

FRIDAY FANFARE - SEPTEMBER 25, 2026  
**NEWSLETTER****DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

Dr. Chris Combest, Associate Director - [chris.combest@mtsu.edu](mailto:chris.combest@mtsu.edu)



As we move deeper into the fall semester, I have been thinking about what it means to welcome someone into a School of Music. Sometimes that welcome begins with a concert or a classroom visit. Sometimes it begins simply by inviting someone to experience our community for a day.

Recently, we had the opportunity to welcome choir students from the Bahamas to the School of Music. Visits like this remind us that music has a remarkable ability to bring people together across communities, cultures, and experiences. I am grateful to everyone who helped our guests feel at home at MTSU.

Soon, we will extend that welcome again through **MTSU Music IRL** on November 3. Prospective students will spend the day experiencing what life here is really like, attending classes, rehearsing with ensembles, meeting faculty and students, and discovering the many paths available to them through music. Interested in joining us? [Registration is now open at this link.](#)

For those of us who are here every day, it can be easy to overlook what makes this place special. Seeing the School of Music through the eyes of a visitor gives us a chance to see it anew. Sharing those experiences with one another also helps us recognize the remarkable work happening across our School every day.

With that in mind, we are making a change to your Friday Fanfare. Beginning with our next issue, **Friday Fanfare will move from a weekly publication to a bi-weekly format, with the next issue arriving on October 16.** This will give us an opportunity to bring together more of the stories, accomplishments, events, and people that reflect the life of the School of Music, while creating a fuller snapshot of our community with each issue. We will continue sharing timely news and upcoming events through our other School of Music communication channels between editions.

As our calendar continues to fill with concerts, events, and opportunities, I hope we will keep opening our doors, sharing our stories, showing up for one another, and making room for new people to discover this community. Every note counts, every story contributes, and every welcome matters.

**FEATURED FACULTY**

**Dr. Paul Osterfield**, Professor of Music at Middle Tennessee State University, is a composer and educator whose creative work has been an important part of the MTSU School of Music community. At MTSU, he teaches music composition and theory, working closely with students as they develop their own creative voices and deepen their understanding of music. Osterfield's compositions have also been regularly featured at MTSU, including multiple premieres by the Stones River Chamber Players and performances by university ensembles. His creative work has earned MTSU's Outstanding Creative Arts Faculty Award, along with recognition from the Tennessee Arts Commission, BMI, ASCAP, and the National Federation of Music Clubs. Beyond MTSU, Osterfield's music has been performed throughout the United States and internationally, with appearances at the Cambridge Summer Music Festival and World Saxophone Congress. His works have also been released on the Albany, Equilibrium, Ravello, and Navona labels.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

On September 18, **MTSU Schola Cantorum** welcomed the University of The Bahamas Chamber Choir for a choral exchange and combined performance as part of the ensemble's two-day residency at MTSU. During their visit, the UB students spent time in both the School of Music and the **Department of Recording Industry**, experiencing several sides of MTSU's creative community. In Hinton Hall, the two choirs performed for one another before joining together on stage for two works. Among them was the National Anthem of The Bahamas, in an arrangement by **Ezekiel Thompson**, an alumnus of both the University of The Bahamas and MTSU. **MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee** and **Andrew Oppmann** joined us for the event, and the exchange will also be featured on an upcoming episode of MTSU's Out of the Blue. We are grateful to our guests from The Bahamas and to everyone who helped make this residency possible. It was a joyful and meaningful opportunity for our students to listen, perform, learn, and build connections through music.



Welcome to our newest **Graduate Teaching Assistants**! The MTSU School of Music recently welcomed our incoming class of Graduate Teaching Assistants with a chance to gather, connect, and prepare for the year ahead. The group shared lunch together with School of Music staff and administrators before **Dr. McWhirter, Director of Graduate Studies**, led the new GTAs through orientation. We are excited to welcome these musicians and educators to our graduate community:

**Deaven Knowles, Wind Band Conducting**  
**Peter Pontes, Tuba Performance**  
**Carlos Meira, Jazz Studies**  
**Nelson Rivera, Jazz Studies**  
**Nathan VanBerkom, Percussion Performance**  
**Gabe Miller, Choral Conducting**  
**Abbie Barton, Piano Performance**  
**Miranda Hartnett, Theory/Composition**  
**Fei Lo, Orchestral Conducting**  
**Olivia Achcet, Trumpet Performance**



Graduate Teaching Assistants play an important role in the life of the School of Music, contributing their talents to our classrooms, ensembles, studios, and community while continuing to grow as musicians, educators, and scholars. We are glad to have them with us at MTSU and look forward to all they will contribute in the year ahead!

