Berklee today
A Forum for Contemporary Music and Musicians

12 Studio Ace John "J.R." Robinson '75: L.A.'s Hit Man

17 The Musician Mind
Contents


LEAD SHEET by President Lee Eliot Berk ................................................. 2

BERKLEE BEAT
Honorary degrees for Sting and Nancy Wilson, Berklee’s L.A. Center, bookstore expansion, faculty notes, visiting artists, and more .................................. 3

FILLING THE SILENCE
Pianist Bob Winter on playing film music from the silent era through the John Williams era .......................................................... 8

THE BPC’S PAST AND FUTURE by Mark L. Small ’73
One of Boston’s most notable film and concert venues for nearly 80 years, the BPC is also a world-class educational facility ............................................. 10

A PLACE IN TIME by Mark L. Small ’73
One of L.A.’s top studio drummers, John “J. R.” Robinson ’75 has played on more hit singles than any drummer in recording history ...................... 12

THE MUSICIAN MIND by Mitch Haupers
Current perspectives on the roles of the conscious and unconscious in the improvising and learning of music .................................................. 17

A CROSS-INTERVALIC CONCEPT by George Garzone ’72 and Joe Viola ’52
How to open up your improvisation with wide interval leaps .......................... 20

ALUM NOTES
News, quotes, and recordings of note ......................................................... 22

CODA: co-da \kō-da by Charles Combs
Connecting musicians with the world of ideas ............................................. 32
Advancing Careers in Music—President Lee Eliot Berk

Berklee’s upcoming 50th anniversary will provide a time for reflection on the past and future of the college. The anniversary theme, “Advancing Careers in Music,” seems an appropriate title for the year-long celebration for several reasons.

Most Berklee today readers are aware of the many musicians who have entered Berklee’s portals as students over the past half century and gone on to greatness in the industry. Key figures interviewed on these pages have revealed some experiences they had here which helped them advance in their careers. John Robinson ’75 mentioned learning to play with a click track in a Berklee studio (see page 15); Branford Marsalis ’81 spoke of his classmates who now work in the “Tonight Show” band; Joe Lovano ’72 cited the impact of his ensemble classes. The individual experiences which added color and texture to the musical lives of over 30,000 Berklee alumni are as multifaceted as the styles of music each pursued.

For 50 years Berklee has been a place of confluence for disparate musical tributaries, flowing together for a time before diverging again. The Metheny brothers (Mike and Pat), were faculty colleagues of Jeronimas Kacinskas and John Bavicchi, and taught some of the same students. As the lives of musicians worlds apart stylistically and culturally have intersected at Berklee, individual careers have been greatly affected.

As alumni reach every echelon of the music business, the resonance has been heard throughout the industry. The influence of Quincy Jones ’51, Gary Burton ’62, Jan Hammer ’69, Steve Vai ’79, Mike Gibbs ’63, Bruce Hornsby ’74, Arif Mardin ’58, John Scofield ’73, Joe Zawinul ’59, or Melissa Etheridge ’80 have had in contemporary music is considerable. Theirs may be easier to track than that of the vast number of alumni who are the rank and file of the music professions. What about those working away from the glare of the spotlight in music education, film composing, music copying, record marketing and distribution, music products and software development, music publishing, studio engineering, music retailing, and numerous other fields? Their collective influence is also far-reaching.

Stay tuned in the upcoming months for announcements of special events and publications which will commemorate Berklee’s 50th. They will underscore the achievements of the college, and you, the alumni whose advancing careers have so advanced the music industry.
STING AND NANCY WILSON HONORED

A highlight of each academic year is the May Commencement exercises where the college honors outstanding music industry figures by awarding them the honorary doctor of music degree. This year's honorees were Sting and Nancy Wilson.

That this year's recipients merit such an honor is evidenced by their lifetime commitments to excellence in their art. Twelve-time Grammy Award-winner Sting has thrilled millions with his music and acting since he burst on the scene in 1978. Grammy and Emmy Award-winner Nancy Wilson has gained acclaim as one of America's greatest song stylists.

Through his six albums with the Police, five as a solo artist, and concert appearances worldwide, Sting has become one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary popular music.

Ironically, Sting began his professional career as a jazz musician—it wasn't until the middle '70s that he began to sing and write songs. In 1977, with drummer Stewart Copeland, and guitarist Andy Summers, he formed the Police.

The first four Police albums sold millions of copies, rocketing the band to supergroup status. Their most successful album, *Synchronicity*, sold 11 million copies within four months of its release. Its biggest single, "Every Breath You Take," was played over one million times on American radio.

Sting has continued his ascent as a solo artist with a string of hit singles, platinum-selling albums, Grammy Awards, world concert tours, and movie roles. He has also committed his energies to help humanitarian agencies focusing on such issues as apartheid, the destruction of Brazilian rain forests, and Amnesty International's campaign for human rights.

From her first hit record with Cannonball Adderley in 1962, to her 1994 release, *Love, Nancy*, Nancy Wilson's musical output of 55 albums has had a powerful attraction for audiences of three generations. More than 30 of her albums have charted in *Billboard* magazine.

Although generally characterized as a jazz singer, she won a Grammy Award for Best R&B Song with "How Glad I Am." Additionally, Wilson has appeared in several feature-length films and hosted her own TV show on NBC. In 1993, she joined the cast of the Fox sitcom "Sinbad" in a role which has continued into 1994. Also recognized for her work as a humanitarian, Wilson has devoted her efforts to such organizations as the American Cancer Society, the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change, and the National Heart Association.

As 1994's Commencement speaker, Sting spoke of memories from his childhood, and how music puts one "in touch with something beyond the intellect, something otherworldly, something sacred." Upon receiving their degrees, Sting told the graduates, "This is very significant... I wish you the best in your careers," and Nancy Wilson stated, "The gift we've been given is precious. Protect it, respect it, and always give it your best."
BERKLEE OPENS LOS ANGELES CENTER

Berklee alumnus Peter Gordon '78 has been appointed director of the new Berklee Center in Los Angeles. The opening of the center this spring marks a new commitment to strengthening relationships between the college, the L.A.-area alumni, and the music industry at large. Located at 15760 Ventura Boulevard, in Encino, the new center will be the locus for a number of activities designed to further the mission of the college.

Working in cooperation with the Admissions Office and the BAR coordinator, Gordon will assist in increasing awareness of Berklee in area secondary schools, and will cultivate partnerships between corporations and the college. He will also help to plan alumni club networking, career advancement, and educational events.

Born in Australia, Gordon graduated summa cum laude from Berklee in 1978, and was a Berklee faculty member for six years. Peter, his wife Gloria (Metzger) Gordon '81, and their daughter Amanda live in Van Nuys. A busy composer and saxophonist in Los Angeles for the past decade, Gordon has released three albums under his own name. His latest, Double Play, was featured in the Radio and Records national airplay top 10. An active studio musician, Gordon has worked on the soundtracks to "Star Trek: The Next Generation," The Flintstones, "Melrose Place," In the Line of Fire, and What's Love Got to Do With It.

Assessing what the future holds, Gordon stated, "I see this position as an opportunity to help Berklee become regarded as the higher education center of the music industry."

L.A. Center Director Peter Gordon '78

DELERUE SCHOLARSHIP

In January, Dean of Institutional Advancement John Collins, along with Associate Professor of Film Scoring David Spear and some bright lights of the Hollywood film industry gathered at the home of Mrs. Colette Delerue for the launch of a drive to establish a Berklee scholarship in memory of Colette's husband, the late Georges Delerue.

Mr. Delerue, a native of France, studied composition with Darius Milhaud, and was one of the most respected figures in film composing. He scored several of Francois Truffaut's best films, and won an Academy Award in 1980 for his score to A Little Romance. Delerue died in 1992 after suffering a stroke during a recording session. David Spear, a friend of Colette and Georges Delerue for many years, has been a key figure in establishing this scholarship.

The Georges Delerue Memorial Scholarship in Film Scoring is the first endowed scholarship fund for the Film Scoring Department. Annually, it will provide a scholarship for one film scoring major, and fund a six-week internship scholarship for another. Daniel Allen Carlin, president of Segue Music in Los Angeles—the world’s largest post production music facility for film and TV, enthusiastically supports the idea of the recipients interning at Segue.

Film Scoring Chair Don Wilkins stated, “Georges Delerue’s music inspired us all. His memory will be preserved in a tangible way through this support for the education of aspiring film composers at Berklee.”

Associate Professor David Spear and Colette Delerue at the January launch of the Georges Delerue scholarship.
TWO BERKLEE DISCS RELEASED

This spring saw the release of two Berklee CDs. The Studio Production Projects CD, a Berklee tradition since 1989, is a sampler of the best of this year's production projects submitted by students of the Music Technology Division. All of the 15 songs on it were written, arranged, performed, recorded, and produced entirely by the students. The music runs the stylistic gamut, and includes gospel, R&B, fusion, dance, southern rock, a cappella vocal, heavy metal, pop, and folk tracks.

The TDK Presents Singers Showcase, features music originally produced during the 1993-94 concert season for the Singers Showcase and the Jazz/Rock Ensemble concerts. The disc was funded in part by the TDK Corporation and will be distributed free of charge to all Berklee students, faculty, and staff courtesy of TDK.

There are many notable performances among the CD's 16 cuts by both vocalists and instrumentalists, including: Sherma Andrews’ stirring performance of “One Moment in Time,” Robin Spears’ emotion-packed version of “Neither One of Us,” and Kenya Hathaway’s moving rendition of Billy Joel’s classic “And So It Goes,” recorded at the 1993 Commencement Concert. Three of the tracks were recorded live at the Berklee Performance Center, the others cuts were recorded in the Berklee recording studios.

TWO ELECTED TO BERKLEE'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sandra Uyterhoeven and Gene Joly were recently elected members of Berklee's board of trustees. The two new trustees will help broaden and strengthen the board as the college continues to advance.

