



Issue No. 77 - Fall 2023

BIRCH NOTES

BIRCH CREEK'S SECRET INGREDIENT IS RELATIONSHIPS

Birch Creek Music Performance Center | Egg Harbor | Door County | Wisconsin



Teamwork: With leadership from a faculty member, jazz students perform in ensembles as well as big bands, building relationships that enhance their team skills and refine their ability to communicate non-verbally. Piano faculty **Michael Stryker** is with the Jazz I **Stryker Ensemble** on July 29. Pictured from left to right with their instruments are **Thomas Teixeira**, **Amélie Reed** (the piano is behind her), **Grace Fuller**, **Ian Levin** (trumpet), **Jason Robinson** and **Maggie Crichton** (drums).

SUMMER OF 2023

Mission accomplished! With trust, inspiration, and confidence, relationships thrived between 186 students and 87 teaching and performing faculty from across the country.



In a symphony orchestra, relationships abound between instruments, the score, each section, and the audience. **Taka Matsunaga** brings energy and delightful expression to his role as Birch Creek Symphony Orchestra Conductor. Taka unifies performers. He understands everyone's ability, how essential each musician is in relationship to the whole and translates his understanding of the music to make it as inspiring and incredible as possible. Here he is conducting Maurice Ravel's "La Valse" during the concert "Symphonic Ballets" on July 14.



Anthony (Tony) Di Sanza joyfully and skillfully engages students in relationships with the world music he loves so well. Tony performs and teaches throughout a percussion universe, an orb that has included Birch Creek for the past nine years. He is pictured on stage at the free family/community concert on July 1 with (from left) **George Wurl**, **Caleb Lewis**, and **Annabelle Nault**.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MONA CHRISTENSEN

Mentoring. Learning. Growing. Performing. Repeat. The formula for student success.



Mission Accomplished: Birch Creek's Secret Ingredient is Relationships

Birch Creek's foundational purpose is to provide positive reinforcement and encouraging mentorship from faculty and teaching assistants for student participants. The professional musicians and teachers who serve as role models and coaches at Birch Creek provide the secret ingredient for ensuring a student's success: relationships. Whether being introduced to a musical genre for the first time or having years of lessons and practice, each student thrives in Birch Creek's nurturing and rigorous learning environment because of relationships forged between student and faculty. These relationships are grounded in trust, inspiration, and the confidence that is gained from feedback as an integral part of student learning.

THANK YOU for helping fulfill our mission

Our educational model is performance-based. It is critical for students to perform for enthusiastic audiences in order for their musical skills to improve. Within days of arrival, students are performing on stage under the tutelage of our expert, world class faculty. This model for learning provides incentives to learn at a remarkable rate and perform live music for you, the Birch Creek concertgoer. Birch Creek's mission — the reason for our being — was accomplished with incredible fervor this season.

Amazing

The most inspiring aspect of the season is the transformation that occurs from the beginning of each session to its end. From the nervous faces at the first concert to the exuberant smiles at the last, Birch Creek's life-changing opportunities set the stage for next level music performance and education for our students. Because of the strong relationships built day by day, students did a remarkable job of learning and performing for you this summer. What a gift to be part of this amazing, life-changing place!

You have given us continued support through purchasing tickets, sponsoring a concert, volunteering, and gifts in support of scholarships, Play It Forward or the Endowment. It is our hope that you continue to support the relationship-building and performance-based mission at Birch Creek.

Thank you for all you do to support this incredible place. We wouldn't be here without you.

Musically yours,



Executive Director, *The Steve and Jackie Kane Chair*



We celebrate YOU with our Opening Night concert on June 22, where we thank you for the joy you bring to Dutton Concert Barn.

BUZZWORTHY

Building new relationships sometimes depends heavily on unpredictable chance events, often enabled by being in the right place at the right time. To wit: **David Eash** of Sister Bay has bees, but those at Birch Creek who care for our buildings and grounds didn't get to know about his bees until mid-July when honeybees moved into an outside wall space on the Miller Music Center at Birch Creek. The bees' comings and goings were witnessed and reported by **Leo Chavolla Barrera**, House Manager and Lights Intern.

