

Music and Theater Arts Section

Consistent with MIT's *mens et manus* (mind and hand) culture, the [Music and Theater Arts Section](#) (MTA) continues to offer students meaningful experiences in the unique languages and processes of the performing arts. Faculty and teaching staff help students understand art's demand for rigor and discipline and its high standards of excellence and beauty. A strong, comprehensive program in both music and theater arts—encompassing history, theory, performance, and technology—taught by faculty and staff of the highest caliber and whose ongoing professional activities inform their teaching will continue to be the hallmark of Music and Theater Arts. The academic program continues to develop talented students who have the desire to extend their education in music or theater beyond the undergraduate level. The section's graduates include those who pursue professional studies at the best graduate programs and others for whom exposure and participation in the arts is part of their lifelong learning and growth.

Music Program Highlights

MTA hosted the first-ever joint meeting of the American Musicological Society, Northeast Chapter, and the New England Conference of Music Theorists on April 8–9, 2016. The conference committee included Assistant Professor Emily Richmond Pollock and Associate Professor Michael Scott Cuthbert.

Professor Evan Ziporyn conducted a volunteer orchestra in a highly successful and critically acclaimed David Bowie tribute concert. The event, which featured two symphonies by Philip Glass, was a benefit for cancer research at MIT.

Graduating senior Daniel J. Parker—pianist, scholar, and winner of the Sudler Prize for Excellence in the Arts—became the first Emerson Fellowship recipient and music major to be accepted into a graduate degree program in piano performance at the Juilliard School. This was the first time an MIT graduate was accepted to Juilliard in the more than 30-year history of MIT's Emerson Program for Private Study.

In celebration of the MIT Cambridge Centennial—the 100th anniversary of MIT's move from Boston to Cambridge—Music and Theater Arts presented a special concert on April 2, featuring the MIT Symphony Orchestra, Adam K. Boyles, director; the MIT Concert Choir and the MIT Chamber Chorus, William Cutter, director; and members of the MIT Chamber Music Society and of the Emerson Program for Private Study. For the Centennial Open House, MTA presented a concert by selected pianists in the Emerson program, inaugurating the new Steinway concert grand piano in Killian Hall. In addition, Gamelan Galak Tika presented a preview concert and instrument demonstration in the Kresge Oval, and Senior Lecturer Martin Marks presented his work in connection with silent movies from 1916 in a collaborative workshop with the History Section.

Under the direction of Fred Harris, the MIT Wind Ensemble presented the Boston premiere of *Rubies* by MIT composer and Institute Professor John Harbison and the world premiere of *To the Light, To the Flame*, by MIT alumnus Jamshied Sharifi.

The joint Wind and Festival Jazz ensembles' recording *Infinite Winds* on Sunnyside Records was awarded the highest rating by *Downbeat* magazine (five stars), and was chosen as one of *Downbeat* magazine's "Best Albums of 2015: Masterpieces." Both of these honors are firsts. It is unprecedented for student ensembles to be mentioned in *Downbeat*'s highly selective "best of the year" list.

The MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble performed with award-winning jazz guitarist Ben Monder and with clarinetist Evan Ziporyn's renowned ensemble, EVIYAN.

The MIT Symphony Orchestra collaborated with Anna Kohler and MTA in a performance of William Walton's *Henry V* in April. In a concert of Polish music sponsored by the Mickiewicz Institute, Poland, the orchestra also premiered new works by MIT composers William Cutter, director of choral programs and lecturer in music, and Charles Shadle, senior lecturer.

Highlights of the choral program included an MIT Concert Choir performance of Mozart's *Requiem* and Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* featuring MIT alumni soloists, and an MIT Chamber Chorus collaboration with choreographer Denise Pons, of the Boston Conservatory dance faculty, and Baroque dance specialist Ken Pierce.

Support staff members Hannah Carpenter and Jillian Scales received the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences' Infinite Mile "Unsung Hero" Award.

