contemporary performers presume to cultivate their marketability, the practice has long been anathema for classical musicians. Murnak aims to change this view using the methods she employs with contemporary performance students. “There’s a fear of doing things differently because then you’re deviating from the masters. There’s a fear of dabbling in things to make them more engaging, entertaining, and more widely accessible,” she says. “The first barrier is being someone coming from ‘pop’ music telling a

classical musician what they should do to be more commercial. I let students know I have nine years of classical voice performance degrees and composition degrees. So, I’m approaching it from their perspective more than they know.”

Her pedagogical approach is based on students developing their craft from the inside out. Grounded in the methods of positive psychology—the scientific study of the positive aspects of the human experience that make life worth living—Murnak encourages students to recognize their innate strengths and incorporate them into their musical practice. Each student completes a character self-assessment to identify dominant traits, such as humor, social intelligence, leadership, kindness, and wisdom.

“It’s so important for me as an educator to understand where the students are coming from, and why something is important to one student and not another; and to use those strengths to bring them through,” says Murnak, who plans to write a book on the intersection of music, specifically the character strength strand of positive psychology. “I use a person’s strengths to help them do what they need to do. If it comes from them, that’s the push.” ||



**“I use a person’s strengths to help them do what they need to do. If it comes from them, that’s the push.”**

## Faculty Highlights

**Melvin Butler**, associate professor of musicology, and **Amanda Quist**, associate professor and director of choral studies, were awarded tenure this year by the Frost School of Music.



**John Daversa** and **Serona Elton**, M.M. '95, were promoted from associate professor to professor in the departments of Studio Music and Jazz, and Music Media & Industry, respectively.

**Kimberly Sena Moore**, was promoted from assistant professor of professional practice to associate professor of practice in music therapy.

**Christopher Bennett**, B.S. '05, M.S. '07, Ph.D. '10, assistant professor of music engineering, published “Digital Audio Theory: A Practical Guide.”

**Valerie Coleman**, associate professor of chamber music and entrepreneurship, and a composer, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, Sphinx Foundation, and Philadelphia Orchestra.

**John S. Hart**, assistant professor of practice, jazz guitar, released his 16th album, *Checkmate*.

**Brian Lynch**, professor of jazz trumpet, was nominated for two 2020 Jazz Journalist Association Awards, Best Trumpeter and Best Arranger.

**Brian Powell**, associate professor of double bass and music education, published his double bass arrangement of Igor Stravinsky’s *Suite Italienne*.

**Aaron Tindall**, associate professor, tuba, released a new album *Yellowbird*. Faculty on the project were Shelly Berg, piano; Chuck Bergeron, bass; Svet Stoyanov, drums; Brian Russell, guitar.



## 1970s

**Curtis McNolly**, B.M. '76, orchestrated four selections for singer/actress Megan Hilty, to be performed at the Kennedy Center. McNolly also composed, orchestrated, and conducted strings for a Walmart commercial featuring the vocals of Aretha Franklin.

**Bruce Hornsby**, B.M. '77, released a new album *Non-Secure Connection* in August 2020, and also performed in Virtual Reality, the virtual edition of Festival Bonnaroo.

**Albert Hospers**, B.M. '78, recorded and produced four releases for songwriters Ken Turley, Kemp Harris, Scot Montgomery, The Shoal Survivors, plus several original songs. Hospers also played bass on several recordings for Carl Sturken, and performed with harmonica player-singer James Montgomery.



**Jon Secada**, B.M. '83, M.M. '86, released a new album *Playa o Montaña* featuring Samo and the group Cero Coincidencias, blending musical elements from Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, and Spain. He also published *A New Day—A Memoir* chronicling his life and career. Secada performed for several pandemic-relief efforts this year, including the virtual concert series *JazzAid: Live at the Banyan Bowl* at Pinecrest Gardens.

A portion of the proceeds benefitted Chef Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen, which has provided more than 25 million meals in 400-plus cities since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 1980s

**Daniel Adams**, M.M. '81, presented a paper entitled "Lift up your head to the rising sun" at the virtual National Conference of the College Music Society. His composition "Reflecting Pool" for clarinet and bass clarinet was released on the Navona Records album *Drift*. Adams is professor of music at Texas Southern University.

