

In Conversation with President Mark Rabideau



President's Report: Annual Meeting 2022

On Sunday, October 23, 2022, the College Music Society hosted our Annual Business Meeting, a virtual, open forum designed to provide membership opportunity to learn more about the state of our society through reports delivered by Secretary Soo Goh, Treasurer Bonnie Sneed, and CMS Fun President Bill Pelto, as well as reflect upon the preceding 12-months and envision the coming year.

And although the President joins his Executive Board colleagues in delivering the State-of-the-Society, what is not always apparent is the deliberation and collaboration required of the Board of Directors, Councils and Committees, and the professional Staff within the Executive Office if we are to meet established goals and set into motion new initiatives aimed at shaping our collective most promising future.

As President, my experience has been one where civil discourse has been the standard and consensus requirement for moving forward. That, however, does not mean that healthy disagreement and well-articulated objection are absent: they are present and it is my hope that it will remain as such.

This month's newsletter is an opportunity to share the State-of-the-Society transparently with our broader membership. Your comments, concerns, and feedback are always welcome as we determine how to best serve our Society.

The President's Report

Our society is constituted of the collective investment of time and mind-space, intellectual curiosity and creative engagement of our more than 4,000 members and the tireless leadership of our Committees, Councils, and Executive Board.

It, too, includes a team of nonprofit professionals homed in Missoula, Montana who, every day, operationalize our vision, mission, and values.

Reflecting upon the past 12-months, I am grateful for all that we have accomplished together. I, too, am driven by the work that lies ahead if we are to lead meaningful change within music in higher education. Change that leads to:

- A more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming profession.

- A profession that celebrates the togetherness of collaborative music-making, as well as prizes the artist's individual creativity as a core value.

- And a profession equipped to prepare the next generation of artist-scholars to - through music-making, music-learning, and public scholarship - inspire greater joy, hopefulness, and connectedness within communities when creating a lifetime of artistic moments, one after the next.

During the past year, we've accomplished quite a lot.

In partnership with ATMI, PKL, and NACWPI, 322 of us gathered in Long Beach, California to listen and learn from one another, to mentor and be mentored, to explore the limitless boundaries of music and for new friendships from across our disciplines.

And already we are envisioning the 2023 conference in Miami as one that should prove to be the most innovative, inclusive, and playful conferences to date, a gathering that celebrates diverse musical traditions, features local and regional art forms, foregrounds improvised music, and spotlights scholarship that

illuminates the significant contributions of Hispanic artists, musicians, and scholars. I hope you will plan attending.

We, too, will continue to gather in the virtual space throughout the year through CMS Webinars, Listening Sessions, and Peer Learning Workshops.

Our Committees and Councils are doing good and important work that enlivens CMS' commitment as the society leading change across music in higher education. Here are but a few examples of the work we've seen unfold during the past year.

The **Council of Music Education**, under the leadership of Suzanne Hall is hosting a yearlong, interdisciplinary conversation exploring what might be possible if we were to reposition creativity at the center of all that we do.

The **Committee on Academic Citizenship** continues to make significant progress toward developing tools for music schools to conduct a self-audit of their institution's success in creating inclusive, equitable, and welcoming communities to diverse constituencies, including:

A collaboration with the **Student Advisory Council** to create a Student Bill of Rights, while the **Workplace Environment Subcommittee** is listening to our membership so that they might assess the needs of workers within the field of music in higher education.

The **Committee on Community Engagement**, under the leadership of Nate Zeisler and Donna Emar, will soon announce plans to lead "nourish," a nation-wide community engagement initiative that provides a framework for schools of music to co-create partnerships with communities that heal and nourish.

2022 has been a year of structural change within our organization.

Effective June 1, we hired our organization's Third Executive Director. Dr. Jeff Loeffert is already leveraging his considerable administrative acuity to articulate strategies and tactics to address, head-on, the challenges that we face. One such challenge is declining membership. To place this challenge within historical context, CMS has lost between 500-800 members each year, for the past 12-years.

To address this challenge, we've recently launched our Institutional Membership, where Deans and Directors can cut a single check to enroll their entire faculty. Of particular importance, the program is designed to incentivize the inclusion of contingent faculty, inviting them into a national conversation so that they might bring these conversations back to their home institutions, while finding a home within our society.

The program is already paying dividends. Since Dr. Loeffert's appointment, CMS has seen a 2.78% increase in membership. As of September 30th, we are a society of 4093 members. And even modest forecasting suggests that 2022 will be the first year in more than a decade when membership will have increased.

Another strategic hire has been the appointment of Hannah Pearson, CMS' Director of Operations. Although tasked with a breadth of responsibilities, Hannah has focused much of her energies on systemic culture building.

So that we might demystify workplace expectations, Hannah has confirmed that all CMS staff members have well-articulated job descriptions and that annual review processes are in place. These infrastructure building steps are critical if we are to see, celebrate, and reward achievement among our staff.

In a recent conversation with Hannah, she said:

"The CMS Staff has done an outstanding job adapting to this summer's transition in leadership, and we're continuing to explore how we can both adapt our current processes and adopt new methods of work and ideas to ensure organizational success and a personal sense of belonging among our staff."

