

Nichelle Jones Mungo: Full Circle

Robert Doezema

Professor, Contemporary Writing and Production Department

Nichelle Jones Mungo has come full circle. In 1991 she was awarded her first City Music SYSTEM 5 Scholarship to attend the Five-Week Summer Performance Program. Today, Nichelle is teaching the pop/r&b vocal ensemble for Berklee's City Music Saturday School. In 1997, she was the first SYSTEM 5 full-scholarship recipient to graduate summa cum laude from Berklee College of Music with a bachelor's in Music Education. This summer, Nichelle will begin teaching at Berklee College of Music as a Summer Performance Program faculty member.

Nichelle's full circle is a story about hard work and determination. As a music educator, her story begins with her work for the Department of Social and Community Outreach Ministries as a private tutor and as a Berklee College of Music mentor for Boston high school students. From 1997 to 2000, Nichelle taught for the Boston Public Schools. Today she is a part of a team of music educators at the Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart, where her duties include teaching general music classes, directing a 60-voice gospel choir, conducting orchestra, and private voice instruction. As a performer, her story begins with three winning performances at the famed Apollo Theatre in New York City and performing the national anthem for the New England Patriots and the New England Revolution. Today Nichelle's credits include performances with Patti LaBelle, Epic recording artist Amel Larrieux, recordings with the group Here II Praise, and four consecutive years of performances with the group Blue Heaven at the Kenmore residence.

Nichelle's full circle also virtually spans the entire history of Berklee College of Music's Office of Community and Governmental Affairs and its outreach programs to the Boston community. Below are excerpts from an interview with Nichelle. Her perspectives on music education both as a former student and current teacher are invaluable.

How did the SYSTEM 5 Scholarship to the Five-Week Summer Performance Program have an effect on your life?

The SYSTEM 5 Scholarship to the Five-Week program affected my life by providing me the opportunity to spread my musical boundaries and to meet my financial needs. In 1991, I was accepted to the Five-Week program playing flute. It was then I was first introduced to jazz playing with Herman Johnson, who inspired me to "shed (practice) improv" and not be afraid to do it. This program reaches out to those who have potential and are serious about pursuing a music career. Without these opportunities, who knows where I would be today.



Nichelle Jones Mungo

Describe some of your first impressions about Berklee from your 1991 and 1993 Five-Week programs.

In 1991, I came fresh from South Carolina only knowing how to play classical flute. Everyone in the woodwind section of my jazz lab sounded like pros. Giving up was not far from my block. I felt I couldn't do it. I remember a recording ensemble with Herman

Johnson. I was intimidated by not knowing much about jazz, but had an advantage being able to read the treble clef. I could also play the piano pretty well by ear, and I've always been able to sing. I was encouraged by most faculty members to keep playing on any instrument I could so I played flute, piano, and voice. For the first time, I was free to experiment. And I was also able to decide exactly what I wanted to do with my life.

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Three Shorts

Angela Shyr

Assistant to the Assistant Vice President

We dream
to rehearse
waking up
among
favorites

Turn a field of green
on its back
to contemplate the sky

Spring loaded—
make way for summer

If you would like to submit poetry for consideration in the next PULSE, please e-mail Angela at ashyr@berklee.edu. Thanks!

Deciding music as a major and after giving birth to my first child, Alleciah, I came to the program in 1993 with voice as my primary instrument. I received a scholarship and with this opportunity, I returned with a vengeance! Nothing was going to get in the way of me and music even though the odds were against my being a teen-age mom in college. I got placed into advanced classes and labs. I studied and worked hard that summer. I'll never forget it. I wanted this more than anything in the world. Without that scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to pursue my dreams—1993 was the best summer of my life!

How did the full-scholarship award to Berklee College of Music have an effect on your life?

Receiving the full-scholarship award affected my life in three ways. First, I realized that Berklee has a program full of believers—believers in me, like I believe in me. Second, I would be the first in my family to go to college all four years without financial struggle and stress on my mother. Third, it meant being able to have a music career that would be beneficial to my family. The night of the Blowout Concert, the concert at the end of the Five-Week program that shows off what we've learned all summer, I remember having butterflies all day long for this is the night the three scholarship recipients are revealed. I knew I would not be able to attend Berklee College of Music without receiving that scholarship. My name was the last name called that night. I remember running with tears in my eyes. I was thankful and grateful that so many people believed in me and gave me such a great opportunity. This has changed my life as I've been given the opportunity to attend a world-renowned music college on a four-year full-tuition scholarship! In addition, I've been given the opportunity to raise my family as well as having a long-awaited career in music.

