

July, 2021

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Staying Curious

As communities across North America begin to open-up after 16-months of shuttered doors on live concerts and retro-fitted teaching practices that, by necessity, found their way onto now familiar platforms, it feels timely to ask ourselves:

Despite technology's vast wonders, what amidst a global pandemic didn't translate in an all-digital world? And what might we choose to keep as we rebuild the future of music education as a hybrid proposition? When challenged to synthesize my own thinking around these questions, I find it comes down to two things:

What lessons were learned by artists and audiences in the absence of art? And how might we reimagine music's role as one that helps people feel connected, creative, inspired, and curious?

How can I become more open to the limitless possibilities of living in a hybrid world?

This month, it is with excitement that I share some of the many ways in which our CMS community will gather, learn, and be curious, together.

Made possible by the generosity of the NAMM Foundation and the CMS Fund, CMS student members will enjoy an unprecedented level of support in 2021, with \$10,000 committed in [Student Travel Awards](#). Expanding both access and opportunity, student-exclusive programming in Rochester will include a Presidential Talk (*The Art of Hope*) and Luncheon, as well as meet-and-greets with CMS leadership, guest speakers, and artists. I would like to express my gratitude to NAMM Foundation Executive Director Mary Luehrsen and CMS Fund President James Scott for investing in CMS's next generation of leaders.

[The Presidential Task Force on Leading Change](#) continues its work on developing a trans-institutional project that tests solutions for a more connected musical world. As it explores the question "Can creativity, inclusion, and re-invention drive the future of artistic training in higher education?" they hope to gain your insights. Please look for an upcoming survey. Your voice is essential in this discussion.

[Pre-conference workshops](#) are a great way to grow our own curiosities and hone new skill sets. And thanks to our collaboration with [The Eastman School](#) this year's workshops are free-of-charge, however, please note that pre-registration by September 9 is required for attendance (no walk-ins will be accepted). Registration for the full conference is required for those attending pre-conference workshops. Attendees are limited to signing-up for one workshop, as these are taking place concurrently. Registration is now open. Here's what you can look forward to in October 2021 at the CMS National Conference in Rochester, NY.

Musicians' Mental Health

Throughout the lifetime of musicians, any number of events can have an impact on their health, and specifically on their emotional wellbeing. This day-long set of sessions, involving a combination of knowledgeable and experienced medical professionals and music faculty, will focus on four key areas in which students and faculty together seek solutions on a daily basis: 1. Adapting to an ever-increasing diverse and challenging world; 2. Understanding faculty boundaries to know when to send students to medical professionals for further assistance; 3. Helping students develop their identities as musicians and enhance their self-esteem; 4. Assisting students handle the emotional ramifications involved in overcoming injuries and returning to play.

Welcoming participation from across our society, Co-Chairs of the [Committee on Musicians' Health](#) Gail Berenson and Linda Cockey, say, "We hope CMS members will take advantage of this opportunity to engage in what we expect will be a day of crucial and lively discussions."

Imagining, Creating, Becoming: Community Engagement through Music and the Lens of Social Justice

The Committee for Community Engagement is committed to bringing people together to create spaces in which we can each/all become more whole, aware, and better at building individual and collective agency through music. It is in this spirit that they invite CMS members to attend a day of exploring and experiencing innovative ways of envisioning, conceiving, and doing community engagement through music with a focus on addressing issues of social justice. This preconference day will be an immersive experience during which participants will visit and dialogue with people engaged with engagement, analytically determining what kinds of engagement there are, and how to co-create experiences that are as meaningful, collaborative, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable as possible. The daylong program will include site visits, conversations, and interaction with ongoing projects, as well as a guided process of creating an actual project attendees can take back to their home institutions and transform into musical action.

About the workshop, Chair of the [Committee on Community Engagement](#) Donna Emmanuel, says, "Let's come together to re-imagine and dream big about how we can work with our institutions and our communities through music to move toward a more just and inclusive future."

