Pro Musica Newsletter, Fall 2011

Bowling Green State University. College of Musical Arts

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Parents pass many traits to their children, whether through genetics, values, or behaviors. Musicians naturally encourage their children to appreciate music. The musical parent desires that their child will develop an appreciation for music that will last a lifetime, whether or not their child chooses music as a career.

But when the musician’s child starts music lessons – particularly at the parent’s insistence – the battles over practicing may become fierce, especially when the parent has a trained ear. Our new Dean, Dr. Jeffrey Showell, is very familiar with this situation.

Dean Showell’s mother, an accomplished pianist, made young Jeff start piano lessons at age nine. Although his mother was not his teacher, she did supervise his practicing. Mother and son fought constantly, until finally Jeff refused to take another lesson.

As he was about to start fifth grade, Jeff’s mother conceded that he could quit piano with the condition that he play an instrument in the school band. However, Jeff conveniently misplaced the school permission slip. Of course, Mrs. Showell discovered this after the deadline had passed to join the band. Luckily there was still time to join the orchestra.

When string instruments were chosen, Jeff did not choose the viola because he loved the tone or the inner parts. Rather, the teacher took one look at the tall young man and chose the viola for him.

Surprising even himself, Jeff loved the viola immediately. However, he spent as much time involved in track and cross country as he did practicing.

At the time Jeff was growing up, Missoula was a small college town, much like Bowling Green. Jeff’s father was an academic and a chemist, so education was highly valued in their home. So, once Jeff was enrolled in the string program at school, his mother made sure he had the best private teacher available, Dr. Gerald Doty of the University of Montana in Missoula. Dr. Doty, a patient man, taught Jeff from age ten until seventeen.

Although he clearly loved music, Jeff had no intention of becoming a musician. He started his undergraduate career at Stanford University, intent on studying chemistry and German. It was during a six-month overseas program to study German in Vienna that Jeff realized that his true passion was indeed music.

Jeffrey Showell then transferred to Eastman School of Music to finish his bachelor’s degree and stay for the masters. He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts from Yale University.

Dean Showell comes to the College of Musical Arts with a distinguished background as a professional violist, viola professor, and administrator. His most recent position was as Director of the School of Music at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Dean Showell succeeds Richard Kennell as the seventh Dean of the College of Musical Arts at Bowling Green State University.

Having officially assumed his duties on July 1, 2011, Dean Showell is most excited to gain greater national exposure for what he describes as a “gem of a music program.” One of his plans is to start a concert series in New York City at one of the major halls to showcase CMA faculty. However, as he initially settles into the position, his primary task will be to observe how the College of Musical Arts operates. As a College, rather than a School of Music, he anticipates that there will be different challenges and opportunities. He wants to demonstrate to all of the individuals involved in the CMA that he is accessible and wants to encourage “the free flow of information and opinion.”

Dean Showell has been impressed at the role that Pro Musica plays in connecting the CMA with the community and making opportunities for students a reality during challenging economic times. He believes that major academic institutions will become even more influential as the “primary creators and transmitters of our culture.”

Fresh faces and ideas are always embraced at BGSU and generate tremendous energy. Pro Musica and the College of Musical Arts welcome Dean Showell to our community.

A Letter from the President

Dear Pro Musica Members and Friends,

The word CHANGE is on the lips of many as this new school year begins. However, there are constants that matter greatly.

• Music is a constant which without this world cannot live.
• Student travel is a vital part of professional growth and increased awareness.
• Participation is the activity that often gives back to the giver more than they have given.

Your generous pledges have and will continue to support CMA students. In return, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have made a difference in the lives of many. Together, Pro Musica members have set a membership and fund raising record.

The thought that has guided much of our work is this:

• Mentors touch two lives.
• Volunteers touch more lives than we know.
• Mentors touch two lives.

In my opinion, some charities’ percentage of funds reaching their intended recipients is dismal. Pro Musica’s record of returning 100% of your pledges to students is a point of shared pride. Together, we are poised to impact more lives this year.

