



Cornell University

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Prof. Eve DeRosa, Dean of Faculty, Day Hall, Cornell University

Dear Prof. DeRosa,

We are sending this note as a brief update on the work of the Cornell Concert Series (CCS) Faculty Committee on Music (FCOM) for the 2021-22 academic year. COVID-19 threw the world into unprecedented circumstances, with particularly strong effects on the live music sector. We also had the upheaval of Concert Series manager Deborah Justice being out on maternity leave in fall '21. With copious pre-planning and the exceptional job performance of CCS Publicity and Production Co-Ordinator Mike Sparhuber, the Cornell Concert Series remained online during fall '21, continuing to provide access to the world's great musical traditions and conversations with the artists. In Spring '22, the full CCS staff was back and we returned to presenting concerts in Bailey Hall and live engagement activities.

FCOM committee membership stayed steady this year, continuing to further our goals of better reflecting the demographics of Cornell faculty and staff. The undergraduate and graduate FCOM representatives on the committee were not available for our meetings, and we will make a greater effort to actively include them in the coming year. We need their perspectives. All other committee members worked with us and Mike Sparhuber to improve and evolve the Concert Series and various virtual related musical activities on campus and beyond. Our work to diversify the committee will intensify in 22-23 as some members' terms are expiring. We will use this opportunity to make extra efforts broaden Cornell community engagement in the FCOM this coming year.

During the 2021-22 academic year, the Faculty Committee on Music met three times, both virtually and once live. Our discussions at the meetings finalized the schedule of performances and engagement activities for the CCS in 2021-2022 and explored possible invitations to artists in 2022-23 and beyond. We also discussed various financial matters, focusing on stewardship as the concert industry re-emerges from the pandemic. Our audiences remain cautious, but those who do attend are overjoyed at being able to gather and enjoy liveness once again. The internationally-reputed artists invited during the 2021-22 season represented a range of the world's greatest musical traditions: Iraqi-American instrumentalist Amir Elsfar virtually presented his Two Rivers project (and Cornell Concert Series was able to provide leadership within the Mid-Atlantic Arts' Jazz Touring Network to make this project available to other regional presenters); Stefon Harris, Dean of the Manhattan School of Music, brought his artistry of jazz vibraphones; Tibetan singer/activist Yungchen Lhamo brought songs that recognized the humanity in us all. In the live spring, CCS worked with the Onecomposer project to present soprano Karen Slack and the Miro Quartet. Our joint philanthropic outreach brought hundreds of community members and students who would not have had access to this concert presenting previously silenced voices of historical Black female composers.

Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, following three Covid-based reschedules, we were finally able to present the Irish supergroup Lunasa. In April, we brought the genre-bending Percussion Collective, whose performance included an audiovisual piece focusing on the world's oceans and human impacts. Finally, we began pilot testing a potential annual tradition of presenting the Rochester Philharmonic in a Mother's Day matinee performance. Hundreds of families enjoyed the performance and we are bringing them back in 2023.

Following encouragement from Deans DeRosa and Kudva, CCS manager Deborah Justice has been working with FCOM to plan more ambitious programming and outreach. In 23-24, we are planning the first year of a continuing Cornell Concert Series residency program. We normally include some engagement activities, but moving forward we are going to intentionally build a multi-day residency each year. This artist residency will partner with other departments so that our guest artists can deeply engage with students and community members off the stage. For example, an artist like Grammy-winning violinist Jennifer Koh could come for a week, partnering with Asian and East Asian studies to discuss her work on discrimination within classical music, as well as Psychology given her interest in music and the mind. We are also developing deeper ties with local schools to ensure contact hours with area students, broadly writ. Justice has been in touch with administrators of the A&S Dean's Arts Unplugged initiative who are excited to partner on launching our residency series as a university-level event. Our plans for the concert presentations of 2022-2023 are almost complete. We look forward to sharing the concert schedule with you as soon as it is finalized. We welcome any suggestions you have for us to explore specific artists or genres of music that you would like to see represented at Cornell.

On a financial front, CCS remains healthy returning to our usual fixed allocation of \$136.8K. While substantive cuts were able to be absorbed for virtual programing, our world-class caliber of live programming relies on the full allocation. Our annual priorities about maintaining CCS' reputation as a flagship presenting series among our Ivy League and wider network of peer institutions continue as the world emerges from COVID. Concert Series has been presenting the world's highest quality musical traditions since 1903. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Deborah Justice".

Deborah Justice, PhD.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bruce R. Johnson".

Bruce R. Johnson, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate and Lecturer