In Q. 1 2022, revenue is up and expenses are down. But the truth is, we still have difficult decisions in front of us. As President, I take comfort that we have the right team in-place to take-on those challenges and weather the storm.

The work that lies ahead

Right-aligning our staffing structure, revisiting the realities of a “home office” - as we consider the wants needs of a 21st century workforce - and re-imagining the future of CMS Conferences in 2025 and Beyond are all conversations we will need to have in 2023.

As such, the Board has voted to engage an external auditor to provide objective expertise on how we can structure the work that lies ahead, while committing to never again burdening our staff with crippling pay reductions the way we did over the past two-years.

The audit will include an assessment of the cost/benefit ratio of maintaining a physical footprint in Missoula as rents increase, inflation rises, and staff express a preference for agile work.

CMS Treasurer, Bonnie Sneed has agreed to liaise between the external auditor and the Board, sharing progress and findings of the audit. I will share the outcomes of the exercise with our membership transparently through the monthly newsletter.

A Task Force for Re-imagining CMS Conferences in 2025 and Beyond will be formed during November and will receive its charge to engage Regional Presidents, Board of Directors, past Program Committee members, society members, and CMS staff to explore the challenges and opportunities for developing new models, formats, and partnerships, investing in connections across regional conferences and hosting hybrid conferences, and more, and make a recommendation to the President for re-imagining how we gather a society through conferences in 2025 and beyond.

This conversation will be driven by the question:

How might we continue musicking together - experiencing the joy, connection, and intellectual, artistic and personal growth - amidst a changing world?

The Committee's scope will be to recommend new platforms and scaffolding of conferences. Future Conference Program Committees will continue to shape the vision and theme of conference content. Annette Peter Park will continue to expertly operationalize the logistics of the conferences.

Extending our reach

CMS has now secured a federal identification number paving the way to form a CMS International Chapter. During the December Meeting, I will ask the Board to confer my nomination to serve as Interim International Region President. Our goal is to announce the new CMS International Chapter in January 2023 and to expand our international membership from 63 (as of this correspondence) three-fold in year-one.

Recognizing that many of the challenges that face music in higher education are rooted in global phenomena, we have begun plans for rejuvenating relations with the Brussels-based [European Association of Conservatories](#), Europe's leading voice for music in higher education.

And in Spring 2023, in advance of our [International Conference in the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia](#), members of our society will deliver a 10-part lecture series in arts entrepreneurship to support the newly formed Joint Professional Doctoral Programme at partner institutions Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Art Academy of Latvia, and the Latvian Academy of Culture.

Capturing the wisdom of the society

Across my nearly 20 years as a member of the College Music Society, I have benefited from the wisdom and generosity of CMS' Past Presidents.

In the early 2000's, then-President Tayloe Harding, attending a conference panel on which I served, offered me **encouragement** to continue my research at the intersection of music and social entrepreneurialism simultaneously urged me to find a home within our society. While watching the “Manifesto” send ripples throughout the profession, I attended a session that included President Patricia Shehan Campbell and

Betty Anne Younker – whose **integrity** is something I strive to emulate – and Keith Ward – whose **kindness** has held me up during trying times, in what has become a simple, monthly note of encouragement timed with the release of the Presidential Newsletter.

I, too, have had the good and great privilege to grow under the formal mentorship systems afforded to Presidents. First, during my tenure as President-Elect by watching President Hayes' quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) **determination** as she challenged (and continues to challenge) our society to become an organization that is decidedly anti-racist, and now under the watchful **care** of Past-President Hayes as she offers steadfast guidance as I strive to live-up to the ways of leading each of our Past-Presidents have exemplified.

The truth, however, is that your society still needs the wisdom and generosity of our Past-Presidents. As do your current and future Presidents.

As such, I have solicited and heard an overwhelming willingness from Past-Presidents to meet with CMS Presidents-Elect during their year of service prior to assuming the presidency. The goal will be to prepare our Presidents to lead through encouragement and with courage, integrity and kindness, and determination and care, just as has been modeled before them.

CMS, too, plans to rename the President's Reception during our national conferences. Future **President Receptions** will be co-hosted by all Past-Presidents in attendance.

Last, I'd like to acknowledge our outgoing Board Members, whose collective contributions, generosity, insights, volunteerism, and leadership are the heart and soul of CMS.

Thank you:

Councilperson of Ethnomusicology: Brenda Romero

Councilperson of Musicology: Ayden Adler

Councilperson of Music Theory: Patricia Burt

Past-President: Eileen Hayes

Vice President: Brian Kai Chin

I, too, hope to extend a warm welcome to our newly elected Board Members:

Councilperson for Ethnomusicology: León García Corona

Councilperson for Musicology: Imani Mosely

Councilperson for Music Theory: Stefanie Dickinson

Vice President: Yeeseon Kwon

President-Elect: Brian Kai Chin

Thank you all for joining the 2022 Annual Business Meeting, whether synchronously and by reading this newsletter. Thank you to all of our members for your dedication to the College Music Society. Thank you for all you do for leading change within your home institutions.

And thanks for joining the conversation.

Mark Rabideau

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