

BAY CHAMBER MUSIC SCHOOL

FACULTY INTERVIEWS

The logo consists of a solid black square. Inside the square, the words "BAY", "CHAMBER", "MUSIC", and "SCHOOL" are stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font. "BAY" and "CHAMBER" are in a larger font size than "MUSIC" and "SCHOOL".

**BAY
CHAMBER**
MUSIC
SCHOOL

*This compilation of interviews with Music School faculty will
be added to over the course of the year.*

ELIZABETH MOORE | VIOLIN/VIOLA

Elizabeth Moore started violin as a child with Janet Ciano and Augusto Salazar among many other musical mentors while growing up in Midcoast Maine. She earned degrees in viola performance from Boston University College of Fine Arts with a Master's of Music. Her primary viola instructors were Sheila Browne and Karen Ritscher. In addition to her viola studies, she was a Keenan Fellow at Lincoln Center Education in New York City, where she worked with Teaching Artists in public schools and put on a collaborative performance at Lincoln Center Education's Clark Theatre. Elizabeth performs regularly as a violist and singer, primarily with Palaver Strings, a musician-led string ensemble. As Co-Artistic Director and Programming Director for Palaver Strings, Elizabeth is dedicated to programming and performing music in ways that engage diverse audiences, and inspire future generations of musicians. A Suzuki certified violin and viola instructor, Elizabeth also teaches in Portland, ME.

What drew you to study music and the viola?

When I was very young my father was in a contradance band, and so as far back as I can remember, I was surrounded by fiddle music. I was very drawn to the music making that surrounded me as a child, and was always making up melodies and singing before I started playing an instrument. When I was 6, I joined a children's choir and started taking Suzuki lessons with Janet Ciano. I had unfortunately not heard of the viola yet, and switch a bit on the later side, as a senior in High School. The very first time I played the viola I immediately resonated with the rich and deep timbre of the instrument, and soon after began auditioning to study viola in college.

What is your approach to teaching?

I have had many wonderful teachers and mentors over the years, and definitely draw on my experiences studying with them in my own teaching. I primarily draw on my Suzuki training with younger and beginner students, but believe it is important at every stage to find what works best for each individual student. Because of this, I also integrate pieces outside of the standard repertoire to match each student's interests, and focus most of the lessons on building a technical foundation that will allow them to play comfortably in any genre. The other area I focus a lot of attention on in my teaching is communicating how to practice at home - this was something I struggled with as I was learning, and so I aim to demystify home practice by writing lesson notes in a detailed and step-by-step manner, and by teaching lessons in the same order I would suggest they practice.



CAROL PRESTON | SUZUKI VIOLIN

Violinist *Carol Preston* has been a Suzuki Method teacher for over 30 years in Damariscotta and the Washington, D.C. area. She also taught public school music for 15 years. In addition to teaching, she is on the board of the Maine Suzuki Association, formerly served as board chair of the Suzuki Association of the Greater Washington Area, and is a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. As a performer, she has been concertmaster of the Midcoast Symphony Orchestra since 2002, is a mentor for Mozart Mentors Orchestra in Brunswick, and plays with Maine Pro Musica. In the D.C. area, she was concertmaster of the McLean Orchestra for 14 years, was a member of the McBeth Quartet, and played all the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas as a member of the Washington Savoyards orchestra. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance from Concordia College (MN) and an MM in music from the University of Iowa, where she studied with Allen Ohmes of the Stradivari Quartet.

What drew you to study music and the violin?

My mother was a cellist and taught strings in our local schools when I was a kid. I don't know why I decided to play violin other than we had my grandfather's violin in our house. And my piano teacher for one year became the strings teacher at my school, so I had to do that! Through high school I was in orchestra, band, and chorus but just kept up with violin (and a bit of cello) in college. My desire was always to teach private lessons.



What is your approach to teaching?

I teach using the Suzuki Method, where we specialize in starting lessons as early as age 3. It's very different from other ways of learning music because parents are heavily involved in lessons and home practice. Students listen to recordings of the music they will play and learn by rote at the beginning. After they can play with some fluency, they start learning to read music. I love this way of teaching, having discovered it in college. I got trained in it after graduate school and never looked back.

Tell us about any performances coming up!

I have been a member of the Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (Brunswick/Topsham) for 19 years and serve as concertmaster. We are a 75-member symphony orchestra. I've always played in orchestras. That is most of the performing I do except for occasional performances with other groups.



Suzuki Twinklers perform with Carol Preston at Union Hall, 2019.