Theater Arts Program Highlights

In the final weeks of AY2015, Theater Arts laid the foundation for two large and important changes. It became clear that 305 Vassar Street would be the new, consolidated base for the theater program and the program's new address would be Room W97. Simultaneously, Course 21M-2 was approved to grant a new, official Bachelor of Science degree in Theater Arts. Much of AY2016 was focused on building up these two distinct and important shifts in the identity of the Program in Theater Arts, and efforts to develop that new identity positively, in light of many challenges, continues. Some highlights over the course of the year included three new permanent hires in Theater Arts. Stephanie Rodemann is the new technical director, Josh Higgason is the new resident designer, and Professor Claire Conceison joined the program's faculty as a senior professor. Theater Arts is also seeking a new senior lecturer, with an emphasis on playwriting. It is hoped that this new senior lecturer will carry forward the academic and artistic mission in playwriting previously led by Professor Emeritus Alan Brody, who retired at the end of the year.

Even with the flurry of activities associated with developing a new building and restructuring the program's curriculum to meet the needs of a rising enrollment, Theater Arts presented a full season of plays, collaborating with members of the MIT Dramashop. There was also an array of faculty-driven research projects.

In celebration of the MIT Cambridge Centennial, Theater Arts presented *Small Infinities*, a play about the life and work of Sir Isaac Newton by Alan Brody. Wes Savick directed.

Enrollments

Enrollments in Music and Theater Arts were 1,415 and 810, respectively, for a total of 2,225.

Faculty Honors and Awards

Senior Lecturer Charles Shadle received a Levitan Teaching Award. Institute Professor John Harbison was awarded the MIT Council for the Arts Kepes Fellowship Prize. Associate Professor Patricia Tang was named a 2016 Margaret MacVicar Faculty Fellow. Professor Claire Conceison was appointed Oriental Scholar at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, 2015–2018, by the China/Shanghai Ministry of Education.

Faculty Achievements

MIT Symphony Orchestra director Adam Boyles was appointed assistant conductor of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Professor Charlotte Brathwaite's most recent productions in New York City included *The Messiah Complex*, BRIC Arts Center, May 20–27, 2016; *The Geneva Project*, JACK performance space, May 19–21; *The Perils of Obedience*, Participant Inc. Gallery, May 23–June 19; *Dolphins and Sharks*, Labyrinth Theater, June 2.

In AY2016, Sara Brown, director of design, continued to establish her reputation as a set designer for contemporary works and plays in development. She was a creative partner in several adaptations of classic works this year, including Jay Scheib's adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* for the National YoungArts Foundation in Miami and Wes Savick's adaptation of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* at Boston Playwrights' Theatre. November 2015 also saw the premiere and critical acclaim of her year-long collaboration with David Michalek, *Hagoromo*, at the BAM Next Wave Festival.

Professor Peter Child was in residence at Yaddo Artists Colony, June 15–July 9, 2016. Performances of his works included *Rilke Song*, Sarah Pelletier, soprano, Boston Musica Viva, Tsai Performance Center, Boston, September 26; *The Great Panjandrum*, Jeremy Huw Williams, baritone, Paula Fan, piano, Killian Hall, MIT, October 2; *Birthdays Card for YNK* (premiere), Ariana Kim, violin, Daniel Kim, viola, Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, St. Paul, October 11; *Small Change* (premiere), a collaborative performance with Lina Viste Grønli, List Visual Arts Center, MIT, October 16; *GS In Memoriam* (premiere), Young Nam Kim, violin, Daniel Kim, viola, Kresge Auditorium, MIT, November 22; *Clare Cycle*, Nina Guo, soprano, Collage New Music, Killian Hall, MIT, February 14; *Seeing the Unseen* and *The Reason Why the World*, MIT Cambridge Centennial Concert, Kresge Auditorium, MIT, April 2; *Marimba Doubles* (premiere), 38th Seminar on Contemporary Music for the Young, the Rivers School Conservatory, Weston, MA, April 10; *Practicing Haydn*, Elaine Chew, piano, Center for New Music, San Francisco, May 12; *Seeing the Unseen*, Ensemble Pi/Association for the Promotion of New Music, National Opera Center, New York, May 18; *Moonsculptures*, Joe Lovano, saxophone, Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, Sundin Music Hall, St. Paul, June 5.

