

## June, 2022

### Reinventing Our Infrastructure

The entrepreneurial process begins by identifying needs, gaps, and opportunities and creating innovative solutions that serve the vision and mission of an enterprise. In this moment's history of The College Music Society, this includes reinventing our organization's infrastructure and financial model, laying the foundation for extending its international reach, incentivizing music units to support contingent faculty's engagement within the profession and within their home institutions, and advancing the core pillars of the [Common Topic](#). Change rarely comes easily, nor does it often feel comfortable. This message is a shout out to those leading change and provides a society-wide update on what's happening behind the scenes.

In June, Bill Pelto will conclude his 5-year tenure as Executive Director. During his time as CMS's chief executive officer, Bill has skillfully navigated the turbulence of the global pandemic, advanced the vision of three presidents, championed initiatives that promote greater equity and inclusivity, and realigned our financial model to be more consistent with the realities of a shifting professoriate. And he has done this always with grace, integrity, and kindness. As Bill frequently shares, he is not leaving CMS, but rather only his post.

Upon Jim Scott's announcement that he will be concluding his service as President of the CMS Fund, and consistent with our bylaws, I charged the CMS Fund Board and Executive Committee to offer a slate of nominees and conduct a vote to determine the next President of the CMS Fund. The vote has resulted in Bill Pelto's confirmation as the Fund's next chief executive officer. Bill's service begins in July 2022, at which time he will conduct a comprehensive examination of the Fund's finances and articulate a robust vision for the Fund's impact and capacity. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are grateful to Jim for his many years of stewardship and to Bill for his volunteerism to advance the important work of the CMS Fund.

In 2021, CMS announced a restructuring of the professional team in Missoula, Montana by reducing the FTE of the Executive Director role to 50% and hiring a full-time Director of Operations. Resulting in net-neutral expenditures, the restructure aims to make more efficient use of the talents and expertise of the professionals that occupy these roles. In January 2022, I announced the appointment of Jeff Loeffert to serve as the College Music Society's third Executive Director. Although he has been hard at work these past months building upon his knowledge of our society, this month Jeff begins his official duties. Jeff plans on spending the summer at CMS's home office with our professional staff and exploring Montana's beautiful countryside with his family.

It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce Hannah Pearson as the College Music Society's newly appointed Director of Operations. Ms. Pearson holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Clarinet Performance from the University of Georgia and a Master of Music in Clarinet Performance from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned a Master of Arts in Music Leadership. Prior to her appointment with CMS, Hannah served as Director of Operations and Production with Chicago-based Fifth House Ensemble (5HE). In this role, Hannah worked closely with presenting partners at universities across the country to coordinate the production of 5HE's collaborative and multidisciplinary music programming, including *Undertale LIVE* and *Journey LIVE*, two unique programs that incorporate live video game play into musical performance and spearheaded logistical planning for Fresh Inc Festival, a new music festival that supports the career development of emerging artists.

Expressing her enthusiasm about joining the CMS professional staff, Hannah said, "I'm extremely excited to begin working with CMS at the national office in Missoula. I believe CMS offers invaluable resources to musicians at all stages in their academic careers, and I look forward to working alongside Dr. Loeffert, the CMS Staff, and the CMS Board to sustain and increase the equitability of CMS programs so that CMS may continue to serve our membership base effectively, transparently, and inclusively."

Ms. Pearson's hire not only represents exciting new opportunities to advance CMS's vision, mission, and values, but too, represents structural changes within the organization. And with all change comes some sense of uncertainty. As such, I am particularly grateful to the CMS professional staff who served on the search committee, including Julie Johnson (Information Services Specialist), Candice Davis (Bookkeeper),<sup>†</sup> Jeff Loeffert (Incoming Executive Director), and Bill Pelto (Executive Director and Chair of the Search

Committee) and joined by CMS Board Members Soo Goh, Patricia Burt, and Michael Stepniak. My gratitude extends, as well, to Shannon Devlin (Membership Specialist), Peter Park (Director of Professional Activities), Beth Mast (Director of Information Delivery), and David Schafer (Director of Information Technology) for navigating this moment of change and uncertainty with grace and confidence that our best years are ahead. On behalf of our membership, I want to thank the professional staff for welcoming Hannah to Missoula.

