A MUSICAL LEGACY: Remembering Florence Kopleff

In the world of oratorio singing, Florence Kopleff was renowned for her contralto voice. At Georgia State University, the professor emerita was legendary for her teaching and generosity. To celebrate her legacy as one who gave her all in concert, in the classroom and to the campus, a memorial celebration took place on September 16 at the Recital Hall that bears her name.

Performers included the Georgia State University Singers, Deanna Joseph, conductor; vocal soloists Richard Clement, Kate Murray, Maria Valdes, Magdalena Wór and Serafina Furgiuele; Tania Maxwell Clements, viola; Walter Huff and Cary Lewis piano. Remarks were given by Thomas Shaw, Alice Parker, Lorna Haywood, John Wustman and Sue Sigmon Williams.

Miss Kopleff, who died July 24 at age 88, taught hundreds of singers in her three decades at GSU. Time magazine once called her the “greatest living alto,” and her voice was one that defined for many music lovers the ideal sound for a contralto: deep and rich in tone, rock-solid in technique and intonation, understated but eloquent in nuance.

“Over our 39 years of special friendship she made generous gifts to music and academic organizations, but unknown to most, she made many anonymous gifts to needy music students,” recalled John Haberlen, former director of the GSU School of Music. “A large circle of friends and the GSU music faculty were a part of ‘her family’ and today we celebrate her life and legacy.”

“She was an absolute icon as a singer, but that wasn’t what made an impact in my life; it was her generosity of spirit and her willingness to encourage greatness in all of her charges,” said Chris Fowler [BMu ’85, MMu ’93], who serves as the choral music director at Buford (GA) High School. “She saw the incredible value of those who would reach the next generation of musical performers, teachers and appreciators. Her dedication to excellence was contagious, prompting all of us to push harder and accept only the best that we could give... I can only imagine how many others can echo the same thanks to a dear lady who gave so freely to her students.”

Her legacy extends even to the musical programs she was not associated with. “The Georgia State University Opera Theater sincerely mourns the loss of a great advocate in Florence Kopleff,” said Carroll Freeman, GSU’s Valerie Adams Distinguished Professor of Opera, who stages operatic events every fall semester at the Kopleff Recital Hall. “Though not a huge opera fan, she continued to bless the opera program here with scholarships, recital- and concert-wear—which have made ample additions

School of Music receives multimillion-dollar planned gift

Georgia State University School of Music has received a multimillion-dollar planned gift from Atlanta alumna Aileen M. Valianos [BS ’78, MBA ’81] and her husband, Chris Valianos, in support of music students, faculty and programs.

“We trust that our gift will help the School of Music achieve its mission, take yet another step toward excellence, and benefit the students, faculty, GSU and the community,” said Aileen Valianos, whose company, Valianos Insurance, specializes in health coverage. Her husband, an attorney, leads Valianos LLC, a mediation, arbitration and counseling practice.

“In the last several years Chris and I have attended a number of productions by GSU’s School of Music,” she said. “We have been inspired by the enthusiasm of the faculty, students and the practice and commitment that goes into the education of a musician. For me, as a two-time graduate of GSU, the fit was a natural.”

The gift supports the university’s strategic goal of supporting students from all backgrounds to achieve academic and career success at high rates. The mission of the School of Music is to provide a comprehensive, rigorous and innovative academic program that is consistent with the urban context and mission of GSU, and that serves the pursuit of artistic, professional and scholarly excellence through experiences of lasting value to all stakeholders.

“A major gift like this will transform a program,” said William Long, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

(A-R) Chris Valianos, College of Arts and Sciences development officers Hope Carter and Cindy Forrest and Aileen M. Valianos.
Georgia State University is on a growth spurt—enrolling over 32,000 students from every county in Georgia, every state in the US and over 150 countries. The School of Music reflects this image, with 115 new undergraduate and 31 new graduate students this fall, for a total of 450 music majors in the School of Music.

This past year we had faculty and students participating in performances, musical festivals and research in the US, Germany, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Ireland, Italy, UK, Ukraine, Spain, China, South Africa, Greece, Taiwan and other locations around the globe. We are continuing to develop our international profile. This past summer, members of the College of Arts and Sciences and School of Music faculty were successful in our discussions in Brazil and Greece to begin collaborative agreements with the University of Sao Paulo, University of Campinas, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Universidade federal do Rio Grande do Sul, University of Macedonia and the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki. In addition, we signed an exchange agreement with the National Chaiyi University in Taiwan and are in similar negotiations in France, Finland, Germany and South Korea. This past month, a group of four faculty and six students traveled to China as part of our exchange agreement with Renmin University in China. We believe that if we do not educate our students globally, we are doing them a disservice.

GSU music students tend to be independent, self-motivated and focused on becoming the best music professionals possible. The level of instruction provided by our faculty is second to none but with an added element of individualized attention to each student. As a result, the level of our performances and the impact our students and faculty make in our community is laudable. As you look through this newsletter, you can read about the many accomplishments of our faculty and students. I know you will be as proud of them as I am.

Because of the quality of our performances and academic programs, individuals donate to various areas of the School of Music. Aileen and Chris Valianos have regularly attended our concerts and productions. They realize the value of education and the importance of what we do and have made a multi-million dollar bequest to the School of Music (see article on page 1).

