New Music Center Groundbreaking

In October, an event that has been anticipated for over two decades occurred. The UofM broke ground on the new Scheidt Family Music Center, a 70,000 sq. ft. facility on Central Avenue. The location will enhance the campus “arts corridor,” contributing to a vibrant performing arts scene in Memphis.

“Demand for the University’s music program has increased exponentially,” said President M. David Rudd. “No other school in the state comes close to matching the breadth and depth of programs available through the Scheidt School of Music. Our faculty sets a high bar for creativity and excellence in music, and in engaging and preparing our students for careers in ways other programs simply cannot. We’re excited to welcome a new facility that provides an educational environment commensurate with the quality of our instructional program.”

According to the School’s benefactor, Rudi E. Scheidt, the event was “the fulfillment of a long-time dream for a facility much needed by our so talented students.”

Boasting an expansive performance hall, the Center will double the size of the School of Music. The facility will increase classroom, performance, recording and rehearsal space. New technology throughout the facility will encourage more guest artist and conductor collaborations, connect students and instructors with programming from top universities and conservatories around the world and allow UofM students to be immersed in the latest trends and advances in music.

The Music Center will provide an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and Opera Memphis and foster new relationships with other arts organizations. Visitors will find an exceptional venue for experiencing outstanding performances by our students, faculty and concerts by visiting artists.
Four School of Music faculty members recently performed a concert in Nanjing, China, leading to a teaching experience at the Shanghai Conservatory and Middle School. John Chiego, bass; Elise Blatchford, flute; Robyn Jones, clarinet; and Bill Shaltis, percussion, were participants in the Nanjing Forest Music Festival. Chiego has a long association with the Nashville Music Scoring Orchestra that records film, television and video game soundtracks. The orchestra was invited to perform at the festival as the Hollywood Film Music Orchestra. With three seats open in the orchestra, Chiego recommended Blatchford, Jones and Shaltis.

Following the concert, the four had the option to return to the United States immediately or to stay in China for an additional five days. Only Bill Shaltis had to return at once. The remaining three were able to schedule masterclasses at the Shanghai Conservatory and Middle School. The Conservatory is the premier music school in China. The Middle School, which is affiliated with the Conservatory, is the equivalent of an American high school.

The School of Music has been building a relationship with the two Chinese music schools for many years. It started with retired UofM Symphony Orchestra (UMSO) conductor Pu-Qi Jiang. Jiang, who grew up in Shanghai, arranged for the UMSO to go there and perform with the Middle School orchestra in 2007. In the years since then, Professor David Spencer has visited and established an ongoing relationship with the trumpet studio there. Other faculty members have made the trip as well.

One of the strongest ties between the Memphis and Shanghai schools is Xiaou Zhao who now heads the orchestral conducting program at the Middle School and Conservatory. Xiao is an alumnus of the University of Memphis where he completed his master’s degree in conducting under Dr. Jiang. He has visited the School of Music several times, most recently for the Max Rudolf Symposium celebrating Jiang’s retirement.

According to Chiego, the experience in Shanghai was overwhelming. He says the students were ideal, listening, working hard and absorbing everything. “Just extraordinary. The Middle School orchestra is better than many professional orchestras in the U.S.,” Elise Blatchford recalls, “This was the best time I’ve ever had on a performing trip to China, partly because I got to go with my Memphis colleagues, but also because the students at the high school affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music were so warm and open.”

In addition to an open invitation to return, the School of Music hopes to expand the relationship by starting a program whereby Shanghai students come to the UofM for part of their college education.
Music Center Design Team Goes to Work

The State of Tennessee has named the architectural team of Memphis-based firms of Archimania and Fleming Architects and Chicago-based theater designer Schuler Shook as the design team for the new Scheidt Family Music Center. Archimania's reputation as an innovative firm delivering buildings that are striking in their appearance and within budget, and Schuler Shook's worldwide status as one of the premier performing arts theater designers, guarantees a facility that will draw well-earned attention to our program.

According to the company, “Archimania is a unique architecture firm in that they understand the extraordinary level of collaboration and interplay needed for a successful arts building.” The firm is responsible for the successful execution of prominent projects including Ballet Memphis, Memphis Sound Studios, Memphis Botanic Garden Encore Pavilion, Salvation Army, Kroc Community Center and Northwestern University Ryan Center. Barry Yoakum, FAIA, LEED AP, will lead the team.

