The good news for the Emory Wind Ensemble was that new director Paul Bhasin was elevating the ensemble to new levels of excellence following a transition between directors. Nonetheless, he and percussion artist affiliate Scott Pollard were looking ahead to a year with no returning percussionists. To shine a light on percussion opportunities at Emory, they organized the inaugural Emory Percussion Symposium, which was held on June 11, 2016.

Their goal was to provide an unforgettable educational experience for a mixed group of students, professionals, and enthusiasts, who were diverse in age as well as skill level. Pollard engaged headliner guests, including She-e Wu, a world-renowned marimba performer from Northwestern University; Mark Yancich, timpanist with the Atlanta Symphony; Andy Beall, a Broadway performer, publisher, and composer; Scott Herring of the University of South Carolina–Columbia; and the Col Legno bassoon/percussion duo. The program emphasized hands-on involvement of the students, who came from Florida, South Carolina, and Tennessee as well as Georgia.

The program led off with a snare-drum clinic conducted by Pollard, who illustrated teaching points in duets played with student attendees. Next, Yancich led a timpani clinic. She-e Wu followed with a master class for students recommended by their band directors. Those looking forward to her theatrical teaching style were not disappointed.

After a communal networking lunch, Beall presented a clinic in Broadway percussion, playing along with the score from the Lion King and explaining what it takes to become a percussionist in musical theater. Wrapping up the teaching segments, Herring conducted mock-college and graduate-school auditions for student volunteers, who experienced the same challenges they would face at a real audition. Herring offered tips on do's and don'ts and formalities to be expected.

Whether gathered around a famous professional, gaining deeper understanding in response to an apt metaphor, laughing at a one-liner, or sitting rapt as a fellow student made great progress in real time, the students were enthralled by their experience. They also had an opportunity to try out instruments at vendor displays.

An evening concert featured She-e Wu; a trio of Beall, Herring, and Pollard and Col Legno (Amy and Scott Pollard). Next summer's list of guest instructors will feature John Parks, Florida State University; Marc Dinitz, principal percussionist, US Air Force Concert Band; Keith Aloe, Interlochen Arts Academy; and Matthew Strauss, Houston Symphony and Rice University; in addition to Yancich and Pollard.
NEWS FROM THE
DEPARTMENT CHAIR

As I write this article, I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to lead such an active music department and passionate group of faculty and students. Recently, I attended the inaugural Emory Young Artist Piano Competition, funded in part by a Friends of Music 2016–2017 grant. The competition was open to students ages 13 to 18, and cash prizes were awarded to the top three winners. I had the privilege of listening to 41 applicant recordings and selecting the top 13 pianists who performed in Emerson Hall. What an outstanding group of young pianists. Congratulations to Elena Cholakova for directing a well-organized competition that is bringing visibility and recognition to piano studies at Emory.

Several notable awards so far this year have gone to faculty members in the performance area. The Emory Wind Ensemble and Director Paul Bhasin were recognized by the College Band Director’s National Association (CBDNA) as one of the nation’s outstanding band programs and chosen as a “top 10 ensemble of remarkable quality.” They will be honored at the CBDNA conference in March.

Richard Prior’s most recent work was premiered by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at a concert in Emerson Hall on January 20 with a reception following the concert sponsored by the Friends of Music.

William Ransom was named one of Musical America Worldwide’s “30 Innovators” for his work toward funding the Quartet in Residency program at Emory and encouraging chamber music performances and discussions in classrooms across the university. Ransom also was named artist director designate of the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival in May.

Last, it is my pleasure to announce that Kevin Karnes will assume the role of chair of the music department for a three-year term beginning August 2017. The opportunity to lead this dynamic department has been a high point in my career at Emory.

Deborah Thoreson Slover

HEART AND EXPERIENCE KEEP BASSOON DAY HUMMING

When Shelly Unger talks about teaching, her adrenaline surge is apparent. Unger is an artist affiliate and bassoon instructor at Emory who maintains her studio of younger pupils as well. A founder and organizer of Emory’s Bassoon Day, Unger brings a wealth of experience running educational festivals for bassoon students and enthusiasts on the national as well as regional level. She works closely on Bassoon Day with Wind Studies Director Paul Bhasin, bringing together middle school through university students for a rewarding day of interaction with Unger, Bhasin, and a guest artist.