In May, we began a soft roll-out of CMS's newest membership initiative, an Institutional Group Membership, that is designed to:

- build music units' capacities for change leadership,
- create a more inclusive and equitable society through greater access to CMS resources and networks, and
- streamline administrators' support of all faculty and staff, with a focus on supporting contingent faculty within our programs and within the profession.

Here's how it works:

1. Administrators sponsor faculty and staff members from a single institution via Institutional Group Membership (greater support, less paperwork).
2. Faculty and staff enjoy the same benefits of "regular-plus" membership in CMS, including:
  - access to the online Directory of Music Faculties and the Music Vacancy List,
  - member-level pricing for conferences and publications,
  - access to webinars, affinity networks, mentorship programs, and
  - most important, engagement with music in higher education's multi-music-disciplinary community of leaders—The College Music Society— which is re-imagining our profession's most promising future.

The results of the pilot are promising and participation by all institutions is now welcomed. For more details about how to invite members of your home institution to become part of the CMS community, [go here](#).

Forthcoming are membership initiatives that focus on growing our student community, retaining the wisdom of our retiring members, and extending our reach around the globe through an International Chapter.

The advent of Affinity Groups by the Committee on Cultural Inclusion, the inaugural post of Board Member for Jazz and Commercial Music, and the exponential expansion of CMS webinars are all outcomes of defining problems within the profession and creating solutions that result in greater connectivity, inclusivity, and access. These initiatives enliven the Common Topic that drives our shared agenda. Continuing the inventive spirit for leading change, Chair for the Council on Music Education, Suzanne Hall alongside collaborator Jane Palmquist is launching a society-wide investigation about what might be possible if we were to reposition creativity at the center of all that we do. *Imagining Creativity-Centered Music Schools: A* discussion among faculty and students seeks engagement from across music disciplines, institutional identities, and musical practices to pose questions and seek answer to:

What is "creativity" in your area?

What can we learn from each other's disciplines about creativity?

What could a creativity-centered music school look, feel, and be like?

How might we teach, perform, and study more creatively?

How might we foster creative, vital music communities within and outside the music school?

How might we approach curriculum, instruction, resources, repertoire, content, and materials more creatively — within and across fields and courses?

In what ways might we encourage and foster individuals' unique artistic and creative voices?

How can communication and collaboration across disciplines be sustained?

Nearly eighty colleagues applied to participate in the discussions for this project, causing Drs. Hall and Palmquist to double the size of their planned cohort. We'll look forward to hearing of their conversations and contributions to broad curricular change

Many of us, when asked, could swiftly cite a movie we've watched an unexplainable number of times. For my wife Laura and me, this is [The Greatest Showman](#). After spending yet another date night watching this film, I wondered why? What about this story holds such a grip on my attention? And although I remain uncertain, I believe it connects to the scene when arts critic James Gordon Bennett (as played by actor Paul Sparks) confronts P.T. Barnum (Hugh Jackman) about the authenticity of his productions, suggesting that Barnum's circus is too fantastical to take seriously, to which Barnum retorts, "Men suffer more from imagining too little than too much."

Perhaps we imagine too little, at times, about the centrally important role music might play in fostering the imagination of all of us: in and out of the profession. What might the world look like if more people were able to see themselves as the inventors of positive change, empowered by their own imaginations to create a more peaceful, harmonious, and accepting world?

Our hearts are with Ukraine.

Our hearts are broken for the families and communities shattered in the wake of unspeakable violence in Buffalo and Uvalde.

Our hearts are with the families of the more than 1,000,000 lives lost to COVID in the U.S. alone.

Thanks for joining the conversation,

Mark Rabideau  
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