A note from the chair

It is an honor and a pleasure to chair the Music Department as it enters its 50th anniversary year. At the same time, we have also reached the end of our founding era with the death of George Steiner last December 30. To the end of his life, he remained vitally interested in our activities and our future. He also understood that today's department cannot be exactly the same as the one he founded. For that I remain grateful.

George and Annette Steiner also recognized the value of ongoing contributions to our ongoing enterprise. As pages 4-5 show, they are not alone. Your contributions help meet the scholarly and performance needs of our students, improve our physical environment, and—a new project—purchase much needed keyboard instruments. As we celebrate 50 years of standing for the arts at GW, we hope you will consider standing with us as we pursue our commitment to quality and leadership at GW and nationally.

Finally, under the department’s bylaws I will rotate out of the chairship on July 1. The next chair will be Douglas Boyce. Serving as chair has taught me much about our institution and introduced me to GW people I otherwise would not have met. It has given me pleasure in the energy, imagination, thoughtfulness, and individuality that permeate what we do, and in the integration of our program within a liberal arts environment. As I prepare to return my professional energy to scholarship, I thank everyone who has participated with me in our important and fascinating musical work. — Karen Ahlquist
Alumni

Jennifer Jones Wilson ’03 received the Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellowship for dissertation research at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA. She and her husband, Greg, celebrated the birth of Elliott James Wilson in August.

Washingtonian Magazine has listed the indie-pop band Jukebox the Ghost (Ben Thornewill, Tommy Siegel, and Jesse Kristin, all ’07) among its “showstoppers.” On their beginnings, music major Thornewill says, “It was really fortunate to have GW as a launching ground.”

Elizabeth (Bestey) Perlmutter ’07 works for the American Music Center (AMC) in New York. She and a colleague have developed a monthly program, Voice Capsule, heard on counterstreamRadio.com. She represented the AMC at the Portuguese Music Information Centre and contributed to an AMC publication, Taking Note: A Study of Composers and New Music Activity.

Adam Hall ’99 is developing a substantial career as an operatic tenor. He has sung leading roles by Donizetti and Mozart and originated characters in premieres. He has also received an Encouragement Award from the Marilyn Horne Foundation. In December he will return to GW to sing Rinuccio in the department's production of Puccini's Gianni Schicchi.

Bethany Flom ’08 has completed her first graduate year at the Manhattan School of Music. She performed in opera scenes and in a chamber music festival, and sang professionally with the National Chorale. She writes that her graduate study has allowed her to develop her artistry, and "has made me even more appreciative of my undergraduate liberal arts education.”

Kathleen Borgueta ’08 sang a lead part in the dramatic presentation of Margaret Atwood's novel The Year of the Flood with Ms. Atwood at Lisner. She sings at Foundry Methodist Church in DC and works for the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors.

Members of the GW Troubadours perform with students from the Bokomoso Youth Center.

Students

Colleen Sullivan ’12 was a public representative/management intern at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She worked at the information desk, in various management departments, and backstage during performances.

Last summer Jennifer Russo ’10 attended CoOPERAtive, a three-week intensive opera training program at Westminster Choir College, where she performed in numerous concerts and sang in a master class with Susan Ashbaker. She also spent her second summer at the the International Vocal Arts Institute in Montreal.

Steiner Scholar Thomas Richards ’10 is singing professionally this semester in a Washington National Opera concert production of Wagner's Götterdämmerung at the Kennedy Center. He is also preparing the title role in the department's upcoming production of Puccini's opera Gianni Schicchi.


Singing and Service in South Africa

by Kelley Stokes

The University Singers and Troubadours traveled to South Africa this summer with Profs. Gisele Becker, Ben Fritz, and Alice Mikolajewski to perform and participate in service projects. The two groups sang a diverse repertoire of American music, including Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms. They participated in a workshop with choral students at the University of Johannesburg and sang with the University of Cape Town's choir at their university. They also painted houses for low-income families and visiting a primary school to meet the children and distribute toys.