**Bruce Zimmerman**, B.M. '81, composed the score for *Astronaut*, an IMAX film. Zimmerman then conducted and recorded the score with the Prague Orchestra.

**Kristian Truelsen**, M.M. '81, starred in the theatre production *The Birds and the Bees* by Mark Crawford at Magnus Theatre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

**Dawn Jewel Lewis**, B.M. '82, performed as Zelma Bullock in *The Tina Turner Musical on Broadway*; Lt. Dixon in *Blood Relative* on FOX; Capt. Carol Freeman in *Star Trek Lower Decks* on Netflix; and Patty in *Apple & Onion* on Cartoon Network.

**Joel McNeely**, B.M. '82, composer, continues his work on the popular television series *American Dad*. Outside of this role, McNeely is in pre-production for an upcoming movie *Thunder Lord*.

**Julianne Sharer**, B.M. '82, published "Street Circus," a 25-minute work for solo piano that was inspired by encountering wonderful street performers during a weekend stroll through the city.

**Paul Colombo**, B.M. '87, released his first contemporary jazz record *Rio Crystal* with the Paul Colombo Group. Colombo wrote seven of the eight original songs on the record.

**Philip Coady**, B.M. '89, produced the first-ever live broadcast from the famed Rudy Van Gelder Studio, *A Tribute to Hank Mobley*, which aired in November 2020. The concert featured the legendary Ron Carter on bass and Joe Lovano on tenor. The performance used the same piano and mics from the original 1960s Blue Note recordings.

## 1990s

**Ronald Dziubla**, B.M. '90, was named dean of the School of Performance Studies at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California.

Dziubla recently recorded for albums by George Benson, John Mayall, and The Airborne Toxic Event. In January 2021, Ron completed the WASC Senior College and University Commission's Assessment Leadership Academy as a member of Cohort XI.

**Edward G. Robinson**, M.M. '90, published a book titled *From Purpose to Fulfillment*. He is also the leader of a five-piece jazz band called Instant Attraction. A retired school principal, he now devotes his time serving as CEO of "Readman," an initiative to increase literacy in children. Robinson is also a mentor for the 5000 Role Model of Excellence program in Miami, Florida; chairman of the board for the Greater Miami Urban League and recipient of numerous awards and recognitions from the City, County and State of Florida.

## Industry Influencer Honored as Frost Distinguished Alumnus

JORGE MEJIA, B.M. '96, award-winning composer and music executive, is the recipient of the prestigious Frost School of Music Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2020. As president and CEO for Sony Music Publishing Latin America & US Latin, he is headquartered in Miami and oversees offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. He has been recognized as one of Billboard's Latin Power Players for every year *Billboard* has held the distinction, including most recently, in 2020.

Under his leadership, Sony grew to become the No. 1 Latin music publisher, with a roster that includes such artists as Luis Fonsi, Maluma, Nicky Jam, Camilo, Chayanne, Fonseca, Jennifer Lopez, Mark Anthony, Prince Royce, Shakira, and Ricky Martin, to name a few.

"Jorge is a giant of Latin music and has been at the forefront of its phenomenal growth across the world," said Jon Platt, Sony Music Publishing Chairman & CEO in a recent issue of *Variety* magazine.

Frost School of Music Dean Shelly Berg says Mejia is an exemplary recipient of the Frost Distinguished Alumnus Award. "His passion and drive has catapulted him to a career as one

**"JORGE MEJIA IS A GIANT OF LATIN MUSIC AND HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF ITS PHENOMENAL GROWTH ACROSS THE WORLD"**

The Colombian-born executive is also a Latin Grammy-nominated composer, known for his rigorous and eclectic work in classical music, with performances throughout Latin America and beyond. He recently composed the music for the digital world premiere of the Miami City Ballet's new work entitled *Places* by internationally renowned choreographer Claudia Schreier. His

"Prelude in F Major for Piano and Orchestra," recorded with the Frost School's Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, was nominated in 2018 for a Latin Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Composition.

