

Music Alumni Newsletter – Fall 2020

A Message from the Editor

E-Mail: MusicAlumni@MusicAlumni.net

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 you to submit updates and stories to us for inclusion in the newsletter. Please join us on Facebook 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 visiting <https://www.music.txstate.edu>.

*Ms. Sunnie Oh (M.M. in Music, '02), Editor
In collaboration with Nico Schüller*

Meet the New Director of the SoM

E-Mail: joey.martin@txstate.edu

Web: <https://www.music.txstate.edu>

After the retirement of Dr. Thomas Clark, the new Director of our School of Music is Dr. Joey Martin, who previously served as the director of choral activities at TXST for 20 years. He has been recognized as a Favorite Professor and as the recipient of Presidential Distinction Awards for both Teaching and Service. During his time at Texas State, he has directed four of the seven university vocal ensembles. Highlights include performances for numerous conferences, including TMEA, SWACDA, ACDA, and the International Kodály Festival.

Dr. Martin served as the artistic director for the San Antonio-based Alamo City Men’s Chorale and with Craig Hella Johnson on the creative team for the Victoria Bach Festival. His scholarly/creative activities span twenty-seven of the United States and fifteen countries on six continents, including many



western European countries, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil. He continues in his twelfth year as the artistic director and conductor for Honor Choir USA in Honolulu, Hawai’i, as he shares the ‘aloha spirit’ with exceptional young musicians from the mainland. As coach / accompanist, he enjoys collaborating with vocal and instrumental artists.

Dr. Martin received his DMA in choral conducting from the University of Texas in Austin where he was recognized as The Outstanding Graduate while studying with Craig Hella Johnson (conducting), Betty Mallard (piano), and Martha Deatheridge (voice). He is a recent graduate of the Harvard School of Education Management Development Program and was selected to participate in the second cohort of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy. In his spare time, he dreams of culinary school.

TXST Music Alumni Showcases

E-Mail: MusicAlumni@MusicAlumni.net

Web: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCou_0-0pm5Uq3ikul2V6G4rA

We are starting a new video series: TXST Music Alumni Showcases! The first one can be found on our YouTube Channel (see link above). All of our alumni are encouraged to contribute. If you have a performance, a lecture, an interview, or just a message to your fellow alumni, please send us the video (in highest resolution possible). We can also initiate the file transfer with Texas State’s new file transfer system. Just let us know!

Mark Your Calendar

Our School of Music usually hosts an annual reception at the TMEA Convention. This year, the convention is virtual, and so is our Music Alumni Reunion. It will be on Friday, February 12, 2021, from 9:00pm to 10:30pm. Please connect via Zoom: <https://txstate.zoom.us/j/96807459945>. We will use Breakout Rooms, and you will be able to freely change Breakout Rooms as you wish. We can even create a Breakout Room just for you and your friends. If you have any questions, e-mail us at MusicAlumni@MusicAlumni.net. Otherwise, no registration necessary. Just join us any time between 9:00pm and 10:30pm on Feb. 12 with Zoom ID 96807459945.

E-Mail & Internet Links:

Texas State Music Alumni E-Mail: MusicAlumni@MusicAlumni.net • Texas State’s School of Music: <http://www.music.txstate.edu/>
Texas State Music Alumni Website: <http://www.MusicAlumni.net> • Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/46231268458>

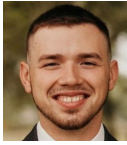
Alumni News

Andres Avila (B.M. in music education with emphasis in jazz, '15) was promoted to Sergeant at the 1st Armored Division Band Fort Bliss.

Kolten Bippert was hired to teach studio saxophone at Bastrop High School.

Edgar Blandon was hired as marching band tech at Akins High School in Austin.

The **Blue Sine Quartet** (Edgar Blandon, Abel Jaimes, Josh Schurtz, and Ryan Harris) performed for over 400 students at the Victoria Performing Arts Center in Victoria, Texas.



Rachel Brown was hired as marching band tech at Round Rock High School.

