

To my Friends and Colleagues in The College Music Society,

Happy New Year!

The New Year's celebration is my favorite of all our holidays. It is a moment where the entire world, despite our differences or barriers to connection, stops to reflect on what we are trying to accomplish and to dream about a better future.

This year, in The College Music Society, we will also dream about our future, and I want to invite you to participate with us. More about that in a minute...

It is with great joy that I am writing to you as the new president of The College Music Society. I am honored to serve you and excited for the great conversations ahead. As my first letter to the whole of The College Music Society, it thrills me to be able to wish you all a productive and creative 2024.

For those of you that I have not yet met, my name is Brian Kai Chin and I am the new director of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. My mission is to audaciously create positive change for this world through music and the artistic process. To do this, we need to maximize our training grounds and education systems to best inspire and prepare the artists of the generations to come. Read more about what I am up to [here...](#)

I will be writing more about our *Common Topic for 2024-2026* in subsequent letters, but for now, [here](#) is a direct link to the description.

The College Music Society is my primary membership organization, and for good reason. While I have affinities to nearly all the major collegiate scholarly organizations, I have found a home in CMS as an inspirational and supportive group of passionate colleagues who are inspired to imagine a powerful future of music academe. Unlike any other organization, The College Music Society can cut horizontally across all of the disciplines in music to find common ground for robust discussion and imagination about the future of music education at the highest levels. This is where the bold and electrifying conversations are happening...

This past year, under the brilliant leadership of Mark Rabideau, Jeffrey Loeffert, and Hannah Pearson, the CMS Board hired an outside consultant to take a 360-degree view of our organization. The findings report was presented to the board at our national conference in Miami, and we have been diligently unpacking the information and inferring our process for meaningful and actionable steps forward. This year, I will present the following agenda for action amongst the board, the regional leadership, and the membership at large:

1. Why be a member of the College Music Society?

We will examine and reauthor our mission, impact, and values statements. Our current Mission Statement:

The College Music Society promotes music teaching and learning, musical creativity and expression, research and dialogue, and diversity and interdisciplinary interaction. A consortium of college, conservatory, university, and independent musicians and scholars interested in all disciplines of music, the Society provides leadership and serves as an agent of change by addressing concerns facing music in higher education.

While thorough, it has become apparent from our review that we lack a clear and focused articulation of why we exist and why all of those in collegiate music will want to participate. We will seek language that is compelling and well-defined.

2. Reevaluate our Programming and Services

Amplify our Digital Spaces. Together with a new branded website, we aim to create robust and usable community meeting spaces and resources to support and amplify our work within the Society, throughout academia, and across our industry partners.

Redefining Conferencing 2025 and Beyond. Thanks to the excellent work of Tracy Cowden and the members of the CMS Committee on Re-Imagining Conferences 2025 and Beyond, we have started a robust exploration into what conferencing will look like in the future of CMS. It is clear this is a big and ongoing conversation and I look forward to helping facilitate this important work.

Exploring Programing. We have started many pilot initiatives in recent years, including expanding our global reach through the new CMS International Chapter, virtual cohorts, web seminars, and mentorship programs. We will continue to imagine, reflect, and refine our ability to best serve our membership through a variety of modalities.

3. Maximize our resources.

We will focus on building our membership base, creating new pathways to revenue, and maximizing expenditures. Here, we will take the year to carefully examine opportunities to streamline our systems while expanding our service to the membership.

I accept the challenges and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead in this year of 2024 for the College Music Society. Join me in this adventure!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B k C' with a flourish at the end.

Brian Kai Chin
President, College Music Society