## FACULTY NEWS

**Dr. Mei Han** recently traveled to **Cape Town, South Africa**, to perform with **Chambre Rouge**, her world music trio, at WOMAD, the internationally renowned festival celebrating music, arts, and dance from across the globe. The trio presented three concerts, sharing its distinctive cross-cultural approach with audiences in Cape Town. Dr. Han's visit also extended beyond the concert stage. At the University of Cape Town, she led a workshop collaborating with musicians from South Africa, India, France, and Réunion Island. She also joined UCT music students and fellow WOMAD artists for a conversation about the place of traditional music in a rapidly changing world. The discussion explored global musical trends, the possibilities and challenges of cross-cultural collaboration, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence on musical creativity, performance, and production. Through performance, teaching, and conversation, Dr. Han's time in South Africa reflects the ways music can connect cultures, encourage meaningful exchange, and open new creative possibilities across geographic and artistic boundaries.



MTSU School of Music faculty took their music from Hinton Hall to the road! Faculty members **Todd Waldecker, clarinet**, **Adam Clark, piano**, and **Bryan Hayslett, cello**, joined forces for a September 17 recital in Hinton Hall featuring music by Aaron Copland, Peter Schickele, Paquito D'Rivera, and Robert Muczynski. The trio then took the program to Lee University on September 23 for a repeat performance, sharing their artistry beyond the MTSU campus and connecting with another university music community.

Missed the Hinton Hall performance? Watch the full recital here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/rkdISfrOaxA?si=U0XjJGUH6ChNYN05>



Congratulations to MTSU School of Music faculty member **Dr. Adam Clark** on the release of his new solo piano album, *Fantasy in F-sharp*! Recorded in Hinton Music Hall, the album brings together works by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Clementi, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Scriabin, with every work connected by a common thread: each is in F-sharp major or F-sharp minor. The project was supported by an MTSU MT-IGO grant and represents a wonderful collaboration among School of Music faculty. **Dr. Joseph Morgan** contributed the program notes, while **Dr. Michael Fleming** served as recording engineer.



## ALUMNI NEWS



Pictured from left: Wiff Rudd, Jeanette Rudd, and Grace O'Connell.

Congratulations to MTSU School of Music alumna **Grace O'Connell**! Grace, a 2023 graduate of the MTSU Trumpet Studio, has earned a permanent position with the New Hampshire Music Festival Orchestra, where she joins Wiff Rudd, Professor of Trumpet at Baylor University, as Co-Principal Trumpeter. Grace also joins some familiar MTSU connections in the NHMF brass section. Music Industry alumnus and trombonist **Tanner Antonetti** and MTSU Professor of Trombone and Euphonium **Dr. David Loucky** are also members of the orchestra. It's always exciting to see our alumni building careers, making music at a high level, and representing MTSU in ensembles across the country. Congratulations, Grace! The New Hampshire Music Festival will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2027.

For ten years, the **Country Music Association Foundation's Music Teachers of Excellence program** has recognized outstanding educators whose influence reaches far beyond the music classroom. Throughout the program's entire history, MTSU School of Music alumni have been among those receiving this national recognition. We are proud to celebrate five MTSU Music Education alumni selected as 2026 Music Teachers of Excellence:

- **Michael Aymett** | Riverdale High School, Murfreesboro
- **Aurora Foster** | Woodland Middle School, Brentwood
- **Tony Hartman** | Scales Elementary School, Murfreesboro
- **Trevor Baxter** | Centennial High School, Franklin
- **Allen Kennedy** | Hume-Fogg Academic High School, Nashville

Each year, 30 educators are selected for their dedication to students and music education. This year's honorees will be celebrated at the Music Teachers of Excellence Red Carpet Gala on October 7 in Nashville. They will also receive a \$5,000 stipend to support their school music programs and participate in a year of professional development and engagement with CMA's broader music industry network. **Congratulations Michael, Aurora, Tony, Trevor and Allen!**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, 9/26 – Matt Lund Faculty Guitar, 6:00 pm  
 Sunday, 9/27 – Double Reed Day, 12:00 pm  
 Sunday, 9/27 – Double Reed Day Finale Concert, 5:00 pm  
 Sunday, 9/27 – Double Reed Day Concert, 7:00 pm  
 Monday, 9/28 – Stones River Chamber Players, 7:00 pm  
 Wednesday, 9/30 – John Lane Guest Flute Recital, 8:00 pm  
 Thursday, 10/1 – Jamey Simmons Jazz Sextet, 8:00 pm  
 Friday, 10/2 – Riley Madej Senior Comp. Recital, 6:00 pm  
 Sunday, 10/4 – Shaunna King & Olivia Johnson, 3:00 pm  
 Tuesday, 10/6 – Symphonic Band/Wind Ens., 7:30 pm  
 Thursday, 10/8 – SOAL, TEBA, & Schola Cantorum, 7:30 pm  
 Friday, 10/9 – SOMGame Night, SFA 207, 5:00 pm  
 Friday, 10/16 – Dawson/Ko Faculty Recital, 6:00 pm



