

## Music Alumni Newsletter – Fall 2013

### A Message from the Editors

E-Mail: [MusicAlumni@txstate.edu](mailto:MusicAlumni@txstate.edu)

Web: <http://www.MusicAlumni.net>

We understand “alumni” broadly: whether you received your degree from (Southwest) Texas State as a music major, whether you studied here for one semester, or whether you were a non-music major but participated in band, choir, or any other ensemble – you are a Music Alumnus!

We invite everyone to submit their updates and stories to us for inclusion in the newsletter. For easy communication, please join our [Facebook Group](#) or our [LinkedIn Group](#), or send us an e-mail so we can add you to our e-mail distribution list.

We also invite our alumni to stay informed about new and exciting events in the School of Music by reading its newsletter *Somos Músicos* at <http://www.music.txstate.edu>.

*The Editors*

*Prof. Charles Hurt, Dr. Lynn Ledbetter, and Dr. Nico Schüller*

### A Message from the Dean



E-Mail: [tm15@txstate.edu](mailto:tm15@txstate.edu)

This year at our annual opening college convocation, I thanked the faculty and staff for making the decision to be “extraordinary.” Here are just a few of the ways in which they are far from ordinary.

**Washington Garcia** was featured in *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* as one of the most outstanding educators and performing artists across the nation. **Ian Davidson** was named a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to visit Tumaini University Makumira in Tanzania, and **Hank Hehmsoth** was selected as a Fulbright Specialist for a project in Santiago, Chile. **Amy Simmons** and **Ron Ulen** were tenured and promoted to associate professor, while **Lynn Brinckmeyer** was promoted to full professor. **Hank Hehmsoth** was a college runner up for the Presidential Excellence Award for Scholarly / Creative Activity, and **Mary Ellen Cavitt** as well as **Kevin Mooney** each were a college runner up for the Presidential Excellence Award for Service.

**Stephen Hager** was recognized for his 30 years of service to Texas State and the School of Music. **John Lopez**'s Mariachi Nueva Generación won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza at the San Antonio Convention Center for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Two other extraordinary events included the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International Piano Festival hosting NPR's *From the Top* featuring students from the piano festival and the School of Music, leading the way as Texas

State becomes a research university with the largest graduate program in the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

Please know how proud I am of our School of Music, the faculty and staff who make it all possible, and you for not settling for the ordinary. Wishing you well as you use your degree to reach extraordinary goals.

*Dr. Timothy P. Mottet, Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication*



### A Message from the Director

E-Mail: [tc24@txstate.edu](mailto:tc24@txstate.edu)

We've launched another academic year and another football season – with the Bobcat Marching Band still undefeated! And we are looking forward with great excitement to an upcoming game in which we will field an alumni band. I hope many of you are planning to participate in it, and other music alumni are planning a visit to your alma mater. Whether for Homecoming or at any other time, I hope your visit can include hearing a concert and stopping by the Music Building to say hello to your favorite faculty and staff members and me. We are proud of you as you represent our best gift to the communities you serve. I know you will experience pride and satisfaction in the good work your successors, our current students, are doing as they continue the tradition of excellence you helped build.

*Dr. Thomas Clark*

### E-Mail & Internet Links:

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# *Congratulations, Recent Graduates! Teaching Positions for 2013-2014*

## *Fall 2012 Graduates:*

Kristen Boynt	Asst. Band Director, Miller Middle School, San Marcos, TX
Kris Crowder	Asst. Band Director, Bandera Middle School, Bandera, TX
Celeste Curiel	General Music Specialist, Powell Elementary, San Antonio, TX
Kristie Davis	General Music Specialist, Rodriguez Elementary, Seguin, TX
Todd Deatherage	Choir Director, Paredes Middle School, Austin, TX
Henry Dreitner	Jr. High Band Director, Hallettsville, TX
Chelsie Lewis	Asst. Choir Director, Bedichek Middle School, Austin, TX
Kristy Ragland	General Music Specialist, Schertz Elementary, Schertz, TX
Drew Saenz	Graduate Assistant, Texas State University
Amanda Stafford	Asst. Band Director, Sugar Land Middle School, Sugar Land, TX