A memorial concert in honor of our dear colleague and friend Florence Kopleff was held in the Georgia State University Kopleff Recital Hall on September 16, 2102. The event featured performances by the Georgia State University Singers, faculty Richard Clement and Tania Maxwell Clements, faculty alumni Walter Huff and Cary Lewis, student alumni Kate Murray and Magdalena Wór, and GSU vocal students (and Florence Kopleff Vocal Scholarship recipients) Maria Valdes and Serafina Furgiuele. Distinguished speakers included School of Music director W. Dwight Coleman, former director John Haberlen, John Wustman, Lorna Haywood, Alice Parker and Thomas Shaw, son of the late Robert Shaw. Florence left a sizable bequest to the School of Music.

The University Symphony Orchestra concert on September 30 in the Rialto Center for the Arts was dedicated to the late Neil Williams, who, along with his wife Sue, have been long time supporters of the School of Music. I have also established the Rachel Coleman Vocal Scholarship in honor of my mother, who was a significant influence in my becoming a musician.

I encourage you to attend one—or more—of our many concerts and events. Our 15th annual Holiday Gala Concerts at the Rialto Center for the Arts will be held on Saturday, December 1 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 2 at 3:00 p.m. These performances allow for us to celebrate with our entire GSU family and the Atlanta community.

The Georgia State University School of Music is becoming the destination of choice for high achieving students. If you would like to help the next generation of professional musicians and teachers achieve their goals, please contact our office at 404-413-5900. Of course, you can always keep up-to-date with all of the news concerning our school by visiting our website, www.music.gsu.edu, where you may also sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you on campus soon!

W. Dwight Coleman

From the Director

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The Sounds of Summer
School of Music students and faculty participate in summer opera programs

GSU Opera Theater students and faculty had an enormously successful summer season at the Harrower Summer Opera Workshop (June 4-24, 2012). School of Music director W. Dwight Coleman and Valerie Adams Distinguished Professor of Opera Carroll Freeman led a 50-plus member talented group of participants from around the US, the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, and a 15-member assembly of the finest faculty in voice and opera. GSU lecturer in voice Kay Paschal headed up the Harrower studio program, assisted by GSU alum and co-music director of GSU Opera Theater Rolando Salazar. Frank Hube, guest conductor from Germany, and Mr. Freeman, stage-director, assisted by Lucy Cain Hargis of Houston Grand Opera and Christina Noel Reaves, choreographer, delivered a beautiful Die Zauberflöte with two completely separate double casts. Harrower favorites Copeland Woodruff, Reed Woodhouse and Christy Lee prepared two nights of a delightful A Little Night Music, also double-cast. The centerpiece of the season was a special appearance by American singer Sylvia McNair, performing at the annual opera gala and teaching two exhilarating master-classes. Also on the masterclass docket were Atlanta Opera’s own Paschal, Kay Paschal served as voice teacher/masterclass instructor; and Richard Clement, tenor.

GSU students participating in the 2012 Harrower Summer Opera Workshop included: Larry Anthony, Jason Arnold, Alicia DeLoach, Amber Demery, Natalie Harrell, Melissa Joseph, Xavier Joseph, James Moonsuk Kang, Elizabeth King, Jessica Lane, Stephen McCluskey, Julia Metry, Andrew Nason, Jadrian Tarver, Ben Thomas, John Tibbetts, Amber Tittle, Julie Trammell, Oriana Wisdom, Lauren Wright and Megan Zhang.

La Musica Lirica celebrated its 13th season this past summer. Kathryn Hartgrove directed a production of L’Incoronazione di Poppea; Carroll Freeman directed Il barbiere di Siviglia; Kay Paschal served as voice teacher/masterclass instructor; and Rolando Salazar served as associate conductor for La bohème and Il barbiere di Siviglia.

GSU students participating included Amy Chastain, Tabita Iwamoto, Marina Miranda, Chelsea Smith and Lauren Westberg.

RACE TO THE TOP
Grant helps School of Music expand education program

A nearly $750,000 grant extension will help Georgia State University School of Music faculty expand an innovative program that integrates music into math and engineering education.

At Drew Charter School in East Lake, GSU faculty are helping to implement a program that pushes traditional music education into the future. Since last school year, fifth grade students there have been using iPads to compose music that they later perform in concert in what is essentially an iPad band.

The idea is to integrate the arts into science and technology education—all part of a growing movement toward so-called STEAM (science, education, technology, arts and math) education, which itself is an expansion of the well-known STEM education.

Armed with a recently announced $749,756 Race to the Top grant, Drew’s program is expanding to eighth grade this year and, after the Drew Charter School Senior Academy is completed, to ninth grade next year.

Dr. Katie Carlisle, project director for the Race to the Top grant, said students must integrate design and engineering when they compose their music because they have to do a lot of computer coding too. Simply put, this is much more than just stringing together some notes. “It’s very, very mathematically based,” said Dr. Carlisle, assistant professor of general music education. “You really have to come at it from that perspective.”

Drew has long had a strong performing arts program, which includes band, orchestra, choir and general music. The STEAM program gives all of that some added momentum by injecting technology into the mix. “We think the arts is really important to develop creativity and stimulate expression,” said Drew principal Don Doran, who has master’s and education specialist degrees from GSU.

All of this helps explain why Scholastic Parent & Child magazine recently named Drew one of “The Coolest Schools in America.” It was the only school in Georgia to receive that distinction.

In the future, Dr. Carlisle said, Drew hopes to infuse technology even further into arts education. Drew’s two-year Innovation Fund grant was one of nine that Governor Nathan Deal announced earlier this month. “The Innovation Fund empowers local communities to work together and think creatively about how to best address their educational needs,” Deal said in a statement. The Drew program is administered along with faculty from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

— Clynton Namuo

Students at the Drew Charter School in East Lake.
School of Music Welcomes 2012-2013 New Faculty

**Brice Andrus**, instructor of horn, is principal hornist of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Andrus joined the ASO in 1966, while still a student at Georgia State University, and moved up to the principal’s chair in 1975. He holds the ASO’s endowed Sandra and John Glover Chair. In 1967 he traveled to the Middle East for a two-month tour with the Georgia State University Brass Ensemble, performing in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Syria.

