

# MUSIC BRINGS US TOGETHER

Whether you want to be a music teacher, performer, work in the music industry, or have a better appreciation for music, the Tell School of Music at Millersville University offers three unique degree programs and a variety of certificates.

"THE **TELL SCHOOL OF MUSIC** SEEKS TO NURTURE AND PREPARE ITS STUDENTS TO LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY MULTICULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICALLY COMPLEX SOCIETY, PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN MUSIC EDUCATION, STUDIO TEACHING, MUSIC PRODUCTION, MUSIC MANAGEMENT AND LIVE AUDIO," EXPLAINS. DR. MICHEAL HOULAHAN, CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT. "WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING AN ENRICHING ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENT. WE PROVIDE FREQUENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLO AND ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE, RESEARCH AND COLLABORATIVE SCHOLARSHIP BETWEEN FACULTY AND ALL STUDENTS. THE SYNERGY RESULTING FROM THE BREADTH OF FACULTY EXPERTISE COMBINED WITH STUDENT ENERGY CREATES A VIBRANT ARRAY OF CULTURAL EVENTS. ALL THESE SKILLS HELP OUR STUDENTS SUCCEED IN THE WORKFORCE."

In this article, we hear from two students, two alums and two faculty members.



MANNO '23

**NOAH MANNO  
'23, FROM  
BURLINGTON  
TOWNSHIP,  
NEW JERSEY**

Many people became familiar with Noah Manno during COVID because

of his work with the group Chromatic, which provided songs for the masses via Zoom. Manno is a music education and vocal performance major at Millersville who is also working on his certificate in music technology. He plans to graduate in May 2023.

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES IN MUSIC AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY, INCLUDING HOW YOU STARTED CHROMATIC.**

Since starting my studies at the Tell School of Music at Millersville University, it has been incredible. The faculty truly care about every student's

individual success and growth. I have had many opportunities which would not have been possible without the support of the faculty. I have had the pleasure of being the music director, arranger and producer for Millersville's only a cappella group, Chromatic. This past year, we competed in the International Championship for Collegiate A Cappella and placed first in our regional quarterfinal. We then placed third in our semifinal. It was so rewarding to lead a group to such esteemed recognition and success.

Additionally, we were also able to create a huge online following on the social media app TikTok. We gained around 50,000 followers and over 13 million views in a few short months. We were proud to represent the talent of the student body here at Millersville.

**WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?**

From an early age, I was always surrounded by music. Throughout my schooling, many music educators in my life inspired me to grow and become the musician I am today. Music class was always a sanctuary for me, and I hope to inspire my own students to feel just as safe and supported as I have.

**TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE PERFORMANCES OR CLASSES AT MILLERSVILLE.**

Although I am a music education student, I have had the pleasure of being one of the first students to complete the new Music Technology in Music Education Certificate. Through this program, I was able to refine my technology skills and learn how I could incorporate 21st-century music technology skills into the classroom.



THE GROUP CHROMATIC

**WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN AT MILLERSVILLE?**

In addition to Chromatic, I am part of Millersville's Chorale, an auditioned vocal ensemble. I have participated in the drumline in Millersville's marching band for three years. I am a part



of the Honors College and have completed the Research Fellows program, a three-semester research fellowship. I am a member of our University's chapter of the National Association for Music Educators. I am also a member of Phi Mu Alpha, a music fraternity.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER COLLEGE?

I plan to spread the love of music throughout my community. This could be teaching at a school, teaching private lessons, or continuing to produce and create wonderful music. My goal is to inspire and bring joy to the people around me.



CLARK '24

### ADAM CLARK '24, FROM LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

Adam Clark is working toward bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Percussion Performance.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR TIME AT MILLERSVILLE

My experiences in the Millersville music department have been interesting. From helping Dr. Barry Atticks shoot a music video with snakes in the middle of a work-in-progress house from the 1700s to being the website editor for a year, I've worn many hats. I have participated in several ensembles; however, the one I have spent the most time in is Wind Ensemble conducted by Dr. Joe Cernuto. I have participated in the Millersville Chorale and University Choir as a singer and a percussionist, and I have substituted for absent players in both the Concert Band and University Orchestra.