Describe experiences as a student at Berklee College of Music that had the greatest impact on your career as a performer?

The summer before I came to Berklee, I was given the opportunity to dance in Singers Showcase. I noticed the students in this show were passionate about what they were doing and enjoying it. I said to myself, "Wow! That's what I want to do!" and "I want to do this beyond Berklee... I want to be a superstar." Taking every opportunity to audition, whether I was accepted or rejected, helped me grow into the strong performer I am today. I was taught how to deal with rejection and to persist no matter what.

What experiences at Berklee had the greatest impact on your career as a music educator?

Berklee's Music Education Department is phenomenal. All of the teachers have passion for and commitment to the arts. They make sure no one gets left behind. For example, Deanna Kidd was excited about every student in the music ed program. She had such a drive about her that even the discouraged students held on through the end of the major. She shared all kinds of teaching experiences. She is the prime example of a good teacher because she loves what she does. I've taken Deanna's positive drive into my classrooms and can honestly say I've come out with 97 percent positive experiences from teaching.

Given your work in both Boston public and Newton private schools, give me your perspectives concerning the state of music education in secondary schools.

Students attending private schools have a much better chance of gaining musical knowledge before entering college. Those attending public schools face a challenge given the budget cuts and layoffs. The very existence of music education in secondary schools is at stake. Berklee is serious about opening its doors to those who are serious about pursuing music careers. It is programs like City Music Saturday School and the SYSTEM 5 Summer Performance Program that gives those students an opportunity. I encourage every student to take advantage of this vast opportunity. It's here for you.

What teaching strategies do you find particularly effective with this age group?

I often find strategies in the area of relaxation and fundamentals drilling to work particularly well with this age group. I say relaxation because there is so much required of students these days with academics, sports, and/or music. This often brings about a high level of stress that impedes their ability to reach their full potential. I say fundamentals drilling in respect to having a formulated way of remembering your music. This often helps whether you tie basic theory into songs or rhythmic sentences.

What doesn't work?

What doesn't work is being stressed. Students constantly feed from your vibe. If you are stressed and uptight, so are they. When the students see you with humility and confidence, they are more likely to want to reach their full potential.

What are some of your impressions about the City Music Saturday School students you are currently teaching at Berklee?

Well, I see the City Music Saturday School as a wonderful opportunity for serious music students to get performance experience as well as musical knowledge before coming to Berklee. Each student is unique and talented with a lot of music to share. Understanding how urban life can be both positive and negative, their passion and desire for the art of music still bursts right out. I love how they respect one another's differences by being supportive and communicative. They are slowly but surely becoming a family. They are a wonderful group.

What advice do you have for these students concerning their career development?

My biggest piece of advice for them is to be serious and focused about your craft and know that a career in music is what you want to pursue. Once you've decided that music is in fact what you want to pursue, let no one discourage you from that. Seek knowledge from wonderful programs like the CMSS and the Summer Performance Program. These are opportunities to make your dreams real. Music is just as important as science and medicine. No one should downplay that just because he or she may feel a career in music isn't lucrative—it actually is!

Jazz on Wheels: Music for Young Ears

Lenore Sempert

The Boston Jazz Society, Inc.

During the fall of 2002, an exciting new program called Jazz on Wheels was inaugurated through the collaboration of the Boston Jazz Society, Inc., Berklee College of Music, and the Boston Public Library.

This program brought live jazz music to branch libraries for the enjoyment of children and parents alike. Ed Henderson, president of the Boston Jazz Society, had a vision of this program, which he had originally named Music for Young Ears. His goal was to keep jazz alive and vital by making it accessible to children and bringing it to them in their communities.

J. Curtis Warner, Jim McCoy, and Jon Hazilla of Berklee College of Music helped to refine the vision and renamed it Jazz on Wheels. Jackie Hogan of the Boston Public Library provided the venues and dates at three branch libraries: Codman Square, South Boston, and Hyde Park. The programs were held Saturday mornings at 11:00.

