

2017-18 Annual Report for the Music Committee

Chair: Peter Diamessis

This report is a brief update on the work of the Cornell Concert Series (CCS) Faculty Committee on Music for the 2017-18 academic year. In addition to three members recruited at the end of the 2016-17 season, Emeritus Prof. Jerrold Meinwald (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), Senior Lecturer Ed Intemann (Performance Media and Arts), and undergraduate engineering student, Nikhil Ranganathan, four new graduate student members joined the committee to provide further diversity of perspective. These new additions include Zoe Weiss, Theodora Serbanescu-Martin and Zoe Weiss, all from the School of Music, and Shantanu Naidu from the Johnson School of Business. All committee members have worked with the CCS Manager, Deb Justice, and the CCS Publicity and Production Coordinator, Mike Sparhuber, to continue improving and evolving the Concert Series and various related musical activities on campus. Note that Nikhil Ranganathan left the committee early in the Fall Semester, whereas, very sadly, Prof. Meinwald passed away in the later part of the Spring Semester. As the academic year is reaching its conclusion, we are working toward identifying new committee members, across faculty, staff and student bodies with the aim of adding as much diversity as possible to FCOM.

During the 2017-18 academic year, the Faculty Committee on Music met six times. Our discussions at the meetings consisted of finalizing the schedule of performances and engagement activities for the CCS in 2018-2019 and exploring possible invitations to artists in 2019-2020. In addition to reviewing our expanding agenda of community engagement, we also discussed various financial matters, our position in the regional arts scene, and strategies for optimizing attendance at concerts from both the student and non-student components of the audience.

The internationally-reputed artists invited during the 2017-18 season represented a mix of classical, jazz, and world genres: Catalyst Quartet, Latif Bolat, The St. Thomas Choir, Alicia Olatuja, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Jeremy Denk, and the Danish Quartet.

Concert manager Deb Justice has continued her efforts to improve CCS customer relations management and community outreach, two highly intertwined efforts. The new ticketing software implemented last year has been fine-tuned, allowing customers optimized online access to ticketing options. The \$25 student membership program (for learners from kindergarten to grad-school) that we implemented last year drew increased student attendance. Our social media following has also tripled over the past 2 years.

The committee has been supporting increased engagement by the CCS, both at Cornell and in the broader Ithaca community. We held master classes for Cornell students with 2 of our visiting artists, and supported multi-day residencies with 3 CCS artists that included students in open-to-the-public lecture-demonstrations and community workshops. Supplemental funding for these expanded activities has come from external and internal grants, secured by the CCS concert manager. Funds from the Jazz Touring Network/Mid-Atlantic Arts Organization defray the cost of our jazz programming and outreach, while funding from Engaged Cornell (first in the form of a \$10k Curriculum Development Grant, and now increased to the next level of \$60k) allows CCS to interface with the music department and community to optimize educational opportunities for CCS artists and Cornell students. This competitive grant takes an important step in confirming the value of engaged performance on our campus. Moreover, our grant was the only purely arts/humanities project awarded funding, out of 23 working groups. Finally, note that the funding from Engaged Cornell is strictly focused on the educational activities listed above. This particular funding cannot be used to pay the performance fees and travel/accommodation fees of CCS artists.

On a financial front, the CCS remains healthy with the fixed allocation of \$136.8K.