

# Great Lakes Chapter Newsletter

## **Two-Greats Super Regional: The Great Lakes and the Plains Perform a Marvelous Musical Duet to Celebrate the CMS 50th!**

### **David Brian Williams, Two-Greats Super Regional CMS Executive Committee Coordinator**

The campus of Illinois State University provided the stage for a most memorable two days of music making, music scholarship, and social engagement to contribute to The College Music Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebratory activities. To Illinois State and Illinois Wesleyan Universities we offer a heartfelt "thank you" for their outstanding hospitality and support that made the event with some 150 attendees over two days so successful. The agenda on March 28–29, 2008 included workshops, presentations, lecture/recitals, two composer's concerts, two evening dinner events, two community engagement activities, eight exhibitors, 2-Greats past-presidents' panel and history presentation, and Bruno Nettel's keynote address; this rich repertoire of events provided something for everyone in attendance to appreciate musically and professionally. The two composers' concerts offered challenging new works for various choirs, string quintets and trios, flute and clarinet, guitar, piano, percussion and dance, wind symphony, jazz ensemble, and more.

The two chapter presidents Darleen Mitchell and Gene Trantham shared thoughts from their experiences at the conference. Darleen, past president for the Great Plains chapter, spoke for their chapter's participation:

One of the highlights of the Two-Greats Super Regional Conference was the keynote speaker, Bruno Nettel, whose talk "Heartlands Revisited: Exercises in Musical Ethnography" was thought provoking and inspiring. There was plenty of time for social interaction at the dinners, including opportunities to speak with Dr. Nettel. It was great fun participating in the sing-along of the Buccheri/Rauche "CMS 50th Anniversary Song" which was great in building a sense of community between the two chapters. We were also glad that members of our chapter had opportunities to continue the camaraderie we have developed over the years, at luncheons, dinners and concerts.

There were many varied and interesting sessions, and we appreciated being able to hear what our colleagues in the Great Lakes Chapter are doing. We found the inclusion of chapter histories very informative. The presentations between the two chapters seemed evenly divided, thanks to the hard work of the programming committee and the co-program chairs, Mark Harbold and William Everett.

The chapter conferences of CMS are and networking, as well as some fun with colleagues. This conference with Great Lakes and Great Plains continued in this tradition.

Gene Trantham, past president of the Great Lakes chapter, offered his reflections:

The first-ever Two-Greats Super Regional Conference exemplified cooperation and collaboration synonymous with CMS as some of the most respected names in their disciplines worked together to make this an exceptional event, one that will be remembered for many years to come. David Williams, conference coordinator, and Beth Mast from the CMS executive office assisted by Julie Johnson worked on behalf of the CMS national leadership to create a very well-organized special event. Mark Harbold, Elmhurst College, and William Everett, University of Missouri-Kansas City, along with a host of committee members worked through 93 presentation and 97 score submissions to assemble a meeting that truly celebrated the 50th anniversary of CMS by looking back at our rich past and forward to an exciting future.

Special appreciation is given to Illinois State University College of Fine Arts and School of Music along with Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music for generously hosting a dinner and for volunteering their services for the CMS composers' concerts. Student ensembles that performed during the composers' concerts included the ISU Concert Choir, Belle Voix, Madrigal Singers and the ISU Wind Symphony and the IWU Jazz Ensemble. Performances were also given by faculty ensembles such as the ISU string quartet and piano-trio as well as other faculty members from the host institutions. There was great diversity and high quality in these music-making events. We are greatly indebted to

opportunities for professional growth James Major, Dean of the College of Fine Arts of Illinois State University, Stephen Parsons, Director of the School of Music at Illinois State University, and Mario Pelusi, Director of the Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music for encouraging their faculty and students to participate and attend the conference. Timothy Fredstrom, assistant professor of music at ISU and local arrangements coordinator, assembled a workforce of students that labored flawlessly together to ensure that this multi-faceted conference would run smoothly.

We were delighted to have renowned ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl, Professor Emeritus from the University of Illinois, provide an inspiring keynote address that took a look backward and forward from the vantage point of an ethnomusicologist, matching the theme of the conference. A Past-Presidents' Panel and a Chapter Histories Presentation also included a time to reminisce and to propel us into the future. Opportunities for training were also available during the Friday morning workshops on technology and improvisation. Participants socialized during the two dinner events, perused the traveling CMS historical materials near the registration booth, and explored new innovations with the many exhibitors located in the glass lobby of the Center for Performing Arts. Nine students from Great Plains and Great Lakes chapters presented papers, lecture-recitals, and had works performed on the composers' concerts. On Saturday evening, faculty members from Illinois State University provided entertainment and lead the participants in singing the CMS 50th Anniversary Song. Truly this was a "super regional" filled with events to inspire, refresh, and engage those who attended.