Facilities Manager **Paul Greenlaw** and Head Maintenance Technician **Bill Schutté** put their heads together. Call Dave. He came that same day. He removed a board on the exterior wall to discover that a medium sized colony of honeybees had begun comb building behind the board. It was a wonderful little place for the bees, but they would need to be moved. Dave prepared wooden frames with string lattice to transport the combs and a box to house them. Climbing a ladder, Dave cut down seven, very white, soft, newly made combs that did not yet have honey. They looked a little bit like bubble wrap. Combs were placed on the frames and frames in the box. The bees were tolerant, and Dave moved them (hands full after hands full of bees) to their transport box without a single sting. Once all the bees had been transferred, including the queen bee, work paused for the night allowing the bees to assimilate to their new condition. The next morning, Dave took the bees home with him to establish them in a more appropriate setting.

To maintain his bee colony at home, Dave needed new bees. To maintain our buildings, we needed help from a beekeeper. A relationship, built with little more than a ladder, box, string, and wonder yielded invaluable benefits.



Dave Eash uncovers honeybees at Birch Creek (left) and boxes the bees and comb for transport (right).

OVATIONS

We are thankful for the generosity of grantors and scholarship donors, whose gifts provide endless opportunities. They include:

Nancy Andriacci Named Scholarship was awarded to **Henry Findlay**, bass, Jazz I. Two Endowment Scholarships from a fund established by an **Anonymous Foundation** were awarded to Symphony students **Charles Kritsch**, viola, and **Callista Siamof**, trumpet.

Another **Anonymous Donor** underwrote two scholarships, which were awarded to **Zen Mendoza**, bass, Jazz II, and **Jenna Zimmerman**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music.

Scholarships named for the **Birch Creek Associates Volunteers** were awarded to Jazz I students **Charlie Debski**, guitar, and **Petra Musante**, trombone; and **Elliot Lydon**, piano, Jazz II.

Glenn Bruck Named Scholarship was awarded to **Ian Yadon**, trumpet, Jazz II.

Phil and Laurey Clampitt Concerto Competition awards a \$1,000 scholarship to two students during the Symphony Session. The award comes with the honor of performing as a featured soloist with the Birch Creek Symphony Orchestra in the following year. **Callie Widi**, tuba, and **Lily Yoshihara**, violin were 2023 winners.

Dr. and Mrs. Dennis and Bonnie Connolly underwrote a named scholarship for a Wisconsin student that was awarded to **Nathaniel Crowder**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music, Milwaukee, WI.

Jane Dalton Named Scholarship recipient for 2023 was **Qisi Lai**, violin, Symphony.

Robert and Lynn Doneff Named Scholarship was awarded to **Annabelle Nault**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music.

Two **Anthony & Judith Licata Named Scholarships** were awarded in 2023 to **Seamus Moore**, tenor saxophone, and **Evan Roeser**, bass, both Jazz I students.

Two scholarships named for **Karen Mehigan and Jim Friel** were awarded to **Robert Meinig**, violin, Symphony, and **Drevian Fuller**, drums, Jazz II.

James McDonald Memorial Named Scholarship was awarded to Symphony student **William Robertson**, oboe.

MMG Foundation underwrote 13 named scholarships in the 2023 Symphony Session. A scholarship honoring Margaret Miller Gilson was awarded to **Trista Schepp**, French horn. Named for **Cynthia Stiehl** were scholarships awarded to viola students **Brae Bigelow**, **Adalyn Sidon**, and **Charles Kritsch**; violin students **Sarah Pearl Anderson**, **Ella Herman**, **Sebastien Roethle**, and **Lily Yoshihara**; **Mateo Estanislao**, bass, **Jackson Medley**, oboe, and **Milan Mendez**, piano. Receiving scholarships named for the **MMG Foundation** were **Henry Smith**, cello, and **Matthew Tian**, percussion.

John and Carolyn Peterson Charitable Foundation, Inc. of Brookfield, WI has underwritten named scholarships since 2006. The four JCCPC Foundation scholars for 2023 were **Sydney Nichols**, percussion, Percussion Steel Pan & World Music; Jazz I trumpet student **Grace Fuller**; **Sarah Ramsden**, baritone saxophone, Jazz II; and Symphony student **Yeimi Alday**, violin.