Professor Claire Conceison's publications included a new introduction to Arthur Miller's 1984 work, *Salesman in Beijing*, in a new edition published to mark the Miller centennial

(Bloomsbury, 2015); "Eating Red: Performing Maoist Nostalgia in Beijing's Revolution-Themed Restaurants," in *Food and Theatre on the World Stage* (Routledge, 2015); "Meng Jinghui and Avant-Garde Chinese Theater," in *A New Literary History of Modern China* (Harvard University Press, forthcoming); an article about Meng Jinghui for a German theater journal, "Icon and Iconoclast" in *Theater der Zeit* (Special Issue, September 2015); and a book review of Rossella Ferrari's *Pop Goes the Avant-Garde: Experimental Theatre in Contemporary China* (Seagull Books, 2012) in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* (June 2016). Her conference presentations and lectures included "Laughter Is the Best Medicine: The Plight of China's Migrant Population in *Two Dogs' Opinions on Life*" at the Crisis, Migration and Performance Symposium, National University of Ireland, Galway, in March 2016; "Arthur Miller in China," at the Arthur Miller Centennial Symposium, University of Michigan, October 2015; "Miller in China," at the Arthur Miller Centennial Conference, St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY, October 2015; and "Arthur Miller in China," Shanghai Theater Academy and Duke Kunshan University, December 2015.

Associate Professor Michael Scott Cuthbert published articles and chapters on medieval music and disability and on music in the age of Dante. During his sabbatical, Cuthbert was a guest professor or invited speaker at the University of California, Los Angeles, Oxford University, Tufts University, West Virginia University, Boston University, and Florida State University.

In February 2016, William Cutter, director of choral programs, worked with the women of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus to prepare a performance of Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 21, under the baton of Maestro Andris Nelsons with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Cutter is one of five candidates under consideration for the position of chorus master of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Senior Lecturer in Music David Deveau recorded a new solo CD for the Steinway label that was released worldwide to critical acclaim in the *New York Times*, *Gramophone* magazine, and several other media outlets. Deveau performed a solo recital at the Shalin Liu Performance Center (Rockport Music) in October that featured a number of works from the new CD. His recording of Schubert's works for violin and piano with Tchaikovsky International Violin Competition winner Andres Cardenes will be released on the Artek label.

Institute Professor John Harbison taught the six Fellowship composers at Tanglewood, where he was also co-director of the Festival of Contemporary Music last July. For that festival he composed a new voice and piano piece, *Seven Poems of Lorine Niedecker*, conducted Dallapiccola's *Concerto per La Notte di Natale*, and coached pieces by Primosch, Levinson, and Ran. He also coached the Composers as Conductors project and conducted the Bach Cantata 155 at the Sunday concert on July 12. Harbison resigned the Festival co-director's position as of September 1.

For the 25th consecutive season, Professor Harbison was co-artistic director of the Token Creek Festival. Events included the completion of the complete Bach Brandenburg cycle with Concerto 1, and a guest concert by the Lydian Quartet that featured Harbison (String Quartet 3 and Lee Hyla's Quartet No. 3). In October, he was chamber music

coach for Yellow Barn in Putney, VT, and conducted Bach's Cantata 95 at Emmanuel Church, Boston. At the Emmanuel Music Bach Institute in January, he presented lectures, classes, and conducted Cantata 13. In March, he was a guest jurist for the Juilliard Composition Prize. Harbison chaired the American Academy of Arts and Letters Virgil Thomson Award for Vocal Music and the Academy Prize for Opera. In May and June, Harbison was guest conductor of Bach's Cantatas 155 and 165 at Songfest, Los Angeles; in July, he was guest conductor of Bach's Cantatas 57, 116, 163, and 187 at Tanglewood.