Planning for the conference unfolded over almost two years of preparation. The process involved sharing previous formats for the two chapter conferences, finding a common ground for sharing a combined conference, and then being innovative with new ideas to make the Super Regional a special event. Some of those new conference ideas included: exhibitors, two full-days of program events, providing dinner events onsite and included in the cost of registration to create a comfortable segue into the evening concerts, parallel workshop sessions, featuring the community engagement projects and presenters at the general session to create awareness of these creative efforts with local area students, and obtaining the cooperation, collaboration, with the local university ensembles and faculty who generously donated their performance time and expertise to the composers' concerts to provide a rich offering of ensembles to attract composers and a wide variety of exciting scores. One would predict that some of these programming innovations might be reflected in future regional chapter conference formats; one might even speculate on a thought of holding such a Super Regional conference every four to five years on a rotating basis between regions.

Since planning was so critical to the success of this venture, we asked the co-program chairs, Mark Harbold and William Everett their reaction to the scope of the planning effort and the success of the conference. Mark's reaction was: "What a rush! I suspect people will be talking about this conference for years to come. I still can't believe how well our teams worked, both our outstanding program committee (truly a "blue ribbon" panel) and an extraordinary local arrangements team at ISU and Illinois Wesleyan. And I'm still pinching myself over two wonderful CMS composer concerts." And, for Bill's reaction: "The unprecedented number of submissions and the program committee's careful evaluation process resulted in an extraordinary array of topics being discussed at the conference, both formally and informally."

The CMS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration began with the 2007 National Conference in Salt Lake City, extended into 2008 with five Super Regional conferences, and concluded with the national conference in Atlanta, Georgia, September 24-28, 2008. The Great Plains and Great Lakes chapters will remember for years to come the exceptional music event that took place between the bookends of Salt Lake City and Atlanta for many years go come! Until the next Super Regional whenever and wherever it may be . . .

## **Selected Activities of the Great Lakes Chapter 2007-2008**

### **Gene S. Trantham, Past President**

#### **Graduate Student Presentation Award for the 2008 Annual Conference**

Nine students from Great Plains and Great Lakes chapters presented papers, lecture-recitals, and had works performed on the composers' concerts. Kristin Elgersma (Northwestern University) was awarded with the Best Student Presentation Award for her lecture-recital "Cowell, Crumb and Company: Extended Techniques in Twentieth Century American Piano Music."

#### **Chapter Officers' Meetings and Discussions**

For the past several years, the Great Lakes chapter officers have meet during the CMS national meeting in the fall and before the spring regional conference. During our November 16, 2007 meeting in Salt Lake City, the officers discussed and received updates on the upcoming "Two Greats" Super Regional conference at Illinois State University. Mark Harbold, program co-chair, provided information about the large number of proposals (93 papers and 97 scores submitted). David B. Williams,

conference coordinator, reported on the conference schedule and mentioned several feature events including the dinners supplied by the host institutions, the panel of past presidents, keynote speaker, community engagement, and the CMS History display materials. Officers also discussed the Fall 2008 chapter elections, expanding the chapter's executive board, future keynote speakers, and how to best supply conference technology workshops which have been kindly led by Peter Webster and David B. Williams in years past. Keith Clifton reported on the preparations for our upcoming 2009 regional conference at Central Michigan University.

Our March 27 & 29, 2008 officers' meetings focused on the immediate regional conference especially the finances (mostly handled by the national office) and the planning process for this special event (large program committee, site visit by program co-chairs). Mark Harbold mentioned some of the challenges with very large score submissions (pdf files reduced the size to where they were hardly readable) and the pros and cons of using faculty and student performers for the composer's concerts. All in all he was very pleased with the conference program process. Officers also discussed a post-conference survey that will be distributed electronically through the national office with the help of Beth Mast. Keith Clifton, local arrangements coordinator, and Sue Piagentini, program chair, provided an update on the March 2009 regional conference at Central Michigan.