"Jorge Mejia is not only an incredible musician,



yet additionally an extraordinary leader in the music business," says producer and business leader Emilio Estefan. "Being the president of a publishing company and a musician is a plus. I believe that is the motivation behind why he has been so successful in his position; he knows how a musician thinks and feels and understands our language. Because of this, he is capable of leading in the right direction for the benefit of all. Jorge has helped many people in the Latin Music Industry, and likewise helped people in so many different parts of the world in so many great ways. I am very proud of him and all of his accomplishments," says Estefan.

"I am honored to join the company of so many other distinguished Frost alumni, and to recognize the key role that the Frost School of Music has played in my development as a musician, composer, artist, and music executive," says Mejia. ||



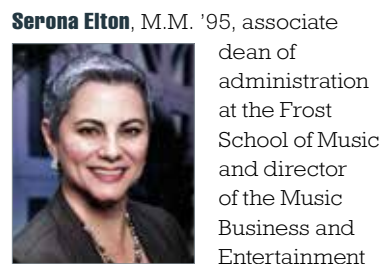


**Roberta Rust**, D.M.A. '91, performed and held master classes at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and Stephen F. Austin State University. She also delivered a virtual piano master class for the Thornton School of Music at University of Southern California.



**Corbin Abernathy**, B.M. '93, served as director for Philadelphia regional productions of *Boys In The Band*, Disney's *Tarzan*, and *I Hear A Distant Song* for Theatre Non-Conforming and the Philly Fringe Festival. Abernathy was rated among the top voice studios in Philadelphia by Expertise.com.

**Christy Crowl**, B.M. '92, M.M. '95, is a full-time music producer for The Walt Disney Company's Entertainment Division in Orlando, Florida. She has also served as music director for Disney's D23 Expo musical presentations in Anaheim, California.



**Serona Elton**, M.M. '95, associate dean of administration at the Frost School of Music and director of the Music Business and Entertainment Industries Program, was named a Yamaha Master Educator, joining a group of 30 distinguished academics, clinicians, consultants and authors who comprise the Yamaha Master Educator Collective. She was also appointed to the Mechanical Licensing Collective as Head of Education Partnerships.



**Michael Babcock**, B.M. '96, won a Hollywood Professional Association award for his work on the HBOMax film *American Pickle*. In 2020, he worked as a mixer on Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of The Chicago 7*. He was also the supervising sound editor, sound designer, and re-recording mixer on the films *Babysitter: Killer Queen* produced by McG, *Bad Hair* from Justin Simien, and *Candyman* from Jordan Peele.

## 2000s



**Robert Phillips**, D.M.A. '02, released a recording of an original composition, which featured works by seven Florida composers: classical guitar icon Jorge Morel, former Cirque du Soleil music director Benoit Glazer, as well as Troy Gifford.



**Samuel Howard**, B.M. '03, finished building a home recording studio in Nashville, Tennessee. Out of the studio, Sam plays bass and sings with guitarist and singer-songwriter, Molly Tuttle. He has recently performed on *The Grand Ole Opry*, *eTown*, *The Today Show*, and *CBS This Morning*.

**Jennifer Jimenez**, B.M. '03, was one of the six teachers selected for the Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards, a series of grants that recognize American teachers by spotlighting their extraordinary impact on the lives of students.

**Jonathan Lazar**, B.M. '05, is president of Urband and Lazar Music Publishing; with over 80 releases in 2020, including new singles from I Don't Speak French, Timmy Trumpet, The Kooks, and more.

**Christopher David Ragsdale**, D.M.A. '06, is chair and professor of music at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. In 2020, Ragsdale conducted the Florida All-State Band held in Tampa, Florida, for the world premiere performance of *Entrata* by Steven Danyew, B.M. '06.