Mr. Andrus’ solo appearances with the ASO include works by Britten, Dukas, Knussen, Mozart and Franz and Richard Strauss. He has performed in music festivals at Amelia Island, FL; Madison, GA; Highlands-Cashiers, NC; and Bellingham, WA. Mr. Andrus has toured with the Summit Brass and was a featured performer at the International Horn Society Workshops in 1993 and 1999. He studied horn with Forrest Standley and Dale Clevenger. He is married to Susan Welty, the ASO’s associate principal horn.

**Marie Sumner Lott**, assistant professor of music history/coordinator, music history and literature, completed her PhD at the Eastman School of Music in 2008. Her primary research investigates chamber music in 19th century Europe with a special emphasis on the varying social roles of chamber music in private settings. Her forthcoming book Producing and Consuming Chamber Music in the Nineteenth Century will be published by the University of Illinois Press; it examines the relationships between publishing, performing, composing and listening to string chamber music between the lifetimes of Schubert and Brahms. Dr. Sumner Lott’s research and teaching interests also include the impact of music recording on the composition and performance of string quartets in the 1920s-30s, women’s roles in musical life during the 18th and 19th centuries, and Romantic Medievalism during the long 19th century.

Dr. Sumner Lott has presented her research at national and international conferences in the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada, as well as throughout the United States. She has published articles and reviews in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Journal of Musicological Research and Ad Parnassum, A Journal of 18th- and 19th-Century Music. Her studies of chamber music by Czerny, Dussek and Brahms are included in reviews in the Journal of the American Musicological Society Workshops in 1993 and 1999. She has published articles and presented papers at international conferences in the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada, as well as throughout the United States. She has published articles and reviews in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Journal of Musicological Research and Ad Parnassum, A Journal of 18th- and 19th-Century Music. Her studies of chamber music by Czerny, Dussek and Brahms are included in reviews in the Journal of the American Musicological Society.

**Christopher Rex**, instructor of cello, joined the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as principal cello in 1979, the same year in which he became the first cellist ever to win the string prize in the biennial Young Artists Competition of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Since then he has appeared as recitalist and chamber musician across the nation.

Mr. Rex took up the cello at age eight, completing a family string quartet in his hometown of Winter Park, FL. Following his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music with Orlando Cole and at the Juilliard School with Leonard Rose, he was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra under director Eugene Ormandy for seven seasons. He has taught at Gettysburg College, the New School of Music in Philadelphia, and the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, NC, and is now the cello chair of the McDuffee Center for Strings at Mercer University in Macon.

Mr. Rex’s most recent solo performances with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra include Strauss’s Don Quixote and concertos by Shostakovich, Victor Herbert, Dvorák and Elgar. He is a founding member of the Georgian Chamber Players, and is the general and artistic director of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival in Florida. He is also artistic director of the Madison Chamber Music Festival in Georgia and is on the board of directors of Chamber Music America. Mr. Rex is a regular performer at the Highlands Chamber Music Festival in North Carolina and has been principal cellist of the orchestras at the Colorado Music Festival in Boulder and the Grand Tetons Music Festival in Wyoming. He has performed as soloist at the Brevard Music Festival and Eastern Music Festival in North Carolina and the Chautauqua Festival in New York. Last May he played at the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, and this past March he performed Samuel Barber’s Cello Concerto with the Atlanta Symphony.

**David W. Vandewalker**, assistant director of bands, is a veteran conductor and music educator. He is nationally recognized for his passionate pursuit of artistry; he is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a high standard of excellence in performance musicianship, the modern wind band clarity of sound and developing well-prepared future educators.

Mr. Vandewalker, a third generation band director, received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Baylor University, earned his Master of Arts in Education degree from Central Michigan University and is amidst dissertation research examining musical expression in performance as a Doctor of Musical Arts student at Boston University. As assistant director of bands at Georgia State, his primary responsibilities include conducting the University Band, teaching the Marching Band and directing the Basketball Pep Band. He is also the music director and conductor of the Metro Atlanta Youth Wind Ensemble (MAYWE), hosted at Georgia State University.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Vandewalker taught for 23 years in both middle and high school settings in Texas and Georgia. As a recipient of the Sousa Foundation’s Sudler Flag of Honor, the Harrison Band (GA) program, under his leadership, was distinguished as one of the strongest, most respected, and well-rounded band programs in the United States. He is a nine-time recipient of the National Band Association’s prestigious Citation of Excellence Award, a three-time recipient of National Wind Band Honors Awards in the New Music category, and presently serves as a Member at Large on the NBA Board of Directors, the Sudler Flag of Honor Selection Committee for The Sousa Foundation, and the Advisory Board of the National Brass Symposium. Mr. Vandewalker is the author of 101 Ways to Harmonize the Madness for Music Educators, Foundations for Wind Band Clarity, Foundations for Wind Band Clarity Instructional DVD, and Everyday Stuff Every Director Needs to Know: A Quick Start Guide.
to our costume stock—accessories, props, and even operatic highlights from her CD collection … In her long, successful lifetime, her large, glorious voice (which she also shared generously) was only surpassed by her largesse. Her legacy of excellence in vocal music at GSU lives on and we are ever indebted to her.”

