

## Mark Katsaounis

*Position at the Conservatory:* Percussion Faculty  
*Birthplace:* Hartford, CT  
*Current Residence:* Astoria, NY

**Where did you go to school?**  
 Hartt School of Music at University of Hartford and University of Cincinnati

**At What age did you begin playing your instrument and why?**  
 Age 9 or 10. I was always fascinated by watching drummers. I liked hearing all the different instruments.

**Where do you perform when you are not teaching at the Conservatory?**  
 Throughout NYC and I also travel a bit with various groups.

**What do you find most challenging about your job?**  
 Balancing my schedule as a freelancer with finding time to experiment with new artistic opportunities.

**What do you think makes the Conservatory so unique?**  
 Even with all the diverse programs and offerings, it still feels like a small, tightly-knit community

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**  
 Hike, travel, cook, swim, and discover new sounds and music

**What is your favorite type of music to listen to?**  
 Not really a fair question. I think most musicians go through phases. Lately I've been listening to a lot of minimalism and electronic inspired music.

**Who is your favorite composer?**  
 John Cage. I admire his curiosity on the nature of sound.

**What is one interesting fact that everyone should know about you?**  
 Despite my fair skin and blond hair, I'm half Greek and speak the language (almost) fluently. Whenever I'm traveling in Greece, people are surprised to hear me speak with them in their own language.

## Caroline Park

*Position at the Conservatory:* Piano Faculty  
*Birthplace:* Seoul Korea  
*Current Residence:* Manhasset, NY

**Where did you go to school?**  
 The Juilliard School, Yale Graduate School of Music, Manhattan School of Music

**At What age did you begin playing your instrument and why?**  
 I started piano when I was 6 years old. My mother signed me up for piano lessons and I loved it.

**Where do you perform when you are not teaching at the Conservatory?**  
 I perform a lot in the U.S and Germany playing New/Contemporary Music.

**What do you find most challenging about your job?**  
 Making my students to love piano and encouraging them to practice.

**What do you think makes the Conservatory so unique?**  
 Very well organized, great place to learn music, and lots of performance opportunities for students.

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**  
 Read, practice, cooking

**What is your favorite type of music to listen to?**  
 Classical and sometimes Hip Hop

**Who is your favorite composer?**  
 Brahms, Schumann & Chopin

**What is one interesting fact that everyone should know about you?**  
 I am a breast cancer survivor.

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF CONCORDIA CONSERVATORY

SPRING 2015

### Concordia Conservatory Mission Statement

The Conservatory's mission is to inspire, instruct, and enrich lives through music offering excellence in education and performance.

### 2014-15 Advisory Board

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## Our Biggest Senior Class Ever!



They arrived at the Conservatory from many places and at various ages, some on their own initiative, others encouraged by parents. But each of the 22 seniors in this year's record-setting graduating class ended up finding a home here, and decided to stay as long as possible. While some of our seniors will pursue a career path through music school, most of the class will remain enthusiastic amateurs, playing or singing for their own enjoyment. All will leave with a deep understanding of the joy of musical expression.

**What is it about Concordia Conservatory that kept them here?** For Eleanor Watson, who has been studying piano with Helen Yedigarian since the age of six, the answer is as simple as "There was no reason for me not to stay! I enjoyed my first lesson, and I still enjoy my lessons...Helen introduced me to pieces that I never would have chosen on my own, and let me choose pieces on my own as well." Max Cutrupi (headed to Manhattanville College as a music business/guitar major with a full scholarship) credits his 11 years at Concordia and all three of his guitar teachers with "prepping me well for college," and "always being very supportive of me and my playing in a way that definitely boosted my self-confidence." Emely Martinez (who found her way here through the Rosedale Outreach Program and will go on to study guitar in college) says music lets her "escape to my own world when I play" and loved jam sessions with her teacher, John Chang. Like many in this class, Khamen Bynoe (a multi-tasker who has studied cello, voice and piano!) took advantage of the Conservatory's summer camp and community musical experiences, and counts piano camp among his fondest memories of the school: "It was a great way to make friends who shared a common interest with me."

Perhaps Kylie Regan, who "can't imagine a life without music" and is grateful for teachers (including Sheri Hammerstrom) who "changed my life" in addition to the opportunities she has had to attend master classes and even perform at Carnegie Hall, sums it up best. "Every week when I enter Concordia Conservatory, my ears are happily overwhelmed by the sound of several different instruments overlapping one another. I will never forget the feeling of absolute warmth when I enter this building. As corny as it sounds, I really feel like Concordia is a second home to me. It is filled with beautiful sounds and people just like me who can't help but love music. I always pass Kathleen Suss' room before my voice lesson and regardless of what she is doing, she will stop and ask me how my lessons are going. She genuinely cares about every one of her students, she has always attended every recital and comments on my growth. What keeps me coming back every year is a hunger to learn more and to see just how much I can improve as a singer."