Music by Duke Ellington and Miles Davis was featured with stellar performances led by Jon Hazilla. The collaboration was aimed at exposing children to the richness of jazz heritage in the Boston area. The tone was light and energetic, and the language used was simple and accessible. Children were invited up on stage to watch the performers and observe the instruments up close and in action.

Actress/poet Abria Smith, who is also education projects coordinator at Berklee's Office of Community and Governmental Affairs, entertained the crowd with her rap on the evolution of jazz. Her presentation was one of the highlights of the program, as she educated and elevated us all with her lively performance. She covered the history of jazz as an essential part of African American experience from the blues born of slavery through ragtime, bebop, orchestral and free jazz.

The Boston Jazz Society provided educational materials such as a folder filled with jazz resources for children and parents. Jim McCoy informed them about music education opportunities through Berklee's Office of Community and Governmental Affairs.



Associate Professor Jon Hazilla answers questions about drumming as young audience members are invited on stage to see the performers and instruments up close.

A photography exhibit by Bernie Moss included photographs of jazz legends such as Dexter Gordon, Horace Silver, Herbie Hancock, and Thelonious Monk. Moss was on the music scene in the '60s and had personal friendships with many of these musicians. He documented their careers in the Boston area, and his work provides a window on a vital era in jazz history. His photographs are part of Boston Jazz Society archives. This exhibit was set up a week before the live jazz performance in the libraries to raise awareness of jazz in the Boston area.

In addition, the participants were informed about jazz photo exhibits at Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, featuring Boston Jazz Society board members Vincent Haynes and Florence Lewis, and free concerts at Berklee. Children were given honorary memberships in the Boston Jazz Society to provide a link for further information about jazz.

The Boston Jazz Society, Berklee College of Music, and the Boston Public Library plan to put Jazz on Wheels on the road again next fall at three other branch libraries. All in all, it was a successful and enjoyable venture with a future on the horizon.

betcha didn't

Abria Smith, POCgA
Education Projects
Coordinator,
appeared in the March
2003 issue of Ebony
Magazine (pp. 98, 100)

know

Is It OK to Wear a Red Shirt?

Larry Bethune

Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students

Editor's Note:

Over time, red shirts have come to represent a number of causes and signatures from the local youth clean-up crews who populated our streets during past summers to the Bloods gang, typically associated with South Central Los Angeles. Formerly known as the Boston Mayor's Youth Corporation, Boston Youth Fund abandoned their red shirts for gray ones, concerned about the negative connotation and association with street violence.

Another type of "red shirting," such as that implemented at Boston College and others, is a term applied to athletic programs that prohibit entering freshman superstars from actually playing on the team their first year in college. The practice is for the purpose of protecting such students new to the college arena from losing their scholarships, ensuring that the proper focus and attention is given to beginning their academic careers on solid ground. Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students Larry Bethune explores this topic as it relates to tomorrow's superstars of screen and stage. Should tomorrow's performers wear red shirts? You decide.

"Hit the ground running. Jump in with both feet. This is what you've waited for your whole life. Let's play already!"

These are just a few statements that illustrate the moment a student enters Berklee. Music is most often a participatory sport for musicians. Getting a scholarship to a music college is not unlike getting a sports scholarship to an NCAA college. Berklee definitely stands among music college powerhouses. These students burst with energy and desire to hit the field—okay, hit the stage! Not everyone, however, is ready for the full college curriculum or experience. This is not unlike student athletes getting big scholarships who are not yet ready for college-level work or academic life.

Over the past 36 years, I have been at Berklee as a student, teacher, department chair, and dean. I have seen many scholarship students adjust well to Berklee's pace and level of expectations. The few who don't are a concern of mine. I am

concerned for students who may not have received the academic preparation skills in junior and high school. They would rather play music than attain academic achievement. Could it be that they spend most of the time playing in bands and practicing? Some students often sacrifice curriculum courses, as well as their social life, thereby interrupting academic success.