### **The Annual Business Meeting**

The meeting was held during the Super Regional conference and included acknowledgements to the many people

who assisted with this event especially David B. Williams (conference coordinator) and Mark Harbold (program co-chair), seven graduate students from the Great Lakes chapter receiving honoraria for having papers or compositions accepted for presentation, CMS campus representatives, and current chapter officers Karen Fournier, Vice President; Jim Perone, Secretary; Sue Piagentini, Treasurer; and Barbara Bowker, Past President. Keith Clifton, local arrangements chair, invited members to attend the March 28-29, 2009 regional conference at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, MI. It was reported that Ball State University in Muncie, IN, would be the location of our March 2010 regional conference.

Gene Trantham reported on the Presidents' Council meeting at the 2007 national conference in Salt Lake City. The creation and specifics of the CMS Student Advisory Council, the main topic of the Presidents' Council meeting, were discussed. It was announced that chapter officer elections will take place electronically in November 2008. This will give new officers a chance to be trained before taking office at the spring 2009 chapter conference. Attendees also discussed the length and schedule of future chapter conferences. Generally, it seemed as though most attendees felt that starting earlier than 5pm on Friday in order to expand the conference would work better than using Saturday and Sunday, or going later into Saturday evening. The general feeling, though, was that we could expand from our past format, and that doing so would help us have a more desirable proportion of paper proposals accepted (our acceptance rate tends to be even lower than CMS National).

During the annual meeting, the chapter membership voted to expand the chapter's Executive Board of Directors to parallel the

CMS national structure. These positions are appointed for two-year staggered terms by the chapter president in consultation with the chapter officers. The chapter also voted to appoint a student representative to the newly formed CMS Student Advisory Council.

The newly expanded Executive Board of Directors for the Great Lakes chapter is listed below:

Composition--Deborah Netanel  
Ethnomusicology--David Harnish,  
Bowling Green State University  
Music Education--William I. Bauer, Case  
Western University  
Theory--MJ Sunny Zank, Ohio Northern  
University  
Musicology--Keith Clifton, Central  
Michigan University  
General Studies--Michael A. Nealon,  
Lansing Community College Student  
Representative--Joe Plazak, The Ohio  
State University

### **Results of the Forum and Discussion of the Annual Chapter- National Common Topic**

Following the presentation of the Great Plains and Great Lakes chapter histories, Dr. Elisa Fraser Wilson from the University of Texas, El Paso gave a presentation and lead discussion on the CMS common topic: The relevance of the current curriculum to today's students.

As a way of introducing herself and the topic, Dr. Wilson reported that she is an academic advisor, a catalyst for curricular renewal over the past 10 years at UT, El Paso and a coauthor of several of the university's new degree programs. These changes took place at a time when the Texas legislature mandated reduced credit

hours for programs that exceeded 120 credit hours, including professional baccalaureate programs. Dr. Wilson reported that as an advisor she sees students that feel that parts of their curriculum are not relevant, and students would like to study aspects of music that are not covered. Some of her main points are listed below:

- Managing institutional curricular change. She reported that ten years ago, music education, performance, and theory/composition were the only degree tracks. However, 5-6 new full-time faculty members started to teach at the institution in 1998, and they wanted change. In particular, they recognized that "the NASM accreditation was looming" and that they believed they needed to revamp and expand their programs in order to meet standards. As a result of their incorporation of new technologies and their increased openness to popular music, they are producing better teachers and sending more of their students to good graduate programs. She emphasized her belief that "we must allow ourselves to be taught by our students."
- Transformation of the Introduction to Electronic Music course, as well as two new degree programs: Commercial Music and Music Theater. The institution has also introduced a new state-of-the-art keyboard lab, and new pedagogy lab, and faculty now utilize YouTube and other online resources. They have added "smart" classrooms to the music building.
- Ownership of the curriculum. "The students become better musicians, because they have ownership." Their feeling of ownership of their

education helps to motivate the students to perform better and to think critically.

- Challenge colleagues and administrators to think outside the box. She mentioned that she attended a session at NASM in Salt Lake City last year in which one of the panelists said, “the days of park and bark are over,” in relationship to training singer/actors for operatic work. Acting, physical fitness, the ability to prepare and perform monologues, and so on, are all important for your singers to be well prepared and up to the rigors of major apprenticeship programs. The curriculum must meet these needs, even though some of our colleagues may be accustomed to old-school vocal performance programs.
- Her department put together a program with more time in studio class, more foreign language repertoire in opera workshops, better advising for students on how they can best meet career goals with their general education electives. Several challenges arose, such as the state of Texas’ mandate that all undergraduate degrees must be held to 120 hours maximum. Her institution had to cut 20 hours from several degree programs. In part, this was done by deliberately under-crediting some courses (private lesson study, for example). Her institution still faces other challenges. For example, she is the only vocal faculty member that is involved in the commercial music program, even though more are needed. It is difficult, though, to convince a music unit to devote more resources to commercial music because classical music tends to be so much more strongly (and

sometimes exclusively) embraced by the academy.

