

Music and Theater Arts

The [Music and Theater Arts](#) Section continues to afford students at MIT the opportunity to experience the unique language and process of the arts. Faculty and teaching staff help students understand art's demand for rigor and discipline and its nonquantitative standards of excellence and beauty. A strong, comprehensive program in both music and theater arts—encompassing history, theory, and performance and taught by faculty and staff of the highest caliber whose ongoing professional activities inform their teaching—has been and will continue to be our hallmark. The comprehensive nature of the academic program continues to produce graduates with the talent and desire to extend their education in music or theater beyond the undergraduate level.

Highlights of the Year

Music and Theater Arts played a visible role in the MIT 150th celebration. In addition to the section's involvement in many special programs and performances as part of the Festival of Art, Science, and Technology, MIT music faculty, teaching staff, and students were front and center at the Next Century Convocation at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in April. Six of our composers—professor Peter Child, Institute Professor John Harbison, professor Keeril Makan, senior lecturer Charles Shadle, and lecturers Mark Harvey and Elena Ruehr—were commissioned to write special music for the event. The MIT Chamber Chorus and the MIT Concert Choir, conducted by lecturer William Cutter; the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble and the MIT Wind Ensemble, conducted by lecturer Frederick Harris; and the MIT Symphony Orchestra, conducted by lecturer Adam Boyles, all performed at the event.

The MIT 150th Festival of Art, Science, and Technology presented a five-hour New Music Marathon curated by professor Evan Ziporyn with Kronos Quartet, Bang on a Can, Wu Man, Gamelan Galak Tika, and the MIT Chamber Chorus performing the music of Brian Eno, Terry Riley, Tod Machover, Christine Southworth, and Evan Ziporyn.

Also as part of the festival, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project with music director Gil Rose presented a concert of music by MIT composers.

As part of the MIT 150th Open House, Music and Theater Arts presented “The Sounds of Minds and Hands at Work,” a showcase marathon of 30-minute concerts by selected students and ensembles from the MIT music program. Performances included Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, performed by the MIT Chamber Orchestra under the direction of lecturer Boyles; Johannes Brahms' *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Horn*, performed by members of the MIT Chamber Music Society; Libby Larsen's *The Settling Years*, performed by the MIT Chamber Chorus under the direction of lecturer Cutter; and solo performances by MIT Emerson Scholars/Fellows Sarah Rumbly, Shu Zheng, and Jennifer Lai.

As part of the MIT 150th Festival of Art, Science, and Technology, professor Thomas DeFrantz hosted the symposium “Dance Technology and Circulations of the Social,” which brought international researchers to MIT to present their original media-focused demonstrations, performances, readings, and research.

Professor Ellen Harris moderated a colloquium on George Frideric Handel and his oratorio *Israel in Egypt*. The colloquium ended with a performance of the oratorio by the Handel and Haydn Society under the direction of artistic director Harry Christophers.

Music and Theater Arts and the Boston Chamber Music Society joined forces to present an innovative program, featuring music composed in Paris between 1900 and 1926, for piano four-hands and piano with voice. *An Artistic Menagerie: Collaborations of Mind, Hand, and Imagerie, 1900–1926* focused on music performances accompanied by art images from the period, as well as stage and costume designs, created to accompany ballets presented by Ballets Russes and Ballets Suédois.

The MIT Concert Choir presented TUTTI, a performance featuring the combined talents of the Concert Choir and student a cappella ensembles including the Gospel Choir, Syncopasian, The Muses, the Chorallaries, the Logarhythms, Resonance, and the Cross Products.

Visiting performers included the Radius Ensemble, pianist Vicky Chow, the Harlem String Quartet, the Fidelio Trio, the Lontano Ensemble, and the Boston Chamber Music Society. The Thursday Killian Hall Jazz Series included composer and pianist Kenny Werner with saxophonist Benjamin Koppel, the Keala Kaumeheiwa Group, pianist Ran Blake with vocalist Dominique Eade, and composer and pianist Guillermo Klein with saxophonist Bill McHenry.

The MIT Faculty Concert series presented lecturer Mark Harvey and the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra performing new works including Harvey's world premiere of *Sumner*, and the International Contemporary Ensemble performing music by professor Keeril Makan.