Some of these students are placed on academic probation, some drop out or are withdrawn due to poor academic progress. It is disheartening to see students who earned scholarships lose their awards when their talent has not diminished. Although many do succeed, some rely on systems that are in place to assist them as they struggle to adapt to the demands of academic excellence and college life.

In college sports, there is a method of protecting talented athletes who seem likely to succeed. They are given an opportunity to develop strong academic skills by not competing during their first year. This is called "red shirting." These students are allowed an extra year to develop academically. Entering Berklee students may not need an extra year, but what some may need is a semester or two to allow adjustment to the college. Ultimately, questions arise. Should Berklee red shirt? Should certain scholarship students be prevented from performing their first semester? Should they be provided with advisors and courses to help them build a solid foundation?

For some, the answer is yes to all the questions posed. Of course we should help students. But many I have spoken with are unsure about red shirting. The drive to play music is here and now for most musicians. Many would drop what they are doing to play. Everything else takes a back seat. It is important to address the question of whether red shirting is of value or a deterrent for entering students. One of the college's many objectives is to cultivate a supportive learning environment for all students. Although some do struggle academically, they seek to become world-class professionals at their craft, and therein lies the dilemma regarding red shirting. Would you be willing to wear one—a red shirt, that is?

POCgA Unveils New Mission

The President's Office of Community and Governmental Affairs supports the college in its commitment to cultural, artistic, and educational development through partnerships, programming, scholarships, and public service through music.

City Music Students Create with Technology

Andre Kim

City Music Saturday Preparatory School faculty

“I like to use the technology to explore my ideas.”

Jose Garcia (woodwinds, age 12)

Here, on the third floor of the Boston Arts Academy, middle school students in the Berklee City Music Saturday Preparatory School* arrive every Saturday morning for a weekly regimen of private lessons, ensembles, and practice sessions. The day is very structured, and classes and curriculum are designed to prepare students for more advanced music instruction.

But here in the MIDI lab, 15 Macintosh workstations and Korg X5 synthesizers are integrated for the students to freely explore their own musical identity. All workstations are outfitted with the necessary software to help meet an infinite and diverse range of musical goals.

“How do I make a cool drumbeat?”

Brandon Woodson (bass, age 12)

“Well first, tell me what your vision is,” I respond.

“What’s that?”

Typically, students believe that the instrument or tool they are using will somehow do the creating for them. Or, they think that the technology will be the muse for their creative spirit. I quickly realized that teaching the students how to use the software and hardware is not the strategy needed here. The software (Opcode’s Musicshop) and hardware (Korg X5D) is intuitive and easy to operate for a generation born in the digital age.

What the students really needed was guidance in defining a creative vision and an understanding of the process required to execute that vision. While this may sound like a lofty goal to a 10-year-old, I further explained that we, as musicians and/or composers, engage in this process on a regular basis with relative ease. So, I asked the students to participate in a group effort. We loosely agreed upon a vision, and began using the technology as part of our creative process.

To facilitate the discussions, I began by asking the students such questions as “Do we want a fast or slow tempo?”, “Do we want a busy or laid-back bass line?”, “What instruments should we use?”

Shortly thereafter, these discussions quickly became more passionate as the students invested more of their own ideas into the project. After a few weeks (and a few heated debates over the direction our song was taking) I challenged the students to create their own songs in a manner similar to the one we had just used as a group.

Some chose to collaborate with other students who shared a similar vision. Others wanted to work alone to try and fulfill their own creative ideas. Some chose not to do anything creative, but instead wanted the workstations to assist them with their current musical goals such as using the technology as a practice tool, gaining a deeper understanding of harmony, or using the technology as an ear-training device.

“I like to use the programs to help me transpose parts.”

Carlos Flores (saxophone, age 12)

Whether as a creative tool or instructional device, the students possess a foundation of understanding to use the technology to their full advantage. Recently, the students have been so involved in their MIDI projects that they regularly need to be reminded to attend their lessons and ensembles!

“Do we really have to go now?” ask two students working on a soundtrack for their school’s talent show.

“Yes, but this will all be here next week,” I respond, waving across the room.

Turning the students on to the technology has been easy: all young people love gadgets with shiny surfaces, lit buttons, and knobs. However, changing the students’ perception of this technology (from a toy to be played with, to a tool to be utilized) has been the challenge. The increased sophistication of their most recent questions is evidence that this change is definitely occurring.