Schuler Shook applies multiple perspectives based on their backgrounds in theatrical lighting, technical direction, architectural lighting, production management, and scenic design. They will design all technical systems and will integrate the technical infrastructure. Among their projects are Kings Theatre, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall, Melbourne, Australia; Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis; DePaul University’s Theater School in Chicago; Lincoln Center’s Koch Theatre, New York; Phoenix Symphony Hall, Phoenix; Civic Opera House, Chicago; and Boston Opera House, Boston. Jack Hagler, ASTC, will be the team leader for Schuler Shook.

David Kahn, principal with Acoustic Distinctions of New York, will serve as lead acoustical designer. Included in their portfolio are projects for The Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts, Minneapolis; A&E Television Studios, New York; National Public Radio NYC Bureau Studio, New York; University of Wisconsin, Rita Tallent Picken Center, Parkside, Wis.; and Illinois State University, Center for the Performing Arts, Bloomington, Ill.

According to Peter Abell, president and CEO of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, “The Scheidt Family Music Center will not only be a fantastic venue for the Memphis Symphony, but for the whole community. Every detail, from the appearance, the patron experience, to the fantastic acoustics is being finely considered. The Scheidt family is truly giving a gift to Memphis.”

Young and Old Share a Passion for Music

An experimental program, fostered by the School of Music and Trezevant Manor, has produced a set of unlikely pairings. Throughout the fall semester, elder residents of the retirement community mentored students from the School of Music. The students participating ranged from undergraduate to doctoral level. Once assigned, the pairs met regularly for meals where the students discussed their personal and professional goals and planned activities with their mentors.

Students elected to participate for a variety of reasons. According to Kashirim Nwobilor, violin, “Even though I have graduated from high school and have completed my first year in college, I know there is quite a lot I do not know about the world.” Daryl Rojas, piano, says, “Every person has something new to share and teach to others and I will be more than happy to learn.” Amber Harrington, vocal performance, says she was looking for a life coach. Pianist Carly Sigurdson wanted a new friend who could share her passion for music.

The mentors worked to prepare students to enter the workforce by introducing them to topics including marketing of skills, networking, leadership, understanding the economic realities of a profession, work-life balance, time management skills and service to others.

The program culminated in a recital performed by the School of Music students.

Daryl Rojas, Amber Harrington, and Kashirim Nwobilor with their Trezevant mentors.
Band on a Barge

"The thing for me was, I realized how impactful this organization has been in its commissioning of new works and in working with amazing students. Now Hunter is a part of that legacy."

Armand Hall

Assistant Professor Armand Hall and School of Music tuba student Hunter Farley shared a unique musical experience this summer on the waters of the Great Lakes. Both participated in the 2017 tour of the American Wind Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra, founded in 1957, is a performing ensemble made up of about 50 students that tours American waterways on a barge every summer, bringing music to towns and cities along the way. The organization is especially focused on new works, and has commissioned over 400 compositions since its founding.

This year, the theme of the orchestra was "The Americas," and it included students from North, Central and South America. The Great Lakes Tour began in Ottawa, Ill. and ended in Ilion, N.Y. As their tugboat pulled it, the barge (named the Point Counterpoint II), stopped to perform at waterfronts, and in local churches, retirement homes and summer camps.

Earlier in the year, the orchestra put out a call for musicians. Hunter Farley auditioned via tape and was selected as the sole tuba player. Along with other students, he stayed with families in the towns they visited.

Hall was selected to guest conduct the orchestra at the Morris, Ill. landing spot. His selection was based on an application that included videos of him conducting. During his time with the orchestra, he worked with students, conducted at concerts and even lived on the barge. According to Hall, "The thing for me was, I realized how impactful this organization has been in its commissioning of new works and in working with amazing students. Now Hunter is a part of that legacy."

Hunter says he auditioned because he was looking for something to do over the summer to improve his playing. In addition, he saw the names of some of the previous tuba players for the American Wind Symphony and recognized them as the best of the best.

"The first week it took a long time for me to balance my sound correctly because I was listening from a different point of view, (due to the arrangement of the barge) but eventually my playing improved tremendously," he says. The best part of the tour for Hunter was meeting and working with the other musicians. In his group most of them spoke other languages, but that posed no problem. "Music is truly a universal language," he says.

Looking back, he says, "being accepted into this was a whole different level of performance. It helped me believe I can be a professional tuba player instead of it just being a dream."
That Susan Owen-Leinert was on the road again lecturing about the Romantic composer Louis Spohr is not really news. Since she came to the U of M in 2005, Louis Spohr has been her research topic and she has lectured extensively in the U.S. and Germany over the years. What made this tour special were the noble venues, all in Berlin. And the whirlwind three different lectures (in German) presented in four days left her no time for jetlag.