Exploring Creative Design at the Human-Technology Frontier Through the Emerging 'Artist-Technologist' Occupation

Career opportunities and working roles of artists have changed over the last 30 years, dramatically so in 2020. Musicians must increasingly master significant skill sets in technology, both in the performance and creation of music and media and the ability to collaborate with experts in other domains. This represents a change in the entrepreneurial, business, and technology skills artists must develop. While musicians often collaborate with technologists, this may not realize the full potential of technology in art/music production. Those with dual expertise in art and technology (artist/technologists or ATs) may fulfill that potential. The University of Rochester is exploring the skills needed by artist-technologists, with a focus on musicians and composers and how we can prepare students for these occupations. This half-day session mixes presentations from the University of Rochester research team with participatory activities and discussions from attendees to collectively explore these evolving skills for musicians.

Michael Millar, Co-Chair of the [Committee on Career Development and Entrepreneurship](#), says, "We are excited to present this interactive workshop of extremely high relevance to the artistic endeavors of the future. This cutting-edge opportunity is not to be missed – come add your voice to the discussion!"

Mentoring has been a longstanding tradition of our society. Those seeking early-career advice about preparing a winning interview for an academic appointment, exploring mid-career opportunities to pivot into leadership roles, or expanding a portfolio of revenue streams to support a diverse career in music will benefit from the expertise of the [Committee on Career Development and Entrepreneurship](#). CMS staff and the Committee are currently working to develop a sign-up process for mentoring sessions during the conference. Stay tuned for details.

If creative expression is the fruit of the imaginative mind, then curiosity is what feeds the artist's hunger for unveiling a world of new thinking. CMS is proud to create opportunities to explore our curiosities and learn from one another.

Filled with gratitude, I would like to take a moment and recognize Bill Pelto for his leadership of The College Music Society for the past 5-years. Dr. Pelto has served three presidents (Keith Ward, 2017-2018, Eileen M. Hayes, 2019-2020, Mark Rabideau, 2021-2022) by offering wisdom and providing continuity, navigated our society's most challenging fiscal waters with integrity and expertise, reshaped our policies, practices, and priorities so that we might strive to become a decidedly antiracist organization, and so much more. Personally, Bill has brought cheerfulness into the everyday work of advancing our society, patience and perspective in moments of urgency, and a joyful reminder of why we do what we do – advance professional musical study so that the power of our music might be central within every community and accessible within every child's life.

Past-Presidents Ward and Hayes share a few words of gratitude.

Bill leaves CMS in a better place than he found it. We thank him for so much – his thoughtfulness, transparency, mentoring, foresight, vision, and personal investment in the Society's success. He will be remembered as an outstanding executive director, someone whose work behind the scenes was as important as that in public. Thank you, Bill. – Keith Ward, President 2017-2018

I am forever grateful to CMS Past-Presidents Cynthia Taggart, Betty Anne Younker, and Keith Ward for bringing Bill Pelto in as Executive Director. During my tenure as president, I found that many of my meetings with Bill were akin to master classes in organizational leadership. Bill's expertise, adaptability, and calm in the storm are reasons he is so highly respected, not only by CMS members, but by music leaders across the globe. – Eileen M. Hayes, President 2019-2020

Although he plans to remain active with The College Music Society, Bill will leave the Executive Director position on August 1, 2022 after which he plans to continue playing lunchtime piano duets with his wife Linda Larson, hiking the mountains of North Carolina, and remaining curious and open to what's next in his rich and successful career of music-making, teaching, and leadership.

Chaired by Betty Anne Younker, and joined by Past-President Eileen M. Hayes, Board Member Jenn LaRue, CMS Professional Staff Members Peter Park and Beth Mast, and myself, CMS has commenced a search for our next Executive Director. Our timeline aims for a public announcement of a new ED in Spring 2022.

As communities across the U.S. reopen, and CMS kicks into gear for conference planning, we should not forget our colleagues across much of the world who continue to suffer amidst the pandemic. India is suffering. Latin America is suffering. The most vulnerable among our world's population are disproportionately suffering. Music is often cited as the "universal language." If there is any truth to that claim, then it is incumbent upon musicians to use their voice to argue for a global approach to solve the world's most pressing problems.

Thanks for joining the conversation,

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