## Abigail Young Named Managing Director of the Henry Mancini Institute

**Abigail Young**, M.M. '14, D.M.A. '17, a violinist, is the newly appointed managing director of the Frost School's Henry Mancini Institute (HMI). She based her doctoral research on "Job Satisfaction of Orchestral Musicians: The Effects of Non-Performance Organizational Roles." Outside of HMI, Young has an active performance resume with notable performances with John Williams, Kristin Chenoweth, Gloria Estefan, Ben Folds, Bruce Hornsby, Barry Manilow, Matthew Morrison, Arturo Sandoval,



and Rita Moreno. She appeared on two live PBS Specials: *Jazz and the Philharmonic*, and *Gloria Estefan: The Standards*. As a member of the Nu Deco Ensemble, she collaborated with artists such as Wyclef Jean, PJ Morton, Jacob Collier, and Macy Gray. She has also performed with the Naples Philharmonic sharing the stage with Itzhak Perlman, Immanuel Ax, and Joshua Bell. Other ensembles she performs with regularly include the Florida Grand Opera, Palm Beach Symphony, and Atlantic Classical Orchestra.

## Making an impact—and finding purpose—in the most isolated inhabited place on earth

KENDALL GRADY, M.M. '19, has always looked for a way to impact change through the arts. She found it recently, in the most isolated inhabited place on earth.

A talented violinist and graduate of the Frost School of Music, Grady was selected for the 2020 cohort of the Global Leaders Program (GLP), a highly selective program that empowers accomplished music professionals to combine music and business principles in ways that drive social change. "I always wanted to make music more impactful for my students," she said.

As part of GLP, Grady completed months of

But Grady was able to offer much more than kindness—she was able to use her skills, developed at the Frost School of Music and through GLP, to make a difference. She set to work every day, taking the small van up the hill to where the school was located, collaborating with local business and school leaders to help them find ways to improve various aspects of the Toki organization, which was struggling to sustain itself financially.

In her own private classes with the students there, as pictured left, she incorporated holistic teaching methods, similar to the ones she used as a teacher at the Frost Preparatory Program. She encouraged students to express themselves through music rather than focusing strictly on technique. In return, she saw them open up and feel more confident to make their own musical choices. Eventually, she helped implement new teaching methods across the school.



training in business management, entrepreneurship, community development, and cultural

agency, before setting off to her field assignment to work with the Toki Music School on Easter Island, known to its inhabitants as Rapa Nui.

What she found there was a local arts organization not just providing free music classes to children, but also playing a vital role in the community. "When I stepped onto the island," she says, "it was the first time in my life I felt like I'm in the right place at the right time, and that I had something, if only kindness and understanding, to offer to the people there."

Her months-long research, as well as countless informal interviews resulted in an 80-page case study offering other creative solutions to keep the school sustainable, many of which have since been implemented.

And although Grady left the island in February 2020, her work didn't end then. As the COVID-19 pandemic intensified challenges for the school, she led a crowd-funding campaign that featured an orchestral arrangement of Toki's anthem and raised thousands of dollars. Even today, she continues to raise awareness about their work and challenges.

"I learned so much," she says. "Being a musician or an artist definitely allows us to open up our minds and find creative solutions. But even so, I never knew the arts could have such impact outside of the concert hall." ||



**David H. Davies**, M.M. '04, D.M.A. '07, was appointed director of the School of Music at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. Davies was a guest composer at the 2020 Front Wave New Music Festival in Palm Beach, Florida.

**Nicholas Perna**, B.M. '03, D.M.A. '08, is associate professor of voice at Mississippi College and research associate for voice pedagogy at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Perna's podcast VocalFri, sponsored by Plural Publishing, was named an inaugural member of the NATSCast Podcast Network.

**Troy Roberts**, M.M. '07, lecturer, studio music & jazz department, released his 12th album, titled *Stuff I Heard*, on which he plays multiple soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones, as well as acoustic and electric basses.

**August Hass**, M.M. '08, a New-York based jazz and Broadway trumpeter, released a holiday album titled *A 2020 Christmas*, and self-published a children's book titled *Little Augie and his Trumpet*.

**Jillian Nulton**, B.M. '08, is senior manager of client relationship at the Harry Fox Agency. Nulton held a networking event for current Frost students and alumni to discuss career interests and opportunities within music, entertainment, and media industries.

**Nicholas D'Angiolillo**, B.M. '08, was featured on Billboard's 2020 Pride List as one of the top 40 executives shaping the music industry.