Kopleff was born in New York City, where as a high school senior she met choral conductor Robert Shaw. She joined his chorale and doubled as its secretary. A mainstay of the Robert Shaw Chorale, she sang on every recording the group made – even, as a tenor, on the male-chorus recordings.

“Music is my religion,” she said with characteristic directness. “I don’t have a family or a business to leave to the world, so my music, which is my life’s work, will be my testament.”

In an active solo career, she performed and recorded the great oratorio roles with such renowned conductors as George Szell, Charles Munch, Fritz Reiner, Eugene Ormandy, Jean Martinon and Maurice Abravanel. She also performed frequently in recital around the country. She recorded Mahler with Abravanel, Berlioz and Debussy with Munch, Beethoven with Reiner. With the Robert Shaw Chorale, she was contralto soloist in Grammy-winning recordings of masterworks by Handel, Bach, and Britten, among others.

When Shaw came to Atlanta in 1967 as music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Kopleff joined him because of the support offered by GSU. Music department chair Thomas Brumby arranged for her to be the first artist-in-residence at GSU, and within the University System of Georgia. Her affinity for her vocal students helped earn her the Alumni Distinguished Professor Award in 1982. She retired in 1998.

Her generosity continues to make an impact on campus. In 1984, she set up her first vocal scholarship, and today the Kopleff Scholars represent music majors at GSU who have demonstrated exceptional vocal talent. They often perform in the recital hall that in 2004 was renovated and renamed in honor of her philanthropy.

“I have the deepest gratitude for her donation to the Georgia State University Foundation,” soprano Melissa Joseph said of receiving the Kopleff Scholarship. “If not for her contribution, I would not be here pursuing my dreams.”

Another scholar, mezzo-soprano Serafina Furgiuele, traveled to China for a music exchange program that was only possible through the Kopleff funding. In Atlanta, Furgiuele visited Kopleff, sang for her and received important advice.

“She’s an amazing personality with such a warm heart,” said Furgiuele, who performed at the September 16 memorial celebration. “I asked her if I should live at home [in Suwanee] to save money or live downtown for convenience. She advised me to be near campus and make friends with other music students, hang out and sing together.”

Memorial gifts may be made to the Florence Kopleff Recital Hall Endowment Fund or the Florence Kopleff Vocal Scholarship, GSU Foundation, P.O. Box 3963, Atlanta, GA 30302.

—Michelle Hiskey, with reporting by Helene Erenberg and Nick Jones

When hip-hop met opera...

The BET Hip-Hop Awards are a far cry from the opera Madama Butterfly, but that hasn’t stopped School of Music graduate Julie Trammel [MMu ’12, vocal performance] from singing in both.

Ms. Trammel performed alongside host and comedian Mike Epps in a comedic and operatic skit that opened the hip-hop awards show, which aired on BET October 9th.

Mr. Epps, dressed like Mozart, and Ms. Trammel, who plays an opera diva, both sang in the skit, which poked fun at various hip-hop stars.

Ms. Trammel, who studied voice in the studio of Kay Paschal, won her slot in the show via audition. “The BET hip-hop awards show was an awesome experience,” Ms. Trammel said. “I loved working with Mike Epps and his writers. It was great to bring opera and hip hop together for this event.”

“Hip-Hopera,” anyone!

School of Music receives planned gift (continued from p. 1)

“That’s particularly true for our School of Music, which will build on already excellent curricula in music performance, production and education, not to mention deep ties to musical communities in Atlanta and around the world. I look forward to working with Aileen and Chris Valianos as we build a strategy for the school’s future.”

Currently, the School of Music enrolls approximately 450 students representing six countries and 21 states, served by 40 full-time and 30 part-time faculty. Concentrations include performance, music education, music management, music recording and technology, composition and jazz studies.

“Chris and Aileen Valianos realize the value of education and have validated the importance of what we do with their tremendously generous gift,” said School of Music director W. Dwight Coleman. “The significance of their bequest cannot be underestimated.”
Robert J. Ambrose, director of bands/associate director, School of Music, spent 11 days in Hong Kong this summer where he served as a faculty member for the 2nd Annual Hong Kong International Wind Conducting Symposium and guest conducted as part of the Slider Asia international trombone festival. In October he conducted the Concordia Santa Fe Concert Band in New Mexico, the Alberta All-Province Honour Band in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, and the Finnish Navy Band in Turku, Finland.

Jan Baker, assistant professor of saxophone, performed in September with Sonic Generator in their production of Fritz Lang’s Metropolis at the Woodruff Arts Center, and she and Tania Maxwell Clements gave the US premiere of Nick Demos’ Moment’s Notice on the September 18th neoPhonia concert. Dr. Baker hosted the 6th Annual Atlanta Saxophone Day at Georgia State University on September 29th. In October, she and Kenneth Long gave a recital and masterclass tour of Tennessee and Kentucky, featuring works recently recorded for their duo CD, Citizens of Nowhere. Dr. Baker was also one of six international judges for the ISSAC saxophone competition in Columbus, GA, October 25-28. She is performing in the Chicago Lyric Opera production of Massenet’s Werther, October 25 -November 26.

Curtis Bryant, instructor of computer applications, will have the world premiere of Joseph Conrad’s The Secret Agent, a two act opera by Mr. Bryant and Allen Reichman in a full production by Capitol City Opera (CCO) company on March 15, 16 and 17, 2013 at the Conant Center for Performing Arts on the Oglethorpe University campus. Artistic director Michael Nutter and music directors Catherine and Michael Giel along with the CCO’s outstanding production staff will bring this new American opera thriller set in 20th century London to the stage. Additional information is available on CCO’s website at www.ccitlycomer.org/performances/the-secret-agent.