## *Spring 2013 Graduates:*

Meghan Berrelez	General Music Specialist, Diamond Hill Elementary, Fort Worth, TX
Savannah Cervantez	General Music Specialist, Crain Elementary School, Victoria, TX
James Duty	General Music Specialist, Crockett Elementary, Greensville, TX
Brittany Elliff	Choir Director, Spillane MS, Cypress, TX
Justin Glossen	General Music Specialist, Sugar Loaf Elementary, Killeen, TX
Kylee Lynch	Choir Director, Burnet Middle School, Austin, TX
Christine Marrs	General Music Specialist, Wolman Elementary, Katy, TX
Amber Metzner	Asst. Band Director, Alamo Heights High School, San Antonio, TX
Victor Orduna	General Music Specialist, Koennecke Elementary, Seguin, TX
Alex Ortega	Asst. Band Director, Bailey Middle School, Austin, TX
James Quintero	Asst. Band Director, La Pryor High School, La Pryor, TX
Amy Ramos	General Music Specialist, Medio Creek Elementary, San Antonio, TX
Maribel Ryburn	General Music Specialist, Dripping Springs Elementary, Dripping Springs, TX
Robert Sabo	Director of Orchestras, Edgewood ISD, San Antonio, TX
Corderro Salazar	Asst. Orchestra Director, Moises Vela MS, Harlingen, TX
Julien Shine	Choir Director, Corbett Middle School, Schertz, TX
Brittany Sloss	Asst. Band Director, Falfurrias Jr. High, Brooks County ISD, Falfurrias, TX
CZ Stollon	Asst. Band Director, Churchill High School, San Antonio, TX
Austin Tran	Asst. Band Director, Cypress Ridge High School, Houston, TX
Taylor Trevino	Asst. Band Director, MacArthur HS, San Antonio, TX
John Villafranco	Asst. Band Director, DeZavala MS, Pasadena, TX
Jett Walker	Asst. Band Director, Hernandez MS, Round Rock, TX

## *Congratulations to our Alumni in new Teaching Positions!*

Carly Boeselt	Asst. Band Director, Hernandez Middle School, RRISD, Round Rock, TX
Stephen Chitta	Asst. Band Director, Plano West Senior High, Plano ISD, Plano, TX
Lauren Esparza	Asst. Band Director, Hernandez Middle School, RRISD, Round Rock, TX
Rachel Janek	Asst. Band Director, Chapa Middle School, Hays ISD, Kyle, TX
Elizabeth Krejewski	General Music Specialist, Rowland Elementary School, Victoria, TX
Donald Lacy	Asst. Band Director, Heritage Middle School, East Central ISD, San Antonio, TX
Cris Lira	Asst. Band Director, Leander Middle School, Leander ISD, Leander, TX
Tina Luna	Orchestra Director, Wood Middle School, NEISD, San Antonio, TX
Coty Raven Morris	Assistant Choir Director, Galena Park ISD, Houston, TX
Sean Morrow	Asst. Band Director, Austin Middle School, Irving ISD, Irving, TX
Nate Smith	Head Band Director, Chapa Middle School, Hays ISD, Kyle, TX
Ramon Parker	Head Band Director, Gonzales ISD, Gonzales, TX
Sarah Elizabeth-Abernathy Rose	General Music Specialist, Natalia Elementary, Natalia ISD, Natalia, TX
Juan Saldana	General Music Specialist, PF Stewart Elementary School, SAISD, San Antonio, TX
Amanda Stafford	Asst. Band Director, Sugar Land Middle School, FBISD, Sugar Land, TX
Stephanie Vogler-Wlodkowski	Head Band Director, Waverly High School, Waverly ISD, New Waverly, TX
Noel Wilds	General Music Specialist, Kyle Elementary School, Hays CISD, Kyle, TX
Christina Wishart	Asst. Band Director, Henry Middle School, Leander ISD, Cedar Park, TX

## *How Do You Build a Truly Exceptional Music Program?*

How do you build a truly exceptional music program in a school district? Hire lots of Texas State University graduates, of course!

