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Cello Masterclass with Rafael Figueroa



ON APRIL 8, 2021, Friends of Music at Stanford presented a masterclass online with distinguished guest artist Rafael Figueroa, Principal Cellist of the Metropolitan Opera

Orchestra. He has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the U.S., Europe, South and Central America, Korea, and Japan. He was invited to teach this masterclass by faculty FoM Board members Debra Fong and Christopher Costanza. Three Stanford student cellists — Tracy Lang, Jessica Lee, and Paul K. Lee — performed works by Elgar, Prokofiev, and Schumann and received coaching from Mr. Figueroa.

“Our idea of a FoM-sponsored virtual masterclass with distinguished guest artist teachers came from seeking positive possibilities within the confines of the pandemic,” said Debra Fong. “The opportunity to virtually interact and learn from guest artist teachers is a big bonus for our music students as they diligently continue their remote lessons. Cellist Rafael Figueroa came to mind immediately, as the MET Orchestra Musicians have been out of work for a full year, and we knew it would be a win-win for everyone involved.”

Christopher Costanza, our emcee for this masterclass, remembers when he and the guest artist were fellow students: “Rafi and I are old friends — we met at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont in 1987, when we were quite young and still in school. We hit it off immediately; he’s an absolutely first-rate cellist and musician, and, of equal importance, he’s a friendly, caring, and warm-hearted human being. I knew he’d communicate well with our student performers and the audience, and, selfishly, I was very excited to reconnect with him after many years!”

The rapport between guest and host made for a warm and entertaining introduction, and the very personable Mr. Figueroa definitely inspired the students. “Having the opportunity to work with and learn from a world-renowned performer was an amazing experience!” said senior Tracy Lang (Human Biology, Minor in Music), who played the first movement of the Schumann Cello Concerto. “Mr. Figueroa gave me valuable insight into how I could elevate my musical phrasing and expression from note to note through my right hand bowing and left-hand vibrato.”

For frosh Jessica Lee, a particularly revelatory insight was “the bow being equivalent to time.” “I’ve never thought of my bow in this way,” said Jessica, “but seeing my bow in a new perspective was exciting as much as it was helpful. [...] I wasn’t really paying that much attention to the bow itself while shifting (I was more so occupied with ensuring that my finger would land on the right note!), but he demonstrated to me the important role controlling the bow has on ensuring that the shift is smooth. I learned that the speed at which I use my bow contributes to the overall timing of the shift, which is critical to both getting the sound that I want as well as to its accuracy.”

String teacher and FoM Board member Terry Merchant was in the audience that day and shared her enthusiasm: “As a string teacher for so many years, I not only appreciated the outstanding content of what he conveyed to the students, but also the palette of teaching tools he used to do that, from wonderful, expressive demonstrations on his cello to speaking to the students and using terms like: ‘The bow never stops! Connect one bow to another,’ and ‘It’s all there — look at the music and play it in your mind before you play it with the cello!’”

The Department of Music offers its very warm thanks to Rafael Figueroa for a wonderful day with our students, and gratitude to the Friends of Music Board of Directors for sponsoring this masterclass. “I am appreciative of the Friends of Music for making a masterclass possible because performance opportunities, especially since the pandemic began, have been very scarce,” said junior Paul Lee (Biology, Minor in Music). “Personally, the masterclass was a chance to present a work I likely wouldn’t have been able to otherwise, at least anytime soon.” — Rowen Leigh

Teaching Music Over the Ether with JackTrip

THE PANDEMIC HAS CHALLENGED the Department of Music in many ways, and perhaps the most frustrating of these is the problem of being able to make music with others. Collaborative music is basic to the everyday work of our academic unit and the lives of its people. Much of the University is able to continue its offerings via video conferencing platforms like Zoom, but anyone who has tried to use Zoom to sing together, or even just to converse without talking over each other, has experienced something called latency. This is the lag time between when an audio signal is sent and when it is received. “Virtual teaching has been a huge challenge for all of us,” says senior lecturer Stephen Harrison, cello. “Despite real audio improvements made on the Zoom platform many of us are ‘hearing with our eyes’ — using our years of experience to imagine the sound being produced. Even with the most robust internet connection — using an ethernet cable with super-fast upload speeds — real-time collaboration between players or accompanists in different locations over Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etc. just isn’t possible. Latency is the culprit.”