One of the most enriching experiences of the trip was visiting the Bokomoso Youth Center in Winderveldt. A small group of students from Bokomoso travel to GW every year to perform the skits they write and traditional South African song and dance. Many are hosted at GW, so visiting them in their environment was especially emotional for many of the students. They also studied the history of the country and visited Nelson Mandela's former home and Robben Island. The trip was an enriching, fulfilling, and eye-opening experience, and a once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Alumni of a certain cohort may recall Cathy Pickar's daughter Bess crawling under the piano during her mother's choral rehearsals. Fast forward--here she is (right) with Cathy (center) and current director of choral activities, Gisele Becker, after a concert last spring. Now a senior at GW, Bess majors in psychology and sings in the women's chorus.
immediately think of dance in this context, but it’s more than that. Recently, researchers in psychology, philosophy, and neurology have made strides in understanding the important roles the body plays in cognition and perception. Music, I think, can play a rewarding part in these academic investigations.” Prof. Montague has presented papers at regional, national, and international conferences and has published papers on the music of Luciano Berio and the Clash.

Prof. Montague's research centers on the relationships between music and physical movement. “Music both inspires and requires physical movement. People

After a search that drew an international applicant pool, the Department is delighted to welcome Eugene Montague as an assistant professor specializing in music theory. Prof. Montague is teaching courses in musicianship, theory, and analysis, and is looking forward to working with GW students at all levels. “I believe that the study of music theory, which is, in short, thinking about music, can play a vital role in our intellectual and musical development when it is approached in a spirit of broad inquiry. The nature of the B. A. in music program at GW encourages students and faculty to adopt just this spirit, and that’s why I am particularly excited to join this Department at this time.”

Prof. Montague's research centers on the relationships between music and physical movement. “Music both inspires and requires physical movement. People

Most recently, Prof. Montague was on the faculty at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. “Truthfully, I’m not missing the Florida weather one bit. I grew up in Ireland, so cooler weather is much more to my taste.” Prof. Montague attended Trinity College, Dublin and studied piano at the Royal Irish Academy. He won a fellowship at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and has been resident in the U.S.A. ever since, earning a master's at UMass and a Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. "I enjoyed living and working in Philadelphia, and I’m delighted to be in D. C., with its similar urban vigor. GW’s position in the city is such an important part of its appeal for all of us here, and I’m privileged to be joining such a vibrant community in one of the great American cities.”

Our dignified city of classical pillars and center-hall colonials might not seem appropriate for a fringe, but Washington now has a Fringe Festival. GW's contribution to the two-week summer series was The Girl who Waters the Basil and the Inquisitive Prince, a "pocket opera" with a libretto by Jodi Kanter of the Department of Theatre and Dance after a story by Federico Garcia Lorca and music by Douglas Boyce. Performers from the department included soprano Rebecca Ocampo as Irene (a.k.a."the girl"), tenor Robert Baker as the prince, Cory Davis '08 in speaking roles as the Market and the Page, and David Jones, clarinets. The Washington City Paper reviewer called the piece "a nimble 40 minutes of well-crafted music." The production was funded by GW's University Facilitating Fund, which is also supporting a production in the spring with faculty and students.

In February, the GW Orchestra strings met the challenge of a Douglas Boyce premiere, performing his Concerto Grosso with faculty soloists Lori Barnet, cello, Joseph Gascho, harpsichord, and David Jones, clarinet. On the same program, the full orchestra accompanied Frank Conlon in Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 4. Nancia D'Alimonte conducted.

Composer and electronic studio director Steve Hilmy continued his collaborative work with choreographer and dancer Maida Withers of the Department of Theatre and Dance with a full-length piece, Fare Well. They performed the work and offered workshops at the Performatica Festival at the Universidad de las Americas in Puebla, Mexico in April. They also performed in Kanab, Utah at the Amazing Earthfest Celebration.

Saxophonist and jazz studies coordinator Peter Fraize has released Organic Matter, his new CD of original compositions featuring jazz organist Greg Hatza.
For the Department of Music

The donors listed here have either supported the general needs of the department or have designated a specific program or activity to receive the funds. The University Singers’ and Troubadours’ experience in South Africa benefitted enormously from the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends. We have been able to continue a project in technology upgrades for our two main classrooms (including our all-purpose room, Phillips B120) and the electronic music studio. We have also been able to increase our support of student scholarly and creative activities, especially the senior capstone projects.