MATTHEW MAINSTER | PIANO

Matthew Mainster graduated in 2010 with his Master of Musical Performance degree from Yale University where he studied with Thomas Murray. In 2008, he graduated with bachelor degrees in organ and piano performance from Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania where he studied with Shelly Moorman-Stahlman. He is winner of the 2002 Vernon de Tar Competition for Organ and the 2007 Violette Cassel Organ Competition, and was a finalist in the 2007 Regional III Competition of the American Guild of Organists. He also received 2nd place at the 2007 West Chester International Organ Competition. As a pianist, Matthew has been fortunate enough to receive coaching from many internationally recognized pianists, including Naoko Takao, Young Hi Moon, Antonio Pompa-Baldi, Nikita Fitenko, Charles Abramovic, Joseph Banowetz, Tiffany Quo, Petronel Malan, and Rachmaninoff's last living student, Ruth Slenczynska. He continues occasional coaching with his former college professor, Shelly Moorman-Stahlman.

What drew you to study music and the piano/organ?

Two things—the organ at my home church growing up was COOL, and so was the organist. I wanted to be her so bad. So at five years old I told my parents this and very fortunately they nurtured my interest. Naturally I studied piano too, but it wasn't until college that I heard the pianist, Petronel Malan, in concert and decided that not only was she the most brilliant pianist on the planet (I still think so today, 15 years later) but the piano was also THE coolest instrument. Thankfully I was only a freshman at the time and was able to add a piano major to my degree, and ever since I've devoted myself to both instruments.



What is your approach to teaching?

Again, two things—one being that I follow the “Leschetizky Method” which is to say I have NO method at all. He was one of the most famous piano instructors of his day and firmly believed that each student must be taught differently according to their strengths, weaknesses, personality, goals, etc., therefore negating any formal “method” or “school” of study. I have always found that each student needs something different from me, and while they might hear similar advice and learn similar practice techniques, I approach the process on a case by case basis. The second thing—and perhaps the closet I have to a “method”—is that in both my own practicing and that of my students' I believe "PERFECT practice makes perfect". By starting from the bottom up and building a perfect, solid foundation in small sections—no matter how slowly you have to go to incorporate all the details/musicality—the rest will come SO much more easily and quickly. It takes a ton of concentration and focus at the very beginning, and a lot less mindless repetition, but believe me, you'll be learning the music in half the time ... If you'd like to know more, just ask! But one of the simplest tips is to count your mistakes while you're practicing. Seriously, keep a tally. You'll find you think a lot harder about what you're doing, and suddenly—ah ha!—without all those mistakes screwing with your brain and fingers, your learning speed, confidence, and consistency will soar. Then, and only then, when it comes to the performance can you give yourself a big pass on any mistakes—because you've done your best. And hopefully played with a ferocious passion, which is always the most important thing.

SOJOURNER CROWLEY | PIANO & VOICE

Sojourner Crowley has been performing, composing, and improvising since childhood. She began studying composition in her hometown of Tallahassee, Florida with Czech-American composer Ladislav Kubik, and as a teenager performed two of her compositions on NPR's From The Top. Her music has recently been performed at MATA Festival in New York City, the Nautilus Music-Theater/New Dramatists Composer-Librettist Studio in New York City, and Opera From Scratch in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is active in Bangor and midcoast Maine as a teacher and collaborative pianist. Sojourner holds degrees in Music Composition from the University of Georgia and New England Conservatory. We are so happy to have her as a part of our piano and voice faculty at the Music School!

What drew you to the piano?

The piano has been in my life since an early age and has been integral to composing and improvising, choral directing, accompanying, vocal coaching, and to how I have learned and taught music. Its range, its usefulness in a variety of teaching and performance settings, and its expressive and dynamic capacity across many periods and styles of music are what I especially love about the piano.

What inspires your teaching?

I think my teaching is largely modeled on how I was taught – taking inspiration from my first piano teacher in Tallahassee. The environment I was taught in was a music school where lessons were combined with a half hour each week in a theory lab. So I would go in for my lesson and then also do a theory section—I always had piano blended with theory and then I started taking composition lessons too. There was also always a blend of studiousness and diligence with play. It was never all one or the other – the pendulum would swing back and forth and my teacher was perceptive to my concentration levels. [In my teaching], I think it's important to blend fun, play, creativity, storytelling, improvisation and a little bit of composition. Then theory has a context and can be blended with the piano lessons. My approach is wholistic, which is how I learned.



COLIN WHEATLEY | ODEON ALLEGRO, VIOLIN & VIOLA

Colin Wheatley earned his Bachelors of Music from Oberlin Conservatory studying with Peter Slowik, his Masters of Music from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music with Atar Arad, and his Masters in Music Teaching from Oberlin Conservatory. He has been teaching violin and viola to students of all ages for 15 years, and is currently the orchestra director in the Waterville Public Schools. Colin previously taught at East Lyme Middle School in Connecticut and the Rhode Island Philharmonic School. An avid chamber musician, Colin performs with Halcyon, and has performed for members of the Emerson, Pacifica, Cleveland, Concord, and Takacs quartets and Yo Yo Ma. He has collaborated with Stevie Wonder, Robert Spano, Menahem Pressler, and Jeremy Denk. Colin has studied pedagogy with Mimi Zweig and has taught at the Oberlin Community Music School, alongside the Indiana University String Academy, privately, and at Fairview Elementary School (Bloomington IN).

What drew you to teaching?