Ralph Pratt Endowment Scholarship was awarded in 2023 to **Jacob Miller**, trumpet, Symphony.

Raibrook Foundation Named Scholarships for Door County students were awarded to **Ezra Linnan**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music, Sevastopol High School; and **Amélie Reed**, a home school student from Sister Bay who studied piano in Jazz I.



James Dutton Merit Scholarship is awarded to a student of high artistic merit on a rotating basis between academy sessions each year. The award underwrites tuition in the following year. The 2023 award went to **Ryan Cooper**, trumpet, Jazz I.

*Pictured: Relationships are forged with faculty (Program Director **Jeff Campbell** is on Ryan's left and Assistant Program Director **Scott Burns** on his right) and also with the student band members who are delighted at Ryan's award presentation during the Jazz I Family/Community Concert on July 29.*

Susie Gebhardt underwrote eleven named scholarships in Jazz I and Jazz II in 2023. The recipients in Jazz I were **Adam Blendermann**, bass, **Armando Celaya** and **Sarah Haley**, both alto saxophone students, **Franklin Herschberg**, piano, **Ben Langlois**, baritone saxophone, **Anthony Lopez**, trumpet, and **Gavin Schnall**, drums. Gebhardt Scholars in Jazz II included **Alex Dusek**, trumpet, **Christopher Merino Dominguez**, trombone, **Jordan Pierson**, alto saxophone, and **Gabrielle Sowicz**, tenor saxophone.

Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Anonymous Family Fund awarded Birch Creek a grant to install solar panels on the Miller Music Center and the Faculty Dorm buildings, which are now providing more than 30% of the electrical power needed to operate those two buildings.

Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Forbes/Berend Family Fund Named Scholarship was awarded to **Kaiya Hoskins**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music.

Joan B. Guasta Outstanding Service Scholarship was awarded to **Theodore Schonberg**, trumpet, Jazz II.

The **Brian T. Hynes & Barry J. Hynes Endowment Scholarship** was awarded to **Owen Driscoll**, bassoon, Symphony.

Two **Phyllis C. Ingwersen Endowment Scholarships**, endowed in her memory in 2018, were awarded to Jazz I students **Bethany Reed**, vibes, and **Thomas Teixeira**, bass.

Herb Kohl Philanthropies has granted a partial scholarship for a Wisconsin student each year since 1998. This year's Kohl scholar was **Ethan Moehr**, alto saxophone, Jazz II from Sun Prairie, WI.

George Kress Foundation Endowment Scholarship was awarded to **Juanita Duarte**, tenor saxophone, Jazz II.

The recipient of a scholarship named for **Walter Edwin Langbein** was **Jack Obrebski**, trumpet, Jazz I.

In 2023, the **Schenker Family** created the **Bert, Marianne, and Ben Endowment Scholarship** in the Birch Creek Endowment as an everlasting memorial honoring the lives of those named and their love for music. The first Endowment Scholarship went to **Delaney Hoepfer**, bass trombone, Jazz II.

Jonathan Tobias Music Memorial Named Scholarship was awarded to **August Nelson**, guitar, Jazz II.

The **Town of Egg Harbor** awarded Birch Creek a grant to sponsor four free family/community matinee concerts at Birch Creek as well as Opening Night.

Roger and Lynn Van Vreede Named Scholarships were awarded to Jazz II students **Christopher Fallis**, trombone, and **Cole Salgado**, trumpet; and **Jaden Teague-Nuñez**, percussion with a steelpan emphasis, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music.

Kim Viney Named Scholarship for 2023 was awarded to **Destanē Williams**, electric bass, Jazz II.

Bill Vineyard Memorial Named Scholarship was awarded to **Ashley Hatland**, percussion, Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music.

Frank & Carol Weber Endowment Scholarship recipient for 2023 was **Samuel Woodbridge**, clarinet, Symphony.

Celebrating its 50th year in service to the people of Wisconsin, the **Wisconsin Arts Board**, with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the **National Endowment for the Arts**, awarded Birch Creek a grant for operational support through the Creation and Presentation grant program, which recognizes organizations that make a significant impact on the cultural life of Wisconsin.