The first lecture brought her to the beautiful Mendelssohn-Remise in the middle of the city of Berlin. This former residence of the famous Mendelssohn family is now a museum. The Mendelssohn Society of Berlin invited Owen-Leinert with her husband, Michael Leinert to present a lecture regarding the delightful and close friendship between Louis Spohr and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. On a personal note, this was a home-coming for Owen-Leinert, as the European part of her long operatic career began in Berlin. Conductor Daniel Barenboim is the artistic consultant for the Mendelssohn Society and their various cultural activities. He invited Owen-Leinert to the Staatsoper Berlin in 1993, thus affording her a giant step into the Wagnerian repertoire with their productions of Der Ring des Nibelungen and Der Fliegende Holländer. The chairman of the Mendelssohn Society of Berlin is also from her operatic history in this city. Andre Schmitz was the artistic director of the Deutsche Opera Berlin at the time of her engagement there for performances of Isolde (Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde) in 2001.

One of the largest and most prestigious music conservatories in Germany is the Hochschule fuer Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin. Professor Claus Unzen is the head of the Voice and Opera Department there and he invited the Leinerts to lecture on the operatic compositions of Louis Spohr. This lecture guided the students and other guests through the ten operas of Louis Spohr with musical examples. In the audience was their conductor-friend who was responsible for many of the recordings used, Christian Fröhlich. He has promoted the works of Louis Spohr for years, recording his operas, symphonies and violin concerti with various orchestras throughout Europe.

The final lecture was given at the wonderful Berlin Museum of Musical Instruments which is a part of the Kulturforum. This area of Berlin is magical, with several different museums, galleries, and a concert hall all within walking distance of each other. The department of music theory and music history at the State Institute for Music Research in Berlin invited the team to present a lecture at this lovely Museum of Musical Instruments. This presentation regarded their edition of the complete Lieder of Louis Spohr, published in 2011 with the Dohr Publishing Co. in Cologne. This 12-volume collection of more than 100 songs has been well received by musicians and musicologists alike. Several wonderful critical analyses have been written in magazines in Germany, England and the United States, praising the precise research, professional editing and attractive layout of the publication. This lecture was accompanied by musical examples as well as an extensive exhibit of manuscripts and research documents used for the publication.

Since coming to the UofM in 2005, Louis Spohr has been Owen-Leinert’s research topic and she has lectured extensively in the USA and Germany over the years.
Scholarship Honors Shirley W. McRae

The School of Music announced the addition of a new endowed scholarship to honor the legacy of Shirley McRae, professor emerita at the UofM. McRae taught at the UofM for 25 years and served as coordinator of music education for seven years.

McRae is also a widely known specialist in Orff Schulwerk, an innovative approach to teaching music to children. She presented numerous in-service workshops in cities in the United States and Canada and presented sessions at national conferences of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and at state and regional MENC meetings. She was active in adult and children’s choirs, serving as children’s choir director at Evergreen Presbyterian Church in Memphis from 1988 to 1993, and was an active clinician in choir festivals and regional summer seminars.

As a writer, she published extensively, with articles in church and music education journals. Also a composer and arranger, she published nine books of folk and original songs arranged for treble voices and Orff instruments. McRae had many secular and sacred mixed choral works published and was awarded numerous prizes for her compositions.

Dr. Ryan Fisher approached several leaders in the music education community about developing a scholarship in Professor McRae’s name. Her children, Stephen McRae and Lane MacAlester, communicated their desire to assist in these efforts. According to Fisher, “Shirley W. McRae devoted her entire career to developing and inspiring future music educators. I can think of no other way to honor her legacy than to invest in a future music educator through this endowed scholarship.”

The Shirley W. McRae Memorial Scholarship will benefit students at the School of Music who are preparing for a career in music education. To make a gift, contact Joanna Curtis at 901.678.5274 or go to http://supportum.memphis.edu/swmcrae.

BRAVO

Alumnus Dr. Kevin F. E. Sütterlin, director of Orchestral Activities at Concordia College, won an Emmy award together with his colleagues for the Concordia Christmas Concerts television production from last December. Sütterlin also conducted the North Dakota All-State Orchestra Festival (2017), and the All-West Tennessee Symphony Orchestra in February 2018.

Dr. Mathias Elmer been named as the recipient of the Arts Award 2018 in his home canton Glarus, Switzerland.

Matthew Palazzolo, BM Cello ’17 (student of Dr. Kimberly Patterson) won a position with Orchestra Iowa.

Carole Choate Blankenship, M.M ’88, DMA ’03, is associate professor of music and Elizabeth G. Daughdrill Chair in the Fine Arts at Rhodes College. Blankenship has recently been elected president elect, 2018-2020, of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. In that position she will serve as the liaison to the NATS Foundation and will be installed as president of the association in 2020.

