Department of Music, Stony Brook University

I. Excellence and Connections

Principles of Excellence

The excellence of Stony Brook's Music Department derives from the unique way its curriculum merges the strengths of the conservatory with the strengths of the academy. The faculty of the Department is noted for its excellence in Musical Scholarship, Composition, and Performance and for a curriculum that weds in an innovative way training in these three sub-disciplinary areas. The Department's profile is shaped by three philosophical principles that guide the curriculum and faculty appointments and that provide the foundation for its Strategic Plan. The three principles are:

A Philosophy of Musical Integration
The Departmental profile is built on the belief that proper university education in music must encompass three areas: solid theoretical grasp of musical structure and compositional techniques; understanding of historical and cultural aspects of music; and practical experience with music performance. The delivery of a strong curriculum that integrates these three types of musical knowledge requires distinguished faculty chosen not only for their disciplinary excellence but also for specific ways each can contribute to intra-disciplinary exchanges within music.

Emphasis on the Creation, Study and Performance of Contemporary Music
Since its inception, the Department has maintained a mission of engagement with the music of our time. Concern for contemporary music and musical practices affects all components of our program: composition, history, theory, ethnomusicology, performance instruction, concert and recital programming. The Department is cognizant of the central role of electronic technologies in contemporary music production and dissemination. Our ongoing involvement in technology is manifested in the Electronic Music Studio (analog, founded 1973), the Computer Music Studio (digital, founded 1987), and our major contribution to the Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture, and Technology (founded 2007).

Breadth and Versatility: Musical Training for the 21st Century
Present-day musical culture requires students to be broadly educated in a wide array of musical practices and to be versatile contributors to that culture. The undergraduate and graduate curricula stress training in diverse areas: contemporary music and practices in Western classical traditions; the broad history of Western classical music; improvisation and jazz performance traditions; music in global perspectives; electronic (analog and digital) music from a technical and critical perspective; and various "popular" musics. The curriculum is premised on the idea that proper musical training for students in the 21st century requires both a high level of expertise in an area of specialization and a breadth of knowledge about the great variety of historical and present musical practices. From this combination of focused training with a breadth of knowledge, students attain the kind of versatility required in the 21st century

Connections: Community Outreach and the Stony Brook Community Music Programs

The Department of Music has forged strong links to the surrounding Long Island Community through its community music programs. Such outreach forms an important link to the Department's overall educational mission. In addition to the yearly Children's Concert performed by the University Orchestra, the Department offers musical education and performance opportunities to members of the Long Island Community, from young children to mature adults. In offering such life-long musical learning, the Department affirms the important of music as a form of interpersonal engagement that has cultural and artistic value. The Stony Brook Community Music Programs include: Music Basics for Kids (Dalcroze), Children's Choir, Pre-College, and Adult Chamber Music.

II. Strategies for Rejuvenation and Future Growth

The Department affirms the value of its historical trajectory which has been defined by the integration of diverse modes of musical engagement and understanding, focus on contemporary practices and trends, and the urgency of broad musical training in the 21st century. This trajectory has determined not only the excellence but also the success of the Music Department. Our strategic plan seeks to realize fully the potential of this past successful trajectory. But we also need to reshape our curriculum in ways that respond dynamically to current cultural conditions.

A. Rejuvenation of the Curriculum and Faculty Positions

In order to sustain its guiding vision, the Department needs to add or stabilize faculty positions in the following areas:

1) Theory and analysis of Western classical music. Since most of the students in the burgeoning performance program emphasize music in this tradition, we need an additional faculty member to provide basic as well as more advanced levels of instruction that address cutting edge notions of musical structure. The Department is understaffed in this area and we regularly have difficulty staffing required courses.

2) Improvisational and jazz studies. It is crucial for all music students to understand improvisational practices in jazz and concert music, jazz performance practice, and jazz history. The Department seeks to secure a permanent appointment for Visiting Professor Ray Anderson, who has single-handedly transformed the jazz and improvisational studies at Stony Brook. He teaches courses in improvisational practice in a broad array of styles and leads several ensembles of the jazz program (big band and several combos). The explosive growth of the improvisation and jazz program at Stony Brook in both undergraduate and graduate levels requires that we have an additional half-time position to meet the increasing demands in this area.

3) Music in Global Perspectives. In order to address the pressing issues of music in a global context, the Department seeks to refill the two positions in ethnomusicology which were central to the music curriculum from the early-nineties through the present. Initially, the Department seeks to hire a scholar with a specialty in some aspect of world music. This scholar would bring a perspective from ethnomusicology and focus on understanding music as a medium of social exchange in a world of digital media. This faculty member would contribute generally to global studies on campus and in particular to some world area depending on the scholar's expertise (Africa, Middle-East, Asia, Latin America).