Sandra Uyterhoeven, a pianist, has helped the college on a voluntary basis on diversity issues. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a master of science in management from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business in Palo Alto, California.

Ms. Uyterhoeven currently serves as assistant director of management systems for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and is a member of the board of directors and treasurer of the Boston Harbor Association.

Berklee alumnus Gene Joly '73, has been president of E.U. Wurlitzer Music and Sound, which operates four music retail stores in Massachusetts, since 1984. Joly entered music retailing after playing in bands as a guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter for 30 years. He holds a bachelor of science degree in marketing from Bentley College, and is a respected figure in the music products industry.

NEW CHAIRS NAMED

After an intense search process, Barbara London has been selected to chair the Harmony Department, and Jay Kennedy will be the chair of the Commercial Arranging Department.

Barbara London, a gifted composer, instrumentalist and vocalist, has been a Berklee faculty member for eight years. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire summa cum laude with a bachelor of arts degree, and has studied composition privately with John Heiss, voice with Patricia Stedry, and flute with Hubert Laws. She brings to the position extensive experience as a musician and educator, and has been involved with a number of committees addressing some of the college's pressing issues.

Jay Kennedy will be relocating to Boston from Los Angeles where he has worked as an arranger, composer and producer. He is co-owner of LA/NY Music and is responsible for many radio and television commercials for Coca Cola, Levi's Jeans, Nike, McDonalds, Nissan, Pacific Bell, Budweiser, and other clients.

Jay Kennedy earned his bachelor of music education degree from Northwestern University, and has presented numerous lectures and master classes on subjects ranging from the business of music to scoring music to visuals.

Barbara and Jay will be assisted in their transition by the acting chairs of their respective departments: George Hargan for Harmony and Richard Evans for Commercial Arranging.
VISITING ARTISTS AT BERKLEE: A FEW MOMENTS WITH THE MASTERS

Ray Brown, one of the most influential bassists in the jazz world, presented a lecture and master class where he gave pointers to several student bassists.

Guitar Week, sponsored by the Guitar Department, brought numerous top guitarists to the campus. The high point was a special BPC concert by poll-winning electric guitar virtuoso Steve Morse performing with a faculty rhythm section and two of the departments finest student rock guitarists. Also visiting were Harvey Reid, Reeves Gabrels '81, Andy Timmons, Steve Khan, Benjamin Monder, and John Petrucci '86.

Flutist and Fulbright Scholar Beth Forest, with guitarist Sergio Costa '93, performed works by Hermeto Pascoal and Patapio Silva.

Pianist and composer Ran Blake, chair of the Contemporary Improvisation Department at New England Conservatory, offered his insights on development of the ear.

Musical therapist Arthur Brodie provided information on causes, prevention, and cure of tendonitis and other physical problems of performing musicians.

Jay Cooper, one of the most respected entertainment attorneys in Los Angeles, discussed current trends in record contracts. He detailed how a band can have a platinum-selling record and still lose money, and how artists can bargain to get just compensa-

Once again, the Visiting Artist Series has brought a wealth of talent and expertise to the Berklee campus for dialog and musical interaction with acknowledged masters. This term’s series included seminars and concerts by performing musicians of every stylistic stripe, songwriters, music lawyers, journalists, and medical professionals. The diverse roster of specialists offered powerful learning opportunities.

As part of Berklee’s Black History Month Celebration in February, singer Oleta Adams presented a clinic and a Performance Center concert with a student ensemble. Also featured in that series was award-winning South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Latin jazz trumpeter and recording artist Claudio Roditi '72 and his sideman, saxophonist Greg Abate '68, gave a demonstration of Latin rhythms, and performed some of Roditi’s compositions with a student rhythm section.

Alan Cohen '74, a songwriter, composer, and guitarist, shared his thoughts on art and commerce, and keeping one’s creative spirit alive in New York City.

The Women in Music Forum brought trombonist Abbie Conant for a performance of her one-woman show Miriam, and a clinic on composition and trombone techniques.

Keyboard session player David Rosenthal '81 detailed his work with Richie Blackmore, and Red Dawn in a seminar sponsored by the Piano and Music Synthesis departments.

Jazz bassist Ray Brown during his March visit to Berklee.

Steve Morse (left) and faculty member Jon Finn trading choruses at Morse’s Performance Center concert in April.

Joseph Shabalala of Ladysmith Black Mambazo during a February visit.
BERKLEE BOOKSTORE ENLARGED

March 1 marked the grand opening of the newly expanded Berklee College of Music Bookstore now located at 1080 Boylston Street.

At the new address, the bookstore now has room for more than 9,000 books, and boasts the Northeast’s most extensive selection of pop and jazz songbooks, and a large array of performance and instructional videos. In addition to course materials and books authored by faculty members, mini scores, books on the history of jazz and rock, the music business, recording engineering, ethnomusicology, and computer music production cram the expanded shelf space.

Store manager Dave Shield says, “With 1,200 square feet now, we’ve greatly expanded our selection of all types of books. The improvisation books and guitar books are our biggest sellers. A lot of people browsing through here now are becoming aware of how low our prices are.”

Musicians of the old school will be pleased to learn that even with all the interest in MIDI and computer music applications on campus, manuscript paper is still the bookstore’s hottest commodity.

The space the bookstore used to occupy at 146 Massachusetts Avenue is now the home of the Heller Travel Agency. Although not a part of the college, it

The newly expanded Berklee College of Music Bookstore at 1080 Boylston Street has the Northeast’s most extensive selection of pop and jazz songbooks.

While carrying more electronic music books, computer software, and third party user manuals, the bookstore continues to stock a wide variety of music accessories—guitar strings, reeds, instrument bags, variable-speed cassette recorders, and metrophones—as well as Berklee sweatshirts, caps, and other memorabilia.

FACULTY NOTES

Assistant Professor of Voice Mili Bermejo ’89 was named a member of the Jazz Fellowships Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts. Her quartet has just released Casa Corazón, on the Xenophile/Green Linnet record label.

Assistant Professor John Ramsay played drums with saxophonist Les Arbuckle ’81 in Arbuckle’s CD No More No Les on Audio Quest Records.

Associate Professor of MP&E Carl Beatty was the mix engineer for “Soia” which recently won a Grammy award for Best Rock Instrumental Performance. The song is from the Zappa’s Universe album and features guitarist Steve Vai ’79.

Associate Professor of guitar Charles H. Chapman ’72 recently published Guitar in the Classroom: A Teaching Aid for Music Educators.

Distinguished Professor of Jazz Composition Ted Pease ’66 released Big Band Blues Celebration. The CD features faculty instrumentalists Greg Baldolato, Ken Cervenka, Dave Clark, Jon Damian, Brad Hatfield, Greg Hopkins, Joe Hunt, Tony Lada, Larry Monroe, Bruce Nifong, Bill Pierce, Marshall Sealy, Jeff Stout, and Phil Wilson.

Mel Bay Publications has released an instructional book entitled Mel Bay’s Complete Book of Harmony, Theory & Voicing written by Assistant Professor of Guitar Bret Willmott ’77.

The Courage Brothers, whose lineup includes Assistant Professor of Percussion Larry Finn ’86, Piano Instructor Deve Limina ’91, and bassist Larry Jackson ’86, released Something Strong for Eastern Front Records.

Instructor Brad Hatfield ’79 is a featured synthesizer and keyboard player on Points of View by Nando Lauria ’93 on Narada Equinox Records.

Assistant Professor of Percussion Victor Mendoza ’81 received an award from Massachusetts Governor William F. Weld recognizing Mendoza as a top vibraphonist and commending him for his involvement with the Mexican and Hispanic communities of Massachusetts.

Associate Professor of Percussion Giovanni Hidalgo released a Latin-jazz CD entitled Worldwide.

Associate Professor of Piano Bill Davies is featured on What Two Can Do, on Rush Records.

Lydia Okumura, assistant professor of ear training, has published a folio of her French-language songs titled Veins. The book comes with a cassette which was recorded in the Berklee studios.

Trumpeter Wayne Naus ’76 and his group Heart and Fire opened the 1994 Boston Globe Jazz Festival June 12. The group includes faculty members Russ Hoffman ’84 (piano), Larry Finn ’86 (drums), as well as saxophonist Pat Loomis ’82, and current Berklee students, percussionist Renato Thomas, trombonist Jeff Galindo, and bassist David Weisner.
FILLING THE SILENCE

Mention silent films and most people think of flickering, scratched black and white images of Charlie Chaplin or Laurel and Hardy scurrying around to the sound of honky-tonk piano. Slapstick comedy was but one facet of the pioneering film efforts—there are many serious dramatic titles in the early film archives.

Piano professor Bob Winter is quick to point out that the same was true for silent film music. Historically it was played live by a pianist or organist employed by the local theater, and frequently displayed more range and depth than happy stride piano tunes or tremoloed diminished chords played as the train approaches the heroine bound on the tracks.

Deac Rossell, who used to head the film department at Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) called Bob Winter to accompany the silent film portion of the annual film series the MFA inaugurated 10 years ago. In Winter, Rossell found an improviser whose musical palette was multicolored and stylistically diverse.

“It is in the tradition to improvise the soundtrack,” said Winter. “But to do it effectively you have to have a certain amount of technique and imagination and then be fearless—just let yourself go.”

One French film Winter accompanied this April was Carl T. Dreyer’s 1928 epic, Passion de Jeanne D’Arc, which runs 98 minutes, and was based on authentic records of Joan of Arc’s trial.

“It is unbelievable to see a film like this and realize it was made in 1928,” said Winter. “It is so stark and real. I used snippets of very angular music and even atonal-sounding things without a lot of cadences. For a film of an hour and 38 minutes, you would use an improvised introduction for about 45 seconds. After I played it and heard the strings come in, I just thought, I have to play creatively for long periods at a stretch. Bob has taught at Berklee for the past 20 years while keeping a busy and varied performing schedule. He has released two albums under his own name and a trio of discs with the Jazz Pops Ensemble.

