

Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State

**Classical Music Project
Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

This report includes a summary of CMP residencies and events for the spring 2015 semester.

Student Engagement Activities

Highlight: Time for Three

The semester began with a very full and robust residency with the classical pop trio, Time for Three. Sixteen activities spanned the four day visit that was culminated with their performance on Thursday, February 26th. Of the residency activities, Classical Music Student Ambassadors facilitated a panel discussion on “Adapting Classical Music to 21st Century Audiences,” and led an Alternative String Playing Workshop and Improv with Time for Three musicians. They participated in an impromptu pop-up concert in a dining commons where students had the opportunity to hear the musicians and participate in a ticket drawing for their public performance. In all, over 1,100 college and middle school students, as



well as faculty, staff and community members enjoyed the week long residency schedule. Time for Three enjoyed this residency activity stating it was one of the most organized they had experienced.

Classical Coffeehouse: February 24 and March 31, 2015

The Classical Coffeehouse series continued in the spring semester with two events. The spring’s coffeehouse featured the Time for Three and eighth blackbird presented in partnership with the Penn State Alumni Association with support from the Blue & White Society and the Council of LionHearts. The Classical Coffeehouse was held in the Hintz Family Alumni Center’s Robb Hall. Complimentary refreshments and Classical Coffeehouse branded mugs were provided for attendees.

On the evening of February 24th, Time for Three performed various pieces, talked about the music and their experiences as artists, in addition to answering audience questions. Attendance was calculated at 140—the highest since the Coffeehouses began. Audience included students, faculty, staff and community members.



An ID swipe system was used to gather information on those students who attended the events and feedback surveys were sent to those who swiped their IDs. The students surveyed represented both graduate and undergraduate students. A majority of respondents indicated they would attend another Classical Coffeehouse; comments included:

- “I enjoyed hearing the stories of the three group members. Hearing first-hand about how they got to where they are was interesting and rewarding.”
- “Getting to hear how musicians in today's society are using classical music.
- In general it expanded my view of instrumental music beyond sitting in a concert hall. Made the musicians and music come alive in a personal and intimate way.”

On the evening of March 31st, eighth blackbird also performed various pieces, talked about the music and their experiences as artists, in addition to answering audience questions. With 82 in attendance,



the audience consisted of students, faculty, staff and community members. Surveyed audience members shared comments as:

- “eighth blackbird performed music that is not very familiar to me. They provided a good exposure to more contemporary classical music.”
- “The level of musicianship was what struck me primarily. I didn't have a strongly positive reaction to the compositions but the way they played them was truly impressive.”
- “Sharing in a wonderful evening of

fine music. As an alum I am proud that the university brings in residence groups like this for our students.”

Penn State Campus Project

On April 1, the eighth blackbird traveled to the Penn State Altoona campus and to spend a day of residency and concert—the second in the 2014-15 season.

The residency began with an event entitled “Pierrot Plus—The New Music Orchestra” held in the Misciagna Family Center Titelman Study.

The Altoona residency culminated in an evening performance held in the Paul E. and Margery Wolf Kuhn Theatre on the Altoona Campus. The event was free but tickets were required. The eighth blackbird perform to a house of 69 audience members.

Spring Semester Recap

Time for Three (Tf3)

