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Volume XII | March 2022



Department of Music and Dance

From the Chair: "Recital Season" is upon us

The mid-semester crunch is on! Voice students are furiously memorizing songs and instrumentalists are working on their etudes. PRACTICE is the word of the day—or should be. And then there are the exams.... Performances by the Wind Ensemble and the Orchestra highlighted this past week. Our Opera Workshop and Dance productions are deep into rehearsals as is our Social Justice Choir and all of our small ensembles. "Recital Season" is just getting started, so check our weekly emails for the list of Graduate Lecture Recitals and Junior and Senior recitals, as well as faculty recitals.

Over the past few weeks and in the upcoming weeks, our faculty have been highlighted on the Jewel Box Series. The Northeastern Trio, consisting of Jaime Gorgojo, violin, Oleksander Mycyk, cello, and Susan Tang, piano, performed in February; this month, our tuba professor, William Russell, will play with the Boston Brass; in April our trumpet

professor, Travis Heath, will be featured with Camerata Chicago. This is a true showcase of our faculty talent!

Our students are doing amazing work, as witnessed by the award violinist Anokyewaa Oppong Wadie received. We have three winners for this year's Elyse Mach Concerto Competition, and our alumni are also showcasing the skills they learned at NEIU; see the article about Zanneta Kubajak below.

We're a vibrant Music Department, so there's a lot more going on behind the scenes. For example, we're already planning our concert schedule for the Fall of 2022 and Spring of 2023! Our Concert Specialist, Daniel Chetel, has been very busy building a tentative set of concert dates, among the million other things he does. Make sure you're signed up for our weekly newsletter and check out our Facebook and YouTube sites.

As we enter yet another period of destabilization, this time caused by the war in Ukraine, let's work to keep focused on our mutual goals. Music can help us find solace and build bridges. I hope we all strive to do this every day.

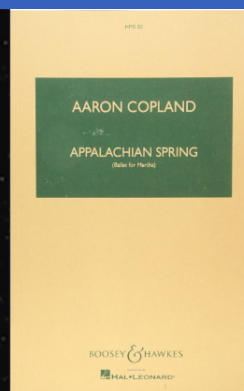
Sing on! Play on!

--Dr. Robert Heitzinger



Program Spotlight: Wind Ensemble celebrates John Williams' 90th Birthday with film music

This spring, the NEIU Wind Ensemble celebrated the 90th birthday of the American composer John Williams with a concert of film music from the US and abroad. Williams. Trained as a pianist, composer, and conductor (he led The Boston Pops Orchestra for 13 years), Williams' musical scores—often collaborations with luminary directors like Steven Spielberg or George Lucas—include *Schindler's List*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Jaws*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, *Indiana Jones and The Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Star Wars*. Williams has won 5 Academy Awards (and has been nominated for 45!) for his compositions for film. At their March 8 concert, the NEIU Wind Ensemble paired selections from *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, and *Indiana Jones* with fellow American Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and Japanese film composer Joe Hisaishi's score to the 1997 animated historical fantasy *Princess Mononoke*. Join the Wind Ensemble again on Tuesday, April 26 for their end-of-semester concert in NEIU's Auditorium.



Music Student Honored by Black Heritage Committee

Violin performance major, **Anokyewaa Oppong Wadie**, was awarded the Dr. Wamucii Njogu Outstanding Student Award at the 20th Annual Black Heritage Awards here at NEIU. She writes of the experience: "During my time here at NEIU, I have had the pleasure of attending and participating in various events across campus, but the evening of February 25th, 2022 was a standout for me. That was the evening I would accept my nomination from the Black Heritage Committee for outstanding student of the year. This was such a huge honor! I have always admired the student body here at NEIU and how diversity is stressed on our campus, thus accepting such awards from individuals that reflect my ethnic and cultural background felt like somewhat of a homecoming. I was nominated for this award by Dr. Sharon Bethea who teaches African American history here at NEIU. I took her course during my junior year and automatically loved the course. I had the pleasure of doing a presentation on music from the African and African diaspora, and I appreciated her passion and dedication to her work. Therefore, accepting this award from her was truly a full-circle moment. I was also honored to have my parents present: Dr. Kwadwo Oppong Wadie and Dr. Asantewaa Oppong Wadie. Both of my parents are full-time educators, so for them to make time in their busy schedules meant the world to me. Big thanks to all my amazing teachers, friends, and family here at NEIU. And of course big thanks to the Black Heritage Committee!"



Alumni Spotlight: Zanneta Kubajak, Mus. Ed. '19



Since graduating from NEIU, I have been working as a Music{ian} Educator. I am currently teaching at Owen Scholastic Academy, located on Chicago's South Side, where I get to guide amazing young humans through a wide spectrum of musical experiences including General Music, Choir, and Music Production. In addition to teaching, I create and perform Children's music with the group ZZ Move It! and I am currently a graduate student at Berklee College of Music pursuing a Masters in Music Education.