**Congratulations to all our seniors—you will be missed!**



# Student News

**Albert Ai** (piano student of Sohyun Ahn), received a top score in his recent NYSSMA grade 5 auditions and now he is heading for his final level festival. His upcoming competitions will include the Crescendo International Little Mozart Competition and New York Music Competition. He recently performed Chopin D-flat minor Waltz at the Pelham Music Festival. He is preparing for his Royal Conservatory Music Development program Level 6 Exam.

**Laney Bagwell** (student of Clare Hoffman), played with the famed rock band, Jethro Tull, on a recent school trip to Iceland. Laney attends Thornton-Donovan School in New Rochelle and met the band in The Viking Hotel where Laney and the band performed together for guests.

**Merrissa Beddows** (student of Sun Young Chang and Caroline Park), was a prize winner in the Yonkers Philharmonic Concerto competition. She will appear on the winner's concert on May 17 Saunders High School. She is also the 1st Place HS division winner in New York Lyric Opera Theatre Young Artist Competition. She was featured on the award's concert on May 2 at Symphony Space in NYC. She heads to the Brevard Music Center Vocal program this summer.

**Rory Christian** (student of Vivian Choi), participated in the Long Island Conservatory Soloist Competition in February and was chosen as a winner. She performed in the Winners Concert at Merkin Concert Hall in March. She will perform Copland's *Cat and the Mouse*.

**Will Cioffi** (student of Stephanie Ho), will travel this July to the Amalfi Coast Music & Arts Festival in Mount Maiori, Italy where he will participate in the piano program.

**Jasper Cox** (student of Sun Young Chang), is headed to the Brevard HS Vocal Program Music Horizons this summer after being accepted after a competitive audition process.

**Henriette Feldman** (student of Jee Sun Lee), scored top score on NYSSMA. She will be performing with Greater Westchester Youth Orchestra in Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall on May 3.

**Michael Landy** (student of Stephanie Ho and Eunbi Kim), received a perfect score for his NYSSMA audition playing the oboe and collaborating with Conservatory faculty Jon Klibonoff.

**Nick Politi** (student of Matt Van Brink and Annette Espada), was accepted into the highly competitive Tanglewood BUTI Composition for a second summer. He has chosen Project Music Achievement at The Rosedale Center in the South Bronx as his boy scout service project. Nick would like the Conservatory community to help in providing musical method books at all levels in guitar, violin, and voice. Please place your used method books and music in the box located in the Conservatory library/office.

**J.P. Redmond** (student of Matt Van Brink), received the ASCAP Foundation Charlotte V. Bergen Scholarship for his Northeastern Sonata—a piano sonata. The ASCAP Foundation Charlotte V. Bergen Scholarship is awarded to the top ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer age 18 or under. This scholarship is made possible by The Frank & Lydia Bergen Foundation and is named in memory of their daughter, Charlotte, a lover of classical music. The ceremony takes place on May 21 at Merkin Concert Hall in NYC. J.P. heads off the Curtis Summerfest at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia to study composition this July.

# Love Letters

## THE HOCH SERIES FINALE

Concordia Conservatory presented its final concert of Hoch Chamber Music season with a program entitled, LOVE LETTERS, with violist Lawrence Dutton, violinist Elizabeth Lim-Dutton, cellist Julia Lichten and pianists Misha and Cipa Dichter on March 21.

A special part of the program was "The Heart Grows Fonder," a new violin and viola duo composition by our very own Conservatory faculty Matt Van Brink for Liz and Larry Dutton which was commissioned by the Hoch Chamber Music Series. It was indeed an evening of joy to a full house.

*Love Letters* was part of ARTSEE, a five month Festival of new works in Westchester County, celebrating ArtsWestchester's 50th Anniversary.



# Conservatory Winners of the Tri-State Certificate of Excellence



Congrats to the Concordia Conservatory performers in the Tri-State Certificate of Excellence Winners Concert on March 1 at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Performers and recipients of the Certificate of Excellence awards include guitarist **Nicholas Lombardi**, sopranos **Sofia Ricciarini**, **Ally Bruno**, **Natalia Morato**, & **Katharine Ungvary** and flutist **Laney Bagwell**.

The Royal Conservatory Music Development Program provides a national standard of musical achievement for people of all ages studying music privately in the US, by offering a sequential course of study. The Program centers on periodic one-on-one, adjudicator-to-student performance evaluations that also function as teaching and learning opportunities. Assessments are offered for keyboard, string, woodwind, and brass instruments; voice; and the academic subjects of music theory, music history, and pedagogy.

These winners received the top scores in their category and level in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut area for their Royal Conservatory Music Development Program Exam.