Katie Carlisle, assistant professor of general music education, recently presented a symposium with Drs. Freer, Norgaard and Hirschorn and a pedagogy workshop at the 30th International Society for Music Education World Conference in Thessaloniki, Greece. Recent research presentations include the Imagining America 2012 National Conference (New York City, NY) and the 55th National Conference of the College Music Society (San Diego, CA). Upcoming pedagogy presentations include the Georgia Music Educators Association Conference and the Florida Music Educators Association Conference. Dr. Carlisle was a contributor to the recently awarded Race to the Top grant for 2012-2014. Her recent supervisory work with graduate students receiving the Johnny Mercer graduate assistantship includes: presenting with students at the Fulton County music educators’ professional development day and the adoption of graduate student Erin Layton’s curriculum unit “The American Musical” by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center for artist residencies in 2012-2013 with four urban New Jersey middle and high schools.

Marva Griffin Carter, associate professor of music history and literature/world music, has been elected to serve as president, treasurer and local arrangement chair of the American Musicological Society’s South-Central chapter (encompassing Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee) for the 2012-2013 term. She will host the chapter’s spring meeting at GSU, which will jointly meet with the Society for Ethnomusicology’s Southeast and Caribbean regional chapter. She has been appointed to serve on the editorial board of the Journal for the Society for American Music and on the Society’s program committee for their annual meeting in Little Rock, AR. Dr. Carter also was a panelist on the preservation of the culture of African classical jazz music at the Auburn Avenue Research Library and gave a multimedia presentation entitled “Swing Along: The History of Blacks on Broadway” at the Rialto Center for the Arts. Dr. Carter is the lead scholar coordinator of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant awarded in partnership with the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System for a programmatic series on “America’s Music: A Film History of Our Popular Music from Blues to Bluegrass to Broadway.” Gordon Vernick and Oliver Greene will also be contributing experts to this project.

Nickitas J. Demos, professor of composition/coordinator of composition studies, received five premiere performances of Pavo, by the Atlanta Ballet (May 18-20, 2012, Alliance Theater). He was awarded a MacDowell Artist Colony Fellowship (in residence May 7-20, 2012) and named a finalist in the Harvey Phillips Award for Excellence in Composition (June 2012) for Tonoi IX (solo euphonium). Additional premieres include Meditations on Amber & Flame (Musica Polonica Nova Festival, April 27, 2012, Wroclaw, Poland); Big, Bright & Beautiful Noise (37th Annual Conference of the International Trumpet Guild, May 24, 2012, Columbus, GA); Cathedrals of Air for alto sax and organ (August 28, 2012, Chicago State University); and Tonoi VIII for solo trombone (August 30, 2012, Tuscaloosa, AL). Tonoi VIII was also recorded over the summer for a forthcoming release on Albany Records.

David Frackenpohl, instructor of jazz guitar, has been busy performing, recently playing at the 2012 Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival and for the Atlanta Opera’s production of Don Giovanni (on mandolin). He also released his first CD, refractions, in July. The CD features all original compositions, and he was assisted by a number of fellow GSU jazz faculty.

Patrick K. Freer, associate professor and coordinator of music education, presented at several international events in the summer of 2012, including research presentations for the International Society for Music Education (Greece) and a graduate choral conducting course for El Conservatorio Superior de las Islas Beleares (Spain). He also conducted a concert of American music for choir and orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City. This fall, he will present a lecture for Florida International University, the Observatoire Interdisciplinaire de Création et de Recherche en
News & Notes

Musique (Quebec City, Canada), and the 2nd Symposium on LGBT Studies and Music Education (University of Illinois). Dr. Freer will conduct an all-state boys choir in Maine, and will have articles published in Music Education Research and Revista Internacional de Educación Musical.

Adam Frey, instructor of euphonium, hosted the ninth International Euphonium Institute (IEI) Festival in June, featuring more than 65 staff and participants from around the world. Mr. Frey also appeared as guest soloist and artist at the Carlos Gomez International Wind Festival in Campinas, Brazil and served as a jury member and guest soloist at the Jeju International Wind Ensemble Festival and Brass Solo Competition in South Korea. His student Paul Dickinson placed fourth from a field of 56 competitors from around the globe. His performances this fall will take him to Panama, Colombia, Colorado, Minnesota, North Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and finally Taiwan and Japan.

Oliver Greene, associate professor of music (world music/popular music), served as the international liaison and advisor for “Living the Garifuna Heritage and Culture After 215 Years - Strengthening Links, Forging Networks, Claiming Ancestral Space,” the first international conference, art and culture exhibition and film series on Garifuna culture held March 10-14, 2012 in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He delivered the paper entitled “Music, Healing and the Transformation of Identity in Lemesi Garifuna (the Garifuna Mass)” and screened his documentary film ‘Play, Jankunú Play’ – The Garifuna Wanâragua Ritual in Belize. He also served as an advisor for International Garifuna Reserach Center in St.Vincent and was instrumental in drafting the Conference Declaration. His article “Remember Andy Palacio (1960-2008): the Life and Influence of a Garifuna Musical Icon” will be published in the fall 2012 issue of Senderos: Revista de Etnomusicologia, a Latin American ethnomusicology journal. Dr. Greene will serve as the local coordinator and host for the Southeast and Caribbean Regional Chapter meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, March 1-2, 2013, which will be held in conjunction with the Southeastern Regional Chapter meeting of the American Musicialological Society.