“How do I cut and paste this section into a new track?”

“How do I change the volume of the percussion?”

“How do I change this note without having to re-record the whole thing?”

“How do I insert a blank measure?”

“Can you come 30 minutes early next week?”

*For more information on the Berklee City Music Saturday Preparatory School, or the Boston Arts Academy, please contact the President’s Office for Community and Governmental Affairs at (617) 747-2447.

betcha didn’t

In April, mentor Rachel Loy from Berklee City Music Program, released a single on Epic Records titled “The Same Man.” Rachel is a 19-year old singer-songwriter and mentor to high school student Karen Ann Constant.

know

Where Are They Now?

Adrian Ross

Director of Alumni Affairs

There are many compelling stories that come out of the City Music/SYSTEM 5 program, as graduates have gone on to lead successful careers in areas such as music production, education, performance, and business/administration. Though it's hard to highlight each and every graduate, it's nice to provide a status report on several alumni to show the diversity of areas in which they are employed.

After leaving Berklee, one of SYSTEM 5's first graduates, **Deanna DellaCioppa**, has taken her career to new heights and continues to succeed in many different areas. Her voice can be heard in jingles for Nabisco, Proctor & Gamble, Mattel, Fila, ESPN, and others. She has sung and cowritten songs for Satoshi Tomiie's Sony/C2 album release *Full Lick*, which ended up on the *Queer As Folk* soundtrack, and *E=VC2, Volume 2* by Victor Claderone, Tommy Boy Records. In 2000, Deanna cowrote and sang the Top 3 *Billboard* single "Higher," which was produced by Grammy Award winner David Morales. She has also had numerous television and film cuts including *High School Reunion*, *The Young and the Restless*, *Soul Food*, *The District*, and *7th Heaven*, and is currently supporting her new European single "Take Me Down (6 Underground)" by Eclipse. Most recently Deanna was awarded the Heineken Music Initiative/ASCAP Foundation R&B Grant for her song "I've Been Waiting (Someone Like You)," cowritten with alumnus Marcus Bell '96.

Another graduate who is actively involved in the music industry and has produced and written various projects is **Storme Bracy**. Graduating in 1998, Storme has worked with some of the industry's biggest producers and executives. Though a lot of her work is in New York, her home base is in Dorchester, where she currently runs her own record label, Soul Town Records, which has signed Coca Cola artist Brianna Ford. She also owns a production company called Storme Zone Productions, which currently has two gospel artists under contract, and co-owns Bell/Storm Production/Management. Storme has collaborated with various producers and works with a songwriting/production team that provides demos for a range of artists within the pop/spiritual genre. She is also hired for freelance production coordination, and currently works with Bad Boy producer Richard Young Lord Frierson.

Music is not the only field within the entertainment industry that SYSTEM 5 graduates have successfully entered. Upon leaving Berklee in 1997, **Abria Smith** pursued a career in acting and has been involved in a range of different theater productions, videos, and films. She has acted in productions such as *Kin We Talk*, *Two Weeks*, *City Preacher*, and many others at Our Place Theater and ACT Roxbury. She has also starred in films *Lift*, *What's the Worst that Could Happen?*, *West of Here*, and *City Love*. An aspiring playwright and actress, Abria has written two short plays entitled *Two Weeks* and *Out Like That*. Despite her involvement

in theater and acting, Abria has also managed to remain active in music. In 1997, she wrote and performed for a rap/r&b duo, T Street, which was an opening act for Busta Rhymes in Europe. More recently, Abria appeared on Walter Beasley's album *Rendez Vous* and his latest release, *Go with the Flow*, as a writer and performer. At the end of 2001, the Office of Community and Governmental Affairs was happy to hire Abria as the education projects coordinator, where she has since become a tremendous asset and contributor to City Music programs.