Dr. Randal Rushing recently performed as tenor soloist in Handel’s “Messiah” with the National Chorus of Korea at the Seoul Arts Center and in Gwangju, South Korea, broadcast on ARTE European Television. He also conducted a series of master classes at Seoul National University, Ewha Women’s University, and Yosei University.

Dr. Kyle Ferrell has joined the faculty of SongFest, a prestigious summer program for singers. It takes place in May and June at the Colburn School in Los Angeles.

Dr. William Shaltis was invited to present a clinic at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) National Teacher In-Service in Dallas. He was also invited to present a clinic on snare drum sound production strategies at the Indiana Music Education Association conference in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dr. Kimberly Patterson and Dr. Marcin Arendt directed the inaugural Honor String Orchestra conducted by maestro Robert Moody. The festival hosted 60 string students from Tennessee high schools for a three-day festival which included rehearsals, masterclasses, sections, a wellness clinic and concerts. In addition, Patterson recently performed recitals throughout Vietnam and China. She also performed as a soloist with the Manila Symphony in the Philippines.
New Initiatives Lead School Into the Future

Every successful organization shares a commitment to grow and refine itself. The School of Music draws its success not only from tradition and dedication to maintaining existing standards, but, more importantly, in pursuing initiatives that keep it vibrant and relevant. Among these initiatives are four areas that are producing remarkable results.

21st CENTURY MUSIC COMMITTEE

The new committee within the School of Music is tasked with recommending ways to better prepare students to enter the music business when they graduate. For example, the vast majority of graduate students want to teach in higher education when they graduate, yet we do not require them to study pedagogy and teaching unless they are music education majors. Another example would be recitals. Students focus on the performance itself to the exclusion of other important aspects of success such as marketing the event itself.

To accomplish its goal, the committee has established eight desired outcomes that detail what every student should have knowledge and experience in when they graduate. The eight are:

1. The ability to create music
2. Experience in the business of music
3. Knowledge of music related technologies
4. Strong presentation skills
5. Strong keyboard and musicianship skills
6. Experience and skills in critical thinking
7. Knowledge of community and culture
8. Experience and skills in pedagogy and teaching

To make these outcomes viable, the committee has examined both the structure of the School and its curriculum. Based on their initial report, an increased emphasis on experiential learning is necessary for success. The committee has made three specific recommendations:

1. Faculty should begin to incorporate outcomes into their courses.
2. Move toward more project based assessments rather than just tests.
3. Add new core courses for ALL students – musicianship, music technology, music business and entrepreneurship.

PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

The music business area of the music industry division has been particularly successful in placing students in internships that give them real-world experience with the industry while expanding the School’s presence in the community. There are many internships including those with the Levitt Shell, Ardent Studios and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Music business students have also spread their wings by producing music festivals, the most recent of which was at Clayborn Temple.

For the third year, the School has advanced the Scheidt Outreach Program. This provides a pathway for SCS high school band, orchestra and choir directors to access resources at the school. Each semester the program offers at least three visits per year by School of Music faculty for masterclasses, sectionals or clinics. In addition, the Symphonic Band is staging performances at the participating schools.

PARTNERSHIPS

Another way the School is expanding its presence in the community is by establishing partnerships with organizations in Memphis. Currently, the School has partnerships with over 30 organizations. A new partnership with Trezevant Manor is explored in an article in this issue. Previous issues detailed the relationship with the School and the Jazz Workshop and Art for Life’s Sake, both of which serve high school students.

The choral division has been working with CoroRIO, an educationally based choral ensemble program designed to serve students ages 8-18 in the greater Memphis and North Mississippi region. In addition, Dr. Ryan Fisher is serving as the artistic director for Memphis ChoralArts. Another recent collaboration for the choral department was a performance with IRIS Orchestra and Opera Memphis. The School is continuing to build upon its relationship with Opera Memphis and has plans for more collaborative efforts in the next few years.

Another growing relationship is between the School and the Memphis Wind Symphony. The School’s Dr. Albert Nguyen serves as associate conductor and the symphony is using UofM facilities for their rehearsal space. They are also providing free performance tickets for School of Music students.

NEW FACULTY

The School of Music is rapidly evolving in terms of faculty. A full 25 percent of current faculty have been with the school for less than three years. This is particularly important in terms of ensuring our students are prepared for their future careers in music. The music industry is rapidly changing and new professors bring with them ideas to meet the challenges of that industry. The result is an overall revitalization of the educational experience encompassing performance, employment and preparedness.
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For times and locations, please call 901.678.2541 or visit our website [memphis.edu/music](http://memphis.edu/music).