Dear Friends,

Once again this year, the music department welcomes several new faculty members, including two CSUSB music alumni. We were sorry to see Andy Crane and Jeff Boeckman leave for North Carolina and Hawaii, but read on! You’ll quickly understand why we’re so excited about their replacements. As usual, we’re looking forward to a terrific year of concerts and other activities. In particular, I hope you can attend our Friends of Music reception in May in conjunction with another excellent Opera Theatre production. Also, I’m very excited about our second annual Jazz Fest in June. We’re in the process of booking artists for the event, and I’ve heard mention of acts such as the The Manhattan Transfer and Oscar Hernandez, as possible headliners. Please use the music website and join our e-mail list for the most up-to-date news!

Todd Johnson, Music Department Chair

Ensemble Notes

2010-11 was a banner year for CSUSB Jazz. The CSUSB Jazz Ensemble and Sextet performed at the Reno Jazz Festival in late April 2011 earning ‘Superior’ ratings, interpreting arrangements by Maria Schneider, Bob Curnow, and Gordon Goodwin. Altoist Stephen Simmons received an Outstanding Soloist Award for his work on alto and soprano saxophone.

The CSUSB International Quartet performed in January 2011 in Surin, Thailand at the Surin International Music Festival. The quartet performed original music and will return in 2012 for a guest appearance at the Thailand International Jazz Festival held in Bangkok.

May 2011 marked the First Annual CSUSB Jazz Festival held on campus. Headlining the evening was jazz percussionist Peter Erskine and the award winning jazz quartet “Poem,” featuring pianist Alan Pasqua, bassist Darek Oles, and tenor saxophonist Bob Mintzer. The RCC Jazz Ensemble directed by Charlie Richard and CSUSB’s own jazz ensemble directed by Robert Knop opened the festival.

2011-12 promises to be as exciting. The CSUSB Jazz Ensemble will perform a Night of Latin Jazz Music, Tuesday November 1, 2011, at the San Manuel Student Center. All proceeds will benefit Music Scholarships. The Vocal Jazz Ensemble “Au Privave” is preparing to perform at the Reno Jazz Festival in 2012 and The 2nd Annual CSUSB Jazz Festival will soon be announced and promises to be even better than last year’s night.

All the Jazz ensembles thank the generous donors and jazz supporters who make our overseas and domestic appearances possible.

The Percussion Ensemble, directed by Todd Johnson, sponsored the first annual Inland Percussion Festival. The festival featured legendary percussion performer and composer William Kraft, and this year’s festival will be held on May 19. The Percussion Ensemble also took its first spring tour, performing in June on CSUSB’s Palm Desert Campus.

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After the highly successful performances of our Wild West version of Mozart’s “Impresario” in April 2011, Dr. Stacey Fraser, director of the CSUSB Opera Theatre is pleased to announce the presentation of Engelbert Humperdinck’s opera “Hänsel und Gretel,” featuring both the outstanding artistic faculty and voice students of the opera program in the department of music at Cal State San Bernardino on Friday May 4, 2012, at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, May 6, 2012, at 2:30 p.m.

We are also thrilled to announce that our new director of choral activities, Mr. Kosta Popovic (most recently of the Metropolitan Opera), will conduct the singers and the opera orchestra. Dr. Stacey Fraser has once again chosen a setting that will entice local audiences of the Inland Empire; the famous fairy tale of “Hänsel and Gretel” will feature pop culture references that will provide an amusing yet clever and sympathetic social commentary on the poverty, greed and commercialism that exist in our world. You may recognize colors and fantasy themes reminiscent of recent Oscar winning movies such as Tim Burton’s “Alice in Wonderland” and you can be sure that the traditional gingerbread house will have a whole new modern twist! Stay tuned ...
Erik Jester (director of bands)

Erik Jester joined the faculty at Cal State, San Bernardino as director of bands in 2011. In this capacity he conducts the Symphonic Band and Chamber Winds, and teaches various music courses, including conducting, instrumental literature, and brass methods.

As a conductor, Jester has led a number of ensembles at the university and high school level as well as amateur and professional ensembles. As a trombonist, he has performed with a variety of large chamber and jazz ensembles. Additionally, Jester has taught courses at Penn State and Wisconsin, served on the staff of the Penn State Marching Blue Band, worked with students at the Penn State Summer Music Camp, Wisconsin Music Clinic, Interlochen Arts Academy, and has been on the faculties at Madison College and Triton College in Chicago.

Jester holds master's degrees in wind conducting and trombone performance from the Pennsylvania State University, and has recently completed doctoral coursework at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His primary teachers include Scott Teeple, Mark Lusk and Dennis Glocke.

Kosta Popovic (director of choral activities)

Kosta Popovic joined the faculty of California State University, San Bernardino in 2011. His duties include conducting the CSUSB Chamber Singers and Concert Choir, coaching and conducting the CSUSB Chamber Winds, and teaching courses in conducting and liberal studies.

As a chorus master, Popovic has worked with Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos, Lisbon, Portugal; Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden, Germany; San Diego Opera and Santa Barbara Opera. At the Metropolitan Opera, New York City, he has been an assistant chorus master for six seasons, and a member of the music staff for eleven seasons.

In April 2002, Popovic conducted “Il Barbiere di Siviglia” at Opera Illinois, where he received critical acclaim. Other conducting credits include “Der Rosenkavalier” (Spoleto Festival, Italy), “Cavalleria Rusticana” (Mercury Opera, NY), “La Traviata” (Riverside Concert Opera) and a gala concert of bel canto with opera stars from the Metropolitan Opera, New York City, San Diego Opera and Santa Barbara Opera.

Popovic has taught for the department of music, UC Santa Barbara and the department of music, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Popovic holds a bachelor of music degree from Belgrade Music Academy and a master of music degree from The Juilliard School. He has completed all the course work for the D.M.A. degree at USC, with concentration in piano accompanying and choral music.

Michèle Brosseau-Tacchia (director of chamber orchestra)

Michèle Brosseau-Tacchia, a noted concert cellist on the East as well as the West coasts, has a passion for sharing her vast knowledge of stringed instruments with children. She has been teaching music in the Inland Empire for more than 28 years.

Having received her B.A. degree in music from California State University, San Bernardino in 1976 and a master’s degree in music performance from San Diego State University in 1982, she also pursued postgraduate studies at the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts (1976-77), the Vienna International Music Center in Vienna, Austria (1977-78) and at the San Francisco State University department of music (1978-79).

She has worked with some of the world’s finest musicians. It is this depth of vision that she seeks to share with her students and to open their eyes to the wonderful world of music. She feels strongly that she can be a role model and inspiration to her students as well as give them the best opportunities by maintaining her role as a performer.

Bradley Hampton (co-director of vocal jazz)

Bradley Hampton has extensive training in vocal harmony. Most of his teenage years were spent transcribing the music of The Beach Boys, The Hi-Lo’s, and Take 6.

Bradley has shared the stage with great vocal groups such as: Rockapella, The Nylons, The House Jacks, The Blenders, The Drifters, The Bobs, and The Knudsen Bros. Bradley is currently the music director, singer, and arranger for the internationally award-winning a cappella group SoundStage.

Bradley holds a bachelor of arts in music education with an emphasis in composition from California State University, San Bernardino. When not composing or arranging, he plays the piano accompanying for various venues, choirs and musical theatre productions.