The newest member of our TXST School of Music Administrative Staff is alumnus **Benjamin Felts**.

Erik Gamez was hired to teach studio saxophone at Akins High School in Austin.

Marty Lenard (B.M. in music studies, '10; M.M. in music education, '12) was recently named as one of the Hill Country 40 Under 40! The Kerr Economic Development Corporation selects The Hill Country 40 Under 40 honoring individuals across all industries who are achieving excellence in innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Marty is an Assistant Professor of Music at Schreiner University in Kerrville.



A native of North Mexico, **Elizabeth "Lizzy" Mora** (B.M. in music studies, '17) currently serves as woodwind professor for the Music Department at Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) and is a private lesson teacher in Ennis ISD, Duncanville ISD, and Red Oak ISD. Mora maintains a private lesson studio of diverse age groups and musical abilities. She strives to create a positive impact in the next generation and a lifelong appreciation of the arts. In December of 2019, Mora received a Master's in Educational Leadership from SAGU.



Josué J. Mora (B.M. '14) was recently hired as a woodwind specialist instructor at Schreiner University in Kerrville. Josué also published the website <https://jmwoodwinds.com>, dedicated to woodwind performance and pedagogy.



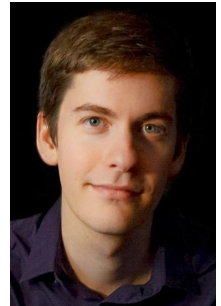
Celeste Alexandria Morales (B.M. in music studies, '15) was accepted into the prestigious Merola Opera Program in San Francisco. Celeste was a student of Oliver Worthington and a member of the Texas State Opera Theatre Program, Texas State Chorale, and VocaLibre. She is the featured soloist on the VocaLibre recording of "Modimo," a solo she reprised with Chorale during their 2018 TMEA performance. Celeste continued her studies at the Manhattan School of Music, has been a Resident Artist with the San Antonio Opera, and has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2015 Winner of the Texas State Aria & Concerto competition.



Eloy Ramirez (B.M. in music studies, '18) completed a Master of Music in Historical Musicology at the University of Arizona and has now been accepted into Harvard for Musicology.

Recent alumna **Nicole Richardson** was hired as an Assistant Band Director at Tays Junior High School in Katy ISD.

John Vinzant (M.M. in composition, '20) presented a paper on "Sed Non Eodem Modo: Comparing Ludomusicology to Nineteenth-Century Musikwissenschaft" at two international video game conferences: Ludo 2020 (hosted by the Ludomusicology Research Group and the University of Malta) and the North American Conference on Video Game Music. He has now been invited by the *Journal of Sound and Music in Games and Game Studies* to submit his work for publication.



Jett Walker (B.M. in music studies, '13; M.M. in trombone performance, '20) has been accepted in the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music for Trombone Performance. In addition to Cincinnati, Jett was accepted into and offered assistantships at the Eastman School of Music, University of Miami, University of Colorado, Arizona State University, and the University of North Texas.





Adam Schroeder – Distinguished Jazz Musician

Adam Schroeder (B.M. in jazz studies, '00) was recently featured among the distinguished alumni in the 2020 College Report. During his time at the then-Southwest Texas State University, Schroeder studied under Dr. Keith Winking and Dr. James Polk. After completing his B.M. in Jazz Studies, Schroeder went on to complete an M.M. in Jazz Studies from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University Long Beach in 2010. Mr. Schroeder currently serves as Assistant Professor of Jazz and Commercial Music as well as the Assistant Director of the Division of Jazz and Commercial Music at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Schroeder is an in-demand global guest artist and clinician.

Beyond his educational success, Schroeder has established himself as an influential Baritone Saxophonist in the global jazz community. Schroeder is a Yamaha, D'Addario Reeds, and Capri Recording Artist who regularly leads his own quartet across the country. In addition to his quartet, Mr. Schroeder's performance achievements include Grammy-Award-winning and -nominated albums, playing with Lady Gaga's "Jazz & Piano Shows",

the Los Angeles & Las Vegas Philharmonics, the Ray Charles Orchestra, Michael Bublé, John Beasley's MONK'estra, the Bob Mintzer Big Band, the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, the Count Basie Orchestra, and with Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band. He also has many television performance credits.