As pianist for the Boston Pops Orchestra for the past 14 years, Bob’s playing has become familiar to two prominent contemporary film figures—Henry Mancini and composer/conductor John Williams, with whom he has toured and recorded.

Winter’s playing can be heard on two recordings with John Williams and the Boston Pops Orchestra on their Swing, Swing, Swing album and on their new Sony release, Unforgettable. Winter’s playing is showcased on three cuts on Unforgettable.

“In Satin Doll’ I improvised an introduction for about 45 seconds. John Williams asked me to ‘rhapsodize,’ and play anything I wanted, then to give a lead-in for the orchestra. I was thinking that there can’t be too many non-jazz orchestras that would use an improvised introduction. After I played it and heard the strings come in, I just thought, I have to be a very lucky person to be doing what I love to do, and expressing myself with musicians like these.”
Berklee College of Music Bookstore

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The Past and Future of the BPC

Mark L. Small

An ad in the December 20, 1915 issue of The Boston Globe announcing the opening of the Fenway Theatre (now the Berklee Performance Center or BPC) hailed it as Boston's "newest and most up-to-date photo playhouse." The Fenway Theatre was the first theater built in uptown Boston expressly for movies, but some live entertainment was presented in those days too. A 20-piece orchestra, a pipe organ concert, and "high class and popular singers" were part of the opening night festivities preceding the feature, The Iron Strain—a Story of Alaska. Ticket prices ranged from 10 to 25 cents.

Twenty years since it became the BPC, the hall is still spoken of in superlatives, though not for its merits as a movie house, but as a concert venue. Since 1915, the hall has played many roles, and narrowly avoided a few others. The Fenway Theatre was seriously considered for conversion into a giant First National supermarket in 1959 after the proliferation of television put a serious dent in movie attendance. In the '60s the theater housed a bowling alley in its basement. Prior to Berklee purchasing the property in 1972, its former owner, Bryant and Stratton College, contemplated demolishing the entire structure and replacing it with an eight-story educational facility for its business school. In 1974, after extensive renovations to the then-dilapidated theater, Berklee opened it as a premier, 1227-seat concert hall. In resuscitating one of the city's choice cultural landmarks, the college provided a fourth generation of Bostonians the chance to experience top-notch entertainment in the hall.

Since the BPC began booking top touring acts, countless artists of international stature and widely varying musical styles have played there.
as a pop music artifact residing backstage testifies. The formerly white “autograph door” is almost completely blackened with the felt-tip pen signatures of many diverse performers who have played the hall, including Roy Orbison, James Brown, Pat Metheny, Carole King, Oscar Peterson, and hundreds more.

Recently, Michelle Shocked and Cowboy Junkies utilized the tie lines to the Berklee studios a floor below the BPC stage for live broadcast of their shows. A few months ago, flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia chose to record a live album in the hall.

Performance Division Chair Larry Monroe, who was M.C. and concert producer for the early college shows, remembers, “When the hall first opened, it was work to convince the faculty to play concerts there. We had no tradition of faculty concerts then. Today it is different, many faculty are very eager to play the BPC.”

As the theater moves into its third decade as the Performance Center, aside from continuing its role as a top performance venue, Berklee’s future plans for the hall include booking more of its time for use as an educational facility. With performance being the second most popular major Berklee offers, and with a swelling in the ranks of the music production and engineering (MP&E) and music business/management majors, the college has made a commitment to provide both faculty and students greater access to the resources of the BPC.

Rob Rose, recently named acting assistant chair for the performance division chair for the Berklee Performance Center and director of on-campus summer programs, states, “We see the BPC as a giant classroom where people can learn about performing and the technical side of presenting a show. For example, Brad Berger is teaching his sound reinforcement class in here. This is a great opportunity for the ensembles who get to perform in the hall for the class and the MP&E students who get hands-on training in sound engineering in a real-world venue.

“Mike Marchetti, the BPC stage manager, gives technical and logistical support to the crews of the pro shows booked here, but also works on set design for the large-scale student shows like the Singers Showcase and commencement concerts.

“We will also begin providing important new training for our work-study students this fall. They will have a chance to learn about all facets of technical services. They may choose to work as stage hands in the production end, or perhaps specialize in sound reinforcement, or they may specialize in lighting, or in videotaping live performances. This is all separate from their chosen major; it is on-the-job training in their work study position. Our music business graduates will have a leg up on others when they enter the job market because they will have worked in the BPC box office as students. They will know all about TicketMaster’s operations and about the dynamics of booking major professional acts by working with our Events Coordinator Dorothy Messenger.”

Another new use of the hall includes providing a rehearsal space for the Concert Wind Ensemble. The 40-piece group had never had a large enough or acoustically suitable rehearsal space until they began scheduling weekly rehearsals in the BPC.

“The change has been significant,” says the group’s director, Assistant Chair of Composition Greg Fritze. “As a large, purely acoustic ensemble, we needed to rehearse in an acoustic environment. Now instead of just learning the notes in rehearsal, we can know how the music will sound the night of the concert.”

Dean of Institutional Advancement John Collins has found the BPC a great spot for fundraising events.

“We recently presented a Jan Hammer scholarship concert, a Networks Expo scholarship show with Berklee’s Gospel Choir, and a Yellowjackets/Korg scholarship fundraiser,” states Collins. “The hall is great for these events because benefactors get to see how talented the students they support are.”

Rob Rose plans many other creative uses for the hall, such as Berklee concert series and theme festival events. Instead of a single international night concert, perhaps there will be a week-long festival celebrating the musical roots of Berklee’s international students. Rose also plans to use the hall for a larger number of the summer program lectures, showcases, and clinics usually held elsewhere. He also plans to make time available so more students and faculty can present concerts as well as make recordings in the hall.

The theater’s original projection booth is still at the back of the balcony and rear projection equipment is available for setup on stage. Rose even foresees the theater getting back to its roots by occasionally featuring film events.
A Place in Time

Studio mainstay John “J.R.” Robinson ’75: a rock-steady presence in an ever-changing industry

by
Mark L. Small ’73

After more than a decade and a half in L.A. where many musical careers flash and fade within months, John Robinson ’75 (alias “J.R.”) continues to be one of the most sought-after drummers in the business. J.R.’s soulful, razor-sharp time-keeping has been the heartbeat for a good portion of the soundtrack to contemporary American life heard via radio, TV, and movies since 1978. Some of his studio colleagues refer to him as the “Hit Man” because he holds the record for playing on more hit singles than any other drummer in the recording world—including 20-year studio veteran Hal Blaine.

The roster of superstars whose gold and platinum discs feature J.R.’s stickwork is extensive and includes Rufus, Eric Clapton, Madonna, Steve Winwood, Diana Ross, Earth, Wind, and Fire, Michael Jackson, Stevie Nicks, Rod Stewart, Whitney Houston, Vince Gill, Elton John, Michael Bolton, Quincy Jones ’51, Peter Cetera, Natalie Cole, and dozens more.

Raised in Creston, Iowa, J.R. was in the garage with his first band at 10. Attending summer band camps in Missouri and Illinois during his junior high school years solidified his desire to become a professional musician. After graduating high school in 1973, J.R. left the heartland for Berklee where he studied for six consecutive semesters. He began working with various jazz groups around Boston, and ultimately went on the road with a showband called Shelter. A providential gig the band played in Cleveland in 1978 catapulted J.R. from the nightclub circuit to the concert stage and studios. One night, Rufus and Chaka Khan stopped in at Cleveland’s Rare Cherry club and liked what they heard from the drums. Things happened fast, and within 24 hours J.R. was asked to join Rufus, finish their world tour, and then record their Numbers album.

Quincy Jones produced Masterjam for Rufus the following year, and liked J.R.’s drumming (Quincy also started calling him “J.R.”). Quincy invited him to play on Michael Jackson’s blockbuster album Off the Wall. When that record soared to multiplatinum status, J.R.’s stock as a session player rose with it. Hundreds of sessions with the top artists, producers, and film composers in the business followed. In 1983, J.R. and Rufus won a Grammy with for their hit “Ain’t Nobody.” In 1987 alone, J.R.’s drumming was heard on eight Grammy-winning songs. By now he has played on more than 25 Grammy-winning efforts.

In the weeks before we met, J.R. had spent
six days recording with Stephen Curtis Chapman, completed a live taping of “Comrie Relief,” a few episodes of “Murder, She Wrote,” and played with an all-star lineup at the 40th Anniversary of the Playboy Jazz Festival. He also signed on for Barbra Streisand’s international tour which opened in London April 17.

With the big gigs comes big pressure. In talking with him, it is apparent that J.R. has always thrived under pressure. This fact combined with his unique abilities and charismatic personality, keep him on the short list of the producers, artists, and contractors who are spinning out gold and platinum records in southern California’s studios.

People knew I’d played in Rufus and assumed I was black. I don’t think race has any bearing on musicianship.

Your initial encounter with Rufus and Chaka Khan is one of the classic, fairy tale “discovery stories.” Do you think that kind of thing happens much today?

I pray it does, but I think discoveries happen more by recommendation today. I remember being in Boston playing clubs, and if a famous musician walked in to listen, I would find myself over-playing. When I would pack up my drums that night I would feel really bad about over-playing because I knew the cat would not call me. I was playing with an eight-piece soul/show band in Cleveland, just after leaving Berklee. We were at a huge, 3,000-seat club which had one of those lightboards that flashes messages. I looked up and it read “Welcome Rufus and Chaka Khan,” and my heart started beating faster. When they sat in the front row, I got even more paranoid, but I remembered not to over-play. They asked us if their whole band, except their drummer, could sit in to play with me. We did a bunch of Rufus tunes, and I thought I was in heaven. They asked me to come to their soundcheck at Cleveland’s Front Row Theater the next night to play some more.

We played again and it was burning. I could see their drummer fading behind the speaker cabinets. He was their second drummer and had only been with them a short time. Incidentally, he and I are still friends to this day. After we played, they told me I was in, and we figured out the logistics of getting me moved to L.A. to rehearse and then join the tour.

