

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 often 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 the Section's 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 hosted the music ensemble Bang on a Can All-stars in an ongoing residency that included monthly visits to the MIT campus for a wide range of artistic, educational, and performance activities, including sold-out concerts at Kresge Auditorium.

The Music and Theater Arts Composer Forums, organized by associate professor Keeril Makan, presented Institute Professor John Harbison discussing his *Symphony No. 6* in advance of its premiere by the Boston Symphony Orchestra; professor Tod Machover discussing his most recent non-operatic work; composer Julia Wolfe discussing her recent work *Steel Hammer*, a new art ballad; composer Terry Riley discussing his new composition, commissioned and premiered by the percussion orchestra Gamelan Galak Tika; and composer Erin Gee in a lecture demonstration about her upcoming piece for the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra.

The Edward Cohen 10th Anniversary Memorial Concert presented Radius Ensemble in a performance featuring Cohen's Clarinet Quintet, Capriccio for Solo Piano, and Suite for Solo Flute. Composer, performer, and senior lecturer Cohen was a beloved member of Music and Theater Arts for many years, and the Section remembers him fondly with these concerts featuring both his music and newly composed music of contemporary composers.

The MIT Wind and Festival Jazz Ensembles, under the direction of lecturer Frederick Harris, presented a special performance during Family Weekend featuring members of MIT's Army, Navy, and Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps. In other performances, the MIT Wind Ensemble presented *Awakening*, a new piece by composer and MIT alumnus Jamshied Sharifi, commissioned specifically for the Wind Ensemble.

The Festival Jazz Ensemble presented the 5th Annual Herb Pomeroy Memorial Concert, with lecturer Mark Harvey as guest conductor and jazz pianist Ray Santisi as guest artist.

The Boston Chamber Music Society Winter Festival, with professor and artistic director Marcus Thompson, offered a forum and concert *Exiled to Hollywood: Outcast Artists in*

Southern California, which presented works by composers who emigrated to Southern California before and during World War II.

Terry Riley, minimalist legend and world music iconoclast, joined forces with Gamelan Galak Tika, under the direction of professor Evan Ziporyn, in a world premiere of a new work for voice, electronics, keyboard, and gamelan composed by Riley and commissioned by Gamelan Galak Tika.

The MIT Chamber Chorus presented Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* under the direction of director of choral programs William Cutter, with set design by director of design Sara Brown and costumes by instructor Leslie Held.

The MIT Guest Artist Series presented the Jupiter Quartet with senior lecturer David Deveau in a performance in Kresge Auditorium; The Ascoli Ensemble, a Holland-based ensemble specializing in the performance of rare and unknown music from the Middle Ages; and Bang on a Can, Trio Mediaeval, and Mantra Percussion in a combined performance featuring the area premiere of works by Julia Wolfe and composer Michael Gordon.

The John Cage Centennial Concert was presented with pianist Vicky Chow and Bang on a Can All-stars performing Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano.

Honors and Awards

Associate professor Michael Cuthbert received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support his *music21* project. The grant is part of a larger project called *Electronic Locator of Vertical Interval Successions (Elvis): The First Large Data-driven Research Project on Musical Style* and involves professors and advisors from the US and Canada researching changes in musical style from 1300 to 1900. He also received a Radcliffe Institute Rieman and Baketel Fellowship for Music for the 2012–2013 academic year.

Professor Makan was awarded a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship. These fellowships are generally intended for scholars, artists, or scientists who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or creative ability.

Program Highlights

Enrollments in Music and Theater Arts were 1,370 and 454, respectively, for a total of 1,824.

This surpasses last year's enrollment by 123 and is the largest enrollment either Music or Theater Arts has seen since they became a combined section in 1988.

The MIT Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of lecturer Adam Boyles, presented a series of concerts that included performances of Gustav Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* and *Symphony No. 1*; Richard Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*; Zoltán Kodály's *Peacock Variations*; and suites 1 and 2 of Manuel de Falla's *El Sombrero de Tres Picos*.