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Mr. Daniel Robert Witkin ’06

For the Steiner Scholarship in Memory of George Steiner

The department honors its founder, Professor George Steiner, who passed away on December 30, 2008. A violinist and conductor, Prof. Steiner was a prominent member of the DC musical community. He and his wife Annette established the George Steiner Music Scholarship in 1984, which named the first Steiner Scholar in 1990. The contributions to the Steiner Scholarship listed below are in addition to the contributions made a year ago in honor of Prof. Steiner’s 90th birthday.

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Dr. Omega L. Silva and Mr. Harold Bryant Webb ’75
Ms. Carol R. Tilford
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Mr. Paul C. Zmola

This year we received $52,838.19 in contributions. We are truly grateful for your support.
For the Choral Program
In Memory of Beverly A. Tuller ‘57

Beverly Alexander Tuller ‘57 passed away on April 28, 2009. While a student, she entertained American troops on five continents with the GW Traveling Troubadours. She was a regular and generous donor to the GW choral program, sang at Harmon reunions, and hosted touring GW singers at her home.

Mrs. Sally A. Cacheris and The Hon. James Cacheris ‘56
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Mrs. Jane W. Van Brimer ’55
Ms. Annette M. Wigton
Mr. and Mrs. T. Wilkinson
Mr. Brian T. and
Mrs. Elizabeth S. Yudd

For the Harmon Choral Endowment in Memory of Patricia Anne Taylor Young ’56

We are grateful to Ms. Young and her family for designating the GW Choral Endowment as the recipient of gifts in her memory. Patricia Young was active in choral music at GW and in the Harmon Choral Associates. She was an events planner and a volunteer for the Art Guild of Washington, the Junior Woman’s Club of Chevy Chase, and the National Symphony Orchestra. She also performed in musical productions of the Potomac Theatre Company. The long list of contributors speaks to the high regard in which she was held by her many friends and musical associates.

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Mrs. Janice Kendrick Archbold
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Mr. Neville G. Barr
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Mrs. Beverly Perry Currier ‘51
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Mrs. Jane W. Van Brimer ’55
Ms. Annette M. Wigton
Mr. and Mrs. T. Wilkinson
Mr. Brian T. and
Mrs. Elizabeth S. Yudd

NOTABLE GIFTS

We are thrilled to receive an anonymous donation of $25,000 toward the Steiner Scholarship endowment and our keyboard instrument fund. We are particularly honored to receive gifts from current students and recent graduates through the Colonial Community student giving program. Special thanks to Kelley Stokes ’10 for her leadership in this effort.

Thanks also to donors who have obtained matching funds from employers. If your organization has a matching gift program, we hope you will make the same request.

If you would like to donate to the music department, please make checks payable to The George Washington University and designate music on the memo line. They can be sent directly to:

The George Washington University
Division of Development and Alumni Relations
ATTN: Gift Processing
2100 M Street, NW Suite 310
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Please indicate how you would like your names to be listed in future acknowledgements.
Scholarship

Individuals named here are Music Department faculty members unless otherwise identified. If you are a GW graduate (regardless of major) who has pursued music scholarship, we would love to hear from you.

Laura Youens presented conference papers “Why scold a noble bride” at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, and “Accidentals in 16th-Century Music: A Case Study” at the International Musicological Society conference in Amsterdam.


Kathleen Biddick Smith, who taught music theory and history in the department for the previous two years, completed her Ph.D. at Florida State University with a dissertation entitled "Musical Processes in Selected Works by Michael Torke."


Jessica Krash is participating for a second year in the Library of Congress’s innovative series Music and the Brain. She gave a presentation with Norman Middleton entitled "Dangerous Music III: Suckers, Firestarters, and Cultural Anarchists, Oh My!"

Eileen Guenther published an article, "We are the Strange Land: Making a Case for Global Music," in Pastoral Music and contributed to "Clergy Formation in Music: Long-cherished Dreams Come to Life," in the same journal.

Aaron Berkowitz ’99 coauthored an article with Daniel Ansari, "Expertise-related Deactivation of the Right Temporoparietal Junction During Musical Improvisation," in the journal NeuroImage (vol. 49, no. 1), which explores relationships between brainwaves and keyboard improvisation. The article was summarized by Alex Ross in the New Yorker of August 31.