Martin Norgaard, assistant professor of music education (strings), was awarded grants by the Center for Collaborative and International Arts (CENCIA) and the GSU Research Foundation in support of an event scheduled for spring 2013 entitled “The Improvising Brain.” A collaboration between the GSU Neuroscience Institute and the School of Music, the event features a concert and symposium exploring music, improvisation and related brain processes. During the summer of 2012, Dr. Norgaard was the invited orchestra clinician for the National Association for Music Education’s Music Education Week in Baltimore where he taught seven sessions under the headline “Adding Eclectic Styles to Your Orchestra.” In addition, Dr. Norgaard presented sessions and played a concert at the 30th ISME World Conference on Music Education in Thessaloniki, Greece, and taught a class on jazz improvisation for strings at Arizona State University.

Michael Palmer, Charles Thomas Wurm Distinguished Professor of Orchestral Studies, continued in his post this past summer as artistic director and conductor of the Bellingham Festival of Music in Bellingham, WA. The Bellingham Festival Orchestra is a national all-star ensemble made up of some of the finest orchestral players in the country. For the festival’s 19th season, Mr. Palmer conducted the orchestra and a stellar line up of guest artists in five orchestral concert programs. Guest artists included Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Jeremy Denk and GSU’s own Maria Valdes [BMu’12, vocal performance].

Amanda Pepping, assistant professor, trumpet and brass area coordinator, performed with the Southeast Chamber Brass as guest artist at the International Trumpet Guild Convention in May. Later that month, she performed with her trumpet-percussion duo partner Dr. John Lane and taught trumpet at the Alfredo St. Malo festival in Panama City, Panama. In July, she was voted “Outstanding Faculty Member” by the students at the Festival of the Spheres in Bragança Paulista where she taught and was a featured soloist with the festival orchestra.

Daniel Solberg, collaborative pianist, received the Award of Merit in the judging category, “Listener Impact: Motivational/Inspirational,” from the Global Music Awards for his album with Jackie Azar, Think on These Things. The album is a free resource for military chaplains and troops on the battlefield. Ms. Azar composed the music and Mr. Solberg arranged and produced it with DSol Productions.

Robert Scott Thompson, professor of composition and coordinator of music technology, has signed an exclusive contract with American Composers Alliance, Inc. of New York City for the print publication, licensing and promotion of his works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles and orchestra. With a history dating to 1937, ACA distributes printed and electronic scores for orchestras, performing artists, chamber ensembles, libraries and other users of sheet music, as well as licenses its works for academic and commercial uses. The ACA catalog of music is one of the most interesting and diverse collections of American music in the world and includes compositions from the early 1900s to the present day. Earlier this year, Dr. Thompson published two new compact disc recordings—Solace, a long-form electroacoustic work, and Play is the Supreme Bricoleur of Frail Transient Constructions, a collection of five recent compositions. He also contributed the title track for the CD Oceans, a compilation recording by the Sound for Good label in support of oceanic ecology. His works were recently presented at the Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States National Conference, the World Saxophone Congress and the International Computer Music Conference.

Gordon Vernick, associate professor and coordinator of jazz studies, performed with Claudia Roditi at the ITG (International Trumpet Guild) conference in Columbus, GA in May. His latest CD release, Destination, received a rave review from JazzTimes, with reviewer Bruce Pulver pronouncing: “Gordon Vernick, trumpeter, composer, arranger, education and jazz historian has delivered another stellar recording.” Dr. Vernick’s “Jazz Insights” AM 1690 radio program and iTunes podcast remains phenomenally successful, with millions of downloads.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

J. Lynn Thompson

J. LYNN THOMPSON’s successful career in music and theatre includes more than 30 years as a conductor, artistic leader, recording artist, performer and educator. He spent 27 seasons with Atlanta Lyric Theatre, a company he assisted in founding in 1980, and where he served as music director/ conductor and artistic director. Mr. Thompson was honored with the title Artistic Director Emeritus in 2007.

This past summer marked his 23rd season with The Ohio Light Opera (OLO) where he has served as music director since 1986. A native of North Carolina and raised in Tennessee, Mr. Thompson came to Atlanta at the invitation of the late Robert Shaw. Hired as a featured soloist for Shaw’s production of Leonard Bernstein’s Mass in 1976, Mr. Thompson’s career blossomed under the care and tutelage of Shaw and others in the national orchestral, musical theatre and light opera worlds. In 1975, he founded the orchestral studies program at the nationally recognized North Atlanta School of the Arts in Atlanta, GA. J. Lynn Thompson holds a Bachelor of Music degree in voice/music education and Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the Georgia State University School of Music.

Sounds recently had the opportunity to chat with Mr. Thompson about his musical history.

You earned your bachelor and masters’ degrees from GSU. Were there any professors that you studied with during those times that particularly stood out, and if so, why?

All of the music faculty I studied with and had contact with were excellent teachers and genuinely cared about my success. Their knowledge, experience and expertise were top notch and I was always challenged to push myself beyond my best—never accept anything less. The career path I chose is extremely competitive and challenging. My professors never let me forget that and it has served me well. They included Peter Harrower (voice), Charles Knox (music theory), John Haberlen (choral music), Lee Orr (music history) and Dwight Coleman (opera scenes).

Your career clearly spans the music education, orchestral, musical theatre and light opera worlds — rather diverse areas requiring different skills. How did your education at GSU impact and/or help to prepare you for success in these areas?

Beyond the rudimental/technical pieces of my studies, the ability to cross over from teaching to performing, arts administration to orchestrating a neglected score all came from my experience at GSU. I worked with a diverse community of quality professors and participated in a variety of ensembles.

Is there one particular area (i.e. conducting, performing, education, etc.) that is “nearest and dearest” to your heart?