For nearly three decades, graduates of Texas State University School of Music have been finding their way to the Galena Park Independent School District and together have built one of the most outstanding choral music programs in the state. Despite the fact that every school in Galena Park is a Title I school with a population that is eighty percent Hispanic and economically disadvantaged, the choral programs at every school surpass their more affluent suburban neighbors in student participation and success in the TMEA audition process and UIL Concert & Sight-reading.

After completing undergraduate and graduate school at what was then Southwest Texas State University, twenty-three year old Sam Harris was hired as the choral director at North Shore High School. In 1985, the Galena Park ISD was very much a middle-class, Anglo school district, yet there were barely 300 students participating in choir district-wide. Two years later, Enrique Collazo came to GPISD, first teaching elementary music where his choir, Jacinto City Elementary Honor Choir, performed at TMEA and later for nearly a decade at North Shore Middle School. In 1994, Sam recruited Daniel Ponce for Galena Park High School and Laurie Ballesteros for Galena Park Middle School, and the south side of the school district began to see growth and success in choral music. Fourteen years ago, Sam left North Shore High School to take the position as Director of Fine Arts, Enrique moved from North Shore Middle School to North Shore High School and Erin Huston joined the team teaching at North Shore Middle School. A year later, Lisa Chew joined Laurie as assistant director at Galena Park Middle. Shortly after, Teejo Gasca joined the staff teaching at Cobb 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus, and last year Elizabeth Bongat came to work with Erin; Scott Lipscomb and Jose Pelaez began their teaching careers at Pyburn and Galena Park Elementary Schools, and finally this year

Coty Morris joined as an assistant director at North Shore High School. Over the years, there were other Texas State grads teaching in Galena Park ISD, including the late David Moseley, Kelan Latimer, Rebecca O'Donovan, Rachel Plitt and Jared Wade.

This year, more than two thousand one hundred students are enrolled in choral music classes in grades six through twelve at four middle schools and two high schools. Thirty-two choirs will compete in UIL Concert & Sight-reading contests with more than ninety-five percent bringing home First Division and Sweepstakes trophies, and hundreds of individual students will be honored through the TMEA audition process. Sam Harris shared: "This dedicated team proves that regardless of background or economic means, all students can thrive and be extremely successful as long as they have great teachers that believe in them, love them and challenge them to be their very best every single day."

Laurie Ballesteros points to the district's vertical alignment that allows teachers to "create a seamless experience from 6th through 12th grade" as one major reason for the tremendous success of GPISD. Coty Morris adds, she thinks GPISD is so successful, because "Texas State alumni understand the importance of being in a supportive, culturally enriched and successful environment. We thrive best in these conditions and expect nothing less!" Enrique said: "We are a team of educators who share a common background of dedication and expertise. Many fine musicians and professors from Texas State University have imparted this legacy to us. Choral music in GPISD is special, because we continue to share the knowledge and traditions that they inspired us."

Thirty years of success of choral music in Galena Park ISD can be attributed to the fact that every choir member enters and leaves the choir room at their school feeling loved, special, and important – that is the focus of each choir director in GPISD.



## Featured Alumni

### Audrey Dornbusch and Christian De la Cruz (both B.M. in Music Education, '10)



Christian De la Cruz & Audrey Dornbusch-De la Cruz are proud Alumni of the Texas State University School of Music. While there, Christian & Audrey studied voice with Cheryl Parrish and conducting under Drs. Jonathan Babcock, Lynn Brinckmeyer, and Joey Martin. Both have continued their love of choral conducting by attending workshops with Dr. Kenneth Davis in Santa Fe, NM. Christian was a Terry Foundation Scholar, and Audrey was a Mitte

Foundation Scholar. Both received the Texas State College of Fine Arts Presidential Scholarship, the Outstanding Senior in Choral Education Award, held Executive positions in Mu Phi Epsilon, and graduated Summa Cum Laude. Christian & Audrey married in 2011 and have been high-school sweethearts since 2003.

Christian & Audrey began their teaching careers in the Northeast Independent School District in San Antonio back in 2010. Christian jumpstarted a non-existent choral program at Krueger Middle School. Krueger is labeled Title I for its extensive at-risk student population. Throughout the six months Christian taught at Krueger, the choir program grew from 42 students to 187 singers. The program now continues to grow and flourish. Audrey innovated elementary music education at Fox Run Elementary. Under her direction, her students performed Hans Krása's operetta *Brundibár* with professional singers. She also founded the popular Fox Run Elementary African drumming ensemble.