The MIT Faculty Series and MIT Heritage of the Arts of South Asia (MITHAS) presented senior lecturer George Ruckert on Hindustani sarod and Nitin Mitta on tabla in a performance in Wong Auditorium. MITHAS also presented a series of concerts that included performances by Neela Bhagwat, a leading exponent of the Gwalior style of singing, and Gayathri Venkataraghavan, a highly regarded carnatic vocalist.

The MIT Dramashop presented *The Rogers Plan*, directed by technical instructor Susan Beth Wilson; Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, directed by senior lecturer Anna Kohler; *World of Wires*, an all-freshman production directed by associate professor Jay Scheib and inspired by philosopher Nick Bostrom's *Are you living in a computer simulation?*; and Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*, directed by lecturer Kim Mancuso.

Professor Alan Brody presented *Playwrights in Performance*, a series of one-act plays written by students and produced by MIT Dramashop and MIT Theater Arts.

MIT Theater Arts presented a series of staged play readings by students in collaboration with professional actors and curated by senior lecturer Kohler, including a reading of *Illness or Modern Women*, written by Nobel Prize-winner Elfriede Jelinek.

Rambax, MIT's African drumming ensemble, traveled to Senegal to study sabar with the Mbaye family. Under the direction of associate professor Patricia Tang and lecturer Lamine Toure, the students had the chance to work directly with a family that has passed down the art of drumming through many generations.

Achievements

Professor Brody's play *Operation Epsilon* is to be staged in New York City, with an upcoming premiere at the Central Square Theater, Cambridge.

Professor Peter Child saw the premiere performance of two works: *Sonatina Serena* for cello and piano, and *Laughing Together* for soprano and piano. His *Rilke Songs* was performed by Boston Musica Viva at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. The Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) performed his new work *Shanti*, and Winsor Music commissioned and performed *Finite Infinity*. He presented *Musical Patois: Reflections of Language in Music*, with Elaine Chew on piano, at the University of Southern California.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra completed its performance cycle of all Institute Professor Harbison's symphonies with the premiere of his *Symphony No. 6*. His *String Quartet No. 5* was performed by the Pro Arte Quartet, and *Sonata No. 1* for violin and piano was performed by Cho-Liang Lin and Jon Kimura Parker in the 2011–2012 season of the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center.

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 a member of the board of directors of the American Handel Society.

Professor Thompson presented the world premiere of the *Viola Concerto* by Olly Wilson with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Arild Remmereit.

He was the recipient of the American Viola Society Founders Award at the 40th Annual International Viola Society Congress, and received the award for commissioning the concerto from Olly Wilson. He performed at the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, the Sitka Summer Music Festival, the Cooperstown Chamber Music Festival, and Ventfort Hall, in Lenox, MA, and inaugurated a recital series at the Bose Corporation Headquarters, with performances by students in the Emerson Scholarship and Fellowship Program.

Professor Ziporyn published the article “Thelonious Monk’s Harmony, Rhythm, and Pianism,” coauthored with Michael Tenzer, in *Analytical and Cross-cultural Studies in World Music*, editors M. Tenzer and J. Roeder (Oxford University Press). He was an instructor at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Arts. His ensemble Gamelan Galak Tika was featured at the Bang on a Can 25th anniversary concert at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. He produced two compact discs (CDs): *Big Grenadilla/Mumbai*, featuring BMOP, Gil Rose, conductor, with Professor Ziporyn and tabla master Sandeep Das as soloists; and *Big Beautiful Dark and Scary*, a Bang on a Can All-stars CD, featuring compositions, arrangements, and playing by Professor Ziporyn. Both CDs are on the Cantaloupe Music label.

