

**Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State**  
**Classical Music Project- Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**  
**2015-2016 Season Final Report**

During its first five funded years, the Classical Music Project (CMP) has provided classical music programming to Penn State students, faculty, staff and community members. The Classical Music Project continues to be a focal point for the Center for the Performing Arts offerings, strengthening student awareness and participation in its classical music programs. The program's impact on the Penn State community has been immense. Since the project's inception in the 2011-12 season, student attendance at classical music programs increased to 51% of the Center's total audience for classical music. This is the most tangible measurement of the program's success, beyond the increased relationships of campus partners and embedding classical music within standard programming such as the popular Classical Coffeehouse series.

This report summarizes the activities of the fifth season of the CMP from July 2015 to June 2016. The four cornerstone components of the project include a major residency program, student engagement activities, curriculum partnerships, and the Penn State Campus Project - a partnership with the Penn State Altoona campus. The student engagement manager position was filled from a national search which increased stability and scope of residency partnerships.

The 2015-16 season included artists such as Sybarite5 and the Debussy String Quartet that introduced audiences to classical music via less traditional avenues. Sybarite5, a string quintet, primarily plays original compositions and arrangements, including transpositions of Radiohead albums. The Debussy Quartet performed three Shostakovich quartets on stage (blindfolded at times) with the Australian acrobatic company Circa in *Opus*.

### **Student Engagement Activities**

#### **Classical Coffeehouses: The Knights, 9/30/15, Apollo's Fire, 11/16/15, Sybarite5, 1/21/16**

In partnership with the Penn State Alumni Association, the Classical Coffeehouse series continued with three strikingly unique programs. Student organizations, the Council of LionHearts and the Blue & White Society provided additional support for these events. The Alumni Association welcomed a new executive director in 2015, Paul Clifford. He has embraced the Classical Coffeehouse series as one of the Alumni Association's many key programs. Conversations to fund the program beyond the 2016-17 year began quickly after Clifford assumed his role, with the goal to establish an endowment for program support, to ensure the program's future.

The Classical Coffeehouse programs continue to be a community and student favorite for their casual atmosphere and proximity to the artists. Light refreshments are available, including coffee served in customized mugs that patrons may take as a souvenir. Students that signed in receive a voucher to Penn State's Creamery. Of the student and community population that provided contact information, a survey was deployed to gain greater understanding of the patron experience. In particular, community members were asked about an entry fee/donation (presently there is no charge for anyone), with 65% responding that they would pay some kind of admission fee, with \$15 being the maximum they would pay. Based on this survey data in 2016-17 Classical Coffeehouses will remain free for Penn State students with community members encouraged to contribute a donation of \$5.

Classical Coffeehouse program content was assessed to maintain distinction between the coffeehouse and the artist's concert. Due to concerns of duplicating content, coffeehouse programs focus on the process and experience of the artist's work rather than a traditional performance.

The Knights' Classical Coffeehouse had a reunion feel, as some of its members had been part of Brooklyn Rider's residency in Spring 2015. Several of the 119 attendees expressed curiosity about musicians maintaining roles in multiple companies as well as differentiating between the work of Brooklyn Rider and The Knights. This conversation allowed founding member Eric Jacobsen to speak to his philosophy on performance practices. Company members appreciated building upon previous residency work as well as introducing their additional colleagues to Penn State and the Classical Music Project.

Jeannette Sorrell led a highly interactive Classical Coffeehouse with Apollo's Fire, inviting those in attendance to bring a guitar or other stringed instrument. The company introduced the intricacies of their instruments, played sections of their repertoire, and finally, taught musicians in attendance a brief accompanying phrase. The direct engagement activity proved an exciting and memorable experience for all. Those without musical instruments were taught a vocal refrain.

Sybarite5's residency activities were quite robust, which allowed direct, increased promotion of the Classical Coffeehouse. Attendance hit 260, with students sitting on the floor and spilling out into the hallway. The event itself ran long, with members of Sybarite5 taking time to answer questions and meet with as many patrons as possible, post-performance. Several professors included the Classical Coffeehouses in their course materials which increased student attendance overall, especially for Sybarite5.



