

A Jazz Milestone

When Gunther Schuller took over the **New England Conservatory** in 1967, one of his first priorities was the founding of a jazz department. His logic was simple: “Jazz is an art form, just as great as classical music,” he says. He reasoned that conservatories around the world had helped sustain the classical tradition; it was time that a music school gave jazz the same kind of attention.

Still, it was an unprecedented idea: even though courses in jazz had been given in Europe since the 1930s, American universities and conservatories didn’t have jazz programs. “There was this weird neglect of this glorious music,” Schuller says. “Jazz wasn’t supposed to be taught.”

Schuller announced his plans for the new department the day after he took office. It would be a six-year undergraduate/graduate program, fully analogous to a classical curriculum. Inevitably, he encountered resistance from some of the more conservative members of NEC’s faculty: “They thought that jazz was irrelevant, degenerate music.” But he was in a good position to push his ideas forward. At that time, the school was in dire need of revitalization. Its finances were in tatters. The Ford Foundation had earmarked a \$2.5 million grant for



GUNTHER SCHULLER

NEC, but it was contingent on Schuller’s leadership. It was a mandate for change. “They had hired me to do something about this failing school,” he says. “Implicitly, I had a kind of *carte blanche*.”

“Gunther saw music as one world,” says Hankus Netsky, a former head of the jazz department and now chair of contemporary improvisation. “He saw musicians of different training, and he would say to himself, ‘*Why* do they have different training?’ He set about trying to create an education for the complete musician.

“Gunther’s vision...would seem fairly obvious, but it was not the way the musical world was in the 1950s and ’60s,” Netsky continues. “He’s like the Julia Child of the musical world: somebody had to get up there and say, ‘This food is boring!’”

It took two years for the department to come together. “There were hundreds of models for conservatories in

HANKUS NETSKY



this country,” Schuller says. “But then I had to populate that motto with the particular things that would educate in the performance and history of jazz.”

Schuller proceeded from some firmly held precepts: The department would be untouched by commercialism. (“Jazz doesn’t guarantee making money—far from it!”) Improvisation would play a key role. And the faculty would be drawn from the very top rung of jazz musicians.

“They had to be people who had made a serious impact artistically; they had to be teachers and they had to be committed to the idea that jazz had evolved,” says Netsky. “They could *not* be people with any sort of tunnel vision.”

NEC’s jazz department ultimately launched in the fall of 1969. Saxophonist Carl Atkins chaired the department, and the faculty included pianist Jaki Byard. One significant hire was composer George Russell. “That was stunning to most people—‘My God, they actually teach composition!’” says Schuller. Russell, who died last summer, pioneered harmonic theory in jazz; his “Lydian chromatic concept” influenced both Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

In 1973, Schuller instituted NEC’s Third Stream department, dedicated to exploring the intersection between jazz and classical music. The Third Stream—now named contemporary improvisation—and jazz departments have long commingled, with students jumping back and forth between programs. In fact, this kind of cross-disciplinary fertilization is very much a part of NEC’s identity: an outgrowth, no doubt, of Schuller’s commitment to exploring music of all

genres. Composer William Thomas McKinley taught in both the jazz and classical departments; the late Joe Maneri, a pivotal figure in NEC’s jazz activities, did most of his teaching in the music theory department. “You can have a very narrow idea of jazz—but that doesn’t work at NEC,” says Netsky.

NEC is marking the 40th anniversary of its jazz department with a two gala weeks of concerts. The first took place in Boston in October; a New York week will follow in March. But perhaps the greatest tribute to Schuller’s revolutionary concept is how thoroughly mainstream it has become.

Within a decade of the launch of NEC’s jazz departments, most major conservatories had followed suit. “Jazz has been welcomed into the conservatory,” says Ken Schaphorst, a former NEC jazz student who is now the department’s chair. “For our current students, it’s a given.”

“That concept of doing away with the segregation of classical music and jazz—now it’s no longer an issue,” says Schuller. “We’ve settled down. All kinds of ethnic and world music have come together with classical and jazz. Now we have not just the Third Stream—but three *thousand* streams.” www.necmusic.edu/jazz40

Thomas McKinley



JOE MANERI



CARL ATKINS

Family Matters

Growing up in a musical family can be perilous. When **Nadia Sirota** and her older brother, **Jonah Sirota**, were kids, they would sometimes find themselves trapped in what Jonah calls “von Trapp-like situations,” forced to play for their grandparents. These were not happy occasions. “Family dynamics are difficult enough without making chamber music,” says Nadia.