# Stones River Chamber Players

7:00pm, Monday, September 28  
 Hinton Music Hall  
 6:30 Pre-concert talk with Dr. Bedford



## MTSU Double Reed Day

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2026  
 WRIGHT MUSIC BUILDING

Join us for a fun day of workshops, double reed ensemble, performances, and a special double reed version of the Scottish Highland Games!

Featuring special guests!

Hosted by MTSU Double Reed Faculty  
 Dr. Keith Sorrels, oboe/english horn  
 Dr. Staci Spring, bassoon/contrabass

**REGISTER HERE!**



## FALL SEMESTER SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN

Applications Due: Oct. 1

- » CLA Transfer Student Scholarship
- » Howard and Carolyn (Jump) Slatton Endowed Scholarship
- » Friends of Liberal Arts Endowed Scholarship

Scan QR Code To Apply



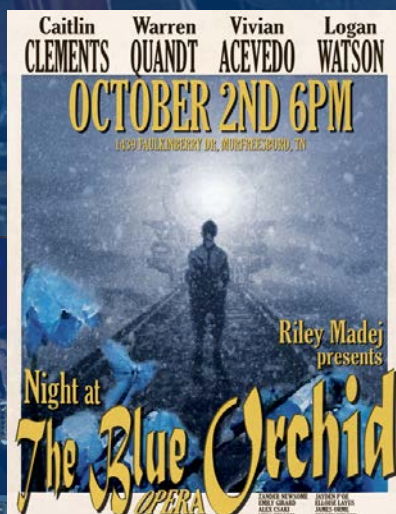
## 2026 MTSU HIGH SCHOOL HONORS ORCHESTRA

NOVEMBER 13-14

Apply now! Limited positions available!

Open by Audition to Students in the 8-12<sup>th</sup> grades

For Information and the On-Line Application  
<https://www.mtsu.edu/music/orchestra.php>



Caitlin CLEMENTS Warren QUANDT Vivian ACEVEDO Logan WATSON

## OCTOBER 2ND 6PM

1030 PAULKENBERT DR, NORFOLK, VA

Riley Madej presents

# Night at The Blue Orchid

OPERA



## MATT LUND

MTSU MUSIC FACULTY RECITAL

PERFORMING ORIGINAL SONGS ON 12-STRING ACOUSTIC GUITAR AND VOCALS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 6:00 PM  
 HINTON MUSIC HALL IN THE WRIGHT MUSIC BUILDING  
 MTSU CAMPUS

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
 SEE [WWW.MATTLUNDMUSIC.COM](http://WWW.MATTLUNDMUSIC.COM)  
 OR SEARCH MATTLUNDMUSIC ON YOUTUBE

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (ALL AGES)



## MTSU WIND ENSEMBLE and SYMPHONIC BAND JOINT CONCERT

Featuring: MICHAEL MIN

Min is an award-winning Korean-American pianist celebrated for his artistry in solo, chamber, and collaborative performances. A top prize winner of the American Prize and the Seoul National Symphony Orchestra Competition, he has graced world-renowned stages like Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and Orchestra Hall.

Tuesday, Oct 6, 2026  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Hinton Music Hall

Wind Ensemble Program:  
 Ingolf Dahl - Sinfonietta (1961)  
 George Gershwin - Rhapsody in Blue (1924)

Symphonic Band Program:  
 Steven Bryant - Whirlwind (2013)  
 Julie Giroux - Fields of Gold (2019)  
 Frank Tichelli - San Antonio Dances (2010)  
 Henry Fillmore - Rolling Thunder (1916)

Dr. Reed Thomas, Director of Bands  
 Dr. Bryan Braue, Assistant Director of Bands

The FRIDAY FANFARE is a weekly newsletter of the MTSU School of Music  
 edited by Dr. Chris Combest - [chris.combest@mtsu.edu](mailto:chris.combest@mtsu.edu)

Want to see your event, faculty, student news featured? Submit it to the [Director's Advisory Box](#)

Share your Alumni news at <https://forms.office.com/r/8Eu72excj6>

To learn more about our programs and events at the School of Music, please visit [music.mtsu.edu](http://music.mtsu.edu).

[MUSIC.MTSU.EDU](http://MUSIC.MTSU.EDU)