### **Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors Series**

CMP artist participation increased with The Knights, Debussy Quartet, Voces8, and Windscape attending hour-long honors lunches. The Paterno Fellows program makes subsidized \$5 tickets available to students wishing to attend the artist's concert.

- 9/30: The Knights, 22 students attended.
- 11/11: all of the Debussy quartet attended and discussed their global experiences with 27 students. A Student Ambassador Leader facilitated the conversation.
- 2/10: Members of Voces8 participated, a Classical Music Project Ambassador facilitated the conversation with 12 honors students.
- 2/17: The 20 students attending participated in a lively discussion with all the musicians of Windscape about career choices and changes in the music industry. A Classical Music Project Ambassador facilitated the conversation.

### **Sybarite5 Major Residency Activities**

Sybarite5 arrived on campus during the Martin Luther King Celebration Week activities so art as advocacy became one of the two residency themes. The second theme, artists as entrepreneurs, grounded the residency focus. The company's structure, as a string quintet, lent itself to both themes, especially entrepreneurship since they create or commission nearly all of their own works. Sybarite5's residency balanced between community (adult and youth), Altoona campus partnership, and student engagement. Through art as advocacy, Sybarite5 visited State College High School to work with students in different special interest groups (specifically LGBTQ and social justice platforms as the residency took place during the Martin Luther King holiday week) on how art can provide a gateway to support those causes. The Altoona partnership focused on reaching millennials with a contemporary appreciation for classical forms. Sybarite5 engaged with business students and area entrepreneurs to discuss strategy, creative practice, and business development.

### **Curriculum Partnerships**

Seven of the eight CMP artists participated in various class visits during their residencies. Due to the work of the project's two faculty liaisons, Carrie Jackson, and Marica Tacconi, artists were able to engage with students in a classroom setting. Academic areas for course visits included business, entrepreneurship, language, English, art history, history, and Asian studies. Sixteen class visits were conducted over the fall and spring semesters reaching approximately 600 students.

In partnership with CMP, *Under the Hood: How Classical Music Works*, an online general education course developed in fall 2013 by Stephen Hopkins, assistant professor of music, added a third section. Dr. Maria Truglio, associate professor of Italian and Women's Studies is developing a new course, *The Spaces of Art: Cultural Sponsorship and Social Networks before Facebook*, to be offered in spring 2017.

### **Penn State Campus Project**

The Catalyst Quartet was in residence at Penn State Altoona for an afternoon lecture attended by 35 students, faculty, and staff on September 16<sup>th</sup>. A collaborative effort, the lecture included professors of music and international studies, discussing diversity of experiences in musicology. Catalyst musicians were able to speak to their personal and collective experiences. Their evening concert was attended by 50 students, faculty, and staff in the Edith Davis Eve Chapel. Additionally, members of the quartet restructured their evening program to accommodate one member's inability to perform due to illness. The improvised program created a more intimate experience, as each of the remaining artists performed solo works with the opportunity to discuss the piece's relevance to their experience.

Sybarite5 participated in an afternoon lecture and evening performance on Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. Altoona faculty lecturer in music, Tim Melbinger, facilitated "On the Challenge of Presenting Classical Music to the Millennials" with Sybarite5 speaking about adapting to audiences and performance practices around the world. 40 students and faculty attended the lecture.

Sybarite5's evening performance took place in the Edith Davis Eve Chapel. The event was free but tickets were required. Their repertoire included classics by composers such as Mozart and contemporary works by British rock band Radiohead. 83 students, faculty, and community members attended.

### **Student Ambassador Program**

The 2015-16 season continued the second year of a Student Ambassador Program. School of Music faculty liaison Marica Tacconi, Ambassador advisor Robyn Costa, and Student Engagement Manager Melissa Croushorn interviewed and selected three ambassadors from twenty-one applicants. It was anticipated that the program would grow from three ambassadors to six in the 2015-2016 season, with the School of Music funding three ambassadors in addition to the three funded by the Center for the Performing Arts through the CMP grant. The School of Music opted to instead incorporate graduate student participation through insertion of ambassador activities in course syllabi. Graduate students participated in the program, but participation was not universal. For the 2016-17 season, the School of Music will integrate ambassador duties into graduate assistantship contracts.