Visiting artists in theater and dance included Jaleel Ojuade, who offered a workshop demonstration in Nigerian Yoruba Bata and Dundun dance; A. "Rokafella" Garcia, hip-hop artist and filmmaker, who screened and discussed her film, *All the Ladies Say*; and Rickerby Hinds, who presented the lecture-demonstration "Hip-Hop Theatre: How We Do."

Honors and Awards

Professor Child received a residency fellowship at the Yaddo artist colony. He was also named the Class of 1949 Professor of Music for a five-year term.

Professor Makan received a residency fellowship at the Yaddo artist colony.

Professor Jay Scheib was awarded a 2011 Fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Assistant professor Michael Cuthbert's grant from the Seaver Institute for his research project, music21: A Computer-aided Framework for Musical Analysis, was renewed for another year. Professor Cuthbert received an award from the Alumni Class Fund in support of his project, MOSS: The Mobile Sound Studio for Teaching and Learning at MIT. He was the recipient of the Homer A. Burnell Career Development Professorship.

Program Highlights

Enrollments in Music and Theater Arts were 1,292 and 409, respectively, for a total of 1,701.

The MIT Symphony Orchestra presented an opera evening with the MIT Concert Choir.

The MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble presented its annual Herb Pomeroy Memorial Concert featuring special guests Ray Santisi and Frank Tiberi.

Martin Luther King visiting artist Donal Fox presented the lecture-demonstration, “Creative Languages: The Art of Improvisation in Music, Dance and Theater Arts,” with special guest Professor DeFrantz.

The MIT Affiliated Artist Concert presented new works by affiliated artists Justin Casinghino and Brett Abigana, performed by the wind quintet Vento Chiaro.

MIT’s Senegalese drumming ensemble, under the direction of professor Patricia Tang, hosted the biennial Griot Festival. A weekend of performances, lectures, and workshops celebrated the musical traditions of Griots from Africa and the Diaspora. Special guest was the Mbaye Family Drum Troupe from Senegal.

Dramashop performed Tony Kushner’s *Hydriotaphia*, directed by professor Janet Sonenberg; and *La Ronde* by Arthur Schnitzler, translated, adapted, and directed by senior lecturer Anna Kohler. Dramashop also presented *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, a series of short plays written, performed, and directed by Dramashop members.

MIT Theater Arts presented a workshop of experimental theater with a new translation and multi-media adaptation of the ancient Greek myth *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus. The production was produced, performed, and directed by MIT theater arts students.

Playwrights in Performance, which allows young playwrights the opportunity to follow their scripts through the production process, presented four new plays by MIT students.

Achievements

Professor Peter Child received commissions from the New England Philharmonic Orchestra for a violin concerto, and from Carlos Prieto for a cello sonatina. He has finished work on *Finite Infinity* commissioned by Kendra Colton. Major performances included the *Viola Sonata* and *Rilke Songs* during the Lontano Festival of Music in London, and *Louisa’s War* by the Concord Orchestra and Chorus. A new CD of his music was released by Lorelt and includes *Songs of Bidpai*, *Promenade*, *Rilke Songs*, and *Pantomime*.

Institute Professor John Harbison received the Founders Award from the American Music Center. The Center recognized Professor Harbison as “A beacon in the field [of American music].” The Boston Symphony Orchestra performed the complete cycle of Professor Harbison’s symphonies as part of its concert season in 2010–2011.

Professor Ellen Harris continued as board member for the *Journal of Musicological Research*, the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, and *Eighteenth-Century Music*.

Professor Lowell Lindgren continued as a member of the advisory board for *Recercare*, the journal for the study and practice of early music. He was also a member of the board of directors of the American Handel Society.

Professor Marcus Thompson performed at the Sitka Summer Music Festival in Anchorage, AK; at the Montreal Musique de Chambre Festival; with Music by the Sea on Vancouver Island; and at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. He performed with the Boston Chamber Music Society, Emmanuel Music, Winsor Music, and the Muir and DaPonte String Quartets. He served on the board of directors for the American Viola Society and continued as artistic director for the Boston Chamber Music Society.