A more fruitful collaboration came some years later, in 2006, when the two violists—Jonah by then a professional; Nadia working on her master’s degree at Juilliard—took part in the premiere of *A Sinner’s Diary*, a chamber piece by their composer father, Robert Sirota (now president of the Manhattan School of Music). In the years since, Nadia has become a busy freelancer, while Jonah has continued his career with the Chiara Quartet. Their first professional teaming occurred this year, when the Chiara joined Nadia to record Judd Greenstein’s haunting “The Night Gatherers.” It’s the closing piece on Nadia’s debut solo CD, *First Things First* (New Amsterdam Records),

which also includes new compositions by Nico Muhly and Marcos Balter.

Much of the album straddles the line between classical music and indie pop—a borderland where both Sirotas feel quite comfortable. The Chiara Quartet, for its part, brings its music—

both contemporary and classical—into clubs that are normally pop territory, to audiences that may never have attended a formal chamber music concert. Their success in these unorthodox venues, as Jonah sees it, is an outgrowth of the music-consumption habits of today’s listeners: the wide availability of various genres, at little or no cost, has made it easier for listeners to explore outside their aesthetic comfort zones.

“When I was in high school, it was a real investment to buy an album—you had to *commit* to the album you were buying,” he says. “The unspoken thing now is that a lot of kids aren’t paying—but they’re getting access to a lot more music. They’ve found it online, or had their friends point it out to them. It makes the distinction between boundaries increasingly unimportant.”

Nadia, for her part, is a kind of crusader for musical catholicity—not just in her musical activities, but as host of the wildly eclectic radio show *Overnight Music* on WNYC-FM, New York. The confluence of interests between brother and sister may be somewhat accidental, but it’s deeply welcome. “Jonah and I are in a similar scene in a lot of ways,” says Nadia. “It’s a cool opportunity to develop a ‘friend’ relationship, as opposed to a purely sibling one.”

www.chiaraquartet.net www.nadiasirota.com



THE CHIARA QUARTET;
JONAH SIROTA THIRD
FROM LEFT



NADIA SIROTA

Heart and Soul

Gillian Rogell gets frustrated with the way some young musicians approach their work. “They think it’s about perfection and dazzling technique—and it isn’t,” she says. “It’s about *connection*.”

The violist and teacher started **Aspinwall Hill Chamber Music Foundation** (formerly the Heart of Chamber Music Institute) in 2001 with the aim of helping musicians and music lovers make those connections. The organization grew out of chamber music workshops that Rogell ran, and its activities have culminated in a DVD, *At the Heart of Chamber Music*, showing cellist Paul Katz and the Jupiter String Quartet working with younger musicians. The DVD lays out Rogell’s core beliefs as a teacher, and expresses her devotion to chamber music—in her words, “the distilled voice of music.”

“Think of it—you’ve got three or four people right in the moment together,” she says. “You connect. You hear the music coming toward you, then you give it to someone else. It’s that unity of purpose we crave as human beings—whether we’re playing in an ensemble or cheering the Red Sox.”

The Aspinwall Hill Chamber Music Foundation goes beyond standard musical pedagogy, taking in Tai Chi, yoga, and acting. The idea is to move past mere note-playing toward the deep communicative properties of music. Ideally, the players lose their self-consciousness—their attention to perfection at the expense of communicativeness. “It’s not about being right,” says Rogell. “It’s about being *together*. Sometimes we take a moment, breathe, and stretch, to demarcate our music-making—to separate it from the rushing and *thinking* of normal activities. Musicians know that, when they play a solo, they don’t want to be thinking. As soon as you start thinking—you make a mistake.”

Rogell tells of a session with three amateur musicians: older women who were working on a Haydn Trio. “I was teaching them that instead of playing all those quarter notes in the cello exactly alike, you have to use the bow and make it into a *shape*,” she says. “Music looks like it’s all at right angles—the stems go up and down; the staffs go across—but we have to make it into a curve. At the end of the piece, one of them said, ‘Wow, that makes me feel better than a massage—and it doesn’t talk as much!’”

