

CMS Councils at Work

This past month, we saw the passing of one of the most beloved, celebrated, and revolutionary composers of the 20th and 21st centuries, George Crumb (October 24, 1929 – February 6, 2022). Heralded for his exploration of sound through extended techniques, the invention of new notational practices that communicate musical intent, and frequent use of palindromes, Crumb's influence on his students, peers, and all of us, is immeasurable. (It's easy to imagine him relishing these final days of February: 2/23/22, 2/24/22, 2/25/22...)

Crumb used his compositional voice to speak to the contemporary moment, composing *Black Angels: Thirteen Images from the Darkland* (1970) in protest to America's involvement in the Vietnam War, his literary voice to argue for embracing musical traditions outside the Western canon in his essay *Music: Does It Have a Future?* (The Kenyon Review, 1980), and composed music later in his life that drew upon vernacular traditions, including hymns, spirituals, and folk tunes (*American Songbook*): perhaps the embodiment of his lifelong effort to welcome back disenfranchised listeners to contemporary classical music. Crumb exemplifies the best of what musicians have to offer: a one-of-a-kind voice searching to connect art with audience.

CMS, as music in higher education's society for leading change, hopes to honor the legacy of musicians like George Crumb by tackling the issues that face contemporary society and our profession, creating spaces for diverse traditions to be celebrated and heard (just wait to see what the 2022 Long Beach conference has in store!), and forging connections between our art and ever-increasing audiences.

So, how do we create a revolution of our own? It begins by listening to our members and amplifying their voices through CMS's Council Chairs.

CMS Councils assist the Board of Directors and the Society in the identification and analysis of professional concerns and in the development of projects, programs, and publications designed to address those concerns. This begins by the CMS Membership electing Council Chairs (Board members from the numerous subdisciplines of music) and then Council Chairs appointing Council Members. Next, each Council identifies achievable goals that lay at the intersection of their charge and the Society's **Common Topic**.

Here is some of what is happening through our Councils.

"I am thrilled to be the founding Chair of the **Council on Jazz and Commercial Music**. This music has long been a key American export to the world and has been formally taught, first through correspondence courses and latter through degree programs in our institutions, for almost 100 years. It is exciting that CMS now formally recognizes the rich musical excellence of fine art music created by Black people in the United States. We will create a community of leaders in Jazz education that strive to support our constituents and elevate the Jazz continuum and its high musicianship standards to the benefit of all musicians and across the entire music curriculum in higher education."

—Aaron Flagg, Chairperson, Council for Jazz and Commercial Music

The **Council on Composition** works with the Board of Directors and the Society to create an inclusive, expanding, and thriving culture for the field of music composition. The Council acts to achieve this goal by developing opportunities for composers to expand opportunities for underestimated, under-represented voices, explore ways in which digital technologies can share our music to ever-increasing audiences, and reposition creativity within music teaching and learning.

"The Council will continue to promote the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives which broadened the music styles submitted to College Music Society conferences. We will also be targeting College Music Society composition opportunities to underrepresented composer communities and seek ways of including more composers in CMS events.

I am excited to serve the CMS membership because I enjoy learning from my peers in all of music's various disciplines."

—Jay Batzner, Chairperson, Council on Composition

The [Council on Music Education](#) assists the Board of Directors and the Society to identify and analyze issues of professional concern, particularly those that lead to the fostering and enacting of systemic change in response to oppressions entrenched in the field. Further, the Council assists the College Music Society in accomplishing this goal by developing projects, programs, and publications that engage with those issues.

"The Council on Music Education will convene a series of listening sessions to survey the needs of the profession. The information collected during the listening sessions will guide the council in determining the most effective ways to support its members in the field. In addition, the council will identify activities to facilitate dialogue between in-service music educators and higher education faculty.

I am thrilled to serve as a member of a community committed to finding solutions to the challenges we face, as well as celebrating the superb work happening in the field."

—Suzanne Hall, Chairperson, Council on Music Education

The [Council on Performance](#) assists the Board of Directors and the Society in identifying and analyzing issues of professional concern. With particular focus on assessing contemporary challenges impacting performance perspective, practice, and artistry, the Council explores ideas and avenues that foster the development of performance opportunities, projects, programs, and publications to meet new terrains of such challenge with innovative spirit and creative outlook, serving the engagement of 21st-century professional performance citizenry with leadership and vision that honors future, present, and past heritage.

"I am excited to serve our CMS membership particularly at this time of interesting change where contemporary issues of performance practice are being posed from many perspectives of influence, creating new and imminent meanings of expressive possibility for interpretive and creative musical artistry. The engagement of new artistic expression, opportunities, and challenges in relationship to performance practice—particularly with regard to diversified modes of social interaction and societal perspective on musical performance, artistry, and reception; in the relationship of the musical arts with advancing technology; and with the engagement of the musical arts reaching increasingly beyond the tradition of disciplinary interest into cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary conversation---supports the advancement of creative innovation while simultaneously honoring the richness of present and past historical heritage.

