



**Cornell University**  
**College of Engineering**

School of Civil and  
Environmental Engineering  
Peter Diamessis  
Professor  
Environmental Fluid Mechanics and  
Hydrology  
105 Hollister Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853  
Tel: 1-607-255-1719  
Fax: 1-607-255-9004  
e-mail: [pid38@cornell.edu](mailto:pid38@cornell.edu)  
website: [www.cee.cornell.edu/pid38](http://www.cee.cornell.edu/pid38)

Ithaca, June 28, 2019

Prof. Charles Van Loan  
Dean of Faculty  
Day Hall, Cornell University

Dear Charlie,

I am sending this note as a brief update on the work of the Cornell Concert Series (CCS) Faculty Committee on Music (FCOM) for the 2018-19 academic year. The new members recruited to the committee this year were Laura Taylor (Associate Director of Faculty & Scholar Services at the Office of Global Learning) and Ben Ortiz (Assistant Curator of the Hip-Hop Collection in the Rare Archives of the Krohl Library). Mrs. Taylor was actively involved in committee activities. However, Mr. Ortiz, presumably due to overcommitment on other fronts, was minimally involved. As such, it was mutually agreed with him that he step down at the end of the 2018-19 Academic Year. Of the existing members, following the sad loss of Prof. Jerrold Meinwald in late Spring 2018, we also mourned the unexpected passing of Ed Intemann, Senior Lecturer in Performing Arts.

I am stepping down as chair of FCOM upon submission of this report. I served as FCOM chair for 5 years and was also a committee member for another 3 years prior to becoming chair. Bruce Johnson, Senior Research Faculty in the Neurosciences, has graciously agreed to become the new committee chair. As we planned my exit, we have worked toward identifying new committee members, across faculty, staff and student bodies with the aim of adding as much diversity as possible to FCOM. In the closing weeks of Spring 2019, and few weeks thereafter, we added 4 new members to the committee:

- a) Nikolaos Bouklas (Assistant Professor in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering).
- b) Laurie Damiani (Director of International Affairs at Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs).
- c) Nidia Reyes-Gil (Graduate Student in Civil and Environmental Engineering).
- d) Michelle Delco (Assistant Research Professor, Department of Clinical Sciences and Staff Surgeon at the College of Veterinary Medicine).

During the 2018-19 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 2019-2020 and exploring possible invitations to artists in 2020-2021. In addition to refining 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 2018-19 season represented a mix of the world's most developed musical traditions: Roomful of Teeth, Jennifer Koh and Vijay Iyer, Béla Fleck, Zakir Hussain, and Edgar Meyer, A Far Cry with Simone Dinnerstein, John Scofield, Christina and Michelle Naughton, Jack DeJohnette, Leo Genovese, Joe Lovano and Esperanza Spalding.

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. Our \$25 student membership program (for learners from kindergarten to grad-school), now in its second year, grew over 250% . Our social media following has also quadrupled over the past 3 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 additionally supported expanded multi-day residencies with 2 CCS artists. These included Cornell students in open-to-the-public lecture-demonstrations community workshops, as well as trips where our professional musicians worked with local school students and at Greater Ithaca Activities Center. Supplemental funding for these expanded activities has come from external and internal grants, secured by Deb Justice, the CCS concert manager. Funds from the Jazz Touring Network/Mid-Atlantic Arts Organization defray the cost of our jazz programing 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. Nevertheless, we have ongoing concerns about maintaining CCS' reputation as a flagship presenting series among our Ivy League and wider network of peer institutions. We strive to present on the level of Harvard and Yale, and have been trying to bring in larger ensembles on a multi-year level, but prices are high. Our audiences consistently remind us that the CCS had historically had the budget to bring renowned orchestras and larger ensembles. While our current budget allows us to bring one chamber orchestra per a year, full-fledged orchestras remain beyond our financial capabilities. To stand out among our peers, a boost of the allocation by an additional \$50K—even for one year—would allow us to add one full-sized orchestra to the CCS program.

We thank you for your continuing support in allowing us to sustain a high impact factor series that has been bringing the best music to Ithaca since 1903.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Diamessis', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Diamessis