- “How relevant is today’s curriculum?” It depends on the situation at each institution; however, if an institution does not value popular music and if it does not incorporate technology, then it is not relevant.

Following her presentation, several issues and questions were discussed by the audience including:

- Curricular relevance is difficult to explain to upper administration, particularly if the administration places too much emphasis on general education credits. Numbers need to be used to convince administrators. Such things as teacher placement rates, Praxis-type testing numbers. Dr. Wilson’s advice is to use whatever testing indicators and concrete data available to support needed change.
- Dr. Wilson was asked how she convinced administration to cut back on the credit hours for applied lessons. She is not sure, but suspects that the administration went along with the idea because the music program is bringing in more money as a direct result of the increased numbers of upper-level jazz and rock history courses.
- Finally, Dr. Wilson and one of the attendees mentioned the helpfulness of NASM’s database as a way of comparing an institution to peer and aspirant schools. Central administrators tend to be favorably impressed with NASM, so NASM data tend to be convincing.

A special thanks is given to Dr. James E. Perone, Mount Union College (Alliance, Ohio) Secretary, Great Lakes Chapter, for collecting and organizing these comments.

## **Reflections on the 2009 Chapter Conference**

### **Keith Clifton, Conference Chair and Host and Sue Piagentini, Program Chair**

The 27th Great Lakes Conference of The College Music Society was held on the campus of Central Michigan University on March 27 and 28, 2009. Attended by nearly 70 faculty members, graduate students, and independent scholars, the conference featuring over 20 research papers, lecture recitals, and posters on a broad array of topics. Presentations included Bach's inventions, Brahms's choral music, contemporary clarinet repertoire, French vocal repertoire, and much more. All who attended found the sessions informative and thought-provoking. The chapter thanks the faculty, staff, and students of CMU for their assistance and warm hospitality during the conference. A slideshow of photographs from the conference is available for perusal on the CMS website ([www.music.org](http://www.music.org)).

One of the major highlights was the Friday night composer's concert, held in the state-of-the-art Staples Family Concert Hall and featuring six new works chosen through a highly competitive review process. Special thanks are due the Central Michigan University bands, string and percussion faculty, ensemble directors, and percussion ensemble for making the concert a rousing success. The composers in attendance were clearly pleased with the results and appreciative of the opportunity to hear their music performed at such a high level.

The chapter is also grateful to Bernie Dobroski (Northwestern University) for his outstanding keynote address and to CMS President Cynthia Taggart (Michigan State University) for her inspiring thoughts on "Music in a Changing

Society" during the Saturday business meeting. Both talks generated lively discussion among the attendees. Although Dr. Dobroski's topic—"Breaking Rules in Higher Education During a Time of Financial Exigency"—was at times somber in keeping with the current financial crisis, he inserted moments of humor at just the right moment to lighten the mood. Attendees were reminded that in tough times, music and the arts are more important than ever, and that it up to us as music educators to instill our passion for this art form into all that we do.

And since CMS members always enjoy good food and drink, a few words about the Dutch Treat chapter dinner on Friday night. Held at the Italian Oven restaurant, the dinner attracted almost 30 conference goers, one of the largest groups in recent memory. We nearly overflowed the special room set aside for CMS! Although social events may appear superfluous, they are in fact significant places for networking and establishing professional connections that may last well beyond a single conference. It was clear that both happened at this year's dinner. Make plans to attend the 28th chapter conference to be held March 19 and 20, 2010 at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. This promises to be another exciting and stimulating conference and we hope to see you there!

## **President's Message**

### **Karen J. Fournier, CMS Great Lakes President**

The annual conference of the Great Lakes Chapter of The College Music Society was held 27-28 March 2009 at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. Presenters and attendees traveled from all corners of our region to engage in topics that ranged across disciplines and forged connections between music and cultural studies, film, popular culture, sociology, gender and sexuality, performance practice, and other topics too numerous to list here. A concert of new music, composed by members of Great Lakes and other chapters and performed by faculty and student ensembles at CMU, was an important

component of the conference. Our Keynote Address was delivered on Saturday afternoon by Bernard Dobroski (John Evans Professor of Music, Northwestern University), who reflected back upon his own career as a measure of how music scholarship has changed and how these changes have reflected themselves in the various ways we teach music to our students. It was a fascinating and heartfelt address that generated considerable discussion.