### **Classical Music Project Ambassadors**

- Ambassadors rotated as facilitators for 3 Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors.
- Tapestry, an evening coffeehouse-style event, took place in January off-campus and utilized community relationships through churches and cultural groups.
- In April, Ambassadors staged a series of pop-up concerts (9 concerts total) in residence halls, the Smeal College of Business, and Law School with the collaboration of other music students. About 65 students interacted in each pop-up series.
- Also in April, in collaboration with graduate students in the College of Liberal Arts and residence life in the College of Arts and Architecture, Ambassadors hosted two “Fancy Parties”. These parties focused on providing a social encounter around classical music and the opportunity to expand peer circles in academic areas.

### **Composer Residencies**

Co-commissioned by the Center for the Performing Arts through its membership in Music Accord, the Emerson Quartet performed Lowell Lieberman’s String Quartet No. 5, Op. 126 during its concert at Schwab Auditorium on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Lieberman arrived on campus prior to the quartet’s residency and participated in three activities: a composer master class, public presentation of work, and a conversation with student musicians over coffee and donuts.

Residencies with composers began in the 2014-15 season, with Sebastian Currier visiting Penn State in advance of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Composer Joseph Hallman will be on campus during the McGill-Weilerstein-Barnatan Trio residency in January 2017.

### **2015-2016 Season Recap**

The 2015-2016 Classical Music Project season continued to grow student attendance at performances, with an increase from 43% in 2014-15 to 51% of the Center’s total audience for classical music. In total, of the nine residencies, activities included:

- 16 class visits
  - Total students visited in course visits: 600
- 13 master classes
- 13 Forums/Panels/Discussion groups
- 3 Public school visits
- 3 CoolBlue performances, Penn State Innovation Park’s employee engagement program
- 25 events by Student Ambassador Leaders
- 3 Coffeehouses
  - Total attendance at Classical Coffeehouses: 494

### **Catalyst Quartet**

- 9/14: in partnership with Penn State’s Multicultural Resource Center, 5 students from the Black Male Empowerment Group, Latino Male Empowerment Group, Women of Color Empowerment Group, and Asian American Students in Action attended a discussion with members of Catalyst and Sphinx Organization founder, Aaron Dworkin. Topics included the power of diversity, removing barriers that stand in the way of goals, and working together to achieve a common purpose.
- 9/15: Catalyst performed for 23 students at Bellefonte Middle School.

- 9/15: Aaron Dworkin, guest-lectured to 24 students in the newly developed Arts Entrepreneurship program.
- 9/15: Aaron Dworkin participated as the speaker in Penn State's Forum modeled on the National Press Club Speaker Series. The Catalyst Quartet also performed during the 90 minute event. 100 members of the Penn State Community were in attendance.
- 9/15: Aaron Dworkin had the opportunity to be interviewed by classical music radio station WPSU; interview may be viewed [here](#).
- 9/15: Penn State's Forum on Black Affairs hosted Dworkin and the Catalyst in an evening event for new faculty and staff of color to Penn State.
- 9/16: The Africana Research Center hosted a talk as part of its lunchtime brown bag series, about the power of diversity and thriving in classical music.
- 9/16: Catalyst musicians participated in "On the Use and Abuse of Folk Music", an afternoon lecture at Altoona's Misciagna Family Center Titelman Study with 35 in attendance.
- 9/16: Catalyst's evening performance was attended by 50 at the Edith Davis Eve Chapel.
- 9/17: Student Ambassador Leaders hosted a panel discussion on diversity in the arts in the School of Music, attended by 22 students and faculty.
- 9/17: Catalyst's concert featuring its arrangement of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations* paired with Glenn Gould's *String Quartet* was attended by 188 patrons.

The Catalyst Quartet operates through the Sphinx Organization, founded by Aaron Dworkin and following his appointment as Dean of University of Michigan's School of Music is directed by his wife Afa Dworkin. A competition and development organization geared towards artists of color, the Sphinx Virtuosi chamber orchestra, (which includes the Catalyst Quartet) will be in residence at Penn State in September 2016. Their residency will include performances and outreach activities at both the University Park and Altoona campuses.