What do you think attracted Quincy Jones to your playing?

When Quincy produced Rufus and Chaka Khan, he had the option of using a studio drummer, but he wanted to use me. I think he liked the fact that I listened to him, I had song sense, my playing was understated, and my time was strong. I also think he was attracted because I am a Berklee alumnus as he is. He’d been using Ernie Watts [’65], Neil Stubenhaus [’74], Abe Laboriel [’72], and a lot of other alumni.

What did you pick up from working with him so closely on several hit albums?

I learned about producing and about the business. Quincy says that a producer is like a casting director. You cast the right people around you to make the record successful. For instance, on “We Are the World,” he cast Greg Phillinganes on piano, Louis Johnson on bass, and me on drums. That was the rhythm section which cut the tune—after we kicked 50 cameramen out of the studio.

Did you know Neil Stubenhaus when you were both students at Berklee?

Yeah, we played the same showband circuit in Boston with different groups, and did some jamming together as did most of the young players from Berklee. Now 21 years later, we are close friends. When I get calls for sessions and I’m asked who I would like on bass, Neil is my first choice. I work with bassist Abe Laboriel a lot, too, probably once a month. Abe and I have a lot in common—spiritual things as well as ideas about the industry.

What Berklee faculty members had an impact on your musical development?

I was a performance major with drums as my principal instrument. I couldn’t choose piano as my secondary instrument, so I took vibes with Dave Samuels. He got me into Gary Burton’s four-mallet technique, but I found it was giving me blisters which interfered with my drum playing. Dave and I became good friends and have since worked on gigs together.

I studied drums with Alan Dawson at Berklee. He is a legend and an incredible player. I wasn’t from an urban area with a jazz scene as he was; I used to love to go into my lessons just to hear him talk. During my lessons, he would play vibes and I would play drums. He got me singing rhythms out of a syncopation book and
working on single strokes with a metronome. He was very influential.

What was the most useful experience you had at the college?
Learning to play with the click in the studio. I went into one of Berklee's first studios in the Mass. Ave. building with fellow student Doug Getschul ['75] who was working as Joe Hostetter's engineering assistant. The engineers asked me if I knew what a click was. I said no, and they played it for me and asked if I thought I could read a chart and play to it. I said no problem, and nailed the track on the first take. They had been having trouble finding a drummer who could play in time with the click while maintaining a human feel, and read a chart at the same time. Consequently, I started working a lot in that studio. I ended up playing drums on all of the instrumental performance tapes of 1974, replacing the drum tracks by other drummers—which is something I am frequently called upon to do today.

To what do you attribute your longevity in the studios?
Style is one factor, and being able to adapt and change that style is very important. I can think of a lot of drummers in L.A. who had a style that was in for a while but found that their work dried up when their style went out.

When I came into the studios in 1978 and began working with Quincy, the four-to-the-floor style on the bass drum was really in. On some of the albums I did, like George Benson's *Gimme A/
the Night*, the Brothers Johnson's *Stomp*, and a bunch of others, I played that, but on top of the drum kit I would add other syncopations to make the groove sound different. From the *Off the Wall* album by Michael Jackson through the '80s to Steve Winwood's "Higher Love," I’ve been able to add to the current drum style, as well as adapt.

I’ve gotten a reputation for being a human clock. With the influx of machines and everything being locked to SMPTE code now, drummers really have to be as precise as possible without sacrificing style, musicality, feel, or dynamics. A lot of drummers freak out trying to handle all of those aspects. They start feeling a train wreck approaching and drag the tempo or miss something in the track. Then they have to go back and do it over again or, worse, they get axed from the session.

You have been in heavy demand in the studios even through a time when drum machines have been used extensively.
To deal with that, you need to master the drum machine as well. I have always been electronically inclined. My dad’s hobby was electronics. He made a Heathkit television set once, and I helped by passing him the resistors, capacitors, and diodes. It was a natural for me to learn programming. Drum machines did cut into the work for a lot of drummers, and I saw many leave town or get a totally electronic drum set up to imitate that sound. I’ve always been pro acoustic, and I’ve played acoustic drums on all the records.

Rufus did a reunion album called *Stompin’ at the Savoy* in 1983; we won a Grammy for "Ain’t Nobody" off that album. That tune has a very syncopated groove, it is precise like a machine, but feels human. After hearing it, Mike Baird [studio drummer] came up to me and complimented me for what he thought was a great Linn drum program on the tune. I told him that I had played everything, it wasn’t a programmed part. He didn’t believe me—a lot of people still think it was a drum program.

Do you get studio calls for one particular style or because you can cover many styles?
Originally I was a typecast because I was a member of Rufus, and they were known for mixing funk and rock. The band was regarded as a black band even though three of the members were white. A lot of people heard that John Robinson played in Rufus and assumed I was black. I personally don’t think race or color has any bearing on musicianship.

I worked with a guy, Jim Stuart, who was one of the owners of Stax Records in the old days. He flew me down to Memphis to work with some musicians in their studio. We had never met, and he came to pick me up at the airport. After everyone had filtered off the plane and out of the airport, I was standing there with my bags. I saw this guy looking all around and I knew what was happening. Finally he came up to me and said "John? John Robinson?" I said, "Hi, Jim." He knew my playing,

John Robinson '75: "Being able to adapt is important. I know players whose style was in for a while, but their work dried up when their style went out."
WHEN RUSS TITELMAN NEEDS A DRUMMER

“I call John Robinson for sessions because he is one of the best drummers on earth. He’s musical and plays any style from big band to funk. He gets the concept fast, spots any problems in a track right away, and his time is impeccable.

‘The Rufus tune ‘Ain’t Nobody’ from the Stompin’ at the Savoy album started with a drum machine program that Hawk [the keyboardist] wrote. John basically copied the machine part, but added this power that you will never get from a machine. We put his drum track down in pieces. First he played the high hat, then he played kick and snare. I think we put in the tom fills—those explosions—a few days later. It is hard on drummers when you make them play in a way they are unaccustomed to, but as I recall, John got each part on the first take.

“If you give a great musician like John an idea, he’ll play it better than you imagined it. On Steve Winwood’s song ‘Back in the High Life Again,’ I asked him to try a press roll in the section following the chorus. When he did it, I just said, yeah, that’s it! He always gets what I want.”

Multi-Grammy-winning producer Russ Titelman has just finished working on an Eric Clapton blues disc and a Vince Gill-Michael MacDonald collaboration.

and that I came out of Rufus, and told me he was expecting to meet a tall black guy. I told him I considered that a compliment.

What are producers expecting when they hire you for their sessions?

Sometimes I get called in to help repair a track. For Rod Stewart’s “Rhythm of Your Heart,” Trevor Horn called me because they couldn’t get what they wanted from three drummers they tried in New York. I did all kinds of overdubs—full kit, timpani, and rudimental snare drum—which gave the song a very Scottish feel. I get calls to come in and add something to a track. It might just be a high-hat which will give a human feel to a track that is too machine-like. Sometimes you can just punch in a little part that adds some beauty. Something that simple can make a hit record.

I got called to work on George Benson’s version of “Beyond the Sea.” Russ Titelman, the producer, came out from New York to have Joe Sample and me play on the tracks he’d cut with a big band. It was a great band, but the acoustic bass player and the drummer were not together, the time was all over the place. I wrote a chart and made notes of every little idiosyncrasy in the time, and Joe did the same. I had to really bend to get with the horns. It was a challenge, but that tune ended up being the big one off the record.

Beyond talent, what attributes make someone successful in the studio?

Personality, promptness, and reading ability. Wes Hensel used to tell his Berklee classes that to be a professional musician you have to be a good reader and be on time. You never want to be late. I always show up early.

As for personality, if you come off cold, hard, or uncaring, chances are the producer won’t call you again even if you did well on his session. You have to remember that you are building a 360-degree circle of people you work for. You don’t want things to end after you have been around the circle once, you want to work with those people again. That happened in the early ’80s for me—I started around the circle again.

Since a lot of drummers are not great readers, they can’t do movie dates, which are very lucrative. They pay double scale like records, but have extra incentives like residuals from films that sell well and then go to cable.

Are you doing a lot of TV and movies?

I do TV primarily when I am in between other projects. It really keeps you on your toes—there is a lot of reading and the pace is quick. I have been doing a lot of motion pictures recently. I did My Cousin Vinny, Dennis the Menace, Wayne’s World II, Diggstown, Grand Canyon, Intersection, and a lot of others. I hope to get into composing for films.

What’s next in your career?

I have been writing for years and would like to eventually spend more time producing than playing, although my playing will always continue—God willing. I have a full studio in my new home, so I could do most of the production on my own projects there.

I originally had a goal of spending 15 years in Los Angeles. I’m past that now, I’ve been at this for 16 years. I figure I’ll just rock this thing out and see what happens.
The Musician Mind

What can scientists expect to discover about the creative process by probing the musician brain?

Musical creativity is considered one of the most mysterious and complex higher cognitive functions of the human brain. Accordingly, musical composition and improvisation must rely, in part, upon the flawless operation of a vast and highly elaborate series of neurological processes. In recent years, the discovery of those structures and pathways in the brain which may be involved in the creation and performance of music has become the focus of major neurological research. As a result, many investigators are predicting the emergence of a science of creativity.

For those who believe in the inspirational origins of creative thought, any attempt to define creativity might devalue its meaning. Creativity is deeply linked with our natural sense of wonder, whereas science is "fundamentally opposed to the romance of superstition."¹ Science, by its very definition, attempts to obtain and unearth knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws specifically concerned with the physical world. Creativity, on the other hand, is most often referred to in a spiritual context (i.e., the creative spirit) and is, in its purest manifestations, glimpsed in fleeting moments of inspiration which remain elusive and unpredictable. What can scientists reveal by examining the process that the artist doesn't already perceive by experiencing the process? Would a

Will the brain reveal the "secrets" of improvisers?