In the summer of 2011, Christian & Audrey were offered their dream jobs. Christian was hired as the assistant choir director at Ronald Reagan High School, and Audrey was hired as the assistant choir director at Barbara Bush Middle School in San Antonio. Both schools were Christian & Audrey's student teaching placements. They are currently in their 4th year of teaching. In the past 3 years, the "DLC's", as their students call them, have accomplished wonderful things. Reagan HS has had the highest number of All-Staters in Texas for the past two years. Bush MS has continued its tradition of excellence with the highest number All-Region members in the area as well as having the highest number of Middle School TCDA Honor Choir members in the state.



Reagan HS placed 5th and 2nd on its first two years at competing in the Texas Madrigal Festival, a prestigious invitation-only chamber choir competition, which hosts some of the very best high school choirs from around the state. Bush MS had two of its Varsity Choirs selected to perform at the National Cambiata Institute Young Singers Symposium. Both Christian & Audrey have received straight ones or "Sweepstakes" with all of their UIL Concert & Sightreading competition choirs. At the past Texas Choral Director's Association, Christian was invited to be a demonstration conductor with Dr. Paul Rardin, and Audrey was invited to present a session on building student leadership in the choral classroom. Both Christian & Audrey enjoy serving as section leaders at the Texas State All-State Choir Camp, and both have demonstration choirs performing at the 2014 TMEA Convention.

Still, Christian & Audrey's most celebrated moment was this past summer when they took 70 members of their choir programs to exchange music and experiences with the locals in Peru. One of the major highlights, even topping the Machu Pichu experience, was the opportunity to perform for the young orphans at the San Pedro All-Girls Orphanage in Cusco. The community of Reagan HS and Bush MS raised over \$3,000 that helped pay for two water heaters and individual goodie bags that included tooth brushes, books, crayons, dolls, socks, recorders & harmonicas, t-shirts, and candy. The gift of hope that the girls at the orphanage gave back was more than the DLC's could have hoped for. On the last day of the nine-day trip, the water heater at their hotel broke with 40 degree winter winds outside. Instead of complaining, the students were quoted saying: "I'm so glad we came. I can't believe what those girls had to go through without hot water."



Service has always been Christian & Audrey's focus. Both choirs have done many outreach programs with local nursing homes, rehab centers, the Animal Defense League, and the San Antonio Food Bank. Last year, audience members were required to donate canned goods for admission into the jam-packed Christmas Concert. Over 10,000 lbs of food was donated. Christian & Audrey recruit on average around 80 students and parents on their monthly volunteer activities. Both choir programs have since grown to over 300 singers each.

Christian & Audrey spend their leisure time cooking together, running, and spending time with their dog, Texas, and cat, Goliath. They are members of the First Protestant in New Braunfels Sanctuary Choir and Handbell Choir. Christian & Audrey sing professionally with San Antonio Chamber Choir.



***Corrie Box***  
*(M.M. in Music Education, '10)*

Corrie Box was a music specialist at Huebner Elementary 2008-2012. During that time she also served as the Assistant Artistic Director for the Hill Country Youth Chorus here at Texas State University. While she was at Texas State, she presented on Kodály pedagogy and classroom

technology in the local area as well as in Louisiana, New

Mexico and Missouri. She also coordinated Kodály workshops for the South Texas area. She is now a second-year doctoral student at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. Aside from her studies, Corrie has taught classes on music for children, art appreciation, vocal / choral lab and country music. Currently, she also supervises student teachers and co-leads the student teacher cohort. She has written newsletter articles for both the Kodály Educators of Texas and the Arizona Kodály Teachers Society. She continues to present and publish on topics of identity, pedagogy, popular culture, and social justice. Corrie credits the knowledgeable, supportive and courageous faculty at Texas State who made it possible for her to live out her dreams: "I came to Texas State feeling a little lost, at one of the crossroads in life. I will always be indebted to you for helping me find my place in the world!"