Going all the way back to my high school years, I always wanted to conduct. At first, it was choral music and I had the great opportunity to work with Don Neuen and Robert Shaw. As my studies progressed I discovered the wide world of symphonic, operetta and musical theatre and pursued that track for most of my career. However, I believe we are always teaching … and learning.

Please tell us a little about your current position at OLO, and your responsibilities and challenges.

I am currently serving my 23rd season as music director for the Ohio Light Opera and with the position comes several responsibilities. auditioning, selecting and contracting members for the 32 piece orchestra. Musicians from all across American apply and audition for positions. Hiring the music staff which consists of an associate conductor, cover conductor, personnel manager, accompanists and librarians. Preparing, rehearsing and performing three or four works each season—on average approximately 30 performances in addition to preparing and performing the annual 4th of July Pops Concert. The Ohio Light Opera typically records two works for the Albany Record label each summer. I currently have 17 recordings with the company.

What was the most valuable piece of advice that you received regarding your career?

Robert Woodruff said, “The world belongs to the discontented.” To me, that means, don’t get too comfortable or too satisfied or contented — keep pushing yourself.

Is there any advice you would like to offer to our current School of Music students and alums?

Be prepared. All I’ve ever asked for are opportunities—then it’s my job to be prepared to do my best and take advantage of those opportunities. Remember, opportunities don’t usually come to you on your time table so be ready! My experience at Georgia State was life changing and I am so proud of the growth of the university, and especially the School of Music.
Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door

Associate professor Stuart Gerber performs Stockhausen’s Himmels-Tür (Heaven’s Door)

It turns out that Heaven’s Door is located below Forsyth Street in downtown Atlanta.

Himmels-Tür (Heaven’s Door) was composed in 2005 by the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, who died in 2007. As he was approaching the end of his life, Stockhausen had a dream in which a percussionist was in front of Heaven’s Door, playing the door as a musical instrument in an attempt to open it. After first writing the score, the composer then designed an instrument—a nine-foot wooden door—that could fulfill the promise of his composition.

The work is dedicated to GSU’s Stuart Gerber, associate professor of music and percussion area coordinator, who worked with maestro Stockhausen on the initial realization of the piece. Dr. Gerber gave the world premiere in 2006, recorded it for the Stockhausen Complete Edition and has given the American, Canadian, German, Portuguese and Estonian premieres as well. All in all he has performed the 30-minute piece nearly 30 times worldwide—the only person brave (crazy?) enough to undertake such a daunting work.

One of the only three doors in the world was built in Atlanta by architect and luthier Daniel Betsill (www.betsillworkshop.com) and currently resides in the GSU percussion studio located in the basement of the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts on Forsyth Street. The “North America Door,” as it is known, is a double-leaf door that stands 9 ft. 2 in., weighs nearly 700 pounds, and requires at least three people to assemble.

The door has been heavily in use as Dr. Gerber prepares for an upcoming solo performance of Himmels-Tür at Alice Tully Hall in New York’s Lincoln Center as part of the white light festival. Originally scheduled for presentation on October 30, 2012, the festival performance was postponed due to Hurricane Sandy—an “act of God” if ever there was one.

“I’ve been very lucky to be a part of this unique piece from the beginning,” said Dr. Gerber. “I’m excited and humbled to have the opportunity to give the New York premiere at such a prestigious hall…. I hope I’m able to play well enough so that it will open!”

Surely Karlheinz Stockhausen smiles down from above.

IN MEMORIAM:
Ruth Duncan McDonald (1921-2012)

Pianist Ruth Duncan McDonald passed away March 4, 2012. After early studies at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music, she became a student of Carl Friedburg at the Juilliard School. Beginning in 1968, Mrs. McDonald served for 24 years as an associate professor at the Georgia State University School of Music, where she played a leadership role in the National Federation of Music Club and the Mu Phi Epsilon. After her retirement, she served as an affiliate artist at Emory University, and spent her last years in Athens, GA.
GSU voice performance alumna Caitlin Andrews [BMu ’10, vocal performance], Jeanette Simpson [BMu ’11, vocal performance] and Julie Trammel [MMu ’12, vocal performance] all qualified for the semi-finals of the Orpheus Vocal Competition in Tennessee. Beginning in 1996, the Middle Tennessee Choral Society has sponsored the annual Orpheus Vocal Competition to provide financial support and encouragement to singers aged 19 to 30 from around the United States who are pursuing careers as vocal artists.

Josh Bias, former music management student [2006-2009] has been signed as an artist with Big Play Entertainment. He also plays with his band, The 6:30 Band, around the Atlanta metro area. Mr. Bias co-wrote the song (with writing partner Angelina Tucker) Bad Timing for LaTosha Scott, formerly of Escape. The song sold over 100,000 copies in its first week of release. The 6:30 Band will also perform with Ms. Scott on tour.

Kaitlyn Costello-Fain [BMu ’09, vocal performance] performed the role of Susanna in the Manhattan School of Music’s April 2012 production of John Corigliano’s Ghosts of Versailles. The production received great acclaim, with New York Times critic Anthony Tommasini offering her praise: “Singling out cast members is almost unfair since the opera is such an ensemble piece and the students were so uniformly good. Still … Kaitlyn Costello-Fain as the pert Susanna [was] among the standouts.” She will be singing Mélèrèdes in the Atlanta Opera’s November 2012 production of Carmen, and then heading to Wichita Grand Opera for her first Le nozze di Figaro, singing Cherubino.

Sarah Fishman [BMu ’09, music technology] graduated with a Master of Music in music technology from New York University in 2012. She is currently working with NPRNY, WNYC, Central Synagogue and Sony Digital as a freelance audio engineer.