Fortunately, the Department of Music is home to the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, and we were able to provide a timely solution to many of the problems with latency: a homegrown technology called JackTrip. Invented in the 1990s by Professor Chris Chafe and some colleagues, JackTrip reduces latency to a few dozen milliseconds, which to the human ear is imperceptible. Although it provides audio only, JackTrip is effective over distances up to about 500 miles. By providing a way for musicians to play together in real time, several Stanford ensembles, including the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, Stanford Philharmonia, and Stanford Chamber Chorale, have been able to use JackTrip to rehearse with everyone in different locations. “Thanks to JackTrip, ensembles made up of students from the Stanford Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Philharmonia have been able to play together since Autumn Quarter,” says Professor Paul Phillips, Director of Orchestral Studies, who worked closely with Chris Chafe starting in September with a group of seven students playing the Beethoven Septet. “It was slow going at first, but gradually became easier for everyone as the quarter progressed.” Professor Stephen M. Sano, Director of Choral Studies, describes how even vocal ensembles are able to rehearse safely. “Between twelve and fifteen members of the Chamber Chorale connected regularly via JackTrip during fall and winter quarters. The very first time people successfully connected and sang together after months of being musically isolated was quite an emotional moment, indeed! Though most of the Chorale members were either on-campus or in the immediate area, members from as far away as Los Angeles and Flagstaff, Arizona, were able to successfully join the sessions with minimal latency — in fact, the latency wasn’t enough to hamper even quick-tempo pieces. Perhaps the most fulfilling experience wasn’t even performance-related, but the joy of singing Christmas carols together — indeed, even after fall quarter had concluded, members continued to meet to sing Christmas carols, just for the joy of making music in ensemble!”

In order to allow a large number of students to use JackTrip, the department assembled several hundred “JackStreamer” kits (Find out more at <https://ccrma.stanford.edu/docs/common/JackStreamer.html>). Each kit contains a tiny computer, the Raspberry Pi, which comes loaded with the JackTrip software, making it much easier for people to use JackTrip as compared to installing JackTrip on their computers. Along with the Raspberry Pi and installed software are a microphone and stand, an audio interface, ethernet and USB cables, and an instruction booklet. The kits were distributed to students living on campus or within the effective 500-mile range. Setting up the JackTrip connections can be tricky for first-time users. To help with this, Friends of Music played a critical role in providing support for a teaching assistant, Jan Stoltenberg, a Music, Science & Technology Master’s student at CCRMA. Jan has assisted dozens and dozens of students, helping them learn how to set up and use JackTrip. “The JackTrip resources supported by the Friends of Music certainly made a tremendously positive impact in the musical, mental, and emotional health of our students!” says Stephen Sano.

The Department can barely wait to return to some degree of normal operations, and there are encouraging signs, but for the moment, we are grateful that JackTrip can allow us to work with ensembles and our collaborative pianists. The success of JackTrip is yet another chapter in the department’s history of ingenuity and our ongoing partnership with Friends of Music.

— Rowen Leigh, with thanks to Paul Phillips and Matt Wright for their contributions to this article.

Marjorie Ann Chauvel 1922–2021



WE ARE SAD TO SHARE the news that Marjorie Chauvel, our Lecturer in Harp for over 45 years, passed away on April 25, 2021 at the age of 98. A graduate of the Curtis Institute and a student of Carlos Salzedo, she also played with the New York Symphony, Carnegie Hall, and the San Francisco Symphony. In addition to teaching at Stanford until she

was 93, she also taught at San José State, San Francisco State, and the University of the Pacific. Her family has donated her harp to Stanford as Marjorie wished.

She was a well-loved fixture of the department and her students were fiercely dedicated and loyal to her and she to them. She will be heartily missed.

2021 Department of Music Awards

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE the winners of the 2021 Department of Music Awards:

- **Louis J. Sudler Prize** (awarded by HSDO):
Sonja Johnson-Yu, conducting (Outstanding Achievements in Music – Department of Music nominee)
- **Carol and Peter Polk Award:** **Jessica Lee**, cello
- **Humanities and Sciences Undergraduate Prizes in Music:**
Laura Futamura, flute; **Jenny Xiong**, composition;
Melinda Zhu, flute
- **Blew-Culley-LaFollette Prize** (piano performance):
Kendrick Shen
- **Daniel V. Robinson Prize** (undergrad, instrumental performance): **Sean Mori**, violin
- **Rita Taylor Prize** (undergrad, vocal performance):
Cassidy McCleary, soprano
- **Patrick Butler Prize** (undergrad, piano performance):
Leslie Jin
- **Marie Gibson Prizes** (undergrad or grad, vocal performance):
Danny Ritz, tenor; **Annette Dong**, mezzo soprano
- **Friends of Music Graduate Prizes** (instrumental/vocal performance): **Lawrence Chiou**, harpsichord;
Thomas Colburn, alto saxophone

2021 Scholarship Recital

ALTHOUGH WE MISSED YOUR COMPANY this year for the 2021 Scholarship Recital, some of you were able to join us for the online version of this event that premiered on March 13. Seven students from our lesson studios performed works they've been studying recently, and each told us a little bit about their lives during a short intermission feature. The featured students and repertoire follow below.