The chapter meeting, held on Saturday afternoon, was well-attended and allowed us to announce a new slate of officers. We thanked outgoing President Gene Trantham for his service to the chapter and welcomed Karen Fournier (President), Sue Piagentini (Vice President), Keith Clifton (Secretary), and Per Broman (Treasurer). As a relatively new feature of our chapter, we also welcomed representatives from various areas of music, upon whose expertise we will rely in the future as questions pertaining to particular disciplines arise. These members include William Bauer (Music Education), Keith Clifton (Musicology), David Harnish (Ethnomusicology), Michael Nealon (Music in General Studies), Deborah Netanel (Composition), and Sunny Zank (Music Theory). Our student representative is Joe Plazak from The Ohio State University, who also received the student award for best paper.

Our meeting also tackled the common topic, titled "Music in a Changing Society," to be discussed further at the CMS national meeting in Portland in October 2009. At the Great Lakes chapter meeting, we discussed this topic from a pedagogical standpoint, posing questions about how our own experiences with music, and those of our students, have been shaped by the technologies through which those experiences have been mediated. We wondered how we, as professors, might find common ground with our students, who did not develop their interests in music in the age of "the record album," as many of us did, but, rather, whose access to music has been shaped by YouTube, I-Tunes, and so on. Challenges and points of connection were discussed at length.

We are now gearing up for the 2010 Spring conference, to be held at Ball State University (Muncie, Indiana) on 19-21 March 2010. The program committee is co-chaired by Sue Piagentini and Michael Nealon and comprises two committees: one devoted to the evaluation of paper submissions and the others to scores. We encourage members from across the chapter, and from across disciplines within the field of music, to consider submission to a conference that always delivers intellectual stimulation and ongoing interest in scholarship, performance, and composition. I look forward to seeing you in Muncie.

## **Thoughts on the 2009 Graduate Student Gathering**

### **Joseph Plazak, Student Representative, CMS Great Lakes Chapter**

Seven music graduate students attended a gathering at the 2009 chapter meeting at Central Michigan University. The two goals for the meeting were: 1) Networking and opening lines of communication for future ideas or concerns; and 2) discussion of how our disciplines will change over the next decade.

The first topic related to teaching, specifically the wide range of competencies we see in our students. There was a general consensus that we teach to the upper middle (top 75%) of the class, often leaving students in need of remedial work behind and advanced students wanting more. With regard to general music and music appreciation, we discussed the typical student desire to learn "more about music." It is difficult to assess if "more" refers to exposing them to new types of music, teaching historical context, explaining theory or performance practice, demonstrating compositional techniques, or suggesting new ways of listening. We agreed that the answer is subjective and involves a combination of the above approaches.

The group expressed concern over stigmas and biased viewpoints of “classical” music. There tends to be an assumption that classical music is losing popularity and that it needs some form of “life support.” It would be of interest to research and obtain empirical evidence regarding this claim. Regardless of actual popularity, classical music, in the most general sense, forms the core of the music curriculum. For some students, this may be perceived as an in-depth study of a somewhat foreign genre, leading them away from the type of music they came to higher education hoping to understand. Perhaps this is what a student is referring to when they claim to have both gained and lost something by studying music in college

Finally, the group discussed the idea that “performers will become computers/robots, musicologist will become statisticians, and theorists will become scientists.” Preparing for an unknown job market is a primary concern. There seems to be a need for broadly trained musicians, but also an increasing need for specialization. A liberal arts mentality, being both well-versed in many fields while delving into one or two areas, seems to be the safest preparation for finding a job during the next decade.

## Future Annual Conferences

CMS members are warmly invited to attend the 28th Annual Great Lakes Chapter meeting to be held at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana on March 19-21, 2010. Kevin Gerrity and Linda Pohly are serving as local arrangements co-chairs and J. Peter Burkholder (Indiana University) will be the keynote speaker. Complete details regarding the conference, including the program, travel options, accommodations, and other important information is available on the CMS website ([www.music.org](http://www.music.org)).

The 29th annual conference will be held at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin on April 1–3, 2011. Additional information, including a call for papers/scores, will be posted on the CMS website as soon as it becomes available.

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