Harbison attended final rehearsals and two of seven performances of the European premiere of his *The Great Gatsby*, at the Semperoper Dresden with the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, November 23–December 10. Wayne Marshall was the conductor and Keith Warner the director. Other performances of Harbison's works included a concert of his vocal music: *North and South*, *The Right to Pleasure*, and *The Seven Ages*, presented by Lynn Torgove, Donald Berman, and ensemble on October 9 at the Pickman Auditorium at the Longy School of Music, Bard College; *Olympic Dances*, by the New England Conservatory Winds, October 13; and the premiere of *For Violin Alone* by Daniel Stepner on January 31, 2016, at Slosberg Auditorium, Brandeis University. Harbison's April 10 Kepes Award Concert in Killian Hall featured him in duos with Rose Mary Harbison and in performances with faculty jazz group Strength in Numbers of the Boston premieres of his *Violin Sonata 2*, as well as world premieres of two pop songs, *Clarise* and *The Slow Samba*.

Dr. Frederick Harris, director of the MIT Wind Ensemble and the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, organized a major tribute concert for the late Gunther Schuller that was favorably reviewed by the *Boston Globe* and brought musicians from around the world to Kresge Auditorium, including Wynton Marsalis (a first for MIT). Harris produced and premiered a 30-minute documentary film, *Seeking the Infinite: Stanislaw Skrowaczewski—A Life in Music*, at Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota. More than 600 people viewed the film, which was deemed "essential viewing" by Minnesota Public Radio. Harris was a guest percussionist with the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, where he performed with Grammy-winning jazz saxophonist Joe Lovano. This performance was favorably reviewed by the *Star Tribune*. Harris organized a commission consortium involving three composers and 40 universities and schools honoring the 85th birthday of legendary wind conductor Frank Battisti, sponsored by the American Composers Forum. Harris was an advisor to Gayle Gallagher (MIT Institute Events) for the MIT Centennial celebration. In June, he was engaged by the Minnesota Orchestra to write an extended essay about Stanislaw Skrowaczewski for the Orchestra's *Showcase* magazine.

Senior Lecturer Mark Harvey's 80-page historical essay on Boston's 1970s avant-garde jazz scene was published by Cultures of Soul Records with a compilation CD of rare recordings, including music by Harvey's improvisational quartet of that period, in a project called "The Boston Creative Jazz Scene: 1970–1983." Harvey's Aardvark Jazz Orchestra celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts with a performance of several selections from this repertoire as part of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra's 43rd annual Christmas Concert at Emmanuel Church, Boston. Founder and director of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, Harvey released the 14th CD recording featuring his own compositions. The critically acclaimed *Passages* (Leo Records) features

the extended work *Commemoration (Boston 2013)*, an homage to the victims and survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing, including the late MIT Police Officer Sean Collier.

Senior Lecturer Anna Kohler, along with Adjunct Lecturer Caleb Hammond, developed a new performance project titled *Profound Little Beasts*, which was presented in E33 and will have its New York City premiere later this year. Kohler was also in the La MaMa production of *I'm Bleeding All Over the Place: A Living History Tour* in New York City this past June.

Associate Professor Keeril Makan's opera, *Persona*, with a libretto by Jay Scheib, premiered in October 2015. Directed by Jay Scheib, conducted by Evan Ziporyn and performed by Either/Or, it was commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects and National Sawdust, where it was met with two sold-out performances and critical acclaim, with a preview in the *New Yorker* and a review in the *New York Times*. *Persona* was also performed to a sold-out house in May 2016 at the Gardner Museum in Boston, receiving an extensive preview and a glowing review in the *Boston Globe*.

Senior Lecturer Martin Marks's essay, "Presto(n) con Spirito: Comedies with Music, Sturges-Style," was published in autumn 2015 in the book *ReFocus: The Films of Preston Sturges* (Edinburgh University Press). In October, he gave a public performance in Killian Hall of his score for the silent film *Faust*, together with MIT soprano Divya Pillai (G), for 21M.013, The Supernatural in Music, Literature, and Culture (taught by Mary C. Fuller and Charles Shadle). On February 26, 2016, he performed his own new piano accompaniments for two silent films from the late 1920s made by avant-garde artist Jean Epstein: *La glace à trois faces (The Three-Sided Mirror)* and *La chute de la maison Usher (The Fall of the House of Usher)*, and on March 14, he played Victor Sjöström's masterpiece for *The Wind* (starring Lilian Gish) at the Harvard Film Archive. On April 15 he presented his paper, "The Continued Life of a Silent Film: Thoughts on *Wings*, as Scored, Restored, and Rescored," at Voicing the Soundtrack (A Conference in Honor of David Neumeyer) at the University of Texas Center for American Music in Austin. He also attended the annual Music and the Moving Image conference held in May at New York University, where he chaired three paper sessions.