**Cristian Grases**, D.M.A. '09, was promoted to chair of the Choral and Sacred Music Department in the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Grases founded the International Choral Academy and fills the role of artistic director. He was also appointed as one of the artistic directors of the 13th World Symposium on Choral Music to be held in Qatar in 2023.

**Kevin Rose**, B.M. '09, participated in the Rise Together, Sweat Together fundraiser for World Central Kitchen's COVID-19 disaster fund.

## 2010s

**Bethany Tallman Adamson**, B.M. '10, is working as a Speech-Language Pathologist for Charleston County School District in South Carolina. She continues to play the flute in the Charleston Concert Band and volunteers as a Province Officer for Sigma Alpha Iota.

**Andres Vera**, B.M. '10, established Least Common Productions, a record label and production house. Vera also maintains a private music lesson studio and teaches high school students how to play stringed instruments.

**Evelyn Laguardia Erwin**, B.M. '12, was featured as one of the healthcare workers in the music video "Safety Dance," with Jimmy Fallon and the Roots.

**Emmet Cohen**, B.M. '12, released his latest album titled *Future Strides*, featuring contemporary stars Marquis Hill and Melissa Aldana. During the pandemic lockdown, Cohen developed "Live From Emmet's Place," a series of weekly performances by his trio and special guests livestreamed from his New York apartment.

**Jenna Rubaili**, B.M. '12, returns to the national tour stage of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, following the pandemic pause. Rubaili participated in the Rise Together, Sweat Together fundraiser for World Central Kitchen's COVID-19 disaster fund.

**Esneider Valencia Hernandez**, D.M.A. '10, D.M.A. '13, was invited to record with Paquito D'Rivera on the album *The Elephant and the Clown*. Esneider played alongside notable musicians such as Juan F. Ruiz in the production of the album.

**Andrew Leonard**, B.M. '13, participated in the Rise Together, Sweat Together fundraiser for World Central Kitchen's COVID-19 disaster fund.

**Matthew G. Limones**, M.M. '14, was featured as one of Billboard's Latin Power Players in the music industry. His current role is artist & label relations manager for SoundExchange, Inc.

**Arianne Urban**, B.M. '14, violinist, released her first single, "Wandress." It was co-written, produced, and mixed by Preston Klik.

**Alyssa Wilkins Stone**, B.M. '14, is owner and clinical director at Dynamic Lynks. She was appointed to the Technology Committee of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) and presented a continuing education workshop on neurodiversity at AMTA's National Conference, among other regional conferences. Stone is pursuing a master's degree in music therapy at Colorado State University.

**Bryan Powell**, M.M. '14, completed a performer's certificate from Carnegie Mellon University, and is now pursuing a doctorate degree in trombone performance at the University of Colorado Boulder.

**Javier Nero**, M.M. '14, D.M.A. '17, released an album titled *Freedom*, and accepted the position of lead trombone with the Pershing's Own, U.S. Army Blues ensemble.

**Alexander Weitz**, B.M. '13, M.M. '15, was recognized as one of the ASCAP Foundation's 2021 Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award Recipients.

**Nerissa Manela**, B.M. '15, is a music teacher and curriculum support specialist for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Manela was recognized as a 2020 Emerging Leader by the Florida Music Educators Association and was awarded the MDCPS Central Region Rookie Teacher of the Year.

**Eric J. McConnell**, B.M. '15, was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional finalist and won third place in the Denver Lyric Opera Guild's 2020 competition. McConnell debuted with Virginia Opera in its Fall 2020 Stayin' Alive initiative, and returned to Virginia where he played Sam in Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* and Dr. Dulcamara in the children's opera *Pinocchio*.

**Emma Marzen**, B.M. '16, was appointed Executive Director of the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. She served previously as assistant director and box office manager.

**Veronica Swift**, B.M. '16, released her latest album titled *Bitter Earth*, which reached number one on the *Jazz Week's* Jazz Album Chart. Swift was nominated for a 2021 Jazz Journalist Association award for Female Vocalist of the Year, and was featured at Emmet Cohen's, B.M. '12, weekly web series "Live from Emmet's Place."

