

Upcoming Events

**“Bach by the Bridge”
J.S. Bach’s 330th Birthday Celebration**
Downtown Houghton
March 21 • 2 - 4 p.m.

“Bach by the Bridge” Concert
Finnish American Heritage Center • Hancock
March 21 • 7 p.m.

CCSA Honors Recital
Chapel of St. Matthew • Hancock
March 26 • 6 p.m.

Family Duet Recital
McArdle Theatre • Houghton
April 11 • 2 p.m.

**Keweenaw Youth Symphony Orchestra
& Preparatory Strings Concert**
Calumet Theatre • Calumet
April 15 • 6 p.m.

Rebecca Bergstrom’s Senior Recital
Bethany Baptist Church • Dollar Bay
April 19 • 2 p.m.

Twinkle Graduation & Group Class Recital
E.L. Wright Studios • Hancock
April 22 • 6 p.m.

Spring Piano Recital
E.L. Wright Studios • Hancock
May 9 • 2 p.m.

Chamber Music Recital
Finnish American Heritage Center • Hancock
May 17 • 2 p.m.

Dear Friends of the CCSA,
As the president of the CCSA Board, I’d like to welcome you to another issue of Musical Musings. I think we all understand the value of a musical education, and the goal of CCSA is to make sure that such an education is available in spite of our remote location. We are grateful to all the parents and friends of the organization who have helped us out so much over the years.



Holiday Recital 2014

Teaching students one-on-one or in small groups is labor-intensive, and therefore expensive. And, over time, the cost of labor increases faster than inflation (the article on Baumol’s Cost Disease in Wikipedia has a good explanation of why this is true). So, the cost of the music education that CCSA provides is not only inherently high, but is also always increasing.

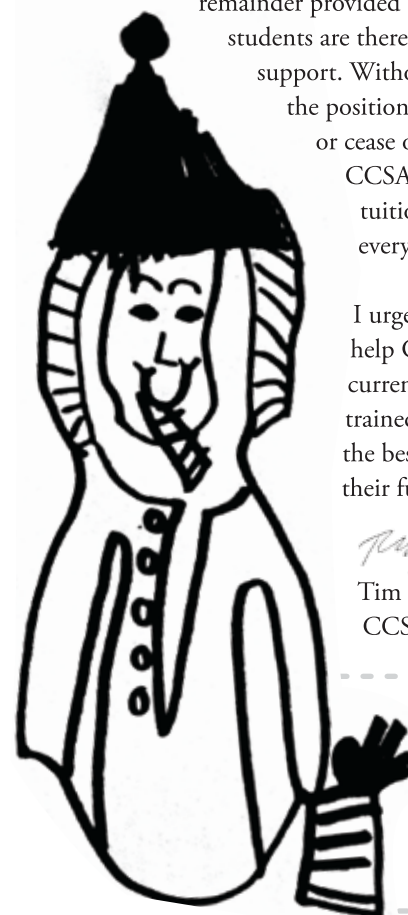
We have as a goal to ensure that students are able to afford to learn to play an instrument, and have long been in the position where the tuition payments do not cover the full cost of student instruction.

Currently, only about 75% of the cost is covered by direct tuition, with the remainder provided by external grants and donations. All of our students are therefore receiving some level of supplemental support. Without these additional funds, CCSA would be in the position of either having to increase tuitions markedly, or cease operations altogether. For nearly 40 years, CCSA has been able to operate on a mixture of tuitions and grants, and we have always needed everyone’s donations in order to keep operating.

I urge everyone to provide what support they can to help CCSA continue to hold tuitions at their current level while still being able to afford our trained instructors who ensure that the children have the best opportunity to learn their instruments to their full potential.



Tim Eisele
CCSA Board President



Help us celebrate
“Bach by the Bridge”
more inside...



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Libby Meyer, D.M.A.
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Violin & Viola Instructor
Amanda Plummer, Ed.D.
Piano Instructor
Milt Olsson, D.M.A.
KYSO Director
Lindy Wagner, M.M.
Violin Instructor
Preparatory Strings Director
Katie Pfau
Violin & Viola Instructor
Ben Holtz
Assistant Cello Instructor
Erin McKenzie
KYSO Assistant and Group Cello
Carla Phillips
Accompanist

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Graduating Student Spotlight:

Rebecca Bergstrom

How long have you played the viola? I've played the viola specifically for about four years, and I played the violin for the six years prior to my switch.

What do you enjoy about playing the viola and what do you find most challenging? I think my favorite thing about playing any musical instrument, or singing for that matter, is how calm and composed it makes me feel, like it just releases the flood of peacefulness when I'm really frazzled or just even if my mind is focused on one too many things at once. I honestly don't think hard at all when I'm playing, which is why I find it so peaceful, because finally my brain isn't working in overdrive and I feel the most relaxed I can be. My conscious mind is blank and the music is just coming from that blank canvas in my head. The most challenging thing for me is—like almost everyone else who plays music—to not try and play something so fast that my fingers can't keep up with it, and everything goes haywire. That and just taking the time to work out the bugs slowly—because nobody likes to play the same two measures over and over a billion times—but that's just how you have to do it for some songs, because they are tough. If there's anything that being a musician for as long as I have has taught me, it's that if I don't stick my neck out and try something just beyond my capabilities, I'll never get that good in the first place. The perfect example of this is the first time Libby organized the Violapalooza, and she offered to let me play either the 2nd viola (the really hard part) or the 4th viola (the really easy part) of the third movement from Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. So, being the stubborn and proud little thing I am, I took the harder part, and fought through it until the performance, and then after it was all said and done and we went back to the Suzuki book work, all the book pieces were almost ridiculously easy!