Guitarist Mitch Haupers is an assistant professor in the Ear Training Department and chair of the Committee for Music Perception and Cognition Studies (COMPACS) at Berklee.

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Improvisation relies upon intuition and the unpredictable responses of the unconscious mind.

The neural components and circuitry which make up the memory system function in parallel. Sensory information is processed through a series of feedback loops between areas of the brain thought to be responsible for the storage of neural representations as memories. Evidently, these neural representations of objects or events are capable of being stored in as little as one exposure. Thus, through association, we can consciously make use of stored knowledge very rapidly and efficiently within the memory system.

This does not imply that cognitive learning by association is more important, complex, or useful than behavioral patterning by repetitive reinforcement. Rather, the activation level of both systems during the learning process may very well affect what we learn and how well we learn it.

Unconscious Learning

The application of this theory to music must include the occurrence of learning at the unconscious level. Without acknowledging the brain’s ability to “learn” on its own—free from the constraints of the conscious mind—how can we account for creativity or original thought? Cognitive scientists believe that “all memory is unconscious before it becomes conscious, [and only] one percent ever reaches conscious awareness.” Thus, the majority of what the unconscious mind knows must be “felt” as intuition. Improvisation relies upon intuition and “unpredictable responses” of the unconscious mind.

Improvising musicians know that the things they practice will show up in their playing in different combinations than they practiced or even imagined before. In part, this development of musical “syntax” seems to evolve on its own. These moments of “true improvisation” often surprise the improviser, yet are usually considered the gems of an improvised solo. Like the natural formation of a diamond, to continue the analogy, this type of musical creativity requires the tremendous pressure of performance over a long period of time in order to materialize. An intelligent approach to practicing can help prepare the improviser for these unforeseen musical moments. Whether or not the brain’s random generation of unique combinations of rehearsed ideas is a type of creativity which can be fostered, suggests an interesting area of study.

Learning Music

According to internationally renowned guitarist/teacher Mick Goodrick ’67, there are two basic approaches to learning music. The first is thinking of goals and ignoring the process; the second is thinking of process and ignoring the goals. He suggests the latter, pointing out that this approach allows practitioners to discover what sounds good to them by examining all possibilities and permutations of an idea in a playful and curious way. The goals are an added benefit of exploring the process. In this way, musicians who struggle through the process may value what is learned because of the struggle.

Saxophonist and author David Liebman offers another insightful look at the musical learning process. He discusses one approach which progresses from intellectual curiosity to the communication of musical ideas. His proposed scheme for the acquisition of new information reads: Intellectual understanding → disciplined and organized practice → integration into technique → emotions shape expressive content of idea → communication of idea.

The process of intellectual understanding requires the active application of analysis, logic, reasoning and linear organization of information, all of which appear to be specialized...
functions of the brain’s left hemisphere. This most certainly requires the attention of the conscious mind.

A disciplined and organized practice regimen also requires focused conscious awareness. At the early “acquisition” stage, the musician hears the original idea manifest itself as sound for the first time. When this process is repeated over time, the sound and feel of the idea becomes integrated into the subconscious as aural experience and kinesthetic skill—a musician’s technique.

Both the assimilation of new skills into technique and equating them with human emotions are examples of synthetic and aesthetic thinking, respectively, which apparently require the receptive mode of processing preferred by the right hemisphere of the brain. Once this hemispheric “cross-over” is accomplished—a sure signal that something is “known”—the idea is ripe for communication through performance.

The habituation of skilled movement to the subconscious allows the conscious mind of the improviser to react more quickly to the ideas of other musicians in performance. The conscious mind is freed to make critical decisions and aesthetic choices.

**Performance Mode**

Neurologists study subjects during performance by utilizing a technique which involves the injection of radioactive xenon into the carotid artery to locate and map blood flow in the brain. The metabolic activities relating to sensory perceptions, voluntary movements, and other functional anatomical correlations are then tracked via highlighted areas of the brain. This process is known as positron emission tomography, or PET scanning.

In a related study, neurologists scanned the brains of subjects who were first introduced to the popular computer game, Tetris®. In the naive state, there was a high rate of metabolic activity. However, after four to eight weeks of practice, the subjects who had become more proficient at playing the game showed sharp declines in most metabolic activity. Only the deepest structures of the brain—most notably the basal ganglia—were the most highly affected. The study concluded that this area of the brain was important for the development of assigning motor tasks to a subconscious level in the most efficient manner.

Ideally, the musician must relegate all performance procedure to a subliminal level. By doing this, the flow state—that midway point between the unconscious and the conscious where “chaos is given over to form and order”—can more easily be reached. This optimal performance mode is sometimes described as a light trance state, hyper-awareness, or being “in the zone.”

**Musical and Language**

Music is often referred to as the “universal language.” As a mode of expression, it is easy to see how the analogy to verbal language can be made. Musicians often refer to one motivation for making music as “having something to say.” Particular styles of music are thought to possess their own “vocabulary, syntax, and grammar.”

Science has attempted to make this analogy for over a century now. However, recent findings indicate that the neurological structures involved in the processing and cognition of music and language are functionally distinct.

As music becomes differentiated from language, musical intelligence is viewed as a unique and viable strategy for learning. However, intelligence and creativity are not the same. Intelligence is measured in terms of convergent thinking—the ability to give the “correct” answer on an IQ test—where creativity stimulates divergent thinking—the tendency to respond to problems by searching for a wide range of possible interpretations.

**A Musician’s Point of View**

Creativity will not be easily understood. The process operates out of the reach of conscious awareness. I do not foresee the discovery of artistic creation as merely a brain function. As well, scientists should not allow their own musical tastes and sensibilities to define the parameters of their research. Composers and improvisers are a most valuable resource to scientific investigators seeking clues to the mysteries of creativity.

As practitioners of the art, musicians can view this opportunity as a chance to contribute positively to the advancement of their art by guiding scientists toward asking the right questions. The music will still speak for itself, but this needn’t preclude a willingness to discuss the process by which music is learned, perceived, organized and communicated. A collaborative effort between musicians and researchers could yield tremendous benefits for both disciplines.

**Notes and References**

A Cross-intervalllic Chromatic Concept

Stretch your improvisational thinking by using wide-interval leaps and chromatic elements

After initial inspiration from my teacher Joe Viola, and the experiences of my own 20 years of playing and teaching, I have developed a method which helps to expand upon the traditional approaches to improvising over chord changes. I call it the "cross-intervalllic, chromatic approach." It involves playing both small and large intervals coupled with chromatic approaches to, and departures from, the notes as a method of expanding the traditional bebop style of soloing over chord changes.

To learn it, increase your fluidity by practicing leaps of fourths and fifths in succession. Working on them in all keys will develop facility and prepare you for playing wide-interval figures such as those found in example 1. After practicing in a constant eighth-note rhythm, vary the rhythms a little to keep the intervallic leaps from sounding repetitive.

Once you have mastered this wide-interval concept, start introducing some chromatics. Inserting them in strategic places will keep your lines from sounding too pattern-like and create melodic flow (see example 2). These chromatics are also instrumental for passing subtly from one unrelated harmonic area to another and for superimposing various harmonic structures over an already-established tonality (see example 3). This provides freedom from the bebop approach, opening the door to a non-harmonic or even atonal approach.

Depending on the musical situation you
are playing in, you can create as much or as little musical tension as desired with this method. I look at this as a kind of a high-wire act where you are balancing the sound between harmonic and non-harmonic elements in your improvisation. As the improviser, you determine the amount of harmonic and/or non-harmonic sound to use.

The title of my blues tune, “Hey, Open Up!,” the last musical example, is meant as a challenge to expand your melodic concepts. This melody shows that with strong direction to your lines, many notes that you would not ordinarily consider playing against a chord can work. On the IV chord, bar 2, you find an interval which is enharmonically a major seventh (technically it is a diminished octave). It creates a clash with the chord, but, in the final analysis, is just an octave displacement of the chord’s flat-nineteen resolving to the root.

In bars 4-6, there are tritone leaps within the melody which help to bring out the augmented dominant quality of the chords. Note how the linear strength of the whole-tone scale in measures 9-10 makes playing the major third against the minor chord in measure 9, and the major seventh on a dominant seventh chord in measure 10, work.

A strong knowledge of the traditional jazz improvisational vocabulary is a prerequisite to using this concept to start breaking the rules. Ultimately, the unity and strength of direction you create in the lines you improvise with wide interval leaps and chromatic elements makes those lines work independently from the chord changes being played.

**BREAKING WITH TRADITION**

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Hey, Open Up!

by George Garzone

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Composer/arranger Michael Gibbs '63 is living in London but frequently works in New York. He has recently composed the score for the film Being Human, which features Robin Williams.

Pianist and composer Manrat Srikasanonda '65 received the 1993 National Artist of Thailand award for his dedication and achievements in music in that country. He also serves as musical advisor to Thailand’s King Bhumibol, who is an avid jazz musician.

James J. Castaldi '66 is band and choral director at Woonsocket High School in Rhode Island. In 1992 his band was the first place Concert Band at the Music in the Park Festival in Williamsburg, VA.

Ernie Watts '66 has been promoting music education in high schools nationally with sponsorship from JVC Musical Industries.

Richard Franke '69 performs in Hollywood as a solo pianist and with his dance band.

Tenor saxophonist, Staff Sergeant Richard Giroux '70 will retire from the U.S. Army Band this year after 20 years of service.

Colin Brown '71 is a behavioral specialist and record producer living in Silver Spring, MD.

Randy Klein '71 has been performing frequently in the New York area with his band the Jazzheads, and is the composer of the musical comedy I Don’t Do Club Dates, playing at the John Harms Center for the Arts in Englewood, NJ.

Frank Lasardo '71 and his band I.Llama have been opening for acts such as Billy Preston, Dave Mason, Leslie West, Ric Derringer, and the Byrds. In addition, Frank is the president of Lost Island Productions in Coram, NY.