As I embark on different challenges every day, I am thankful for the knowledge and experiences I carry with me from NEIU. The value of studying at NEIU runs deeper than just academic courses, it comes from the student clubs, practice rooms, recitals, late nights in the library, and all the friends I have made along the way.

Keys to Inclusion: Expanding the Piano Repertoire

Keys to Inclusion (K2I) is a multi-institutional project to engage with the piano music of Black American composers in a variety of ways, through lectures, study, teaching, performing, and recording. K2I was born in summer 2020, when the conversations surrounding race in this country were a call to action for many of us. The founding members included the piano studios of Northeastern Illinois University, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, Loyola University-New Orleans, Denison University (Ohio), San Diego State University. During a period of time when long distance teaching,

performing, and interaction were a necessity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first year of K2I included numerous lectures, masterclasses, and performances that addressed the intersections of music, education, and race, and could be experienced by students across the country.

Here are just a few of the dozen or so guests that have presented to and engaged with our students.

- Dr. Guthrie Ramsey is a University of musicologist, and author of the book *Race Music: Black Culture from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (2003). He is also an alum of NEIU, having earned a B.A. in Music Education in 1986.
- Dr. William Chapman-Nyaho is a Ghanaian-American pianist, teacher, and scholar and a pioneering editor of piano music by African composers
- Lucinda Ali-Landing is a violinist and founder of the Hyde Park Suzuki Institute.
- Dr. Leah Claiborne is an assistant professor at the University of the District of Columbia who promotes diversity in the arts by championing music by black composers in her performances, research, and teachings.
- Dr. Daniel Bernard Roumain is a collaborative composer, performer, educator, activist, and social entrepreneur.



This spring, K2I is excited to announce in-person events, specifically a joint performance by members of the NEIU and University of Chicago piano studios on Friday, April 1 at 7:30pm held in NEIU's Recital Hall. Follow the group on Facebook for more information and upcoming events at www.facebook.com/Keys2Inclusion.

Music Department celebrates Black History Month through a series of Video Posts

During the month of February, the NEIU Department of Music and Dance celebrated Black History Month through a series of posts on social media that highlighted the works of composers of Black heritage throughout music history. Led by Dr. Katherine Petersen, a small working group of students helped conceive and design the posts, each of which included a video of NEIU performers sharing music by such composers as Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, Duke Ellington, Celso Machado, and many more, accompanied by a brief biographical or historical vignette.

Performances ranged from guitar to piano to voice, and included multiple selections by the NEIU Black Heritage Gospel Choir. NEIU student—and Gospel Choir Director—Dee Kimpel writes of the effort: "Black History Month is a time for celebrating, sharing, and learning with people all over the world. Showcasing student performances of music by Black composers meant that someone might hear a song that they've never heard before, sparking interest in music unknown to many. I was happy to be a part of this process because there is still so much to learn about the history of Black composers."



Please visit www.facebook.com/neiumusicanddance to see a playlist of the collected videos.

Concerto Competition Winners Preparing for April Performance with NEIU Orchestra!

Last month, a panel of esteemed judges selected three winners of the 2022 Elyse J. Mach Awards Concerto Competition:

Isabella Anderson, soprano
MOZART "In uomini, in Soldati" from *Così fan tutte*

Mikayla Hyunkyung Jang, piano
LISZT Totentanz, Paraphrase upon "Dies Irae" S. 126

Diego Tapia, piano
SHOSTAKOVICH I. Allegro from *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 102*

All three winners will receive a \$500 award and the opportunity to perform their competition-winning selections with the NEIU Orchestra on Thursday, April 21 in NEIU's Auditorium. Save the date!

Upcoming Events after Spring Break:

NEIU Jazz Combo
Tuesday, March 22 at 3:05pm

Social Justice Choir
Thursday, March 24 at 3:05pm

Student Recital Hour
Tuesday, March 29 at 3:05pm

Graduate Lecture Recital: Melanie Rolon, flute
Thursday, March 31 at 7:30pm

Keys 2 Inclusion
Friday, April 1 at 7:30pm



Keep up to date with Music and Dance events on NEIU's University Event Calendar or follow us on Facebook where there is an event for every concert. Catch anything you might have missed on the department's YouTube page. Videos are typically posted within 1-2 weeks of the live performance.





Music at NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



2022-2023 SCHOLARSHIP AUDITIONS

Saturday, March 5 and April 2, 2022

The Music Department at Northeastern is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). To set up an audition contact the recruitment and scholarship coordinator, Tina Laughlin, or visit neiu.edu/auditions.

Tina Laughlin | t-laughlin@neiu.edu | (773) 442-5942



neiu.edu/music