Schroeder reflects fondly upon his time in the Texas State School of Music. "[Southwest Texas State] as I knew it was an amazing place to study and grow," Schroeder told us. "I'm happy to see the University thriving, and it's an honor to call it home."

Congratulations!

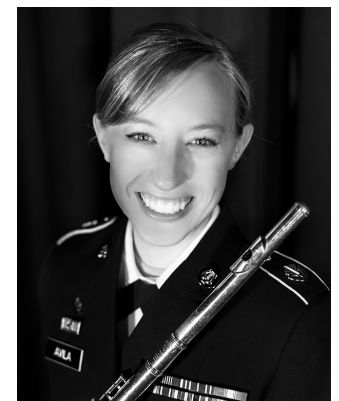
Krystyn Jensen (B.A. in Music, '07), Administrative Assistant III at Texas State's School of Music, received the National Outstanding Advisor Award from Sigma Alpha Iota for her work as Chapter Advisor to the Texas State University Theta Omega chapter. Since being initiated into Theta Omega in Spring 2004, she has been active in SAI, serving in multiple collegiate and alumni chapter officer positions (including President at both levels) and at the national level as the Kappa A Province Officer from 2012 to 2015. She has proudly served as the Theta Omega Chapter Advisor since Fall 2015. In the words of the Theta Omega chapter, "[p]assion flows through her, into our chapter members, and is contagious to everyone she meets. She guides us in so many ways and yet gives us the independence that we need. She pushes us to do better than our best and continues to provide us with encouragement and motivation to support our campus, community, and the national organization in every way possible. She constantly reminds us that SAI is bigger than our small chapter in San Marcos, Texas. She reminds us that our time with SAI is not just the time we spend in the School of Music classrooms holding our chapter meetings, but that it continues afterward with alumnae membership."



In the Spotlight

Andres Avila graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music with emphasis in Jazz Performance in 2014. He was a student of Dr. Todd Oxford and Dr. Russell Haight. He won an audition with the United States Army Bands, beginning a military career with the United States Army Europe Band and Chorus in Sembach, Germany. Mr. Avila performed throughout Europe in venues such as the International Choral Festival in Montreux, Switzerland, the Hannover Messe Google Convention (attended by former President, Barack Obama). He was awarded the Army Achievement Medal for performing and teaching and the Army Commendation Medal in December 2018 acknowledging his musical arrangements produced for multiple ensembles in the USAREUR Band and Chorus including Concert Band, Brass and Woodwind Quintets, Show Band, Dixie Band and Chorus. Mr. Avila is currently stationed at the 1st Armored Division Band at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Valerie Cowan, who earned a Master's degree in flute performance from Texas State in 2014, recently earned the position of Flute Instructor at the Army School of Music at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, VA. She will be responsible for coaching student chamber ensembles and teaching lessons and master classes to all of the Army's incoming flutists as well as assessing and teaching Army flutists who attend Advanced and Senior Leadership courses at the School of Music. While at the Army School of Music, she will also have the opportunity to perform with the faculty woodwind quintet on university tours and at conferences across the country. – Valerie is currently the Flute Section Leader of the 282nd Army Band at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Her job as an Army Musician involves performing in university recruiting tours and community outreach concerts with the band's woodwind quintet, marching in ceremonial military functions, and leading the flute section in concert band tours and holiday shows.