Manrat Srikasanonda '65

Roland Vazquez '72 is currently living in New York and released his latest CD entitled Roland Vazquez: Best of the L.A. Jazz Ensemble on his own Roland Music label.

Saxophonist Tim Price '73 is a featured columnist in Saxophone Journal. Among his many reviews in the June issue, is a critique of Berklee professor Andy McGhee’s CD Could It Be.

Ron Bergin '74 served as festival director for the first annual 1993 Chequamegon Fine Arts Festival. Ron lives in Cable, WI.

Josh Picano '74 of Wakefield, MA, was named “Teacher of the Month” in the Lynn public school system. Josh is also giving music clinics at the Music Place in North Reading.

Kim Cascone '75 has released his latest CD, In a Garden of Eden, on Silent Records.
Jazz guitarist Steve Masakowski '75 is based in New Orleans and recently released What It Was for the Blue Note label.

Nicholas Patrick Puin '75 is an instrumental music teacher at Maple Heights City School in Maple Heights, OH. He arranged, played drums on, and coproduced an album for singer Dew Watson which scored five number one records on the independent record charts. He is currently working on his master of music in composition.

Steven Sauls '75, classical guitarist, concertizes throughout Arizona.

Misha Segal '75 wrote and produced the Randy Crawford CD Don't Say It's Over for Warner Brothers. The CD went to #1 for several weeks on the new adult contemporary chart.

Jayne Zanglein '75, a Texas Tech University professor of law, received the Spencer A. Wells Award for creative excellence in teaching from the university in 1993.

Composer/arranger Gene Bohlmann '76 has released a contemporary jazz CD titled Aerial Display.

Guitarist John Burns '77 is living and playing professionally in Shelton, CT.

David Mash '76 has published Multimedia Machine, an interactive guide to music, sound, and multimedia for the Macintosh. The book includes a mixed-mode CD-ROM with software so the reader can get hands-on experience at incorporating music and sound into multimedia projects. The book is published by SYBEX.

Keyboardist and trumpeter Jim Cannon '77 and guitarist Andrea Ricci-Cannon '78 from Spring, TX, have been performing at schools as Good Vibrations helping children learn critical thinking skills through music. Andrea was also named Berklee’s BAR representative of the year in 1992.

Classical guitarist Michael Carenbauer '77 is currently serving as director of government relations at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Ken Darsh '77 is living in Pittsburgh, PA, and teaching guitar at Duquesne University.

Trombonist William Emil Gibson '77 is living in Sioux Falls, SD, and is the director of jazz ensembles at Augustana College and instructor of brass at Sioux Falls College. He recently directed the Augustana College Jazz Band at the Jazz One Upper Great Plains Festival. Berklee faculty member Greg Hopkins was a featured trumpeter soloist.

Robert Streitfield, Jr. '77 of Portsmouth, RI, is chief musician for the Navy Band in Newport, RI, and received the Navy Achievement medal.

Alex Vaughan '77 is one half of Atlantic Canada’s best-known children’s music act, Audrey and Alex. They recently received the East Coast Music Award for their first album Smile.

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CLASS CONNECTIONS

The month of May was an active one for alumni as three different chapters held events on the same day around the world. On May 22, Boston alumni attended a brunch honoring singer/songwriters Bruce Cockburn '65 and Patty Larkin '81 who received Distinguished Alumni Awards. Former Boston Club President Joseph Cardello '68 received the Boston Alumni Club Award, and Rick Schettino '84, editor of New England Performer, and A&R representative for Relativity Records, was the guest speaker.

At the same time, on the West Coast, Los Angeles alumni held a “networking-schmooze” gathering with cohosts, Los Angeles Chapter President Leanne Summers '88 and Peter Gordon '78, director of the Berklee Center in Los Angeles. Across the sea in Tokyo, Chika Okamoto '87 was hosting a networking social.

Orlando Chapter President Stan Kubit '71 started the May activities by hosting an alumni get-together on the first of the month. Kathy Sheppard '81 organized and hosted the fourth annual BAR Scholarship Fund Benefit Concert at Kenny’s Castaways in New York, featuring four bands.

The Women Musicians Coalition, comprising Marcia Guntzel '84, Maggie Galloway '82, Pam Quick '85, Lynne Vadala '81, Gloria Jasinski '78, and Valerie Walton '79, participated in a panel discussion at the IAJE conference in Boston this January titled “Integrating Female Students into the Jazz Classroom.”

In preparing the 1995 Alumni Directory, Harris Publishing Company will mail a questionnaire to all alumni in June. To help make this an effective networking tool, please complete and return your questionnaires as soon as possible.

Sarah Bodge
Assistant Director of Development for Alumni Relations
Guitarist Mike Stern '77 released is what it is for the Atlantic Jazz label. The disc features Michael Brecker, Harvie Swartz '70, Jim Beard, Dennis Chambers, and Will Lee.

and have just released a second album titled Song Soup.

Dave Cashin '78 was voted best keyboardist in 1994 by the Washington Blues Society, and his group Fat James was voted best band, and also won the west coast regional finals in the Yamaha/TicketMaster Soundcheck Music Showcase in September 1993.

Vocalist/guitarist Chris Daniels '78 and his band the Kings recently released their third album on the Flying Fish label.

Scott Gordon '78, a pianist/arranger, released his first CD At Last, a collection of great American popular standards.

Saxophonist Jan Konopasek '78 traded fours with President Clinton in a Prague nightclub last January. Guitarist Randy Caldwell '79 has toured and recorded with vocalist Arthur Prysock and earned Grammy nominations for “A Rockin’ Good Way” and “This Guy’s in Love with You,” on Milestone records. He recently produced and composed four selections for the album In Your Own Backyard with his group American Underground.

Gregg Gelb '79 is a saxophone instructor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His Gregg Gelb Swing Band has released its first CD.

Michael Hayes '79 recently released a self-titled album through the Chase Music Group in Glendale, CA. Musicians on the disc include alumni Steve Hunt '80 and Randy Roos '78.

Steve Pemberton '79, drummer, performed last summer at Carnegie Hall for a Judy Collins benefit. Others on the bill included Marvin Hamlisch, Skitch Henderson, and the New York Pops. He has also played and recorded with Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist Peter Nero for the past eight years.

Guitarist Steve Vai '79 wrote the score for the 20th Century Fox film P.C.U. (Politically Correct University). Kurt Sobel '78 was the film’s music consultant.

Drummer Cindy Blackman '80 is signed to Muse Records and recently did a world tour with the Lennie Kravitz band.

Ginny Fordham '80 and Steve Wilkes '80 are playing frequently with their band dr. carrot throughout Massachusetts.

Robert Sears '80 is living in Baunain, Australia, and is composing and doing sound design for 6M of Australia and 9Network Corporation for national TV spots.

Steve Thompson '80, a flutist living in Seattle, WA, has released his latest CD entitled My Romance on Jazz Cats Records. Steve’s music has been featured on television, radio and in the film Citizen.

Ringo Cheung '81 of Ontario, CA, is the house drummer at the Turning Point night club in San Gabriel, CA.

Keyboardist and vocalist Aaron Loo '81 released a fusion album titled Loo-ow for the TLC Records label. Aaron recently made his operatic debut as “Zuniga” in Bizet’s opera Carmen with the Bel Canto Opera Company in Los Angeles.

John Russo '81, a composer/producer, is the owner of Musiccreations studio in New York City. He is also pursuing his master of music degree at New York University.

Sande Sharlat '81 (a.k.a. Athena) recorded a self-titled album which she co-produced with fellow alum Ed Friedland '79. In addition, Sande also performs in the Boston area as a soloist and with the band True Love.

David DeQuasie '82 is living in Orlando, FL, and teaches guitar and other fretted instruments at Adrian Music Academy in Oviedo. He also plays with the band Calamity Jane throughout central Florida.

Jon Herbst '82, a film composer, video editor, and producer, lives in San Francisco. He composed music for the PBS special “Abraham Lincoln,” the PBS series “Cookin’ at the Academy,” and the Disney Channel’s “America’s National Parks.” He also wrote the score for the 1991 Best Short Documentary Academy Award winner, Deadly Deception.

Guitarist Kevin McCluskey '82 recently won the New England Broadcasting Award for jingle production. His Mumbo Jumbo Productions is releasing This Distant Light, a CD of his folk material.

Composer Per-Erik Johansson '83 is living in Hamden, CT. The internationally renowned Ars
Jazz trumpeter Anders Bergcrantz '81 of Malmo, Sweden, will record his fourth CD in August for Dragon Records.

Nova Trio recently performed his composition Introduction and Scherzo.

Violinist David Kim '83 of Watertown, MA, is acting concertmaster for the Waltham Philharmonic Orchestra. David also served as the violin soloist for the premiere of a work by Dan Cooperstein at the Charles River Museum last spring.

Benjamin Schachter '83 toured Spain playing alto saxophone with the Gerald Veasley band in 1993 and will tour with them again this year. He has been performing as a member of Jamaaladeen Tacuma’s hip-hop ensemble and will be a featured soloist and arranger for Tacuma's forthcoming Sony Music CD.

Cynthia Sinclair '83 was selected for inclusion in the next Sterling's Who's Who Executive Edition.

Ovid Alexis '84 recently released a new album entitled Calypso Flower with his Rhapsody Jazz Band.

Woodwind player and vocalist LeRoy Bach '84 and guitarist Evan Coleman '89 are currently working with their band Uptighty in Chicago. They have opened for the Smashing Pumpkins and Ziggy Marley. The band recently released a self-titled CD.

Danilo Buenconsejo '84, a recording artist and producer from Chicago, was commissioned by the city to produce the Earth Day '94 fundraising concert featuring jazz artists Bobby Enriquez and Ester Hana.

Guitarist Kenny Carr '84 of Springfield, VA has been touring with Ray Charles since 1986. Kenny appeared on Ray’s album Just Between Us.

Evelyn Charles '84 is a singer/songwriter performing in Los Angeles.