Professor Tang presented “Bakks in Motion” at the Embodied Knowledge Symposium, at Harvard University. The article “A Tam-tam for Africa” was published in *The Culture of AIDS in Africa*, edited by Gregory Barz and Judah Cohen (Oxford University Press). The article “Il y a des gens courageux parmi vous: Griots Wolof, la Lutte et les Héros du 21ème siècle” was published in *Communication et Société Wolof: Héritage et Création*, eds. Anna M. Diagne, Sascha Kessler, and Christian Meyer.

Professor Scheib presented *World of Wires*, the third installment of his trilogy *Simulated Cities/Simulated Systems*, at The Kitchen performance space, in New York City. He received a coveted 2012 Obie award, Off-Broadway’s highest honor, for his direction of this production. He presented the workshop and lecture *Performing Monsters Motion Theater* at SITI Company, in New York City. He lectured and was part of the panel for the colloquium *Mutation des avant-gardes: entre art, politique et connaissance*, in Montreal.

Professor Cuthbert published the articles “International Style and Medieval Italian Music: A Flemish Motet in the Ascoli Piceno/Montefortino Fragment” with Sasha Zamler-Carhart in *Fama e publica Vox nel medioevo: Atti del Confegno di Studio*, edited by Isa Lori San Filippo and Antonio Rigon; and “Interoperable Digital Musicology Research via music21Web Applications” with Beth Hadley, Lars Johnson, and Christopher Reyes in *Proceedings of the Digital Humanities Conference*, Hamburg, Germany. He was on the board of directors for the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music, and on the advisory board for Centro Studi sull’Ars Nova Italiana del Trecento and the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales Committee, a joint committee of the American Musicological Society and the Music Librarians Association.

Professor Makan’s *Dream Lightly* was performed by BMOP under the direction of Gil Rose. Praxis Quartet performed *Mu*, at Ashmont Hill Chamber Music; the ensemble Either/Or performed *Resonance Alloy* at Miller Theater, in New York City; and Williams

Percussion Ensemble performed *2*, in Williamstown, MA. *Target*, a portrait CD of Professor Makan's compositions performed by Either/Or and the chamber ensemble California EAR Unit was released on Starkland Records. He is currently at work on *Persona*, a new opera commissioned by the group Alarm Will Sound, with a libretto adapted by Professor Scheib from the Ingmar Bergman film of the same name. Professor Makan was managing editor of *Computer Music Journal* (MIT Press).

Senior lecturer Deveau continues as music director for the Rockport Chamber Music Festival.

Senior lecturer Martin Marks saw the release of the latest DVD collection of restored silent films, *Treasures 5: The West 1898–1938*, for which he was the music curator. He performed scores at the Harvard Film Archive for two silent films directed by Sergei Eisenstein: *Strike* and *Old and New* (inaugural program for the film series “¡Qué Viva Eisenstein!”).

Senior lecturer Ruckert composed and performed for the Chhandika dance program and directed the seven-concert MITHAS concert series. He began writing a book on Indian music in the US.

Senior lecturer Pamela Wood continued as a faculty member at the Kodály Music Institute at 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 Harris published *Seeking the Infinite: The Musical Life of Stanisław Skrowaczewski* (CreateSpace), a comprehensive biography of the internationally recognized conductor-composer. Reviews and press can be found at <http://www.seekingtheinfinite.com/praise-and-publicity-for.html>. The book and its author were featured on *All Things Considered*, Minnesota Public Radio, in December 2011.

Lecturer Harvey directed his group Aardvark Jazz Orchestra in a concert featuring original works, including his composition commemorating 9/11, *Blood on the Sun/New Moon Rising*.

Lecturer Ruehr saw the premiere of her cello concerto *Cloud Atlas* performed by Jennifer Kloetzel with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra.

Personnel

Keeril Makan was appointed associate professor with tenure, effective July 1, 2012. Emily Pollock was hired as an assistant professor, effective July 1, 2012. The Section's 11 faculty members included two women and one African American. The 10-member, full-time teaching staff included one African American woman and one Native American.

Janet Sonenberg
Section Head
Professor of Theater Arts