Whenever I was in school there were usually one or two teachers that I really looked up to and that made an impact, whether it was how they led their lives, how they taught or how they interacted with students. As I grew up and reached an age where I could think about teaching, those connections definitely drew me toward the profession. I love working with young people - their enthusiasm, humor, and energy makes me excited to teach every day.

Describe your teaching philosophy.

My goal is to inspire an interest and a joy for music so that students want to learn and pursue music on their own rather than me telling them what to do. I emphasize a comfortable and solid foundation and creating a beautiful sound from the first day a student plays their instrument. I enjoy building relationships with students, getting to know their musical tastes, and finding repertoire that both excites and challenges them. Perhaps my favorite moments come when students start to become their own teachers - correcting mistakes, making personal musical decisions, and pursuing chamber music and other opportunities to perform.



Odeon Allegro performs at Union Hall, 2019

JASON DEAN | DRUMS

Jason Dean has been a professional drummer for 20 years. He moved to Maine after attending Berklee College of Music and began working as a recording artist and session player. He currently plays with many local acts as the drummer including Mullet Makers, Hypherphonix, Electric Bonfire and his own electronic band, Group Qauntam. Jason also collaborates with Music School faculty member, Mike Whitehead, in the eponymous Whitehead-Dean Jazz group. We are thrilled to welcome Jason to the Music School!

What led you to play percussion? And what led you to teach?

I started taking guitar lessons as a child but I always had an interest in playing drums. Since I was kid, I was always drawn to the rhythmic implication of sound! About ten years ago, I had a few people approach me about taking drum lessons and over time, I took on more students—teaching from my house.

What are your primary goals as a teacher and for your students?

The interesting dynamic behind the idea of teaching for me is that I also learn quite a bit through the process...having to bring something fresh to the table from a technical perspective each time that can then be used as an applicable tool to express creative ideas.



JOHN ADAMS | VOICE

John David Adams is an acclaimed concert soloist and recitalist, with repertoire ranging from Baroque masterworks to world-premiere compositions. He began his professional music career on the West Coast before returning to New England where he currently enjoys a busy schedule of performing engagements. He has appeared with orchestras and music ensembles across the country, including the San Francisco Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, Arlington Philharmonic, North Shore Philharmonic, Maine Pro Musica, Masterworks Chorale, Oratorio Chorale, San Francisco Bach Choir, St. Mary Schola, Lincoln Arts Festival, Portland Early Music Festival, and the Blue Hill Bach and White Mountain Bach festivals. He studied voice and opera at Hartt School of Music and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music; his teachers have included William Metcalf, Leopold Simoneau, Dr. Edwin Barlow, Eric Howe, and Malcom Smith.

What drew you to music and singing?

I was drawn to music and voice initially through my parents. My father was a minister and so of course I was exposed to music in church services. But he was also a firm believer in singing, and though untrained, he used it as a means of human connection, from breaking the ice before public speaking to comforting shut-ins. My mother had more formal training in the area of classical music – piano, not voice – and I gained an appreciation for a broad range of music at an early age. In grammar school she even taught me to sing the Ode to Joy in German (although phonetically of course).

Beyond my family I have been fortunate to have inspiring teachers over the years, from high school on, who not only instilled healthy vocal techniques, but also introduced me to a wide range of repertoire and performing styles, and encouraged my curiosity in that exploration. Amazing to think that as a teenager my voice teacher at the time introduced me to Handel and bel canto methods, and art songs of Schubert, Faure, and Vaughan Williams. That was an invaluable beginning of my path, continuing through college and my adult years, to become a professional singer and now teacher as well. And I should note that even at this stage in life, the study, exploration, and joy of discovery of repertoire and styles always continues.



Describe your approach to teaching?

My approach to teaching is first and foremost to empower and value every student. That sounds simplistic and vague, but it really applies to a lot of what I do. Teaching healthy technique of course leads to a stronger and more sustainable singing voice, but this only works successfully if a student has the confidence to open up, literally and figuratively; healthy and enjoyable singing comes with a relaxed, open production of the voice. Because singing is the most personal and intimate means of making music, something we literally generate from deep inside ourselves and send out into the world, it takes a lot of courage to release what is so personal, to letting it flow as freely as possible without apology. I find that that the biggest obstacles in voice study are learning to sing without muscle tension and strain, and how to get out of our own way, to bravely create and share your personal sound.

What has been a real joy for me, and something I only discovered during my time teaching at Bay Chamber, is teaching adult students. Maine has an older population as we all know, but Maine also has a large number of musical organizations and especially choral groups and vocal ensembles. I think there are almost a dozen between Brunswick and Belfast, and the majority of participants are older adults. Many of my students sing with one ensemble or another, and came to me to build a healthier technique so they can get more enjoyment from their participation. Some are interested in reaching farther and exploring solo opportunities, some are not. But they all come with rich life experience and an understanding and appreciation when they discover not only their best voice, but their confident singing selves as well. It's very rewarding for me.