***Samuel Parrott***

*(B.M. in Music Education, '11)*

Immediately after graduating, Sam Parrott began working at Brooke Elementary School in East Side Austin ISD, teaching Kindergarten through fifth grade. Sam's adventures in elementary have been fast paced and filled with many learning moments. He spent the first six months assessing the situation that faces many elementary schools now, which is new teachers entering a school that has experienced many staffing changes in a short period of time. After sorting through decades of materials, he began shaping his program to be a combination of Kodaly and Orff. Sam started a ukulele program at Brooke Elementary by purchasing fifteen ukuleles and connecting with the leader of EdUkation, a non-profit ukulele organization in Austin. He also raised money to purchase a smart board through popcorn sales. He raised over \$1,700 to purchase the smart board as well as a full speaker system. His classroom is the only one in the school that has this sophisticated technology. He was able to give a presentation to the Austin ISD Technology department about the importance, use,

and need of this product. He emphasized the characteristics that fully engage the students' learning and attention, and also the importance of technology in lower income districts.

Sam spends the remainder of his free time at school leading the Lego Robotics club and First Lego League robotics team. He was recently awarded a grant to purchase ten new robotics kits, making Brooke Elementary one of largest robotics programs on the East side of Austin. Sam is in his first semester of a Graduate Degree in Choral Conducting at Texas State at the same time as teaching.



## *Alumni Information & News*

**Charles Aguillon** (B.M. '93; M.M. in music education, '98) is the new Director of Fine Arts for Lake Travis ISD. He was recently featured in the [Texas Cultural Trust newsletter](#). Previously, Mr. Aguillon was the Associate Principal for Teaching and Learning at Georgetown East View High School. During the 17 years Mr. Aguillon was in Georgetown ISD, he held the positions of middle school and high school band director, Director of Bands for Georgetown High School, and Director of Fine Arts for Georgetown ISD, during which time Georgetown was twice named to the "Best 100 Communities for Music in America." Prior to coming to Georgetown, Mr. Aguillon was a band director for San Marcos CISD for 3 years. Ensembles under his direction have appeared at the Texas State Marching Band Contest and the Music for All National Concert Band Festival in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Alicia Caicedo** (M.M. in piano performance, '10) is in her first semester at Texas Tech University pursuing a D.M.A. in Piano Pedagogy and was granted a Teaching Assistantship, which includes teaching Piano Class and individual applied lessons.

**Oscar Garza, Jr.** (B.M. in music education, '04) is currently the Music Specialist at George I. Sanchez Elementary School in Austin ISD. He has also performed with Austin's Award-winning *Mariachi Relámpago* for the past 11 years as their vocalist and trumpet player.

**Christopher T. F. Hanson** (M.M. in music theory, '12; M.M. in music history, '09; M.M. in music composition, '09) is the Orchestra Director for San Marcos CISD, teaching at Miller and Goodnight Middle Schools and San Marcos High School. He was nominated as a Life Changer of the Year in 2013 and was also named a Shining Star Under 40 in San Marcos. He is a quarterfinalist for the Grammy for a Music Educator – the winner will be awarded in January 2014! Christopher is the Artistic Director and Founder of the SMART Orchestra in San Marcos. He was a 2013 finalist for the American Prize in Conducting for Youth Orchestra. Mayor Daniel Guerrero presented Christopher with the Key to the City of San Marcos in August 2013.

**Erin Bales Hanson** (M.M. in vocal performance, '12) writes: "Christopher and I were married in September 2012. I spent the summers of 2012 & 2013 as a guest artist with the National Music Festival in Chestertown, MD. I was a semifinalist for the American Prize in Art Song 2013. I began working at Austin Lyric Opera in January 2013. I continue to sing and audition in the Central Texas area."

**Krystyn Jensen** (B.A. in music, '07) won the Texas State University Staff Council *Deborah and James Mathews Excellence in Collaboration / Outreach Award 2013*. This annual award provides \$200 to a staff member whose work over the previous academic year exemplifies an ability to collaborate with others in order to achieve overall excellence in service to Texas State University. Evidence of collaborative projects and service are the basis for this award. Only one recipient is selected each year from full-time staff members who exemplify these qualities. Krystyn is honored to receive this award and was presented a certificate from President Denise Trauth on Wednesday, September 18. Her name will be added to the awards plaque located on the wall outside of Human Resources, JCK 340.