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?

I began my "musical journey" when I was 6 at the recommendation of my mother's music friends. I played piano for several years until I got to third grade and started the trumpet, switching to percussion four years later. When I was in eighth grade, I was approached by a senior in the Hempfield High School Marching Knights to join the band. I joined the front ensemble, or pit percussion. I participated for five years, some begrudgingly, until I eventually found my home in it.

### TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE PERFORMANCES OR CLASSES AT MILLERSVILLE.

Two immediately come to mind: Recording II with Dr. Atticks and The Art of Choral Techniques with Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell. Recording II allowed me to create music, whether recording it, mixing it or both in a studio environment. Dr. Atticks is a wealth of knowledge, and once he drinks his ninth cup of coffee, he'll tell you just about anything you need to know. Art of Choral Techniques with Dr. Gemmell has probably been my favorite education class. We learned lots of practical information about teaching voice and teaching music in general. In ACT, we learn through doing, so there was lots of singing, peer instruction and feedback. Dr. Gemmell is quite the personality and a genuine teacher who wants to see everyone succeed.

"Where words fail,  
music speaks."

*Hans Christian Andersen*

### DO YOU HAVE MENTORS OR OTHERS IN THE FIELD WHO YOU ADMIRE?

Three of my mentors at Millersville are my studio professor, Paul Murr, and two professors I've had for classes, Dr. Jeffrey Gemmell and Dr. Joe Cernuto. I tend to get in my own head, and these three have been nothing but supportive.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER COLLEGE?

I intend to go to graduate school – the "where" of it is currently a big question.

### ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

Millersville has allowed me to practice and perform my craft with like-minded individuals and provided me with the skills to go out and teach others as well. I've taught front ensembles in local high school marching bands, including Penn Manor High School, Hershey High School and Eastern York High School.

Being a music student at Millersville is not for the faint of heart. It is a lot of work, and it is important to remember why you are going to school for it in the first place. Many try to bring others down by saying, "Music isn't going to get you a job," or other ridiculous, nonsensical jabs. Without music, the world is dull, and we'd do well to remember that.



MAZZURCO MUSCATO '13

### BRITTANY MAZZURCO MUSCATO '13 FROM COLLEGEVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Brittany Mazzurco Muscato has been teaching at New York University since 2019 and currently teaches data visualization and storytelling. She also works as a senior behavioral designer for the ideas42 behavioral design team that is embedded in the NYC's mayor's office.

Before moving to New York, she was an active member of Trinity Cathedral's choir in Miami, Florida.

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?

At the risk of sounding cheesy, I cannot remember a time in my life when music wasn't important to me. I was always singing and performing in some manner or another as a child. However, it wasn't until high school that I began considering a career in music. During my high school years, my love for music evolved into a true obsession. When college application season rolled around, I couldn't imagine being happy doing anything else.

One thing that endeared Millersville's music department to me was that they believed that musicians need to be skillful as performers, educators and entrepreneurs. As someone still figuring out what her nonperformance career in music would look like, this appealed to me.

### TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE PERFORMANCES AT MILLERSVILLE.

If I had to pick just one, I would say performing in the music department's performance of Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Old Maid and The Thief*. Not only was I able to perform alongside some of my most beloved classmates, but this was my first time performing in a fully staged operatic production.

"When I hear music,  
I fear no danger.  
I am invulnerable. I see  
no foe. I am related  
to the earliest times,  
and to the latest."

*Henry David Thoreau*



## WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN AT MILLERSVILLE?

During my four years at Millersville, I was hyper focused on music and participated in many musical ensembles. I participated in several choirs (University Choir and Keystone Singers), played viola in the orchestra for a few semesters and held several positions within the music department's student-run recording studio/music label.

I also participated in a semester-long study-abroad program, where I studied at London Metropolitan University. While there, I still performed in my music classes, but I spent most of my free time trying to explore all of the sights and cultures of western Europe.

## WHY IS MUSIC IMPORTANT AT THE K-12 LEVEL?

The arts provide constructive, beautiful ways for young people to channel their emotions. Participating in music was life-changing and, at times, lifesaving. My mother struggled with illness and addiction throughout my middle and high school years. Music (and singing in particular) was my way to escape and express myself. It was the language of my heart when I didn't have the words.