Bryan Croad '84 of Everett, MA, has opened Croad Guitar & Bass Co.

Daniel Indart '84 of Tarzana CA, owns Indart Music Productions.

Alan Jones '84 of Portland, OR, recently released a CD titled The Fensters on Aria Records with his quartet. They took first prize at the Belgium Jazz Competition.

Humberto Ramirez '84, a composer and arranger, released the CD, Aspects, on Tropi-Jazz Records in 1993. His latest collaboration is with Willie Colon on Hecho en Puerto Rico.

Music director and conductor Barry Rocklin '84 can be heard frequently at Club Europe and the Roxy in Boston. Alumni in his orchestra include Jim Pastore '66, Dave Sass '87, Bryan Young '88, and faculty member Jackson Schultz '76.

John Donahoe, Jr. '85 plays electric fiddle and saxophone, and has recently joined Boston based band Boogaloo Swanis. The band is recording an album with Bob Stanton '83 producing.

Eddie Horst '85 of Atlanta scored five episodes for the television show “In the Heat of the Night.”

Gregorio Froio '86 served for two years as vice president of the classical music school Centro Studi Musica Sud, in Italy, and is now living in Worcester, MA.

Saxophonist Steve Norton '86 performs in the Boston area with the avant jazz group Debris which features bassist Bob Ross '82, cornetist Keith Hedger '91, and trumpeter Herb Robertson '74.

Tenor saxophonist Scott Brubaker '87 of Austin, TX,

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SPRING BREAK '94 IN NASHVILLE

This March, a group of 50 student songwriters continued the six-year-old Berklee spring break tradition. Instead of laying on the beaches of Cancún with their peers from other colleges, they opted to lay some groundwork for their futures in the Nashville music industry. Songwriting Professor Pat Pattison was faculty sponsor and organizer of the trip, as he has been since 1988. The Nashville Record Label Division of the Warner Music Group was the chief sponsor of the trek, though sponsorship for some events also came from NARAS, BMI, ASCAP, Ronnie Milsap Publishing, and EMI.

After a 16-hour bus ride, the group stretched out and immersed themselves in the ambiance of the Music City, beginning with local nightspots. The nocturnal excursions gave the Nashville sojourners a chance to hear and meet dozens of successful songwriters and performers—many alumni among them—and were an important component of the trip. One highlight was a trip to Windows on the Cumberland, where alumnae Gillian Welch ‘92, (who has just signed a deal with the Almo Irving publishing firm) Kami Lyle ‘92, Eve Goodman ‘89, and Lynn Biddick ‘80 played their original music.

During the daytime there were clinics, studio tours, seminars, and panel discussions led by the songwriters, engineers, publishers, and entertainment lawyers of the Nashville industry elite. Pete Fisher, publishing director of WarnerSongs, organized many events, ranging from a tour of WarnerSongs to a Nashville Chamber of Commerce informational session detailing the realities of day-to-day life in the Music City.

High points of the week were: clinics given by hit songwriters Janis Ian, John Ims, Carl Jackson, Fred Knobloch and Tim Mensy; alumni panels on publishing; and tours of the Ronnie Milsap and Fireside studios. Throughout, students and alumni were able to quiz clinicians and panelists at length to determine what the Nashville music scene has to offer a Berklee graduate.

One of the most exciting events of the week—the fifth annual Berklee Alumni Showcase—took place at the Bluebird Cafe. Organized by the Nashville BAR Association President, Rich Adams ‘82, alumni previously selected by taped audition presented a series of in-the-round performances for an SRO audience. Writers included David Rawlings ‘88, Hunter Moore ‘77, Lee Satterfield ‘82, John Mock ‘80, Aaron Hsu-Flanders ‘88, David Thomas ‘83, Gary Culley ‘88, Lynette Ashim ‘92, Betsy Jackson Sheridan ‘84, Ilene Altman ‘92, and Debbie Salvucci ‘89. Afterward, Mike Morris ‘82 and his band M to the 3rd Power hosted an alumni jam session. Sitting in were Nancy T. Michaels ‘83, Camille Schmidt ‘84, Dan Baggot ‘82, Alan Powell ‘89, Jazzy Joe Turley ‘81, and Rich Adams.

Between performances Pat Pattison presented Pete Fisher the Berklee Recognition award for advancing careers in music and Lee Satterfield the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Too soon the week was over and the group saddled up for the trek back to Boston. Many expressed hopes of moving to Nashville after graduation.

Pete Fisher (left), publishing director of WarnerSongs, receives the Berklee Recognition award from Pat Pattison.

Hit songwriter John Ims gave a clinic and sang students a few of his songs.

earned his master’s degree in art, and owns the Corn Brew record label.

Woodwind player Dr. Tamas G.K. Marius ‘87 is an associate professor at the University of Central Florida where he received his doctoral degree in education. He also teaches sound recording at Orlando’s Valencia Community College.

John Christopher McCaffrey ‘87 of Coconut Creek, FL played drums for 10 years with the underground Drag Queens and has now assembled the Velvet Flesh Peddlers for his own Twin Records label.

Dennis Mitcheltree ‘87 and his quartet have been playing in New York City clubs, and performed at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall this May.

David Radin ‘87, a mastering engineer at Precision Mastering, recently worked with Bob Dylan, Prince, and others.

Fritz Renold ’87, an alto saxophone player from Schonenwerd, Switzerland, has released two albums on EPM Records in Paris with the Bostonian Friends. He has also produced discs for the Herb Pomeroy (’52) Quartet and the Christian Jacob Trio. In May, Fritz recorded his latest album with Berklee alumni Mark Soskin ‘74 on piano and Harvie Swartz ’70 on bass.

Kathie Twa ‘87 is currently working on Sundown recording artist and president Gilbert Yslas’ next album and her own keyboard-oriented solo album.

Israeli vocalist Varda Zamir ‘87 released her first CD entitled Free in ’93, featuring songs cowritten by Argentine composer Sergio Barcala. With her band Shirou, she represented Israel at the Eurovision Contest in Ireland.
BERKLEE GRAMMY AND BMA WINNERS

Locally and nationally, a number of Berklee alumni received prestigious music awards this winter and spring. At the Grammy Awards presentation this February, Bruce Hornsby '74 and Branford Marsalis '81 won Best Pop Instrumental Performance honors for “Barcelona Mona.” Aerosmith, featuring Joey Kramer ’71 and Brad Whitford ’71, took the Best Rock Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal category for the song “Livin’ on the Edge.” Frank Zappa’s “Sofa,” featuring Steve Vai ’79 and mixed by Associate Professor Carl Beatty, was named Best Rock Instrumental Performance. Joe Henderson’s album So Near, So Far (Musings for Miles) featuring John Scofield ’73, won in the Best Jazz Instrumental Solo, and Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Individual or Group categories. Quincy Jones ’51 won the Best Large Jazz Ensemble Performance award for the Miles and Quincy Live at Montreux album.

Aerosmith swept the Boston Music Awards in April with wins in seven categories. Aimee Mann ’80 was named Best Female Vocalist and Melissa Ferrick ’90 topped the competition for Best Folk/Acoustic Vocalist. Associate Professor of Guitar Garrison Fewell ’77 won the Best Jazz Album on an Indie Label category for his debut disc A Blue Deeper Than the Blue. The group Bim Skala Bim, with guitarist Jim Jones ’83, took two awards for Best Club Band, and Best Ska Band.

Bobby Borg ’88 of Princeton, NJ, was formerly drummer with Atlantic recording artists Beggars & Thieves. His new band Left for Dead toured the U.S. with Warrant and Saigon Kick.

Tracy Chisholm ’88 engineered the self-titled debut album of the band Truck Stop Love.

Kenny Cooke ’88 lives in Washington, D.C., and is lead singer for the band Liquid Rhythm.

Jared Robinson ’88 of Bermuda is music specialist at several elementary schools and performs frequently with his gospel group Psalms.

Nashville songwriter, guitarist, and vocalist Gary Culley ’89 recently released Flight of Dreams with the group Culley & Elliott.

Guitarist Joy Basu ’90 is teaching and performing throughout southern California, while seeking a record deal for his instrumental music.

Trumpeter Kelley Bolduc ’90 performed with Machel Montano and Xtactic at the Trinidad Carnival ’94 and will be touring the Caribbean and U.S. late in 1994.

Tod Hilton ’90 is coowner of Great Plains Recording Company in Des Moines, IA.

Keith David Martinelli ’90 is living in Allston, MA and playing with his band Medicine Pipe. The band’s latest CD is titled Crucifixation.

Jorge “Lobito” Martinez ’90, who studied at Berklee on a Fulbright Scholarship, was guest pianist in a concert performance at the Fulbright Association’s 16th Annual Banquet in Washington, D.C.

Tonu Naissoo ’90, a pianist/composer, and saxophonist Daniel Walsh ’85 performed at the Tallinn International Jazz Festival in Estonia.

Mark Nemkoff ’90 recently had his music featured in the CBS telecast of the 1994 Winter Olympics. Mark has...
also written for the television shows “Sunshine Cuisine” on PBS, “Death By Chocolate” and “Burger Meisters” on the Learning Channel, and the theme music for the Hometown TV Network.

Hiroe Nomura ’90 is currently living in Hollywood working as an entertainment industry business consultant and owns Live Entertainment.

Colin O’Dwyer ’90 and Steve Spungin ’90 of Animal World performed at the 1993 International Folk/Jazz festival in the Azores Islands off the coast of Portugal.

Deborah Phillips ’90 of Whitney Point, NY is assistant project manager for International Service System and will be studying entertainment law this fall after receiving her M.B.A. in finance/marketing.

Troy Richardson ’90, a bassist, recently joined Stanton Park Records/Helter Skelter recording artists, Voodoo Dolls.

Matthew Stone ’90 vocalist, and Damir Prcic ’93 keyboardist, are playing around the New England area with their band Random House of Soul.