Gilbert Elorreaga, who graduated with his Bachelor's degree from Texas State in 2003, is a trumpeter for Latin-funk and cumbia powerhouse Grupo Fantasma and progressive funk ensemble Brownout based out of Austin, Texas. With Grupo, Gilbert is a 2008 Grammy Award nominee and a 2010 Grammy winner in the Best Latin Rock category for Grupo's album *El Existencial*, and was the backing band for several tours with the late artist Prince. For his contributions to the Austin music scene, he is an inductee of the Austin Music Hall of Fame. Along with his performing successes, Gilbert remains a dedicated teacher. He has maintained an 80-strong studio of the next generation of trumpeters since 2000. He's placed students in the highly competitive Texas All-State Bands / Orchestras every year for the last decade. Students from his studio have gone on to win scholarships to some of the most prestigious music programs in the country, including the University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas, Baylor, Cleveland Institute of Music, San Francisco Conservatory, Mannes School of Music and Eastman. Gilbert lives in Austin with wife Laura and two little girls, Elena and Ashley. His love for the San Antonio Spurs is only second to his love for his family. He is an alumnus of Texas State University.



Alma N. Garcia received her B.A. in Psychology with a music minor from Southwest Texas State University in 2003. She began teaching Orchestra at Dr. J. G. Cigarroa Middle School in Laredo, Texas. Under her leadership, the CMS Orchestra earned 14 Sweepstakes Awards with 15 straight-one division ratings in the Sight-Reading portion of UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest. Alma began assisting the mariachi at CMS in 2009 and has been the Mariachi Director for Mariachi Caporal and Mariachi Juvenil Caporal 8 years. She served as clinician for the Region XIV MS and HS Mariachi in 2010, 2016, and 2017. Several of her students are selected for the All-Region Orchestra and All-Region Mariachi every year and have earned numerous 1st Division ratings at UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest. Alma currently serves as the Region XIV Middle School Orchestra Coordinator. In December 2019, she received her MS in school counseling from TAMIU (Laredo).

Chris Herring is a retired music educator with over thirty years of teaching experience. He directed award-winning bands in Carrizo Springs, Wharton ISD, and at Madison High School in San Antonio, where he taught for 25 years. "In my 30 years as a band director, my professors at SWTSU/Texas State always stayed in touch. Charles Hurt, Jack Laumer, Dr. John Schmidt, Dr. David Pino, Doug Skinner, Dr. Russel Riepe, and John Stansberry who arrived at SWTSU after my graduation. John was a clinician for my bands at Madison HS on many occasions. Mr. Stansberry was my go-to whenever I needed to borrow an out-of-print composition or discuss music over a cup of coffee. While teaching in Carrizo Springs, the SWTSU faculty woodwind and brass quintets drove 200 miles to South Texas in order to perform and give master classes on the All State Band and Orchestra Music to students from all over the region. I still communicate with my former music faculty, even those I did not have the opportunity to study with. I'm very proud to be an alumnus of Texas State, where alumni are remembered forever by their fantastic mentors." Chris is also an expert trout fishing guide in New Mexico.



Pictures from the TXST Music Alumni Reunion at the 2020 TMEA Convention











Texas State Faculty Offer 1:1 Match for Donations

A Note from Alumna Sunnie Oh (M.M. in Music, '02):



Dr. Kwak with current students and recent graduates

“Texas State’s School of Music is in the process of establishing a keyboard scholarship endowment. My husband and I are donating \$50 per month to this endowment. The scholarships will benefit pianists, including those who accompany other students. Thus, this scholarship fund will benefit the entire School of Music. Several faculty, among them Dr. Jason Kwak (Coordinator of the Piano Area), have pledged to match all alumni contributions 1:1. For example, for a donation of \$10, one of the faculty will donate another \$10; for a \$100 donation, a faculty will donate \$100; etc. To donate, use the form at <https://secure.ua.txstate.edu> and click on ‘Search for a designation not listed’ to do a keyword search for ‘Keyboard’. Chose the ‘Scholarship Fund for the Keyboard Area in the School of Music’. No amount is too small or too large! Future Texas State music students will thank you!”

Want to Help?

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

- Give us feedback as we revise our curricula
- Establish an endowment
- Become a mentor
- Contribute to a scholarship fund

For more information, contact MusicAlumni@MusicAlumni.net

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