- February 23: Nick Kendall met with an intimate group of Schreyer Honor Students for dinner to discuss the group and give students the opportunity to engage in a personal way. Attendance: 13.
- February 24: Tf3 met with MGMT 215 students for discussion on how to turn personal passion into business—as it relates to music and beyond. Attendance: 41
- February 24: Tf3 met with CAS483 students to discuss how to use social media for communication and marketing—especially for small non-profit groups. Attendance: 18
- February 24: Tf3 presented *Follow Your Dreams and Shoot for the Stars*, to the Bellefonte Middle School students. This program introduced techniques for young people to celebrate themselves while enriching others. The program delivers messages about bullying prevention and empowerment. The trio encourages young people to find what makes them happy and to live it. It also urges students to encourage others to do the same. Attendance: 600
- February 24: CoolBlue Concert and Conversation – Business park employees were invited to hear Tf3 perform several pieces of music as well as participate in conversation with the string musicians. Attendance: 75.
- February 24: Tf3 musicians participate in concert and conversation with students, faculty, staff, and community members in the Classical Coffeehouse held at Robb Hall of the Hintz Family Alumni Center. Attendance: 140
- February 24: As a result of a class visit, Tf3 participated on student-run radio show, COM Radio.
- February 25: The public was invited to observe Ranaan Meyer, Tf3 double bassist, work with Penn State School of Music bass students in a 90-minute master class. Attendance: 8
- February 25: The public was invited to listen as two of the Tf3 musicians participated in an A&A 297A course that introduces arts markets and consumption models for emerging arts entrepreneurs. The musicians discussed their experience and explored issues in marketing aesthetic products and creating/communicating artistic value. Attendance: 15
- February 25: The public was welcome to hear the Tf3 musicians introduce techniques for college students and educators to consider various aspects of what they can accomplish as musicians. The trio members show how music can open new doors and help everyone reach creative fulfillment. Attendance: 16
- February 25: Tf3 engaged in an informal conversation with students in the Penn State Paterno Fellows program. The event includes a question-and-answer session. Attendance: 17
- February 25: The public was welcomed to observe a panel discussion, moderated by the Classical Music Ambassadors, in which Tf3 discuss strategies for marketing, programming, alternative venues, and other ways to introduce music and performance art in a twenty-first-



century context. The discussion included tips for educators, such as integration of classical music and ideals into today's music scene without losing artistic integrity and while still catering to young audiences. Attendance: 22

- February 25: This 90-minute interactive workshop, targeted at Music Education students but open to the public, introduced alternative string techniques: LH slides, "chucking," "comping," style considerations for articulation, sound, bow use, and more; improvisation for string players; fiddle (gig or reel), jazz (simple tunes such as "All Blue" and "Blue Bossa," II-V-I, need-to-know jazz theory), blues (twelve-bar, pentatonic scale/blues scale), tips for effective soloing; jamming on classical music by ear (creative ways to use classical repertoire for improvisation). Attendance: 23
- February 25: Tf3 took classical music to a residence hall for an intimate performance for and discussion with Schreyer Scholars and residents of the Honors Living Learning Community. Attendance: 50
- February 25: Tf3 interacted with key donors and performance sponsors in an intimate dinner setting. Attendance: 25
- February 26: The public was invited to hear Tf3 musicians speak to MUSIC 005: Introduction to Western Music students. Attendance: 45
- February 26: The weeks' long residency activities were culminated by a public performance. The trio's concert selections included works from their new CD plus songs such as John Lennon and Paul McCartney's "Norwegian Wood," Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," and Katy Perry's "Firework."



eighth blackbird

- March 31: The public was invited to observe as members of eighth blackbird coached Penn



State School of Music string, woodwind, and brass graduate students who have memorized a short piece, movement, or segment of a larger work. The workshop addresses issues such as movement, choreography, stage presence, and visual communication. Each of the three sections lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Attendance: 69