Unger describes Emory’s Bassoon Day as a musical-enrichment event for bassoonists of all ages that draws guest artists and teachers of the highest caliber. It has enjoyed the support of members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, regional colleges and universities, area band directors, and local private bassoon instructors. Unger invites them only when she has personal knowledge of their excellent teaching skills.

On September 25, 2016, Emory’s Bassoon Day featured New Zealand–born bassoonist Michael Burns, an active teacher, performer, recording artist, and professor of bassoon at the University of North Carolina–Greensboro. In 2015, Bill Ludwig, professor of bassoon at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, was the featured artist. Other guest artists have included Martin Kuuskmann (solo bassoonist); Sue Heineman (principal bassoonist with the National Symphony Orchestra); Kristin Jensen (professor of bassoon at the University of Texas–Austin and co-chair of the Meg Quigley International Vivaldi Competition for Women); Richard A. Svoboda (principal bassoonist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra); Bob Williams (principal bassoon with the Detroit Symphony); Marc Goldberg (the Juilliard School); Grammy Award–winning bassoonist Frank Morelli (Yale University); Jeff Keeseecker (professor of bassoon at Florida State University); and John Hunt (professor of bassoon at Eastman School of Music).

For Unger, an educational symposium like Bassoon Day provides an essential tool in nurturing her students’ goals by giving them exposure to “the culture of the bassoon” as well as alternative teaching styles that may better match their own learning style and provide keys to open up their playing. For example, at Bassoon Day 2015, Bill Ludwig showed a young Allison Rose how to solve a problem with producing vibrato, unlocking her talent and leading to her presence today as an Emory bassoonist.

In fact, Emory has welcomed a number of Bassoon Day alumni who double-major in music and another field, such as one of the sciences, humanities, or business. With their parents, they are able to develop a relationship with the Emory music department and the university as a whole. Like Rose, current Emory bassoonist Haley Mathews attended multiple Bassoon Days before applying to Emory. Alumni Kevin Harrell (medical resident), Jason Lee (second-year medical student), Amanda Murgas (business school graduate), and others fit this profile.

In addition to improving their musicianship, students attending Bassoon Day may get to know and impress teachers who later appear on their college or graduate school audition committee. Teachers who attend learn from the techniques of other teachers and may connect with students in a way that influences where the students apply to college. And for Unger, the long-term benefit to the community of encouraging a lifelong love of music is a high priority.

A typical Bassoon Day schedule includes a guest artist recital, master classes, a networking lunch, exhibits by instrument manufacturers, and a bassoon choir rehearsal and concert under the direction of Bhasin. Bassoon Day 2017 will take place on September 24.
YOUNG ARTISTS PIANO COMPETITION DRAWS TALENTED MUSICIANS

William Ransom, Mary Emerson Professor of Piano, and Elena Cholakova, artist affiliate and collaborative piano instructor, asked themselves the question: How can we give young talent access to a big stage and promote Emory's music program? The answer: stage a piano competition for pianists ages 13 to 18.

Responding to Cholakova's intensive efforts to publicize the competition in the Southeastern US, 41 entrants from six states showcased their musical talent and technical ability in video auditions submitted by the December deadline.

Cholakova reached out to piano teachers, college professors (who often teach high school youth), and members of the Music Teachers National Association. She was successful in attracting contestants from Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee as well as Georgia.

Deborah Thoreson Slover, chair of the department and senior lecturer, piano/collaborative piano, took on the task of reviewing the 41 entries and selecting 13 finalists and three alternates based on their musical talent and technical ability as showcased in the videos submitted. Slover characterized this blind prescreening as "a thrilling opportunity to hear this group of enormous young talent performing today."