The overall aim is to emphasize the spiritual aspect of music. “The concert hall is a place where something very important happens to people,” says Rogell. “I was giving a workshop in a small room, with the Borromeo Quartet playing Bartok’s Fourth. The whole room was breathing together: we became part of a tremendously charged conversation.”

“If people from another planet came down to earth,” Rogell says, “they would think that concert halls were religious places.”

www.MusicAlchemy.net



VIOLIST/EDUCATOR
GILLIAN ROGELL

Together

N a d j a Salerno-Sonnenberg has always gone it on her own. For nearly three decades now, the violinist has toured and recorded as a solo performer. But she has recently embarked on a whole different venture: she's the music director of **New Century Chamber Orchestra**, the Bay Area string ensemble.

The bond between the orchestra and the violinist dates from the fall of 2007. NCCO's previous music director, Krista Bennion Feeney, had stepped down, and the orchestra was playing with a number of guest artists, with an eye out for a possible successor. "It was a powerful experience when I guested with them," says Salerno-Sonnenberg. "It became very clear very quickly that it was a powerful chemistry." The feeling was mutual: within the next few months, the group offered Salerno-Sonnenberg the post and she accepted. "I took the gig—it was really that simple," she says.

"I did everything I could to include this possibility in my life," Salerno-Sonnenberg says. "The solo career hasn't diminished by one gig, so it's just a lot more work. The best analogy is that it was like an unexpected child: nothing you've planned, but suddenly 'Whoa, I'm pregnant!'—and your life has changed."

Salerno-Sonnenberg's undeniable dynamism has energized the orchestra and its audience. She has instituted a high-profile Featured Composer program: Brazilian-born composer Clarice Assad in 2008–2009 and William Bolcom this season, with fellow violinist Mark O'Connor slated for 2010–2011. She and the orchestra have recorded *Together*, a CD of folk-influenced string music, released on her own label, NSS Music. And even coming in the middle of the recession, her first season saw a rise in NCCO's ticket sales (up 50 percent) and the number of its donors

(up 75 percent). "The public connects with her, and she with them," says Parker Monroe, NCCO's executive director.

For the violinist, the NCCO post has been an indoctrination into a whole new area of music-making. "Sitting in the concertmaster's chair, I have to lead and I have to blend," she says. "It's very different from standing out as a soloist. I have to wear a different pair of shoes—literally! When I'm soloing, I put heels on."

A soloist's life can be a lonely one, but the NCCO post has given Salerno-Sonnenberg a new sense of connectedness. She mentions a recent concert at Carnegie Hall, when orchestra musicians and board members bought a box to watch her perform; one of them bringing flowers at her bows. "It was so emotional," she says. "It's lovely to have a family."

www.ncco.org



SALERNO-SONNENBERG PERFORMING
WITH THE NCCO

Filling a Gap

The Behrend College in Erie, Pennsylvania, does not offer its students a major in music. But the college (part of the Penn State system) *does* offer **Music at Noon**, a free, six-concert chamber music series, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The concerts feature such artists as the Imani Winds and eighth blackbird, and attract students, faculty, and members of the greater Erie community. The events are resolutely informal affairs, held in a student commons. Some listeners bring brown-bag lunches. Others stumble across the events when they visit the school's Reed Union Building.

Participating ensembles spend a couple of days in Erie, visiting classrooms on campus and at the nearby John C. Diehl Elementary school. These activities aren't intended just as pedagogy, but also as a way of demystifying the world of classical music. "A lot of our students don't come to us with a background in the arts—whether it's because of the reduced role of arts education or the bombardment of pop culture," says Gary Viebranz, the college's director of instrumental programs. "By letting them see that the musicians are real people, not snooty elitists, it makes the performers—and subsequently, their music—more accessible."



MUSIC AT NOON FOUNDER KAY LOGAN

The series is the brainchild of Kay Logan, a former flutist and erstwhile CMA board member, who saw "a big gap" on the Erie campus, and devised Music at Noon as a way of filling it. The funding comes from a charitable trust established by Logan's late husband, Harry A. Logan, Jr., who had been chairman and president of the United Refinery Company in nearby Warren, Pennsylvania. "My husband believed you should always put your resources back in the area where you earned them," she says.