**Nick Landis** (B.M. in sound recording technology, '06) is a mastering engineer, consultant and freelance audio engineer in Austin, TX. Nick has been the studio mastering engineer at Terra Nova Mastering since 2005. Since then, he has accumulated over 1,500 album credits. Last year, Nick just finished a four-year term on the Board of Governors and a one year term as Vice President for The Recording Academy (GRAMMY's) Texas Chapter.

**Sunnie Oh** (M.M. in piano performance, '02) is now teaching elementary music at Austin ISD. She is also directing the Children's Choir at Austin Korean Presbyterian Church. In the 2013 choir competition of the Southwest Korean Schools Association, Sunnie's choir was awarded a "Gold" prize.

**Francisco J. Rios** (B.M. in music education, '01) writes: "I taught elementary music for one semester at Enrique Camarena Elementary School in La Joya ISD. I was then hired to start a brand new program at J. D. Salinas Middle School within the same district. I had a successful four years there, helping my band students earn three UIL Sweepstakes awards and one Superior award. Over 40 students made the district's All-City band, and five of those students earned placement in the All-Region band. Now in my sixth year teaching, I am Assistant Director and Woodwind Specialist at Juarez-Lincoln High School, also in La Joya ISD (the school my previous school fed into). I am in charge of all reed players and assist with other duties. Our staff is new, and the students are working hard to make history. Working with fellow band directors who are also Bobcat Alumni is definitely a plus! Go Bobcats!"

**Cecilia Kittley Shinn** (B.M. in vocal music performance, '07; M.M. in music theory, '09) sings with the professional chamber choir *Conspirare: A Company of Voices* and is the Director of Music Ministry at St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church in Houston, Texas. Cecilia and husband Joe reside in Seabrook.

**Amey Szanto** (B.M. in music education, '08) and her husband, Scotty, welcomed their first child, Dawson, to their family on November 2, 2012. Amey graduated from Texas State in May of 2008 and is currently in her sixth year of teaching Music to Pre-K thru 4th grade at Rose Garden Elementary in Universal City. She is also the Gifted and Talented Coordinator and teaches the GT students one day each week.

**Steven Trinkl** (M.M. in composition, '13) is currently pursuing a D.M.A. in Music Composition at Texas Tech University. In addition, he recorded a studio album with his band and is working on various commissions.

**Zack Uzzle** (M.M. in choral conducting, '10) currently serves as Director of Traditional Music at Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church in Austin, while also maintaining a private lesson studio in both Austin I.S.D. and Round Rock I.S.D. He is currently serving as tenor section leader for Texas Choral Consort and lives in Austin with his wife Wendy, son Stuart and dog Boomer.

**Dr. Lee Weimer** (M.M. in music, '82) has been named Dean of Arts and Humanities at Black Hawk College in Moline, Illinois. In addition to his Master of Music degree from Texas State, Lee holds a B.F.A. from the University of Minnesota and a D.M.A. from The University of Memphis. He and his wife, Elizabeth (B.M. in music education, '82), and their twelve year old son, Owen, live across the Mississippi River in Bettendorf, Iowa.



**Kerri West** writes: "I was in the SRT program in 2004/5, marched with Bobcat Band in '05/06, and played with the basketball band for a couple seasons. Now I am a 2011 graduate of UT Austin with a B.A. in Sociology, and I play trumpet with the Minor Mishap Marching Band (in Austin.) I have toured across Texas and in New Orleans for Mardi Gras. I also recently began playing with the Cinematic Symphony. My 'real job' is being an EMT on a 911 ambulance, and I hope to remain in emergency medicine for many years to come. Past ensembles include the Dead Music Capital Band and the Williamson County Symphony Orchestra."

**Kirsten Robinson Wingo** (B.M. in music education, '12) completed her first year teaching elementary music at Pasemann Elementary in Taylor, Texas.

## *Want to Help?*

Would you like to help current and future students at Texas State University? You can

- Help us revising our curricula
- Become a mentor
- Establish an endowment
- Contribute to a scholarship fund
- Etc.

For more information, contact [MusicAlumni@txstate.edu](mailto:MusicAlumni@txstate.edu)

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