Jeff Thacher ’90 is the vocal percussionist for the New York City-based a cappella group Rockapella. They toured for eight months and have a new CD entitled Vocobeat on Life Records of Japan, and are featured on the “Carmen San Diego” soundtrack.

Ary (Rico) Toto ’90 composer, is working with his band Moundjahka, combining Asian, European, American, and African styles of music.

Lisa Vonesch ’90, a bass player, has backed up Spencer Davis, The Coasters, The Drifters, The Platters, and others with her band. She is also a substitute bassist at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.

Mark Liberty ’91 recently did engineering on Stan Strickland’s latest album Ascension.

G.P. Sulser ’91 is completing a master’s degree in composition at New England Conservatory.

Jazz vocalist Elizabeth Deters ’92 has been performing and recording under the name “Liz Forester” in Minnesota.

Stephen Chaggars ’92 is currently gigging around New England with his band Gingerbutkis. The band also includes saxophonist Tony Edeltibe ’91.

Alex Clements ’92 is enrolled in a master’s degree program in jazz performance at McGill University in Montreal. This summer his group, the Jazz Vigilantes, will be playing at the Edmonton Jazz Festival in Canada, and the Montreux Jazz Festival and Festa New Orleans/Ascona in Switzerland.

Colin O’Dwyer ’90 (left) and Steve Spungin ’90

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JOURNEY FROM RECIFE

Listening to Nando Lauria’s ('87) Billboard-charting, debut album Points of View, released on Narada Records, is like reaching the beach in the midst of a heat wave. The melodies are cool, the rhythms refreshing, and the vocals are like the spray of an ocean mist on an August afternoon. Points is a true tropical delight containing every element of Lauria’s native Brazil.

Lauria has been a regular on the Boston jazz club circuit for many years, and was initially introduced to wider audiences by Pat Metheny. It was the wordless vocals that drew Lauria and Metheny together. Lauria, noticing that Metheny used vocals similar to his own style on the albums First Circle and Letter from Home, sent a tape to Metheny, and received an instant request for a second recorded sample of his singing. After compling, he received a call from Metheny and soon found the guitarist in his living room conducting a personal audition. Metheny offered Lauria the slot vacated by Pedro Asnar, and, after two rehearsals, the band hit the road for a short tour.

Metheny bassist Steve Rodby later introduced Lauria to an A&R person at Narada. Nando was invited to contribute some original tracks to a compilation disc. After a second compilation was released, Narada offered him his own contract. But its terms were not close to being acceptable to Nando.

“In the draft contract, Narada threw in all kinds of absurdities,” he says. “It seems they wanted my soul, my house, my wife. After reading the contract, I said I was going to get out of music.”

But Lauria persisted, pouring over books on the music business and contracts in Berklee’s Career Resource Center. He scrutinized every paragraph in his contract, and after a year of personally negotiating with Narada lawyers, he signed. His efforts paid off, Lauria’s five-record deal includes some things he knows are not found in other Narada artists’ contracts.

Something that contributes to the freshness of Nando’s album is the rhythms. Drawing on more than 350 rhythms learned in his youth in the Brazilian coastal city of Recife, Lauria composed a number of the tunes on his album with rhythms he feels will be new to American listeners. His song “Northeast Tide” is built on a rhythm called a ciranda, imitative of the sounds of sea waves.

“By the response my record is getting, I think that America is ready for the rhythms of Brazil.”

—Allen Bush ’89
Drummer Marcelo Contento '92 released his latest CD titled *Magic Touch*. Personnel on the new disc includes saxophonist George Garzone '72.

Jazz vocalist Elizabeth Deters '92 is living in Wayzata, MN, and recently distributed her album under her professional identity "Liz Forester." Liz also teaches voice at Music Tech in Minneapolis, MN.

Jason Eckardt '92 is playing guitar for ensemble21, a contemporary music ensemble in New York.

Esteban Molina '92 and Alex Aleva '92 and their band Tinku released a CD *Cuyabeno*, and toured Equador in February.
THINK ABOUT THE BAR PROGRAM

Berklee Alumni Representatives (BAR) visit dozens of high schools, conferences, and college fairs each year, talking about their Berklee experiences and answering questions about the college from talented young musicians.

If you are interested in sharing your time and talent to help us reach the next generation of music industry leaders, call us at (800) 421-0084, or mark the BAR info box in the alum notes form on page 30. We will send you more information on the BAR program along with an application. Join us.

Pianist Cyrus Chestnut’s (’85) CD Revelation is on Atlantic.

Deby Pasternak ’92 was a top-10 finalist in Boston’s Acoustic Underground Competition held at the Berklee Performance Center in February.

Ruthie Ristich ’92 organized “The Wall of Respect for Women,” a mural in Somerville, MA. She was joined in the dedication by fellow Berklee alumni and faculty Roberta Radley ’75, Gayo Tolan ’82, Mili Bermejo ’89, Kris Adams ’91, and Ed Friedland ’79. The mural was painted by Be Allen.

Carlos Ruiz ’92, a drummer, completed a recording with guitarist/poet Greg Glazner which was broadcast on national radio.

Composer Patrick Anthony Walters ’92 took second place in the original composition division of the 1994 Toronto Music Festival for his orchestral work The Mist of November.

Peter Wettre ’92, a saxophonist living in Oslo, recently toured Norway and performed at the Kønigsberg Jazz Festival. Peter was a featured soloist on the Stavenger Gospel Choir’s debut CD A Touch from Up Above.

Benjamin Wilborn ’92 is living in Reno, NV, and playing fiddle and recording with country and jazz singer/songwriter Freddy Powers.

Drummer and vocalist Blake Windal ’92 toured Panama with San Diego-based band the Mar Dells. He works with keyboardist/vocalist Scarlett Keys ’92.

Torab Majlesi ’93, a drummer, is performing and doing recording work in Istanbul, Turkey.

Justin Petty ’93 was given the Youth Role Model of the Virgin Islands, 1993 award for his outstanding achievements in music by the University of the Virgin Islands. Justin is also completing graduate studies at Boston University in communications.

Bret Willmott’s Complete Book of Harmony, Theory & Voicing

Bret Willmott is a highly acclaimed professor at Berklee College of Music and a noted educator and performer worldwide. He has been a faculty member of the college for more than 18 years and a performing guitarist for over 25 years. Mr. Willmott’s musical history would include studies and performance with Pat Metheny, Gary Burton, Mick Goodrick, Mike Stern, Bill Frisell, Wolfgang Muthspiel, Jeff Berlin, and Steve Smith, as well as currently appearing on CDs that include notables Bob Moses and Mike Stern. Bret is also the creator and primary teacher of two popular courses offered at Berklee College dealing with harmonic and rhythmic development on the guitar. (95112) Book $19.95.

This text is a combination of harmony/theory/voicing with emphasis placed on “voice leading.” Harmonic motion and understanding are key elements for “comping” in today’s jazz and pop idioms. Through knowledge and listening, students will discover and compose new voicings and sounds.

This text’s primary focus will be that of presenting and examining four-note voicings on the middle four strings of the guitar. Students will learn to recognize each note’s relation to the chord as well as each note’s linear motion to the next chord. This book is complete in itself with over 240 pages and is highly recommended to anyone who wants to learn harmony, theory, and voicing.

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Co-da comes from the Latin word for tail—something which may or may not have much of a function. A monkey’s prehensile tail is a handy appendage; a dog’s tail is mainly an indicator of mood; but a bird’s tail, in addition to being attractive, is essential for flight, providing stability, direction, and balance.

Is general education at Berklee a kind of institutional coda? Is it a decorative afterthought, or is it integral to the mission of the college, providing our students with a sense of direction; with the social, cultural, and intellectual context of their music; and an informed worldview which may influence their careers and artistic decisions?

These are a few concerns I’ve been dealing with during my past four years at Berklee. Previously, I was director of theater at another college for 12 years. There I served as an advocate for the arts in a liberal arts setting. Now, in a 180-degree turn, I find myself advocating the importance of the liberal arts in an arts college. Where I previously argued for the necessity of aesthetic literacy, I now espouse the literacies engendered by immersion in the liberal arts. Historically, in many colleges’ curricula, general education consisted of introductory, foundational “service” courses which students hastened to “get out of the way.” But general education, which embodies an institution’s conception of an “educated person,” includes more than a study of the liberal arts alone. Its desired outcome is that students also develop thinking skills, integrative competencies, and intellectual perspectives.

Berklee recently hosted a regional symposium entitled, “General Education in the Professional College Curriculum.” We were interested in how other specialized institutions handle the size, configuration, and function of their general education programs, and invited several experts to present their views on the topic.

Berklee faculty members and administrators Walter Harp, Paul Smith, and Robert Myers helped to arrange the symposium. The keynote speakers were Sandra E. Elman, associate director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education; Ernest A. Lynton, senior associate at the New England Resource Center for Higher Education; and Donna Plasket, of Harvard’s Project Zero. A total of 50 professors and administrators from 15 professional colleges of various disciplines participated in the symposium.

The speakers raised important issues to consider as we explore ways to integrate general education with the academic lives of our students. Dr. Plasket noted that since the ideas and values of professional mentors play a strong role in shaping students’ worldviews, the faculty of the major are often very influential in general education though it may not be their formal responsibility.

Dr. Elman stressed developing curricula unique to our own students’ needs, since specialized colleges have an advantage in knowing what students require to prepare them to be successful professionals in the context of contemporary society. Dr. Lynton suggested that because students in specialized colleges major in a single discipline, general education could be conceived as an “extended major,” an array of courses which inform the specialty from a variety of liberal arts perspectives.

The most provocative idea of the symposium was that general education is more than a small liberal arts curriculum embedded in a large professional course of study. Rather, it is a way of connecting the students’ professional study to the world of ideas and values. Thus, it is not solely the responsibility of the liberal arts faculty, but a shared responsibility of faculty across the college. It is integral to the college experience, not loosely appended to it. Hence, it is like the tail of the bird which enables it to soar.
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