Stanley R. & Robert E. Wright Endowment Scholarships recognize serious senior-level students who intend to pursue music as a career path. The recipients for 2023 were **Adam Blendermann**, bass, Jazz I; and Symphony students **Addison Swan**, cello, and **Lillian Widmar**, trombone.

ASSOCIATES VOLUNTEERS



The Associates Volunteers build relationships through service. They greet and guide you to ticket sales and barn seating on concert nights, beautify the campus through gardening, mowing and painting, and sell concessions and souvenirs in the Play It Again Stand. **Pat Long, Peter Grimyser, and Carol Lacombe** oversee the sale of popcorn, root beer, and sweets at intermission on Opening Night, June 22.

Performances in Juniper Hall

Saturday, September 9 7:00 PM

Talk of the Town

featuring Kevin Van Ess and his Dixieland Jazz Band

Saturday, September 16 7:00 PM

Dan Moore & Friends

featuring Wesley Morgan and Rodrigo Villanueva

Saturday, September 23 7:00 PM

Jazz Faculty Favorites

featuring Katie Ernst, vocals; Michael Stryker, piano; and Scott Burns, saxophone

Saturday, October 7

Associates Fundraiser

Percussion Trio: Brad Stirtz, Carter Stirtz & Wesley Morgan

5:30 Social | 6:00 Reception | 7:00 Concert

Saturday, December 2

Christmas at Birch Creek

featuring Birch Creek Symphony Brass, Dan Moore – Mallets, Door County Community Handbell Choir Family Matinee | 2:30 PM Evening Concert | 7:00 PM

Order tickets (920) 868-3763 or order online: BirchCreek.org/Tickets.

PLAY IT FORWARD ANNUAL FUND



The Play It Forward Annual Fund is used for operational expenses and is the fund that bridges the gap between tuition paid by families and the true cost of program delivery.

Did you know that every student automatically receives **\$2,700** in reduced tuition because of your support to this annual fund?

True Cost:	\$5,100
Play It Forward Support:	-\$2,700
Student/Family's Tuition:	\$2,400

We want to ensure that our tuition fees are affordable to most families by covering the gap between the cost of educating a Birch Creek student and the family's out-of-pocket costs, while also raising additional tuition assistance dollars to help those for whom even our subsidized tuition is a challenge.

Your gift, in any amount, will ensure affordability to a broad and inclusive spectrum of promising young musicians. Donate online at BirchCreek.org/Support or contact the office at 920-868-3763 or mainoffice@birchcreek.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 CONCERT SPONSORS

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Deeply personal relationships grow between our performing artists and audiences. "Tales of the Wild," composed by the Percussion Faculty Ensemble and performed by them on June 23, was inspired by the writings of Northeastern Wisconsin Nature Writer **Roy Lukes** and performed in his memory. His wife and Birch Creek Concert Sponsor **Charlotte Lukes** presents Program Director **Dan Moore** with a gift of thanks: a photograph taken by Roy.

ADULT MUSIC PROGRAMS



New relationships began and old friends were reacquainted in the Wind Ensemble and Chamber Music Retreats held for 75 adult learners at the end of August.

RELATIONSHIPS



One-on-one time with students and the acclaimed musicians who teach them are essential to Birch Creek's learning and performing model. **Liam Teague**, Steel Band Director and renowned steel pan impresario, listens to **Sydney Almquist's** growing skill and confidence on the steel pan, an instrument she played for the first time at Birch Creek.



Clay Jenkins, jazz trumpet faculty, is at the forefront of the jazz performing and teaching arenas. He shares his knowledge and experiences easily with his trumpet students during a Birch Creek Master Class, building lasting connections among students as resources for each other. Playing along with Clay are Jazz II trumpet students **Aaron Vetter**, **Cole Salgado**, **Theo Schonberg**, trumpet TA **Joe Palmer**, **Joey Edgar** and **Dane Freund**.



The notes will always remain the same, but what makes the result completely different is the expressiveness given by the musician. **Dr. Susan Bengtson Price**, a passionate performer and violist, is delighted to relay to Birch Creek students **Natalie Coleman** and **Ellen Zhang** what it means to play the viola expressively.