Cullen Gandy [BMu ’10, vocal performance] is the tenor soloist in the premiere of Peter Menin’s The Christmas Story with the Saint Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra under the baton of Mark Shapiro at Carnegie Hall in December. He was invited to cover the role of Fritz in Offenbach’s La belle Hélène at Santa Fe Opera, where he will conduct Don Giovanni for the Belgrade Opera of the National Theatre in Serbia, and Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas at the Belgrade Early Music Festival.

John Irvin [BMu ’10, vocal performance] earned his Professional Opera Studies Certificate in 2012 from the Boston University Opera Institute, where he was the recipient of the Opera Institute award and the Esther B. & Albert S. Kahn Career Entry Award, given to an artist of great promise. While in Boston, Mr. Irvin made his professional debut as Malcolm in Verdi’s Macbeth with the Boston Lyric Opera. Other awards and accomplishments include being a nominee and finalist for the Sara Tucker study grant by the Richard Tucker Foundation, a prize winner for the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, a finalist for the Liederkranz Foundation International Vocal Competition and a prize winner for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (New England Region, 2012 & 2011). Selected to join the 2012-2013 Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Mr. Irvin has already performed as Basilio with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (excerpts, Le nozze di Figaro) and as Ferrando with the Grant Park Music Festival (excerpts, Così fan tutte). As part of a new collaboration between WFMT Classical Radio and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, he recently recorded art songs for themed recitals (Other Americans in Paris, Shakespeare Songs, 1929, Wanderlust) which will air throughout the year. For Lyric’s main season, he will be singing roles in Strauss’ Elektra, Massenet’s Werther, Wagner’s Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg and Verdi’s Rigoletto. Other future plans include serving as tenor soloist in Chicago’s annual “Do It Yourself Messiah,” soloist with the Apollo Chorus of Chicago in Haydn’s Theresienmesse and Charpentier’s Te Deum, and his international appearance as a soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Bryn Terfel and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Sir Andrew Davis.

Heather Lannan [BMu ’08, voice performance] currently works as the talent and project manager for International Liturgy Publications (ILP Music), a non-profit sacred music publisher out of Nashville, TN. The organization is creatively conducted by Catholic music artist and composer Vince Ambrosetti (3 time Grammy Award Nominee for Sacred Music). She oversees recruiting, maintaining and scheduling of everything from recording sessions to travel with the talent at ILP Music. Ms. Lannan is also working on recording an album with Anna Cage, Vince Ambrosetti and the Prague Symphony that will feature songs emphasizing discipleship and vocation. She is also privileged to be a vocalist in rotation to worship with Nic Gonzales and the popular Christian rock group Salvador (How Far is Heaven) at Fairview Baptist Church in Lebanon, TN. She has several MP3 releases online at www.ILPMusic.com.
BRASS

Paul Dickinson, a second year graduate euphonium performance major at Georgia State, recently traveled to South Korea to compete in the Jeju International Brass and Percussion competitions, where he placed fourth out of the 58 euphoniums, performing Christopher Wiggins’ Soliloquy IX and Eduardo Boccalari’s Fantasia di Concerto in the semi-finals. Mr. Dickinson also won first prize in the Solo Euphonium Artist competition at the International Euphonium Institute held this past summer, and placed fourth in the National Brass Symposium competitions in June. Mr. Dickinson is in the studio of Adam Frey.

The Georgia State University Trumpet Ensemble under the direction of Amanda Pepping gave a prelude performance at the International Trumpet Guild Festival on May 24, 2012. The 11-member ensemble gave the world premiere of GSU composition professor Nick Demos’ Big, Bright, and Beautiful Noise! which was commissioned for the occasion. GSU alumus Peter Bond [MMu ’81, trumpet performance] performed the first movement of Oscar Boehme’s Concerto for Trumpet, arranged by Dr. Pepping, and accompanied by the students. The October issue of the International Trumpet Guild Journal praised the performance: “The ensemble, conducted by Amanda Pepping, was precise, controlled and accurate throughout this very fine prelude performance.”

CHORAL

The University Singers, under the direction of Deanna Joseph, have been invited to sing at the 75th annual conference of the Georgia Music Educators Association in Savannah, GA in January, 2013, where they will perform works by Distler, Lauridsen and Debussy. The performance is scheduled for Saturday, January 26 during the morning concert session. An alumni reception honoring the University Singers will take place on Friday, January 25 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 45 Bistro (inside the Marshall House), 123 East Broughton Street, Savannah. The University Singers also performed for the Four Pillars Tribute dinner at the Georgia World Congress Center on October 4, 2012, honoring Mayor Sam Massell.

The 2012 Atlanta Summer Conducting Institute was an enormous success, with conductors participating from eight different states. Repertoire included choral-orchestral masterworks by Bach, Brahms, Mozart and Haydn.

COMPOSITION

Graduate composition student David Clark had his work, Threnody to the Victims of Freedom, selected through adjudication for performance on the 2012 Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI) Student National Convention at Capital University in Ohio on October 12-13. Mr. Clark is in the composition studio of Nick Demos.

JAZZ

The GSU Jazz Band went on a mini-tour of North Georgia, October 25-26 with stops in Rome, Cartersville, Ringgold and Jefferson. The group performed at various high schools in the region, as well as at Berry College. The Band will perform with special guest Duffy Jackson, drums on November 15 at the Rialto Center for the Arts, under the direction of Gordon Vernick.
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Upcoming Audition Dates: Monday, February 18, 2013
Friday, March 8, 2013 (instrumental) Saturday, March 9, 2013 (vocal)
For more information, contact David Smart at 404-413-5955 or smart@gsu.edu.

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