



*There is joy in the season of giving...*

**Dear Friends** — We hope this letter finds you in good health and in a peaceful place. In these challenging times, many have come to realize that the most important things in life are supportive family and friends, and activities that foster **the giftedness inside each one of us**. In less complicated times, we would gather inside Miller Music Center’s Juniper Hall for Birch Creek’s Christmas Concerts. Oh, how we love celebrating the holidays with a beautifully decorated hall and a full audience singing carols while being entertained by Birch Creek faculty, local choirs and guest musicians! This year, with heartfelt concern for the safety of our friends, neighbors and performers, our campus remains closed. We miss you, our dear friends, patrons, volunteers and donors!

But, we are continuing to provide opportunities for promising young music students. Through technology, we held **Birch Creek’s 45th season** online. It was a creative, imaginative summer in which the qualities unique to Birch Creek rang true, as the following story demonstrates.



Michael Thurber, 2003



Michael Thurber, 2020



Alan Steiner, 2020



Jasper Chambreau, 2019

*It was the summer of 2003 at Birch Creek. **Michael Thurber**, then 15, was an award-winning bassist in the Symphony Session, performing alongside his teacher and Birch Creek faculty member **Alan Steiner**. After that summer, Thurber’s studies took him to Interlochen and eventually The Julliard School in New York. Fluent in jazz and classical idioms, Thurber joined Jon Batiste and Stay Human in 2015 as bass player for *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*. He has gone on to co-found one of YouTube’s biggest music collectives, write compositions and lyrics for theatre, create “Thurber’s Theater” at Joe’s Pub in Manhattan, to teach and perform.*

*In July 2020, Thurber returned to Birch Creek as a guest speaker—via Zoom technology—to the fascination of Symphony Online students and faculty, and the delight of Mr. Steiner (in his 20th year as a faculty member). In September, Thurber came again to Birch Creek audiences via Zoom as a presenter for Birch Creek’s first Online Studio Sessions with “Technology for Today’s Musician.” Through the Zoom lens, Steiner introduced Thurber to another young promising bass student of his, **Jasper Chambreau**, 14. The cycle that began for Thurber at Birch Creek in 2003 has continued through the 17 years since. “Jasper wants to do everything,” Steiner told Thurber. “He attended Birch Creek in 2019 and won the Online Concerto Competition this year. Jasper is the Michael Thurber of Birch Creek’s orchestra!”*

What a great story! New young students can imagine their journeys through those who came before them. And, since all Birch Creek’s artistic activities were online in 2020, it helps to understand that our faculty, guests, and students created a sense of place, learning and lifetime support.

This strong sense of relationship occurs with the support of donors like you! With your gift of \$100, \$250, \$500 or more before the end of the year, you will help to sustain Birch Creek as we move forward and continue to prepare our historic campus for an in-person 2021 academy and concert season. Birch Creek is planning now to operate safely for our students, faculty, staff, donors and patrons in 2021.

Birch Creek offers that place of wholesomeness, creativity, mentoring and inspiration. It is a haven for musicians and music lovers alike. It is a place of giftedness. **Won’t you join us in giving your best year-end gift?**

All of us at Birch Creek are wishing you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season. We hope to see you in person in 2021!

Musically yours,



Mona Christensen

Executive Director, *The Steve and Jackie Kane Chair*



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It is our mission to provide intensive, performance-based instruction to promising young musicians by immersing them in a professional, mentoring environment.

# Giftedness



*inside each one of us.*

The logo for Birch Creek Music Performance Center features a stylized treble clef on the right side. The words "BIRCH CREEK" are written in a large, blue, serif font across the middle of the clef. Below this, the words "Music Performance Center" are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. To the left of the main text, there is a small graphic of a building.

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*Students from  
Birch Creek Online*

*Summer 2020*



*Percussion & Steel Band  
Symphony  
Big Band Jazz*