**Kyle Guffey**, B.M. '17, is music and marketing coordinator at Flavorlab, an award-winning audio production company.

**Andrew Friedrichs**, M.M. '14, D.M.A. '17, won two national auditions for trombone positions with the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" in Washington, DC and the U.S. Air Force Heritage Band of America in Virginia. He is also active as a freelance trombonist, performing with the Colorado Symphony, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, and Boulder Philharmonic.

**Alex Brown**, M.M. '18, performed with Paquito D'Rivera at the Jazz at Lincoln Center's new live concert experience, *Live From Dizzy's*.

**Luca G. Cubisino**, D.M.A. '18, is piano teacher at the Frost Preparatory Program and director of its Advanced Piano Program division. In 2020, Luca created the #StayHome International Piano Competition, which was recognized by *The World of Piano Competitions* magazine.

## STAY IN TOUCH.

Share your news with us!

We are proud to showcase our Frost School of Music alumni, both near and far.

Send us your notable achievements, career milestones, news and updates to be included in a future issue of *Score* magazine.

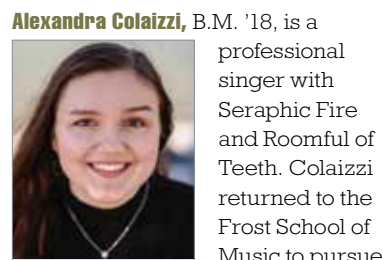
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**Laura Mazon**, M.M. '18, a Cuban-born classical guitarist, was selected and endorsed as an Augustine Strings Artist, a high honor for guitarists.

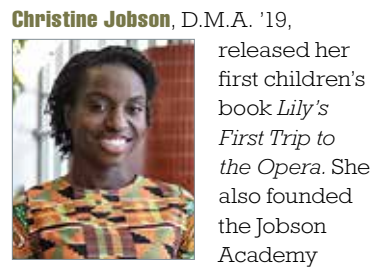
**Ryan Holder**, DMA '18, is associate director of Choral Activities at Northern Arizona University.



**Alexandra Colaizzi**, B.M. '18, is a professional singer with Seraphic Fire and Roomful of Teeth. Colaizzi returned to the Frost School of Music to pursue

her D.M.A for vocal pedagogy and choral conducting cognate.

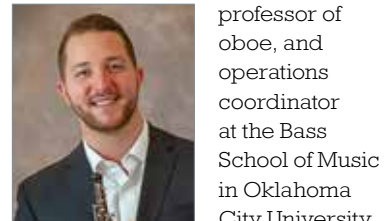
**Michael R. Dudley Jr.**, M.M. '18, a D.M.A. candidate at Frost, played lead trumpet on Brian Lynch's album, *The Omni-American Book Club*, which won a Grammy award last year for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. He was also a teaching assistant for the 2020 JAS Academy in Aspen, Colorado.



**Christine Jobson**, D.M.A. '19, released her first children's book *Lily's First Trip to the Opera*. She also founded the Jobson Academy

of Music, a virtual music school, and Black Girls Sing Opera, an organization dedicated to show the world that little black girls can do anything including sing opera. Jobson recently sang in the chorus at the Metropolitan Opera for their production of *Porgy and Bess*. She is an adjunct professor at Western Connecticut State University.

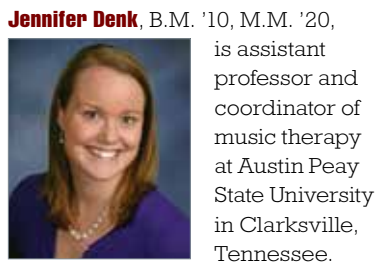
**Joseph Wenda**, D.M.A. '19, is assistant



professor of oboe, and operations coordinator at the Bass School of Music in Oklahoma City University.

Wenda is also on the faculty of the Killington Music Festival in Vermont and the Bocal Majority Summer Bassoon and Oboe Camp in Houston, Texas.

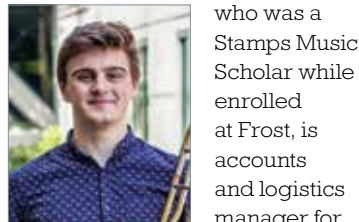
## 2020s



**Jennifer Denk**, B.M. '10, M.M. '20, is assistant professor and coordinator of music therapy at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee.