### **The Knights**

- 9/25: Student Ambassador Leaders coordinated a pop-up concert in advance of The Knights' residency in the Graduate Student Center.
- 9/29: Members of The Knights visited a senior level Russian literature course, with 10 students in attendance.
- 9/29: The Knights performed at Innovation Park as part of CoolBlue, an employee engagement program. 25 employees attended.
- 9/29: 6 students from Schreyer Honor College hosted members of The Knights at a downtown restaurant as part of the College's Dinner with Honors program.
- 9/29: Agnes Marchione coached 18 Penn State School of Music clarinet students in a master class.
- 9/30: Members of The Knights visited an advanced tonal analysis music course, with 25 students in attendance.
- 9/30: The public was invited to listen to The Knights engage in discussion with 60 students in Paris: Anatomy of a City, a Penn State French 137 course.
- 9/30: Members of The Knights participated in the Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors program. 22 students attended.
- 9/30: The Knights participated in a discussion about music and World War I with 40 students in The Western Heritage II, a Penn State History 002 course.
- 9/30: Michael Caterisano taught a percussion master class to 10 School of Music students.
- 9/30: 119 members of the Penn State and State College communities attended The Knights' Classical Coffeehouse.

- 10/1: members of The Knights guest-lectured in an Arts Marketing course, speaking on their development as a company.
- 10/1: 148 patrons attended The Knights' concert. The program included Sergei Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes*, Maurice Ravel's Piano Trio in A minor, Anton Webern's Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano, Ernest Bloch's *Prayer* for cello and piano, Caroline Shaw's arrangement of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Tierkreis: Leo*, and Igor Stravinsky's Suite from *The Soldier's Tale*.

#### **Lowell Lieberman and the Emerson String Quartet**

- 10/14: Student Ambassador Leaders staged a pop-up concert in the Graduate Student Center, with 70 in attendance.
- 10/15: Composer Lowell Lieberman arrived in advance of the quartet and taught a composer master class to 15 School of Music students.
- 10/15: Lieberman also participated in a public presentation of work, hosted by the School of Music, attended by 20 students and faculty.
- 10/15: Philip Setzer taught a string master class for 30 School of Music students.
- 10/15: Setzer also taught a violin master class for 16 School of Music students.
- 10/15: Gene Drucker visited a first year English course of 20 students in which he provided musical context and framework on their studies of literature inspired from World War II.
- 10/15: 148 patrons attended Emerson Quartet's concert program included Haydn's String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 76, No. 4, *Sunrise*; Schubert's String Quartet No. 13 in A minor, Op. 29, *Rosamunde*; and Liebermann's String Quartet No. 5, Op. 126.
- 10/16: Student Ambassador Leaders facilitated conversation with Lieberman over coffee and donuts for 27 School of Music students.
- 10/16: Student Ambassador Leaders set up an instrument petting zoo in the Student Center with 50 students in attendance.

#### **Circa Opus/Debussy String Quartet**

- 10/10: The Debussy Quartet participated in a class discussion with 36 students about war propaganda in Russian Course 143: The Culture of Stalinism and Nazism. Ensemble members introduced a Dmitri Shostakovich quartet and discussed how the work is a reflection of its time period.
- 10/10: Student Ambassador Leaders and Center for Arts and Crafts co-hosted a Color of Music pop-up activity in Warnock Commons. 45 students participated in the visual reflection experience by listening to classical compositions and transposing their thoughts through coloring pages.
- 11/11: The quartet attended the Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors and discussed their global experiences with 27 students. A Student Ambassador Leader facilitated the conversation.
- 11/11: Opus, Debussy's collaboration with the acrobats of Circa, was attended by 954 patrons. Fourteen acrobats and the quartet celebrated the music of Dmitri Shostakovich.