Please stay in touch by visiting the Pro Musica web site at: http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/music/about/promusica/newsletter.html

Together we will make new memories and enhance many lives.

Gratefully,
Karol Spencer
Student Essays

Drew Ochoa
2011 Midwinter Barbershop Convention and The Fourth Annual International Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival, Las Vegas, Nevada

My quartet, Prestige, went to Las Vegas for the 2011 Midwinter Barbershop Convention and the Fourth Annual International Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival, which was held the last weekend in January, 2011.

Kayleigh Butler
Quince Concert in New York City

My familiarity with new music has been acquired only since coming to BGSU. I have the honor of being Professor Christopher Scholl’s graduate teaching assistant. Unfortunately, my schedule has not allowed me to sing in ensembles. When fellow student Amanda DeBoer invited me to form a vocal ensemble outside of classes, I was hesitant due to the time commitment, but ecstatic to have the opportunity.

Christopher Lewis
Midwest Regional Conference of the International Tuba and Euphonium Association

The Midwest Regional Conference of the International Tuba and Euphonium Association, held every other year, took place on March 4-5, 2011, at Central Michigan University School of Music. This conference was a great opportunity to be coached by Joe Connolly, an extremely musical and emotional singer. He focused on how we could use the text to create a more effective performance.

Paul Cohn
Jazz Education Connection of Ohio Intercollegiate Jazz Ensemble

The Jazz Education Connection of Ohio Intercollegiate Jazz Ensemble is selected each year by audition from Ohio college students to perform at the Ohio Music Educators Association National Conference.

The first performance I attended was Edward Mallett playing a double-belled euphonium. I also attended a recital by Benjamin Miles who played duets with his wife, Flautist Sarah Miles, and with tubist Bryan P酮nkey. My favorite performance was given by the Central Michigan University Symphonic Wind Ensemble. They played Gustav Holst’s famous Second Suite in F, featuring several euphonium solos.

The conference held a competition for tuba and euphonium players and the winners were featured as soloists with the Symphonic Wind Ensemble. Not only was the performance outstanding, but it was rewarding attending with other members of the tuba/euphonium studio from Bowling Green State University. The exhibit hall at the conference allowed me to view, try, and purchase virtually any product related to tuba or euphonium, including mouthpieces, compact discs and sheet music. Representatives from the military band were present.

Saturday morning was devoted to preparing for our performance with a dress rehearsal in the Staples Family Recital Hall. The School of Music at Central Michigan University has a new building and the hall had excellent acoustics.

Our performance went well and was the result of hard work. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to attend this conference. The perspective I gained from this experience will help me to propel my career in music and not have been possible without the support of Pro Musica.

We performed a concert as part of a series in the New York City area called Contagious Sounds, organized by Vicky Chow, pianist and director of the New York University Jazz Ensemble, and Amanda DeBoer, a friend of Vicky Chow, organized and planned our concert.

We performed at The Gershwin Hotel in Manhattan along with The Parias Ensemble, a local NYC-based, new music ensemble. Amanda DeBoer, commissioned several pieces, written specifically for us, including Ravi Kittapa’s “Decantations” and Jamie Leigh Sampson’s “The Body Electric.”

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The Midwest Regional Conference of the International Tuba and Euphonium Association, held every other year, took place on March 4-5, 2011, at Central Michigan University School of Music. This conference was a great opportunity to experience the entire spectrum of tuba and euphonium. Professor David Saltzman took the entire BGSU Tuba and Euphonium Studio to perform at the conference.

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From left: Professor David Saltzman, Josh Davis, Graham Roese, Garrett Shook, Rocco Durante, Stephen Hanhold, Kaitlin Tucker, and John Wood.

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We are pleased to say that our trip was a success and we are grateful to Pro Musica for its financial support.

Music features rhythm being based on the clave. Sanabria demonstrated the style of his music. The music, much less rigid in form, included many open sections ended by specific cues.

Overall, I feel I grew as a musician with this band and learning from Bobby Sanabria. I connected with other musicians and was exposed to new musical styles.