- March 31: The public was welcomed to observe eighth blackbird's Matthew Duvall working with Penn State School of Music percussion students in a 90-minute masterclass session. Attendance: 10
- March 31: The public was encouraged to attend as members of eighth blackbird discussed writing for strings, winds, and piano/percussion, plus composing for groups using mixed instrumentation. Other seminar topics might include orchestration, commissioning, score organization, and meeting deadlines. Attendance: 12
- March 31: eighth blackbird, the Chicago sextet, acclaimed for its energetic performances of modern music and its theatrical flair, played selected works and engaged in conversation with the audience of the spring semester's second Classical Coffeehouse. Attendance: 82
- April 1: Members of eighth blackbird shared their observations about studying twentieth- and twenty-first-century music with graduate students. Attendance: 10
- April 1: The public was invited to hear members of eighth blackbird introduce techniques for college students and educators to consider various aspects of what they can accomplish as musicians. Discussion included various topics, including the business aspects of running a chamber music ensemble. Attendance: 17
- April 1: The eighth blackbird musicians engaged in an informal conversation with students in the Penn State Paterno Fellows program. Attendance: 17
- April 1: Dr. Tim Melbinger, instructor in music at Penn State Altoona, gave a brief history of the orchestra and the events that led to its contraction to an important subset, a sextet called *Pierrot Plus* (eighth blackbird is an example). The eighth blackbird musicians then discussed their repertoire and perform samples from the evening program. Attendance: 35
- April 1: The sextet performed a free concert scheduled to include "Counting Duets/Etudes" by Tom Johnson and György Ligeti, arranged by Lisa Kaplan and Tim Munro; "Doublespeak" by Nico Muhly; and "Songs of Love and Loss," including "Duet for Heart and Breath" by Richard Reed Parry, "Lamento della Ninfa" by Claudio Monteverdi (arrangement by Munro), "Moro, lasso al mio duolo" by Carlo Gesualdo (arranged by Munro), and "Babys" by Bon Iver (arranged by Kaplan). Attendance: 69
- April 2: eighth blackbird residency activities were culminated by a public performance that included a performance of *Pieces of Winter Sky*, an Aaron Jay Kernis composition co-commissioned by Penn State through its membership in the national classical music-commissioning consortium Music Accord. The program also included works by Tom Johnson, György Ligeti, Richard Reed Parry, Gabriella Smith, and Bryce Dessner. Attendance: 266

Brooklyn Rider

- April 13: The public was welcome to listen as Brooklyn Rider musicians participated in an A&A 297A course that introduces arts markets and consumption models for emerging arts entrepreneurs. The musicians discussed their experiences as well as explored issues in marketing aesthetic products and creating and communicating artistic value. Attendance: 12
- April 13: The public was encouraged to hear Brooklyn Rider musicians speak at an Art History 112 class about their creative process and the inspiration they derive from the pre-World War I

Blue Rider art movement. The musicians also discussed their work with contemporary composers and engage in general conversation with students.

- April 13: Brooklyn Rider musicians engaged with Penn State Schreyer Honors College students during a dinner that gives the scholars an opportunity to talk about the quartet's almanac project and ask questions. Attendance: 5
- April 13: Brooklyn Rider musicians and students from the Students Engaging Students organization and Schreyer Honors College explored the concepts behind the dynamics of leaderless teams, pursuing passions, and appreciation of classical music. In the same way that a chamber music ensemble performs without a conductor, individuals on a leaderless team must recognize when to step forward and when to drop back and allow someone else to take the lead. Attendance: 40
- April 14: The public was invited to hear Brooklyn Rider perform several pieces of music. The one-hour session also included conversation with the string quartet musicians.
- April 14: The Schwab Auditorium program featured Joseph Haydn's String Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3, Rider, plus compositions by Dana Lyn, Gonzalo Grau, Vijay Iyer, Christina Courtin, Bill Frisell, Glenn Kotche, Aoife O'Donovan, and Rubin Kodheli from the ensemble's 2014 album *The Brooklyn Rider Almanac*. Attendance: 360



Administrative

The 2014-2014 Classical Music Project season proved to be one of the most successful to date. With the robust residency schedule and activities of all artists, student attendance increased to 43%.

Looking forward, the 2015-2016 Classical Music Project season includes nine classical music artists for which residency activities are being scheduled.

As described in the fall report, a search is being conducted for a Student Engagement Manager, a shared position between the Center for the Performing Arts and Student Affairs. It is anticipated that this position will be filled by mid-Summer, at which time it will assume the administrative coordinator tasks of the Classical Music Project.