#### **Apollo's Fire**

- 11/16: 115 students, faculty, staff, and community members attended the Classical Coffeehouse.
- 11/17: The Student Ambassador Leaders staged a pop-up concert in the Graduate Student Center, with 60 in attendance.
- 11/17: Jeannette Sorrell guest-lectured on period musical instruments and Antonio Vivaldi's *La Folia* with 17 students in Italian Course 325: Introduction to Literature and the Arts in Italy. Sorrell also talked about her Baroque ensemble and its music.
- 11/17: Olivier Brault taught an upper strings master class for 12 students which included demonstrations of Baroque dance movements.

- 11/17: Amanda Forsythe taught a voice master class to 26 students.
- 11/17: Apollo's Fire explored the passions of the Baroque in *The Power of Love*. The concert featured luscious George Frideric Handel arias, from the new Apollo's Fire album with Forsythe, plus fiery Antonio Vivaldi concertos. The program closed with Sorrell's acclaimed arrangement of Vivaldi's *La Folia*, which the ensemble performs from memory. 568 patrons attended.

### Sybarite5

- 1/19: Sami Merdinian and Angela Pickett spoke to over 50 students in an Intro to Music course at the School of Music.
- 1/19: Laura Metcalf and Sarah Whitney were interviewed by classical music radio station WPSU.
- 1/19: Sybarite5 played an afternoon concert for over 50 employees at Innovation Park in the CoolBlue employee engagement program.
- 1/19: Sybarite5 attended and performed at the Center for the Performing Arts major donor event at the Nittany Lion Inn for about 40 guests.
- 1/20: Sybarite5's Altoona residency consisted of an afternoon lecture and evening performance, attended by 42 and 83 Altoona students, faculty, and staff respectively.
- 1/21: The company's visit to State High utilized the lunch hour rotations to meet with three groups of students (37 total) in differing areas of interest to explore art as advocacy for current LGBTQ and social justice initiatives.
- 1/21: Louis Levitt and Angela Pickett visited an Entrepreneurial Mindset course which was a more diverse academic cross-section of students. Levitt and Pickett provided practical thoughts on independently managing businesses and took time to brainstorm with about 40 students about their next steps.
- 1/21: Sybarite5's Classical Coffeehouse maxed out the facility, with guests spilling out into hallways. The 260 attendees stayed past the concert's conclusion to meet the artists and discuss the nature of Sybarite5's work.
- 1/22: Louis Levitt offered a master class for 10 double-bass students in the School of Music.
- 1/22: Sarah Whitney and Sami Merdinian met with 10 local entrepreneurs and artists at the New Leaf Initiative "Salad Fridays" lunchtime program in downtown State College.
- 1/22: Laura Metcalf and Sarah Whitney participated in the School of Music's Common Hour/Freshman Experience seminar with over 100 students to discuss career paths in music, and using technology for performance and composition. Two Classical Music Project Ambassadors facilitated conversation.
- 1/22: Sybarite5's performance at Schwab Auditorium was attended by 147 patrons – despite a snowstorm developing that afternoon. The company announced its program from the stage which included classics by composers such as Mozart and contemporary works by British rock band Radiohead.

### Voces8

- 2/10: The collegial artists of Voces8 began their American tour with their Penn State residency.
- 2/10: The company visited musicologist Marica Tacconi's 50 students in her Music 261 course (open to non-music majors) in mixed lecture style that included some performance, technique demonstration, and commentary on early music traditions.
- 2/10: Members of the company participated in the Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors. A Classical Music Project Ambassador facilitated conversation with 12 honors students.



- 2/10: Voces8 taught a joint vocal coaching session for Penn State's Oriana singers and Glee Club (130 students) at the School of Music.
- 2/11: The company delivered a similar coaching session at State High for over 100 students.
- 2/11: Company founders (and brothers) Paul and Barnaby Smith spoke to 60 students in a business management course on developing a brand, building an infrastructure, and navigating organizational growth. The session was also livestreamed to students in online sections of the course.
- 2/11: Voces8's evening concert at Pasquerilla Spiritual Center was attended by 240 patrons. The program featured works by Felix Mendelssohn, Thomas Tallis, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Giovanni Gabrieli, Claudio Monteverdi, Robert Louis Pearsall, and included jazz and pop selections announced from the stage.