Professor Evan Ziporyn saw the New York and Boston premieres of his opera, *A House in Bali*, and the world premiere of his *Tabla Concerto* with Sandeep Das and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. A program spanning 20 years of his work was presented at Carnegie Hall and included solo works for clarinet and piano, along with the New York premiere of *Bayu Sabda Idep* for gamelan and strings. Professor Ziporyn joined the Bang on a Can All-Stars for performances of his own works and others at music festivals in Australia and Hong Kong.

Professor Patricia Tang continued as associate editor for the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* and as cochair for the Society for Ethnomusicology African Music Section.

Professor Jay Scheib's *Bellona, Destroyer of Cities* was performed in Paris as part of the Exit Festival and at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. *Bellona* is part two of *Simulated Cities/Simulated Systems*; Professor Scheib is currently at work on part three of the planned trilogy.

Professor Michael Cuthbert coauthored, with Elizabeth Nyikos, "Style, Locality, and the Trecento Gloria: New Sources and a Re-examination," in *Acta Musicologica* 82; authored "Tipping the Iceberg: Missing Italian Polyphony from the Age of Schism," in *Musica Disciplina* 54; coauthored, with Christopher Ariza, "music21: A Toolkit for Computer-Aided Musicology and Symbolic Music Data," in *Proceedings of the International Society on Music Information Retrieval* (2010); and coauthored, with Christopher Ariza, "Modeling Beats, Accents, Beams, and Time Signatures Hierarchically with music21 Meter Objects," in *Proceedings of the International Computer Music Conference* (2010).

Professor Keeril Makan's new compositions include *Tender Illusions*, written for the Scharoun Ensemble; *Herd*, for piano, commissioned by Benjamin Binder; and *Infinite Corridor*, commissioned by the MIT Council for the Arts for MIT's 150th celebration. He saw numerous performances of his works, including the premiere of *Nothing is More Important*, performed by the Boston Chamber Music Society; *Mercury Songbirds*, performed by the New York New Music Ensemble at Merkin Hall in New York City and at the Festival Música Nova in Sao Paulo, Brazil; *Dream Lightly*, performed by the New Juilliard Ensemble at Alice Tully Hall in New York City; and *Zones d'accord*, performed

by Dal Niente at the Issue Project Room in Brooklyn, NY. He was managing editor of *Computer Music Journal*, MIT Press.

Senior lecturer David Deveau performed the world premiere of Scott Wheeler's piano trio, *Granite Coast*, at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. This performance was the inaugural concert of the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport, MA. Lecturer Deveau continued as the artistic director of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. Other performances this year included concerti with the New England Philharmonic Orchestra, the Boston Civic Symphony, and the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, as well as a pair of all-Mozart recitals with Boston Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Malcolm Lowe.

Senior lecturer George Ruckert presented a series of performances with MITHAS (MIT's Heritage of the Arts Southasia) featuring Indian music and dance. He received an Alumni Class Fund award in support of the project, Folk Music of the British Isles and North America.

Senior lecturer Pamela Wood continued as a faculty member at the Kodály Music Institute at the New England Conservatory in its summer program, and she continued as a member of the board of trustees of the Kodály Center of America.

Lecturer Frederick Harris saw the publication of *Seeking the Infinite: The Musical Life of Stanislaw Skrowaczewski*, a biography of the composer-conductor.

Lecturer Mark Harvey was conductor, soloist, and arranger for the John Coltrane Memorial Concert at Northeastern University. He performed as music director and conductor of the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra at Boston College, Kresge Auditorium, and numerous other venues throughout New England.

Lecturer Elena Ruehr saw her music showcased in a New York City performance by the new-music ensemble Novus.

Personnel

Michael Cuthbert was appointed associate professor without tenure effective July 1, 2011. Ellen Harris retired effective July 1, 2011. Thomas DeFrantz left MIT to accept a tenured position at Duke University effective July 1, 2011. The section's 13 faculty members included three women and two African Americans. The 10-member, full-time teaching staff included one African American woman and one Native American.

Janet Sonenberg
Section Head
Professor of Theater Arts