Paul Lee, cello (student of Christopher Costanza)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Suite No. 4 in E-flat Major for Unaccompanied Cello, BWV 1010
i. Prelude

Caprice No. 8 in A minor, Op. 25, Alfredo Piatti (1822-1901)

Roger Xia, piano (student of Thomas Shultz)
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus (1944)
xiii. Noël

Jin-Hee Lee, soprano (student of Kathrynne Jennings)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
"Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln",
from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782),
with Steven Lightburn, piano

Noah Tin-yu Brazer, flute (student of Melody Holmes)
Lowell Lieberman (b. 1961)
Concerto for Flute, Op. 69 (1962)
with Lori Lack, piano

Hiroto Saito, violin (student of Debra Fong)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Partita No. 2 in D minor for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1004
v. *Chaconne*

Vivian Shaylin Chen, piano (student of Kumaran Arul)
Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)
Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp minor
i. Andante

Cainan Anthony Cole, tenor (student of Greg Wait)
Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)
"Maria", from *West Side Story* (1957)

Engineering Student Thomas Colburn: Saxophone and Gregorian Chant



A RECIPIENT OF THIS year's Friends of Music Graduate Prize in Performance, saxophone player Thomas Colburn completed his B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 2020, and he is currently a Ph.D. student in Materials Science and Engineering. He has been taking saxophone lessons since his freshman year. As an alto saxophonist with the Wind Symphony, he has been a section

leader for three years. In 2019, he played in the Friends of Music Scholarship recital. That same year, the saxophone quartet he is a member of won the FoM Chamber Award for their performance of David Maslanka's *Recitation Book*, and they were also selected to perform Michael Colgrass' *Urban Requiem* with the Stanford Wind Symphony; however, that concert was canceled due to the pandemic.

"Thomas is not only a supremely gifted musician," says Stanford saxophone lecturer David Henderson, "but an invaluable member of the sax studio and Department of Music, always willing to lend a hand and support his fellow musicians."

Thomas has continued to perform on saxophone in these COVID times, albeit in modified ways. Lessons have moved online or in-person, outdoors, and distanced. "I recently digitally performed *La Danza del Olvido Amargo* by David Salleras, a unique Spanish piece with a flamenco flavor. I love to perform music from a variety of eras of musical history, from Bach to the present day, exploring the cultural influences and musical innovations that such a journey through a composition conveys." Thomas also took part in David Henderson's online studio recital on March 18

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Thomas Colburn

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in which he performed his Department Awards piece, Victor Morosco's "Blue Caprice."

In addition to his love of performing on saxophone, Thomas is the founder and president of the Stanford Gregorian Society for the historical study and use of Gregorian chant. "I enjoy everything from chanting the Divine Office and participating in chanted Holy Mass to investigating the evolution of monophonic chant and polyphony under the instruction of Professor Bill Mahrt."

While both his saxophone studies and chanting have been impacted by the pandemic, Thomas continues to bring his unique energy to the Department. "Music is something that connects us and brings us together, and it is my goal to continue to bring the joy of both modern and ancient music to the Stanford community!" — Rowen Leigh

Holiday Musicales for 2020 goes virtual

THE HOLIDAY MUSICALES, traditionally presented on a December afternoon in Memorial Church, was reconfigured to a virtual offering in December 2020, hosted by Friends of Music board members Christopher Costanza and Debra Fong, who introduced selected prerecorded musical performances from the Stanford Chamber Chorale, Stanford Philharmonia, university organist Robert Huw Morgan, and Memorial Church Choir, all of which featured holiday music. A special presentation was the Costanza Stanford Cello Studio Choir, twelve cellists playing *Hymnus* for twelve cellos by Julius Klengel.

Our hosts interspersed comments on the music between the selections. The video premiered Saturday, December 12, and was available for viewing through January 3, 2021. In all, over 600 people have enjoyed it.

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