# New Camps at the Conservatory

Imagine boosting your songwriting skills with a school years' worth of weekly composition classes condensed into four intensive weeks! Conservatory faculty Matt Van Brink has developed a **Songwriting & Composition Camp** where talented middle and high school composers can immerse themselves in a mix of private lessons and group sessions in improvisation, theory, and ear-opening listening exercises. You'll hear your work performed by small ensembles in the Conservatory's Summer Music Festival, and recorded in a full evening concert as well. Says Van Brink, "Students can complete a piece they've already started, or try something new entirely, all with expert guidance and Concordia's outstanding facilities. The most exciting part of the camp is the creative camaraderie that develops between students."

And now for something completely different: **Cirque du Concordia!** Conservatory alumni Kevin Flanagan describes circus arts as "such a powerful outlet and tool for self-expression...within it there are no rules—only what you can imagine. This overwhelming idea that anything is possible, along with the creative ideals the art form instills in a person are applicable to all walks of life, and can be thought of as a unique approach to problem solving." Of course, Flanagan also points out that "what initially drew me to it was the aspect of just being able to play...free to create and take a break from other responsibilities." So come and play as you explore everything from juggling and stilt walking to tumbling and clowning. Kevin will be joined by stage director and circus specialist Walker Lewis and Conservatory alum composer, Chris Landy. You'll even collaborate with other campers on a staged performance set to music at the Conservatory Summer Music Festival and outreach concert in the community.

Want to play in piano ensembles that need four to eight hands, sharpen your sight reading and theory skills, and make new friends who love music like you? The come join us for two fun filled weeks during the Conservatory's **Summer Keys Piano Camp** with piano department head Melissa Alexander this summer!

**Online registration is open now for these and all our summer camp offerings.**  
[www.concordiaconservatory.org](http://www.concordiaconservatory.org)



# Musical Adventures Family Series Concluded with Schmutzinberry Has Writers Block & The Magical Mystery

In March, **Schmutzinberry Has Writer's Block** was the Conservatory's last show of the 2014-15 Musical Adventures Family Series. With book by Rami Vamos, the show featured the piano trio of Nurit Pacht, violin, Annette Espada, cello, and Jon Klibonoff, piano with Rami Vamos as Schmutzinberry.

Music featured in the show includes new works by Conservatory student J.P. Redmond. This one-act, musical education comedy centered around Wolfgang Amadeus Schmutzinberry. He had writer's block was commissioned to write a very important piece for an important occasion but could not come up with a single

note! He came to the Conservatory and found inspiration to write his music.

On February 7, the Conservatory presented **The Magical Musical Mystery** also by Rami Vamos that featured Conservatory students with Olivia Damasco, Emily Murray, Jack Clough, Grace Smyth, Renz Toledo, Giulia Mazzella, Rose Hanish, Emma Sanchez, Jack Szczepanski, Carmel Pacht-Colblence and Ally Bruno with Kathleen Suss, stage director, Audry Hamilton, choreographer and Greg Suss, music director. The band included Emma Sanchez, piano, Abby Carter, bass and percussion, Rose Hanish, cello, and Nick Lombardi, guitar.

# Dates to Remember

## MAY

- 15** **Hear It Live!**  
*Composers Concert*  
7:30pm  
Sommer Center
- 16** **Chamber Music Festival**  
*The Star Showcase Concert*  
7:30pm  
Sommer Center
- 22-23** **Music Development Program**  
Spring Exams  
Sommer Center & Stein Hall
- 25** **Conservatory Closed**  
Memorial Day

## JUNE

- 3** **Adult Performance Class**  
7:00pm  
Stein Hall
- 12** **JP Redmond & Rami Vamos with the Haunted House**  
7:00pm  
Bronxville Field Club
- 15-25** **Musical Adventures Mini Camp**  
Early Childhood Program
- 29** **Conservatory Camps Begin**

# Conservatory Alumni Corner

**Luke Dutton** graduates from Trinity College with a BA and has accepted a position with ProService, a human resources firm in Honolulu, Hawaii starting this summer.

**Carolyn Caruso** finishes her sophomore year at Northeastern University, majoring in communications and women's studies.

**Cristina Favaro** will begin a teaching position with City Year AmeriCorps and graduates from Fordham University in May.

**Julia Hoch** graduates from Williams College this June and is headed to Pittsburgh Light Opera, an equity theatre, to assistant stage direct *The Wedding Singer*, *Gypsy* and *Man of LaMancha*.

**Danny Levitz** performs his senior graduation piano recital at SUNY-Purchase on May 12 and graduates in May.

**Alice Smyth** is graduating from Fordham University in May and continues to work as a freelance harpist and a cantor at Holy Family Church in New Rochelle. Alice recently received a grant from The Juilliard School for research on social media and harp performance.