She is a member of the Tennessee Association for Music Therapy, the Tennessee Music Therapy Task Force for State Recognition, and the Continuing Education Committee for the Southeast Region of the American Music Therapy Association.

**Cameron Daly** B.M. '20, trombonist,



who was a Stamps Music Scholar while enrolled at Frost, is accounts and logistics manager for

the Heifetz Institute, pursuing an interest in the operations side of orchestra and music performance.

## Karen Kennedy: A Dazzling Presence

BELOVED and admired Karen Kennedy, associate professor emeritus and former director of choral studies at the Frost School of Music, passed away on August 30, 2020 at the age of 50. She is survived by her husband, Corin Overland, associate professor of professional practice.

"The Frost School of Music—and the world—irreplaceably lost the bright, searing light of one of its greatest stars," says Assistant Professor Raina Murnak, a close friend and colleague.

"Dr. Karen Kennedy, who bravely fought cancer for three years, was not only our star, but shone dazzlingly all over the world leading festival performances from Carnegie Hall to the Vatican, conducting symphony orchestras, professional choirs, garnering leadership positions and receiving numerous awards for her outstanding teaching."

Prior to her arrival at Frost in 2011, Kennedy served as director

of choral activities at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and also at Towson University in Maryland. She reluctantly retired in 2018.

Kennedy was renowned for her innovative rehearsal techniques,



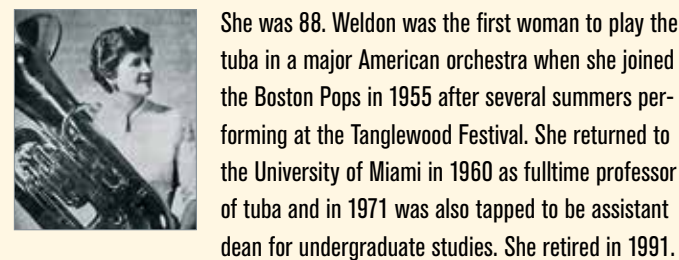
conducting sensitivity, and mastery of her art of communicating love—through her hands. She achieved artistic brilliance with her joyful sense of humor and immediate read of the classroom, audience, and atmosphere; entrancing all deeply into the meaning of each piece. Many students, alumni, faculty, and supporters from the University of Miami and the community will remember her outstanding musicianship during the Frost School's annual gala Winter Wonderful.

"Heroine and mentor to so many, she was the light that walked into the room with power and delightful presence. One can only hope to carry her razor-sharp wit and joie de vivre with them in tribute," says Murnak. ▮

## In Memoriam

**Alfred "Al" G. Wright**, B.M. '37, M.M. '47, passed away on September 5, 2020 at the age of 104. A pioneer in the band profession, he was founder of the National Band Association, chairman of the board of the John Philip Sousa Foundation, director emeritus of bands at Purdue University, founder the United States Collegiate Wind Bands, and a member of the American Bandmasters Association. Wright also served as president of the Florida Bandmasters Association, Florida Orchestra Association, and Florida Music Educators Association. He was also inducted into the Florida Bandmasters Hall of Fame and the University of Miami Band Hall of Fame.

**Constance Weldon**, B.M. '52, M.M. '53, passed away on August 7, 2020.



She was 88. Weldon was the first woman to play the tuba in a major American orchestra when she joined the Boston Pops in 1955 after several summers performing at the Tanglewood Festival. She returned to the University of Miami in 1960 as fulltime professor of tuba and in 1971 was also tapped to be assistant dean for undergraduate studies. She retired in 1991.

**John Pellegrino**, M.M. '58, died on January 24, 2021 at the age of 90. In addition to being a music educator, Pellegrino served as principal trumpet in the Rhode Island Philharmonic for nearly two decades. He was also a featured soloist with numerous groups throughout New England.

**Taavo Virkhaus**, B.M. '55, passed away at the age of 86 on February 10, 2021. He was music director and conductor of both the Duluth-Superior and the Huntsville Symphony Orchestras, with many guest conducting engagements around the world. Virkhaus wrote six symphonies and two violin concertos, as well as many incidental pieces.