With this background of understanding, I will be creating a leadership council in performance that evaluates pertinent needs, challenges, and opportunities concerning such interests. I plan to further engage the ongoing assessment of the council with critical steps towards creating performance, programmatic, and publication opportunities that support the vision of engaging new platforms of creative performance artistry and expressive opportunities for artist-scholar-musicians."

—Sarah Chan, Chairperson, Council on Performance

The [Council on Music Business-Industry](#) is empaneled to act as a liaison between academia and the music business industry. Members, both pedagogues and practitioners, are committed to fostering the development of this important relationship with the ultimate goal of preparing music graduates for the many career opportunities that exist in our world today and invent the careers of the future.

“The promotion of music in higher education and exploring areas of expansion and overlap of the music industry studies area with other music disciplines is an area of opportunity. As Chair, I look forward to continuing to serve as an ambassador for the CMS/NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) GenNext initiative during the 2022 NAMM Show (June 3-5, Anaheim, CA) and advocating for CMS broadly, while giving voice to music business and industry.”

—Courtney Blankenship, Chairperson, Council on Music Industry

The [Council on Music in General Studies](#) celebrates music within the context of the liberal arts and the musical pursuits of the amateur musician. Promoting the experience of music as a creative activity that develops connection and expression, the Council on Music in General Studies supports musicians who teach learners with a diverse range of educational and musical goals.

“It is a joy and a privilege to serve CMS because our membership brings together scholars and artists from a diverse array of institutions, emphasizing what makes us all musicians and challenging us to respond collectively to critical issues in our field. The Council on Music in General Studies is working to develop resources for musicians who find themselves teaching music to a broader, non-specialist audience. In particular, we are developing resources that shift from a Eurocentric music appreciation model towards a more inclusive format that foregrounds creativity and connection as central to our understanding of musical expression.”

—Denise M. Odello, Chairperson, Council on Music in General Studies

The [Student Advisory Council](#) extends the reach of the College Music Society by collaborating with CMS members in establishing student chapters; providing student chapters resources that foster insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the music profession; and offering a platform for student voices to be heard by the profession through CMS conference opportunities, webinars, and chapter activities.

“Dedicated to expanding opportunities for students to prepare and deliver scholarly presentations, the Student Advisory Council is collaborating with Phi Kappa Lambda to present an undergraduate research symposium. Driven by the difference we hope to make, plans move forward for the inaugural program to be hosted via Webinar in Summer 2022.

We are excited to welcome Student Board Representative, Cody Arington, who currently serves as the President of a Student Chapter at Appalachian State University. We know that having this student voice on the national board will bring forth student's concerns about sustainable careers and the changing dynamics of music learning, performance, scholarship, and teaching. Students truly are the future of our field and we appreciate the opportunity to create the environment for their voices to be heard.”

—Jenny Snodgrass and Gene Trantham, Co-Chairpersons, Student Advisory Council

The [Council on Ethnomusicology](#) assists the Board of Directors and the Society in the identification and analysis of professional concerns and in the development of projects, programs, and publications designed to address those concerns. The scope of the Council's concerns includes but is not limited to: ethnomusicology-derived pedagogies for diverse musics; notions of a world music “canon;” the suspension of fieldwork due to the Covid-19 pandemic; virtual research; and intra- and interdisciplinary collaborations. In addition, the Council on Ethnomusicology, allied with the Committee for Academic Citizenship, addresses implicit systemic bias toward ethnomusicology and ethnomusicologists and problematic institutional issues and obstacles surrounding artist teachers and the teaching of diverse musics and theories.

“The Council on Ethnomusicology has partnered with the [Committee for Academic Citizenship](#) and the Alliance for the Transformation of Musical Academe (ATMA) to create tools for music units to conduct qualitative and quantitative self-evaluations of their internal processes, policies, practices, and priorities. The coalition’s work is focused on providing more equitable, inclusive, and just frameworks in our musical disciplines by reflecting upon our curricular and co-curricular offerings, our workplace and learning space cultures, the music we study and perform, and the moments and measures we use to define and reward success.”

—Brenda M. Romero, Chairperson, Council on Ethnomusicology

CMS is leading nothing short of an epistemic shift in the ways in which we prepare musicians for the challenges and opportunities of living, learning, and teaching in a hybrid-world and how we define what music and musicians count within music in higher education. And it is our Councils and Committees that take-up the heavy lift of change. On behalf of the College Music Society’s Executive Committee, including President-Elect Michael Stepniak, Vice President Brian Chin, Secretary Soo Goh, Treasurer Bonnie Sneed, and Executive Director Pelto, please know how grateful we are for your bold vision for the future and the tireless work required to bring your vision to fruition.

Thanks for joining the conversation.

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