Lecturer Elena Ruehr was awarded an Opera America Grant for her upcoming opera, *Crafting the Bonds*, which will be performed in the late spring of 2017. Her second CD of string quartets was recorded by the Cypress Quartet in December 2015. Her viola concerto, *Shadow Light*, written for Institute Professor of Music Marcus Thompson, was premiered and recorded in Washington, DC, in 2016. The recording will be released this coming fall. Her piece *Quetzal Garden*, for flute and strings, was premiered and recorded during the 2015–2016 season and was reviewed by the *Boston Globe* and the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*. The world premiere of Ruehr's *The Worlds Revolve* by the Borromeo String Quartet and pianist Donald Berman at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival was reviewed by the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*. Other performances included *It's About Time* in Vermont, February 2016, and *Jane Wang Considers the Dragonfly* in New York, May 2016.

Professor of Theater and Director of the Theater Program Jay Scheib collaborated with Keeril Makan and Evan Ziporyn on the development of *Persona*, a new opera after the film by Ingmar Bergman. It was presented for students on campus in E33 and made its premiere in New York City at National Sawdust in Brooklyn.

Between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016, Senior Lecturer Charles Shadle completed seven new compositions: *The Old Place* (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano commissioned by Lontano, London, UK); *Primordia: A Song Cycle to Early Poems of Wallace Stevens* (commissioned and premiered by Jeremy Huw Williams); *Nocturne: On the River* (commissioned by MIT for the MIT Symphony Orchestra, which premiered the piece, to celebrate the centenary of MIT's move to Cambridge); *Wren Churches: Sonata da Chiesa for Solo Oboe*; *Pomme* for alto flute (commissioned by MIT for the Edward Cohen memorial concert with Collage and premiered by Christopher Krueger); *Einstein and Music: A Concert Aria for Baritone and Piano* (commissioned by Paula Fan, University of Arizona); and *A Tale of My Native Land: A Ballade after Hawthorne* (piano, for MIT student Yun Chang). In the fall 2015 semester, the distinguished Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams gave the first performance of the nine songs of *Primordia* at MIT, later performing them on tour throughout the US. In the spring semester there were performances of the *Missa Brevis* with the Schola Cantorum of St. Stephen's Providence and the woodwind quintet *A Romance (for Miss Jewett)*.

Institute Professor Marcus Thompson performed and recorded Elena Ruehr's *Shadow Light*, a concerto for viola and chamber orchestra, with the New Orchestra of Washington (DC), and performed the Boston-area premiere of John Harbison's *String Trio* (2013) with colleagues from the Boston Chamber Music Society at the end of its 33rd season. Thompson also presented two recital tours for the Piatigorsky Foundation, traveling to remote communities and performing in schools, colleges, churches, living facilities, and museums in West Texas (in January) and Wyoming (in May). He also presented a recital of Brahms's viola sonatas with a local MIT alumnus at Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal.

Professor Evan Ziporyn composed and arranged music for Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble that is featured on their most recent recording and will appear on the upcoming soundtrack to Ken Burns's documentary *Vietnam*. He also performed with the Silk Road Ensemble at the 2016 TED Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He presented solo performances at festivals in Indonesia, Poland, and Korea as well as in California, Florida, and Wyoming. Professor Ziporyn also released the recording *Green Light*, a CD of new compositions and improvisations, with Polish jazz master Waclaw Zimpel.

Personnel

Claire Conceison was hired as professor, effective January 1, 2016. Eran Egozy was hired as professor of the practice, effective January 1, 2016. Alan Brody retired effective June 30, 2016. The section's 13 faculty members included six women and two African Americans.

Peter Child, Section Head
Professor of Music

Jay Scheib, Director of Theater Arts
Professor of Theater