Several of the program's alumni have also managed to find a happy medium between working full-time jobs outside of the industry and balancing careers in music. A perfect example of this is **Nichelle Mungo**, SYSTEM 5's first graduate, who has worked in the field of music education for over six years (see "Nichelle Jones Mungo: Full Circle" in this issue of *PULSE*). Nichelle taught in the Boston Public Schools for three years before joining the Newton Country Day School, where she currently teaches general music classes, directs gospel choir, conducts orchestra, and instructs private voice lessons. While developing into a leading music educator, she has managed to advance her music career, recording with the group Here II Praise, singing with Epic artist Amel Larrieux, and Blue Heaven at the Kennedy residence, among other professional engagements. Nichelle continues to impact the lives of hundreds of children, increasing their passion for music and enhancing their overall knowledge of music. At the same time, she continues to position herself as an independent artist and intends to put out an album in the near future.

Sele'fana Kamau '02 also fits into this category and balances multiple careers. Since graduation, Sele has been prominent in the Boston music scene and has sung background and lead for the group Love Jones (formerly known as Edable Grey). Since a child, she has sung in the production of *Black Nativity*, and this past December she was featured as an actor as well as a singer. Sele was also a background vocalist in the production of *3 Mo Tenors*, and remains active with her church's choir at the Greater Framingham Community Church. In addition, she assists the Eliot Congregation Youth Choir and performs at various community events such as the Homeless Children in Roxbury and others. During the day, Sele is an information solutions specialist at Boston Capital, where she has been working for approximately one year.

Brent Irvine '00 and **Jesus Melara '00** have also found similar niches and secured respectable positions in both the financial sector and in public relations. Brent is currently a public affairs specialist for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, where he schedules, organizes, and conducts project-level briefings, presentations, and site visits for federal and state legislators, U.S. Department of Transportation officials, FHWA, MHD, senior state government officials, and foreign officials and dignitaries. He has

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Are you interested in volunteering or providing financial support for the youth outreach programs of Berklee City Music?

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN IT TO

Berklee City Music
President's Office of Community and Governmental Affairs
Berklee College of Music
1140 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02215

Name	Telephone Number	Fax Number	E-Mail Address
Mailing Address	Are you a Berklee alumnus? Yes No	Are you employed at the college? Yes No	
Occupation	Are you a musician? Yes No	If yes, what instrument do you play?	
Please list any languages other than English that you speak at an advanced level			
Please list any other skills that you would like to utilize as a volunteer			
Please circle the activities listed below in which you would like to be involved:			
Recitals/Open Houses	Mentoring/Tutoring	Fundraising	Student Recruitment Other
<p>If you would like to make a financial contribution to City Music, please complete the section below or enclose a check written to Berklee College of Music</p>			
Type of Card	Cardholder Name (As It Appears on Card)	Card Number	Exp. Date Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard			

'Where Are They Now' continued from page 6

performed briefings for the Boston business community and associations, and assisted state legislators in various capacities as they inform constituents about the projects' long-range and immediate developments. **Jesus** is currently the assistant controller for Nuestra Comunidad Development, where he has been for several years. He is responsible for the organization's monthly bank statements and reconciliation of its bank accounts. Prior to joining NCD, Jesus worked as a financial analyst for the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. Both of these alumni are very busy in their daytime positions yet still manage to find time for music. Brent performs regularly with several general business (G/B) bands, as well as a host of Latin bands, and Jesus plays piano at El Shaddai Ministries as often as possible.

The success of these alumni demonstrates the importance of the SYSTEM 5 scholarship program. This article examines only a few of the program's graduates, and as SYSTEM 5 continues to flourish and expand, we can look forward to many more stories such as these.

p u l s e s t a f f

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[PULSE Online](http://www.berklee.edu/html/ab_communitypulse.html)

To view back issues of *PULSE* online, go to www.berklee.edu/html/ab_communitypulse.html.

calendar

summer
2003

July

16, 23, 30: Swingin' At Mother's Rest, Mother's Rest Park, Dorchester. All concerts start at 6:30 p.m. Please call the POCgA office at 617-747-2447 for specific performance details.

30: Songwriting Contest Concert, David Friend Recital Hall, 7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

August

2: Jazz at the Fort. Benefit for the Sarah Vaughn Scholarship, featuring Walter Beasley, Highland Park, Roxbury. 7:30 p.m.

6: Summer Performance Program Blowout, Berklee Performance Center.

7: City Music/SYSTEM 5 Blowout, Berklee Performance Center.
Please check www.berklee.edu for times for both shows.