4) Orchestral Studies

   The Department of Music has two successful orchestras. The Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra (SBSO) is made up primarily of graduate students, along with some of our most qualified undergraduates, and it has a series of guest conductors each year. The University Orchestra is conducted by Professor Susan Deaver and is composed of undergraduates not only in the Music Major but also from across campus. The SBSO currently has no regular conductor. In order to provide the highest quality instruction in orchestral performance for students in the performance program, the Department seeks to hire a full-time conductor for the SBSO who can give the proper oversight for the orchestral curriculum and possibly begin an orchestral conducting program.

5) String Instruction. Because violins and violas play such a crucial role in chamber music and orchestral music, the Department seeks additional faculty instructors to assure that there are sufficient students in those areas. The lack of sufficient student numbers in those violin and viola (which are determined by faculty FTE) affects all students in the performance program since the instrumentation of ensembles is fixed. The Department seeks to hire a .5 violin and a .5 viola

instructor, both with specialties in contemporary music to complement the specialities of existing faculty.

Each of these faculty needs grows from the Department's guiding principles of integration, contemporary music, and breadth.

B. Reshaping the Curriculum for the Future

1) Appointment of a scholar with a specialty in digital musical practices in the 21st century. This scholar would be trained in either musicology or ethnomusicology and would address the significant ways that new technologies have impacted the creation, performance and apprehension of music. This scholar would have an emphais on Western musical practices in either jazz, concert, or popular music. This scholar would be a part of cDACT and serve to strengthen and broaden this crucial emergin program as well as to enrich the music curriculum at all levels.

2) Opera Studies—This is an emerging research focus that builds upon the work of faculty in all three wings of the Department: musicology, composition, and performance. The Department strives to establish a center for opera studies that would integrate research into historical performance practices, critical study of recent staging practices in the United States and Europe, performance of diverse works from the repertoire, including recently composed operas, and performance studies—including vocal production and acting. This new initiative includes Professors Mauro Calcagno and Ryan Minor (in musicology), Professors David Lawton, Timothy Long, Frederick Carama, and Elaine Bonazzi (in performance), and potentially all of the composition faculty (NB: operas by Professors Peter Winkler and Sheila Silver will be performed in Spring 2011). The Department's previous successes in opera studies, as manifest in the career of Christine Goerke, have set the stage for the next stage of its development.

C. Enhancement of Performance Studies

The Department's performance program has for many years has lacked instruction in several instrumental areas that are crucial to a world-class program. These include harp, bass trombone, and tuba. Instruction in these areas would ensure that students are available for the various chamber, jazz, and orchestral ensembles. Without these players, choices of repertory are artificially limited. The Department seeks to hire adjunct faculty to provide instruction in harp, bass trombone, and tuba.

D. Other Areas of Growth

Additional areas of growth that are currently under discussion include:
Online teaching: masterclasses by performance faculty, including the Emerson String Quartet; courses in music theory and history; combined degree in Music and Business

III. Facilities and Long-Range Growth

A. Facilities

Over the last 15 years, the population in the Department's undergraduate major and graduate programs has grown to such a level that we can no longer accommodate a larger music student population. Even at current levels, the faculty in all areas (musicology, composition, and performance) are overburdened. Moreover, our performance, rehearsal, practice and office spaces insufficient for our size and needs. We have definitely outgrown the 1976 building that was designed for a much smaller student body. To adequately deliver our programs, we need larger and better facilities: acoustically superior performance and recording spaces, additional rehearsal spaces for orchestra and chamber music, additional practice rooms, additional office spaces, and cutting-edge equipment (especially pianos and percussion instruments, sound playback and recording machines).

B. Long-range Growth: School of Music

In order to achieve the full potential of our trajectory of excellence and success, the Department aspires to become a School of Music. That status would entail: a larger building (or new, renovated spaces) dedicated to music study, creation, and performance; increased faculty numbers in performance, musicology and composition; and a larger support staff to deal with admissions and recruitment, administration, rehearsal scheduling, equipment and instruments, publicity and general secretarial work. Status as a comprehensive school of music would give our music programs more potential for fundraising and more visibility on Long Island, in the United States, and internationally.

IV. Fundraising Trajectories

Over the past 10 years, the Department has had success with several fundraising initiatives. While these have been beneficial, we believe that there is a potential for even better results given the stature of the faculty and the Department's unique curriculum. We believe that a person dedicated to fundraising in the arts is essential for future support of our guiding philosophy and mission.

Scholarships

Building on the generous gift of Erwin and Freddie Staller, the Department of Music strives to be an all-scholarship school by 2016. It is increasingly the norm at schools of music in the United States for all students to attend tuition-free. This is now the case at the Yale School of Music, Peabody Institute, and the Colburn School of Music. Several others schools are well on their way to achieving all-scholarship status. In order to remain competitive, the Department of Music must strive to provide a tuition-free education to all students in graduate music study and for qualified students in the undergraduate major.

All-Steinway School

In recent years, the Department has received donations from many generous patrons who understand the value of providing Steinway pianos to the Department for rehearsal, performance, and teaching purposes of faculty and students. It is our goal in the next 10 years to replace all of our existing pianos (some of which are over 40 years old) with new Steinway pianos.