Yasheen Gao typified the caliber of applicants. Gao is a senior at Johns Creek High School in Georgia with plans to study medicine and public health in college; she has been working at Emory as a cancer research intern for two years. Her study of piano has spanned 14 years, including seven with Cholakova. During this time, she performed at Carnegie Hall, played in the Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra as the principal pianist, and participated regularly in recitals and competitions. Gao commented: "Auditioning for the Emory Young Artists Piano Competition was a great experience, as it gave me an opportunity to showcase and improve my piano pieces and gain more exposure as a pianist. I submitted Ginastera’s Sonata no.1, movement 1, Beethoven's Sonata no. 23 in F minor, Op. 57, movement 1, and Scarlatti’s Sonate L23 in E Major, all of which I recorded at Steinway Piano Galleries in Alpharetta."

Cholakova noted that 12th-graders who have been successful young pianists face large life changes. Some may choose to apply to music conservatories (a sometimes risky venture), and others may choose another career, although music remains a big part of their lives. Emory hopes to attract excellent musicians in the latter group who have been exposed to the university through the piano competition.

The 13 finalists arrived at the Schwartz Center for Performing Arts on January 29 with their parents. Starting at noon, they performed before an audience and the judges in the Emerson Concert Hall. The three judges were Ransom, Jerome Reed, the Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Piano at Lipscomb University, and David Kalhous, assistant professor of piano at Florida State University.

Not without difficulty, they selected four performers who played again at the Winners Concert at 7:00 p.m. that evening before an audience that eagerly awaited the judges' final decision as well as an opportunity to award the audience prize by the volume of their applause. The winner received $1,000; a concerto performance engagement with the LaGrange Symphony Orchestra, where Richard Prior is music director and conductor; and a solo performance at the Atlanta Young Artists Concert of the Emory Chamber Music Society of Atlanta.

After a thrilling final concert, first prize and the audience prize were awarded to Yannie Tam, who performed Chopin's Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, op. 23. The second-prize winner, Helen Bryant, and third-prize winner, Keona Rose, also received monetary awards. Annabelle Yang received honorable mention.

BACKSTAGE SPOTLIGHT

The Vega Quartet attended Professor Judith Miller’s Freshman Seminar, Conversation in the Age of Jane Austen. First violinist Elizabeth Fayette (second from right) led a discussion for students and Friends members punctuated by performances of Haydn, Beethoven, and Shostakovich. Discussion about the history of the string-quartet proved fascinating.
A MAGICAL MUSICAL AFTERNOON FOR MEMBERS

The Friends of Music once again expanded the scope of its annual Musicale gathering for members by coming together for a reception in the Chase Atrium of the Schwartz Center for Performing Arts preceding a concert by the Emory Wind Ensemble. Members enjoyed remarks by Jennifer Barlament, Emory alumnna and new executive director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Paul Bhasin, Emory's director of wind studies and director of the Emory Wind Ensemble.

Barlament held the audience spellbound with a warm tale of her career path, starting when she was an Emory undergraduate. She majored in music and physics, indicative of the broad interests and abilities she put to use in administrative positions with seven professional orchestras after receiving a master's degree in clarinet performance at the Eastman School of Music. Her connection to the Atlanta Symphony (ASO) began when she took lessons at Emory from ASO clarinetist and Emory adjunct faculty member Laura Ardan, and then faithfully attended performances during her Emory years. We are fortunate that she returned to help strengthen the role of the arts in Atlanta, where she and her family found a home near Emory.

Bhasin’s remarks prepared us for a wonderful concert by the Emory Wind Ensemble, highlighted by the “introspective loneliness” of Copeland’s *Quiet City*, featuring ASO soloists Michael Tiscione, trumpet, and Emory artist affiliate Emily Brebach, English horn. The program “American Perspectives” was rounded out by other works for winds by prominent American composers, including Gandolfi’s *Flourishes & Meditations on a Renaissance Theme*, Schuman’s *New England Triptych*, Gillingham’s *Be Thou My Vision*, and Williams’s *Suite from Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

We extend our condolences to Dorothy Chitwood and the Chitwood family on the death of Charlie Chitwood. He and Dorothy were longtime members of the board and generous supporters of the Friends of Music at Emory, serving as treasurer and secretary of the Executive Committee. Charlie and Dorothy will be remembered for their tireless contributions to our group and their cheerful spirits in addition to their many other contributions to church and community.