Swedish mallet specialist **Anders Åstrand** is pictured with student percussionists **Jenna Zimmerman** and **Nathaniel Crowder** during the second week of Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music June 25 - July 1, when Åstrand gave clinics and performed alongside students and faculty. His collaborations with Program Director Dan Moore led him to Birch Creek and his relationships as a musician and composer with students, faculty and audiences were spellbinding.



Birch Creek's educational success is built on the relationships between faculty and students. Faculty are role models in their capacity as professional musicians and through their kind and caring leadership. Executive Director **Mona Christensen** recognizes Jazz II Studio Band Director **Steve Sveum** for 20 years of service on August 11.



It is a thrill for students to rehearse alongside the professional musicians who will perform in concert with them. After rehearsal on July 11, flute faculty **Shannon Finney** reviews intonation as an element of tone production with **Elizabeth Dunn** for the performance on July 13.

Birch Creek's mission is to provide intensive, performance-based instruction to promising young musicians by immersing them in a professional, mentoring environment.

RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music | Dan Moore
Symphony | Ricardo Castañeda
Jazz I and II | Jeff Campbell

FALL/WINTER OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday | 9 am to 4 pm
 Friday | 9 am to 2 pm
 Closed holidays and Dec. 24 – Jan. 1
 Mainoffice@birchcreek.org

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For 35 years at Birch Creek, 27 as Jazz Program Director, **Jeff Campbell** has given bass students the feeling that he is speaking directly to them. His leadership is the reason for lasting jazz faculty relationships and student success. Jeff conducts warmups with Jazz II Session bass students **Zen Mendoza** and **Madilynn Adams**.



Program Director **Dr. Dan Moore** has stretched the boundaries of the percussion session. Now named Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music, Moore has built upon the faculty's enormous skill set and the trust they share to nearly double the student enrollment in 2023. A happy outcome is the Most Improved Musician honor, awarded to **Sydney Nichols**.



When chosen as Program Director of the Symphony Session 26 years ago, oboist **Ricardo Castañeda** introduced the concerto competition to promote student return in the following year and orchestral leadership on stage. Mission accomplished! Ricardo is pictured with 2023 Clampitt Concerto Competition winners **Lily Yoshihara**, violin, left, and **Callie Widi**, tuba.

OFF TO COLLEGE

Jazz I Session

Immanuel Boyce (2019 and 2023, drums) Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, majoring in audio recording technology with a minor in film.

Luke Fuller (2022 and 2023, trombone) Illinois State University, Normal, IL, history education studies.

Noah Underhill (2022 and 2023, tenor saxophone) Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, double major in chemical and paper engineering with a minor in jazz performance.

Jazz II Session

Madilynn Adams (2022 and 2023, bass) Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, majoring in music education.

Thomas Andersen (2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023, piano) McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, pursuing a major in jazz performance.

Juanita Duarte (2023, Jazz I in 2022, clarinet and tenor saxophone) University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, double major in music and biochemistry.

Chris Fallis (2022 and 2023, trombone) Madison College, Madison, WI, studies leading to a comprehensive degree in automotive technology with a possible transfer to industrial management.

Jozelle Filippi (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, drum set) Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, majoring in studio art and film studies with minors in creative writing and environmental studies.

Collin Yablonsky (2022 and 2023, guitar) Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Edwardsville, IL, studying jazz performance.

Percussion, Steel Pan & World Music Session

Ashley Hatland (2022 and 2023, percussion) University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, majoring in music education and percussion performance.

Symphony Session

Mateo Estanislao (2023, double bass) University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, music performance major.

Charles Kritsch (2022 and 2023, viola) Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, major in viola performance, studying with Professor Stephen Wyrzynski.

William Larsen (2023, cello) Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL, major in cello performance.

Nia Quiñones (2023, violin) Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL, pursuing a double major in music education and classical performance.

Cole Salgado (2021, 2022, 2023, trumpet) DePaul University, Chicago, IL, majoring in jazz trumpet.

Callie Widi (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, tuba) DePaul University, Chicago, IL, majoring in tuba performance and music education.



Immanuel Boyce



Chris Fallis



Ashley Hatland



Callie Widi