Besides playing at recitals and concerts, have you played anywhere else? I actually played in the pit orchestra for the Calumet Players' performances of Cinderella by Rodgers and Hammerstein, which was incredibly fun and probably one of my favorite gigs to have played ever! I've also played for my family and such, just for fun.

What is your favorite type of music to play and do you play other instruments? What do you listen to? I love playing Irish and Celtic fiddle tunes on my viola. It sounds so amazing and it makes me want to dance around! I sing, I used to play the clarinet, and I've been slowly teaching myself guitar too. But mostly I listen to 80's era rock, because of the musicality of the guitar players. They are absolutely AMAZING!

What do you do when you're not playing viola? With all your activities, how do you fit practicing in? I'm mostly working on school stuff and maybe going and spending time with my friends and boyfriend, also drama club, and I used to be the captain of my school's cheerleading squad, until the end of this past football season. When it comes to fitting practicing in, I've struggled with it for years. What it's come down to is that I will maybe not practice as often as my parents and teacher might like, but when I do practice I'm intensely focused on it and get a lot done, which is what works for me.

Is the rest of your family musical, do you play together? Every other person in my immediate family plays at least one instrument, and we all sing, so we do sing and play together a lot. It's almost unavoidable. Playing together is often a good motivation for my youngest sisters to practice if they get to play their songs with me and my sister Grace (who plays violin).

What are your plans after high school? I am going to be attending Michigan Tech University for mechanical engineering, and hopefully getting a Spanish International minor as well as participating in the Tech Concert Choir and the KSO as a violist.

To [instructor] Libby: Thank you for not letting me take the easy way on the Brandenburg, and for pushing me to do the whole piece, it's definitely been the toughest thing I've ever done musically, and I'm so glad you didn't let me quit.



Instructor Lindy working on theory with Elizabeth.

"SAT" Test for Strings

CCSA's first Student Achievement Test (SAT) for Strings with the Michigan Music Teachers Association was held the last weekend in February. This test assessed five skill areas: performance, theory, aural awareness, technique and sight reading. CCSA violin and viola students worked hard to prepare three accompanied performance pieces for judging. Dr. Barbara Rhyneer, faculty at NMU, served as judge and offered a workshop afterwards on tone production for string players. CCSA string instructors carried out theory tests while members from Mu Beta Psi, national honorary music fraternity at MTU, volunteered as crowd control. Accompanists Dr. Amanda Plummer, Dr. Leslie Dukes and Susan Byykkonen provided support on piano for the performance portion of the test.

The SAT test serves as a useful tool in classical music education by motivating students (and instructors alike) and providing constructive feedback on skills learned. The CCSA is proud to offer this opportunity to our students and grateful for Dr. Barbara Rhyneer's participation as inaugural judge.



CCSA string students participate in a workshop on tone production by Dr. Barbara Rhyneer (second from right).



Graduating Student Spotlight:

Elise Cheney Makens

How long have you played the cello? Fourteen years.

What do you enjoy about playing the cello and what do you find most challenging? I love playing the cello because, I'm biased, but I think it's the most beautiful-sounding instrument and it is so versatile and full of possibilities. When I'm playing I'm usually just thinking about the music and the phrasing, or sometimes I'm reflecting on my day or the mood of the music. The most difficult part of playing the cello is probably carrying it around. Through the cello, I've learned that its important to take risks because I have always gained something from every experience with my cello, even if it was a "failure."

Besides playing at recitals and concerts, have you played anywhere else? Yes. I played in a quartet in Appleton, WI and at Interlochen last summer.

What is your favorite type of music to play and listen to? I love Bach and the Suites so that is what I like to play the most. I like listening to classical music, especially while doing homework, but otherwise I'm usually listening to something by Jack Johnson.



Photo courtesy of Emily Dennis

What do you like to do when you're not playing cello? Considering all your activities, how do you fit practicing in? I play tennis, work in a lab at Michigan Tech, and I'm in lots of AP classes. It can be difficult to find time to practice but I try to set specific goals for what I want to accomplish for each practice session even if it's just for 10 or 15 minutes.

Is the rest of your family musical, do you play together? Do you play any other instruments? No, my parents don't play instruments but they have a great appreciation for music. I want to learn how to play the ukelele.

Do you have a memorable "musical moment" or accomplishment? I have a million favorite memories of music, but my most recent favorite is playing songs from "Frozen" in cello choir at Interlochen.

What are your plans after high school? I'll be attending Michigan Tech next year and continuing to play the cello.



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