### Windscape

- 2/17: The company began their residency with 13 graduate art history students examining mixed media in performances. Windscape musicians detailed how they built their program based on Japonisme influences and students considered the nature of sharing resources in the visual art community.
- 2/17: Windscape also performed in a senior level History of Asia course for 20 students. Course professor Ran Zwigenberg facilitated conversation between music selections to draw connections between visual art utilized by Windscape and course material.
- 2/17: The 20 students attending the Paterno Fellows Lunch with Honors participated in a lively discussion about career choices and changes in the music industry. A Classical Music Project Ambassador facilitated the conversation.
- 2/17: Windscape played an afternoon concert for 25 employees participating in Innovation Park's CoolBlue employee engagement program.
- 2/18: The company taught oboe, wind ensemble, clarinet, and French horn master classes at the School of Music for 40 students in total.
- 2/18: Windscape's evening concert at Schwab Auditorium was attended by 216 patrons. Titled *East Meets West: A Floating World—Japan and the Impressionists*, Windscape's program featured works by composers familiar to Western ears—Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Olivier Messiaen—paired with music by Japanese composers Michio Miyagi and Toru Takemitsu. The musicians performed before projected images of paintings and prints by artists from Europe and Japan. Works by Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne, Georges Seurat, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Vincent Van Gogh, and others are juxtaposed—often thematically—with pieces by Katsushika Hokusai, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Ando Hiroshige, Kitao Shigemasa, Suzuki Harunobu, Kitagawa Utamaro, Mizuno Toshikata, and others.

### Russian National Orchestra

- 3/3: Flautist Maxim Rubtsov coached students in Naomi Seidman's studio of 14. Another faculty member provided translation during the class. Students were very excited to work with Rubtsov, presenting him with a School of Music shirt, card, and taking photos with him after the class.
- 3/3: The orchestra's evening performance had 841 patrons in attendance. The program included Alexander Glazunov's Prelude to the Suite *From the Middle Ages* and Pletnev's arrangement of Sergei Prokofiev's Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*. Stefan Jackiw joined the orchestra to perform Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64. Jackiw made his Carnegie Hall debut the day before the Penn State concert.





## **2015-16 Engagement Partners**

- Alumni Association
- Council of LionHearts
- College of Arts and Architecture e-Learning Institute
- College of the Liberal Arts
- Institute for the Arts and Humanities
- Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts at Penn State Altoona
- Paterno Liberal Arts Undergraduate Fellows Program
- School of Music
- Schreyer Honors College
- Student Affairs
- New Leaf Initiative
- Center for Arts and Crafts
- Kern Graduate Center
- Africana Research Center
- Penn State Parents Program
- Forum on Black Affairs
- North Halls Residence Association
- East Residence Hall Association
- Multicultural Resource Center
- Smeal College of Business
- CoolBlue at Innovation Park

## **Administrative**

In July 2015 Melissa Croushorn joined the Center for the Performing Arts team in the new position of Student Engagement Manager. This is a position formed out of a deepening partnership with Student Affairs who is providing one-half of the funding for the position. Melissa's responsibilities include administration of the Classical Music Project, developing and executing other CPA student and campus engagement activities, and working across the student experience at Penn State through Student Affairs to engage students with the performing arts. The student engagement manager also advises a student-led Performing Arts Council, which represents all students in the arts regardless of their major.

## **Conclusion**

In its fifth year the Classical Music Project organized and presented its most robust series of programs and engagement activities to date. Student engagement with classical music continued to grow and new ideas and directions for the project continue to be explored. The CMP team and partners continue to be nimble, adapting to successes and challenges to bring an even more effective selection of programs to our campus and community.

The CMP has partnership with many entities across campus which are critical in developing the CMP's reach to students. The partnership with Student Affairs became increasingly central to CMP and served as a catalyst for the Student Engagement Manager position. The CMP team and all project partners are working together to develop plans to sustain the project following the conclusion of Mellon Foundation funding.

The Classical Music Project has been an important part of the Center for the Performing Arts' offerings and has made a significant impact at Penn State helping the CPA advance its student engagement program. The CMP is grateful for the support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that has made possible the project's success at Penn State University.