We were happy to have a kind and informative letter from John F. Bullough ’54, a member of the Harmon Choral Associates. With no music major available, he majored in speech while serving as the student choral conductor under "Doc" Harmon. He taught music and speech at Fairleigh Dickinson University, including stints as fine arts department chair and campus faculty speaker. Of his career, he writes, "Kudos to the (then) Speech Department at GWU!"

Prof. Bullough also reports the death of his wife, Dorothy Baines Bullough (GSEHD ’48), in February 2008. The Bulloughs met singing at GW: "Dot was one of the ‘three little maids from school’ in a very polished production of The Mikado with the symphony orchestra of the US Air Force. That production began a relationship between GWU and the Air Force that led directly to the formation of the Traveling Troubadours and their first trip to Greenland. We were scheduled to be married and therefore had to miss the trip."
The department welcomed a new colleague, jazz trumpeter Thad Wilson, in January. A graduate of Jersey City State College, he performs regularly in the Washington area and on tour, and has offered workshops and clinics internationally. He played recently at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage with his trio, in the Duke Ellington Jazz Festival "New Orleans on the Potomac;" and on tour in the musical Ella, in which he portrayed Louis Armstrong. He performs regularly and has recorded with the Thad Wilson Jazz Orchestra.

The string duo of Uri Wassertzug and Elizabeth Field performed the duo for violin and viola by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco at a Viola Society of America recital in New York. Prof. Wassertzug plays viola in the National Chamber Ensemble and teaches at Howard University in addition to GW.

Berta Rojas' latest project is a guitar competition on the Web: she is director and one of five judges in the Barrios World Wide Web Competition, which has attracted contestants from around the world performing music by the distinguished Paraguayan guitar composer Augustin Barrios. As of this writing, Prof. Rojas has just returned from concerts in Kolkata and New Delhi, India and is currently judging a competition in Venezuela.

Mezzo-soprano Amy Reiff sang with the Cantiamo Vocal Quartet on the Community College of Baltimore County Music Forum concert series and on St. Mark's Church series in Easton, MD. She sang at an Irving Berlin lecture-recital with pianist Frank Conlon for the National League of Pen Women and in concerts of music by Jewish composers.

Malinee Peris, the department’s piano studies coordinator, serves on the boards of Georgetown’s Dumbarton Concert Series and Amico Artists. This summer she made a CD promotional tour to east Asia, where she met with former GW piano students Eiko Sato Kodama and Ayoko Kohno ’96. She also played a recital with two singers at Oxford in a performance that doubled as their wedding.

A workshop production of When ET Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, with book, lyrics, and music by Jim Levy, was performed at Lisner Downstage in July. The cast included vocalist Arielle Goodman ’09, and John Albertson on guitar.


Members of the Kennedy Center Orchestra Lora Ferguson (clarinet), David Jones (clarinet), Carole Libelo (oboe), Stephani Stang (flute), and Uri Wassertzug (viola) performed with conductor John Williams at a concert in honor of Senator Edward Kennedy on his birthday.

Organ instructor Eileen Guenther served on a music and worship team in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Her performances last year included a recital at Greenwich Presbyterian Church, a piano dedication performance at Wesley Theological Seminary, and harpsichord continuo for Bach’s St. John Passion. She spoke at a gala honoring the career of organist Marilyn Mason and was interviewed for Religion News Service, Episcopal Life, and United News and Information and NPR.

Harpischordist Joseph Gascho taught last summer at the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute. He also conducted staged performances of Purcell's King Arthur and the Faerie Queen at the Magnolia Baroque Festival and cantatas by Handel and Montecclla for Baltimore's Artscape Festival.

Faculty at Work

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Hail, Alma Mater" The GW Big Band, Orchestra, Troubadours, University Singers, and Wind Ensemble Salute Music in Universities—Including Ours

Universities have inspired, hosted, supported, and otherwise made music since their beginnings in Medieval Europe. To open the Music Department's 50th anniversary celebration, our large ensembles will honor music's place in higher education with a showcase concert and reception on Sunday, February 7, 2010 at 3:00pm in Lisner Auditorium. The concert is free to the public. Music graduates and Washington area alumni will be invited to a reception. Other alumni may receive an invitation on request to the department (gwmusic@gwu.edu -- subject line "invitation," or call us at 202-994-6245).