## ARE THERE JOBS IN THE MUSIC FIELD?

Yes, there are jobs in the music field. The trick is that most music jobs are not exceptionally well-known, nor are they necessarily the ones we musicians might have aspired to as children. Throughout my life, I have taught private lessons, sung as a freelance soloist, been a counselor at a rock 'n' roll summer camp, served as an audio engineer, been paid section leader of a church choir, run public relations for an opera company and served as a freelance digital marketing manager for indie musicians.



CAI '20

## ANYI CAI, '20 FROM CHINA

Pianist and harpsichordist Anyi Cai was born and raised in Hubei, China. She went to the Wuhan Conservatory of Music Middle School and studied piano with professor Wu Man in 2010. In 2012, she started her musical journey in the U.S. with the acceptance into the Pre-College Advanced Music Division Program at Millersville under the guidance of Dr.

Xun Pan. Cai has given solo performances in venues including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Wiener Musikverein in Austria and the Ware Center in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?

I did not come from a musical family, but one of my cousins is a piano teacher in our home city, Wuhan, China. I took advantage of the only musical resource in our family and started having piano lessons with my cousin when I was 6.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION.

My educational journey in the U.S. began when I went to Lancaster Mennonite High School as a freshman. I was enrolled in the Pre-College Music Division at Millersville University while I was at LMH. I later attended the Tell School of Music at Millersville for my Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in piano performance and harpsichord performance. I recently earned my Master of Music degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in harpsichord performance. This fall I started my Master of Musical Arts degree at Yale University. It is a special two-year degree program founded at

Yale School of Music for students who already hold a master's degree and are seeking to further advance their training and education.

## DO YOU PERFORM AT YALE?

Students at Yale School of Music are required to perform in ensembles such as Yale Philharmonic, concerts and have their degree recitals. There are plentiful opportunities to perform within and outside of the school. For my degree program, I need to give a public recital every year, with one of them being a lecture recital.

## TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE PERFORMANCES OR CLASSES AT MILLERSVILLE.

One of my favorite performances at Millersville is surely the Winner's Circle concert in late February 2020. I performed Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor with the Millersville University Symphony Orchestra, conducted by maestro Volchansky. It was such a privilege and memorable experience.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN AT MILLERSVILLE?

I was in the Cantilena women's choir, University Choir, and orchestra during my time at Millersville. Choirs are always fun times with friends. Playing in orchestra as harpist on the keyboard and celeste player were wonderful experiences, too.



JESTER

## DR. JENNIFER JESTER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MUSIC

Dr. Jennifer Jester is a musician, educator, songwriter, entrepreneur and board-certified music therapist. She has a background performing around the world in low brass (trombone, euphonium, tuba) and as a vocalist and percussionist. She is in her seventh year at Millersville.

Jester was named a recipient of the

Modern Band Higher Education Fellowship in 2021 by the nationally renowned Little Kids Rock Program and, in 2022, a Neurologic Music Therapy Fellow.

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?

You could say it is in my DNA. My mom was a concert pianist and piano teacher, my grandfather a banjo player, and my dad a trombone player. I had great aspirations to be an astronaut in high school and even attended Space Academy but ultimately decided music made my soul happy. I just loved performing and making so many kinds of music that there wasn't any other option.

## WHAT GROUPS DO YOU PERFORM WITH?

The Lancaster British Brass Band is a professional organization made up of players from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland



and plays two concert series a year. I also have started playing with my newly formed jazz group – Dr. Jester and the Kings of Swing – a collection of American songbook jazz, bossa nova, funk and other favorites where I sing and play my bass trumpet.

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PERFORMANCES.

It was last fall when I played two euphonium solos with the Combined Wind Ensemble and Concert Band during our annual Brass Day. One of my favorite off-campus performances was for my commercial bands during fall 2021. I had booked preconcert showcase concerts at Phantom Power so the groups could perform before their final performances on campus. After COVID restrictions, this was a fun performance and happened to be the week before Halloween. I encouraged everyone to wear a costume and even showed up in one myself! Not only was it an incredible night of great music, but it was a very healing event for many of my students and myself included.