A longstanding advocate of music education, Logan sees Music at Noon as less a standard concert series than as an educational program. "Music is such an incredibly valuable resource that expands the horizons of anybody who gets involved in it," she says. "But I'm very biased, obviously!"

www.erie.psu.edu/academic/hss/music/musicatnoon.htm

SEQUENCES

Cellist **Katie Schlaikjer** has joined the **Colorado Quartet**. Schlaikjer, a former member of the Avalon Quartet, received her doctoral degree in 2007 from SUNY Stony Brook, where she studied with Timothy Eddy. She replaces the Colorado Quartet's **Diane Chapman**, who resigned to move to Portland, Oregon, where she plans to teach and perform,

The **Biava Quartet** has announced that **Gwendolyn Krosnick** has joined the ensemble as its new cellist. Founding cellist of Trio Cleonice, Krosnick was the winner of the Cleveland Cello Society's Agnew Bach Prize. She succeeds Jason Calloway.

Robert K. Dodson has been appointed director of the School of Music in the **Boston University College of Fine Arts**. Most recently director of the Division of Music in the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, he has also served as provost of the New England Conservatory, dean of the Oberlin College Conservatory, dean of the Lawrence University Conservatory, and principal of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Trained as a cellist, Dodson began his career with the **Vaghy String Quartet**.

Janice L. Mayer has been appointed director of artistic planning and communication for the **Van Cliburn Foundation**. Founding director of Janice Mayer & Associates, she was an artist manager specializing in the vocal arts, as well as an arts consultant who served such clients as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the U.S. State Department Cultural Fellows Program, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and Bridge Records. Mayer is the founding president of Backshore

Artists Projects, a chamber music commissioning organization, and, from 2006 to 2008, served as associate director of Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS.

New England Conservatory has appointed **Rachel L. Roberts** as its first director of entrepreneurial musicianship, leading a program that will integrate professional and personal skills development into the musical training of students. A flutist and 2003 graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Roberts comes to NEC from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, where she was director of Strategic Planning Engagement.

In Memoriam

Rashied Ali, drummer

Hildegard Behrens, soprano,
Metropolitan Opera

Chris Connor, singer

Alicia de Larrocha, pianist

Jim Dickinson, pianist

David Drew, critic, musicologist, artistic
director; Boosey & Hawkes, *Tempo*;
Largo Records

Carleen Hutchins, violinmaker

Leon Kirchner, composer, pianist,
conductor, teacher

George Koutzen, cellist; New York
String Sextet, Little Orchestra Society,
Knickerbocker Chamber Players, NBC
Symphony, Kansas City Philharmonic;
conductor, Suburban Symphony

Erich Kunzel, conductor, Cincinnati
Pops Orchestra

Leonard R. (Len) Levine, advertising
and marketing consultant; former
publisher, *Chamber Music*

Lawrence Lucie, jazz guitarist

Ma Si-hon, violinist and teacher; president,
Si-Yo Music Society

Joe Maneri, composer, saxophonist/
clarinetist; faculty, New England
Conservatory

Les Paul, guitarist, inventor

Myor Rosen, principal harpist,
New York Philharmonic

Mike Seeger, singer, multi-instrumentalist,
music historian

Anne Bigelow Stern, patron of the arts;
Caramoor Center for Music and the
Arts; board president, Kneisel Hall
Chamber Music School and Festival

CORRECTIONS TO THE 2010 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The following listings were omitted, in the wrong section, or contained errors relevant to contact information.

ENSEMBLES

ARIZONA

Quartet Sabaku

Founded: 1997
Contact: Katherine Shields
1820 W. Raven Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85286
(480) 855-1282
Fax: (480) 905-9399
k.shields2@cox.net
www.QuartetSabaku.com

A string quartet committed to performing traditional repertoire and music of living composers. Recitals, young people's concerts, and masterclasses. Interdisciplinary educational residencies and workshops featuring integrated arts for preschool through college. Recent performances include Kerr Cultural Center, Festival Sinaloa de las Artes, and Classical Connections. Artist roster: Arizona Commission on the Arts. Cynthia Baker, Leslie Froeb Turner, violins; Katherine Black Shields, viola; Frederic Chao, cello.