IN MEMORIAM: CHARLIE CHITWOOD

THE ORPHEUS PLAYS PRIOR

On January 20, 2017, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra appeared in the Candler Concert Series performing Richard Prior’s new piece, *a canticle of shadows*, along with Mendelssohn’s *Scottish Symphony* and Tchaikovsky’s *Violin Concerto*, Vadim Gluzman, soloist. In explaining his motivation for his work, Prior noted his personal connection to places that are now conflict zones, from which have emanated an “endless stream of images” depicting faces radiating an “aura of devastation and hopelessness.” His canticle radiates compassion and, in musical language, reminds us to consider how the empathy we feel for such refugees is all too fleeting. Prior’s work was commissioned for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. The Friends of Music hosted a reception following the concert.

We hope to see you
Monday evening, April 24

A GALA COCKTAIL PARTY AND FUNDRAISER

Musical delights, culinary treats, and cheery socializing with Friends. Look for your invitation in the mail.
HOW I FOUND MY WAY TO FRIENDS OF MUSIC

As I take on the duties of vice president for membership, I want to share with you the story of how I came to know and appreciate our special organization, and my decision to make a personal commitment to help the Friends of Music support music students at Emory.

Emory’s Schwartz Center for Performing Arts first became one of my happy places during my daughter Claire’s involvement with the Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra. Weekly rehearsals in Tharp Hall and regular concerts in Emerson Hall were the foundation for my musical entertainment and inspiration, which also included attending Candler series concerts. Periodically, on our way to rehearsal, we’d see Friend of Music signs. I consider myself a “friend of Music” and a champion of developing young musicians, so I decided one day to find out what those signs meant. It wasn’t until a couple years later that Friends of Music found me.

Our formative history with Emory happily led to my daughter enrolling at the university in 2015. The music department made her an offer she couldn’t refuse and affords her the leeway to pursue music and business. Claire plays principal flute in both the Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. She loves her school. When I made a financial contribution to the music department to show my gratitude, I received a letter and brochure back from Friends of Music.

Here was the answer I needed for finding my new way as an “empty-nester” unwilling to give up my involvement with young musicians. Friends of Music showed me how I could help fill in the gaps financially for Emory’s music students and encourage faculty and students in their development and presentation of musical experiences on campus. The group also provides social and educational opportunities for members. It’s how I discovered the planetarium and enjoyed the musical accompaniment of the Vega Quartet.

So, I offered to help in an official capacity as the vice president for membership. Although I have no prior experience with membership programs, I have found the board members to be so gracious and willing to wait out my learning curve.

Please consider joining us in a more active way. Pooling our financial resources to benefit students and faculty steadily strengthens Emory’s music program. One of my favorite things about attending student performances is giving a standing ovation and witnessing happiness and satisfaction spread over the musicians’ faces. Whether these students make music their profession, hobby, or sanity-preserving outlet, they receive our encouragement.

Equally as important, I believe in Friends of Music’s efforts to help make Emory University and the Schwartz Center safe places for beauty and creativity to be put on display. To that end, I relish the sense of community I feel inside a concert hall with beautiful music washing over all of us. It’s something I want to protect and invest in for future generations.

Even as I can offer energy and ideas for engaging new members and retaining constant Friends, I need your help to strengthen our support for the music department. I look forward to getting better acquainted with each of you. Our next opportunity to socialize will be at the annual gala on April 24.

Gayle Mahon
Vice President for Membership

ZHAO PERFORMS WITH THE ESO

Leo Weiyu Zhao, winner of the 2016 Concerto and Aria Competition for Emory students, performed the first movement of Tchaikovsky’s Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra, accompanied by the Emory University Symphony Orchestra, on November 19 at the Schwartz Center for Performing Arts.

Zhao’s lessons at Emory with William Ransom and Keiko Ransom have been assisted by the Friends of Music. He is a sophomore at Emory, double-majoring in music and biology. Zhao began playing the piano at age four and also is an accomplished saxophonist. He has performed at major venues such as Carnegie Hall and is the winner of several other piano competitions.