**Frank A. Biringer**, B.M. '59, M.M. '71, Ph.D. '74, passed away on February 21, 2020 at the age of 83. He served as supervisor of music for Pinellas County Schools in Florida from 1979-1997, and played trumpet for many notable acts during his career.

**Mark S. Colby**, B.M. '72, M.M. '75, saxophonist, passed away on August 31, 2020. He was 71. He began playing music at the age of eight, and started his professional career at the age of 14. Colby played with notable acts such as Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Doc Severinsen, Sarah Vaughn, Sonny and Cher, and more. He served as a jazz studies adjunct faculty member at Elmhurst since 1997, and taught at Chicago's DePaul University for 31 years.

**Cheryl J. Robinson**, B.M. '74, died on November 25, 2020 at the age of 68. After graduation she worked as a music therapist in the Georgia Mental Health Institute in Atlanta, a Broward County mental health facility, and later with the American Cancer Society.

**Dean T. Barnhard**, B.M. '74, M.M. '80, passed away on July 11, 2020 at the age of 67. After working as a professional tuba teacher and teaching at the University of Miami, Barnhard embarked on a thirty-year law career. He was honored professionally in the Best Lawyers in America 2011-2020.

**Francis J. Manzella**, B.M. '82, died on August 16, 2020. He was 60. A renowned acoustic engineer, he won many awards for the world-class recording studios he and his team designed. In his spare time, he enjoyed building up his synthesizer collection and creating his own music.

**Timothy B. Berlew**, M.M. '86, passed away at the age of 61 on April 30, 2020. He began his musical career at the age of 13, and pursued three performance art degrees. In 2011 he was ordained as Reverend of the Methodist Church and served as a pastor in Wisconsin.

**Edward M Grotkowski**, M.M. '91, passed away on January 18, 2020. He was 65. His career as a music educator spanned three decades. He held conducting positions with the Erie Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in Pennsylvania, as well with the Greater Miami Youth Symphony in South Florida.

**James M. Stayton**, B.M. '07, passed away on March 21, 2020. He was 35. While at the University of Miami, James pursued a double major in music engineering and computer science with a minor in mathematics. His career took him to work at Amazon and Microsoft as a computer programmer.

**Gregory Cardi**, A.D. '20, passed away at the age of 28 in July 2020. A violinist, he was a graduate of the Colburn Conservatory, Juilliard School of Music, New World Symphony, and the Frost School of Music. An aspiring conductor, Cardi most recently served as associate conductor of the Frost Symphony Orchestra with Distinguished Professor of Music, Gerard Schwarz.

**Patti Herbert**, B.M. '57, a longtime benefactor to the Frost School of Music, as well as many other schools and divisions at the University of Miami, passed away July 27, 2020 at the age of 84. As a student, she was inducted into the Iron Arrow Society, the highest honor attainable at the University of Miami. She enjoyed a long career in real estate in Los Angeles. She and her husband Allan Herbert, a business executive and University of Miami Trustee, donated millions of dollars to the U, helping to transform academics and student life. The Patti and Allan Herbert Frost School of Music Program at Salzburg, the Herbert Wellness Center, and the Miami Herbert Business School are all named in honor of their generosity.



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\*In memoriam

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Thandolwethu Mamba, a vocal performance master’s student studying with Professor Kim Josephson at the Frost School of Music, performs as the Lion in the Frost Opera Theater’s production of *Fox Fables* by Peter Winkler and Rhoda Levine. It was a COVID-19 pandemic-era live production where all of the singers, as well as instrumentalists from the Frost Symphony Orchestra, wore hygienic masks while performing.

JEFFREY BUCHMAN, STAGE DIRECTOR; ALAN JOHNSON, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR; ROSA MERCEDES, CHOREOGRAPHER; CAMILLA HAITH, COSTUME DESIGN AND MASK DESIGN; JEFF SEMERLING, MASK ARTIST; STEVIE AGNEW, LIGHTING DESIGNER; GEORGE FELDNER–GIGS UP, SOUND DESIGNER

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