CONNECTICUT

Jasper String Quartet

Founded: 2003
Education Activities
Management: self-producing
(314) 607-2042
jasperquartet@gmail.com
www.jasperquartet.com

The Jasper String Quartet consists of J Freivogel and Sae Niwa, violins; Sam Quintal, viola; and Rachel Henderson Freivogel, cello. The Jaspers are the graduate string quartet in residence at Yale School of Music and the 2009-10 Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts. In addition to winning the grand prizes at the Plowman, Coleman and Yellow Springs competitions, they were the first ensemble to win the Yale School of Music's Horatio Parker Memorial Prize.

ILLINOIS

Ryan Cohan Sextet

Ryan Cohan
4620 N. Beacon St., Unit 1S
Chicago, IL 60640
Education Activities
(773) 784-7045
Fax: (484) 771-3432
ryancohan@ameritech.net
www.ryancohan.com
www.myspace.com/ryancohan

Jazz sextet featuring original compositions and arrangements by Ryan Cohan. Instrumentation: two woodwinds (doublings on tenor and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet, and flute), trumpet/flugelhorn, piano, bass, and drums. In addition to concerts, available for clinics.

MICHIGAN

Pauline Martin & Friends (replaces deMaine-Martin Duo)

Pauline Martin
5876 Tabor Dr.
West Bloomfield, MI 48322-1818
(248) 626-2165
pauline@paulinemartin.com
www.paulinemartin.com

CMA-WQXR award-winning pianist collaborates with University of Michigan faculty and Detroit Symphony members in varied and innovative programs. Featured are the St. Clair Trio, Fair Lane Chamber Players and recitalists Yehonatan Berick, Robert deMaine and Amy Porter. Martin has recorded as soloist and chamber musician on the Koch, Naxos and CRS labels. Her recent release with clarinetist George Stoffan (*Postcard from Europe*) earned kudos from *Detroit Free Press* critic Mark Stryker.

MISSOURI

newEar

Year Founded: 1994
Ingrid Stolzel, president
P.O. Box 7156
Kansas City, MO 64113-0156
Education Activities
(816) 333-0626
info@newear.org
www.newear.org

newEar performs chamber works at the forefront of musical expression. Annual concert series features programs often emphasizing musical

and social issues of our time and cultural exchange through sound. With over 50 world premieres to its credit, newEar constantly examines the definition of new music, its origins, and its presentation. Flexible instrumentation generally chosen from flute, clarinet, saxophone, violin, viola, cello, piano, percussion, et al.

NEW YORK



Ljova and the Kontraband

Founded: 2006
Contact: Lev Zhurbin
118 W. 73rd St., #1C
New York, NY 10023
Education Activities
Management: self-producing
(310) 933-5673
ljova@ljova.com
www.ljova.com/kontraband

"Ljova and the Kontraband play genre-defying music beautifully and soulfully. Organically bringing together influences ranging from classical and new music, klezmer, tango, jazz, Gypsy music and more, their music is smartly original, steeped in tradition while moving those traditions forward."—Bill Bragin, Lincoln Center. Founded by composer and violist Lev "Ljova" Zhurbin and inspired by his collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project, the Kronos Quartet, and Osvaldo Golijov, the Kontraband draws on a multitude of cross-cultural influences to fearlessly forge a new direction.

Virtuosi Quintet, Inc.

Founded: 1983
Contact: James Jeter
564 W. 52nd St. #3G
New York, NY 10019
(917) 749-7797
chleojet@yahoo.com
www.jamesjeter.com

Performs music for duos, trios, quartets, and masterpieces of the

quintet literature. Named Young Artists of 1986 by Musical America. Includes: Karla Moe, flute; Elizabeth Condon, oboe; Larry Tietze, clarinet; Janet Lantz, French horn; James Jeter, bassoon. Core winds of the Twentieth Century Unlimited (Santa Fe, NM). Records for Koch International Classics and Musical Heritage. Masterclasses and children's concerts. National touring.

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

MASSACHUSETTS

Noralee Walker

246 Commonwealth Ave., #1
Concord, MA 01742
(978) 254-5783
noraleewalker@yahoo.com
www.noraleewalker.com

OTHER ERRATA

The Ahn Trio was founded in 1993, not 1979.