#### WHO WAS ONE OF YOUR MENTORS?

Sam Pilafian was my main teacher during my undergrad at Arizona State. He was an incredible human, performer and tuba player, and he helped guide me to be eternally curious and creative.

#### WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ON CAMPUS?

This fall, I'm working with the instrumental musicians as part of the University musical Carrie. This is the first time for me to work with this ensemble type in a musical setting.

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MUSIC CLASSES BEING CUT FOR K-12?

It is terrible. As a music therapist and someone who has presented on how songwriting helps boost mental health and wellness, and a proponent that every student needs to be making some kind of music, cutting a music program at this time is the most ignorant thing that could be done in the face of a mental-health crisis. Every class that comes in for the next several years will carry the scars of what COVID brought us. I hope to be one of the squeaky voices for these students who need a positive outlet. Music is the answer. Music education saves lives.

#### ARE THERE JOBS IN THE MUSIC FIELD?

Live audio? Yes. Especially on the touring side. They are desperate for qualified workers who are mentally and emotionally tough enough to handle the ups and downs of touring. For a young person right now, the sky is the limit – I would add that those with a college degree and some training will advance faster and fare better in the long run. And, oh my goodness, do we need more teachers. For those who love teaching, now is the time to dive back in. We need you!

“Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.”

*Confucius*

Sight Reading” are scheduled to be published in 2023 by Oxford University Press. In March 2016, he was awarded the Organization of American Kodály Educators Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2017 he was recognized in the Hungarian Parliament as a distinguished alum.

#### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INTO MUSIC?

I grew up in a musical family. My father's side of the family was musical; he was one of nine children, all of whom played instruments. My father never had a lesson but played several instruments; piano and banjo were his favorites. One of his sisters was a professional violinist, and I loved watching her perform in orchestra concerts. I loved my elementary and middle school music teachers. My formal study began in fifth grade when I went to the Peabody Preparatory division in Baltimore.

#### DO YOU HAVE MENTORS OR OTHERS IN THE FIELD WHO YOU ADMIRE?

One of many would be my piano teacher at Peabody and, through my undergraduate years, Reynaldo Reyes. He could play anything and always gave me a choice in terms of repertoire. His performances always inspired me.

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR TIME IN HUNGARY.

My studies in Hungary led to numerous international presentations and my subsequent work in music cognition and perception. I began active work in perception and cognition before I came to Millersville, at the Institute of Cognitive and Computational Science at my previous academic home, Georgetown University. That work took me to Finland many times over several years. At that time, musicological and ethnomusicological studies had expanded into neuroscience. I saw my art through an entirely different lens, which was pathbreaking.

#### HAS THERE BEEN A STANDOUT STUDENT IN YOUR TIME AT MILLERSVILLE?

Dr. Laura Petravage is probably our most interesting and unusual student. She came to us after already earning a master's degree from the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., an undergraduate degree from American University in Washington, D.C., and was completing her doctorate in conducting at James Madison University. Laura came to the Tell School of Music to get certification in music education. She observed Micheál Houlihan teach several theory classes and told him that she wanted to learn how to teach music theory using the Millersville approach. Much to her credit, she entered our program and got her second undergraduate degree in music education after she completed her doctorate at James Madison.

#### MUSIC CLASSES HAVE BEEN CUT AT THE K-12 LEVEL IN SOME SCHOOL DISTRICTS. HOW DOES THAT IMPACT STUDENTS?

While there are school systems that have made cuts to music programs, there are many that have not. I'm happy to report that all of our Tell School of Music education graduates are employed teaching in both public and private schools. It's been my experience that well-trained musicians and teachers are always employed. ♦



**DR. PHILIP TACKA,  
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC**

Dr. Philip Tacka has been a professor of music at Millersville since 2002. He has performed in Hungary, conducted the choir at Georgetown University, and written dozens of articles and published 16 books with Dr. Micheál Houlihan, chair of the Tell School of Music. Two new volumes, “Choral Artistry: A Kodály

TACKA

Perspective for Middle School to College Level Choirs” and “Choral