Gillian Irwin ‘13

Gillian Irwin in her own words: “When I came to Muhlenberg, I knew I wanted to pursue a Music major. While there were other areas of study I wanted to investigate, music was always a sure thing for me. I became more sure of this when I began music classes at Muhlenberg; from my first Music Theory course through the summer research project I undertook this summer, every experience I have had in the Music department has been exceptional.

“Muhlenberg has innumerable opportunities for those interested in Music, and the faculty and staff are more than willing to work with students to help them get the most out of their education. I have been able to assist Dr. Diane Follet in her research on Schumann (and present that research at regional and national conferences), receive a grant for a music-related summer research project, and take a semester of lessons in viola da gamba.

“The best thing about Muhlenberg’s Music department—which is really the best thing about all of Muhlenberg—is the relationships students can develop with faculty members; even better, those relationships often spring from or connect to activities outside of class. Dr. Follet and I have presented research together, but she is also my advisor, theory professor, and the advisor for an instrumental chamber group I perform in, Musica da Camera. Dr. Karen Hiles has also served several roles in my academic development: I first met her when I was the Writing Assistant for her First-Year Seminar on Disney, she was the advisor for my research last summer on Balinese gamelan and perceptions of time—a project that grew out of my semester abroad in Indonesia—and I will be part of her first Music Senior Seminar this Fall.

“After graduation, I plan to pursue a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Indonesia and then go on to graduate school in Music Theory. I know that Muhlenberg’s Music program and the academic relationships I have developed through it have given me the confidence and preparation I need to be successful in the future.”
Kappa Kappa Psi

Kappa Kappa Psi, the National Honorary Band Fraternity, is devoted to serving college band programs. The chapter at Muhlenberg, Mu Xi, was chartered in 2009, and it has grown into a group of close friends who share not just a love and appreciation of music but a willingness to give back to the community. The chapter participates in many service opportunities throughout the year, such as volunteering at USSBA marching band competitions, setting up for Muhlenberg’s concerts, and keeping Muhlenberg’s music library organized. The Brothers of Mu Xi also sponsor an annual Rock Band tournament with proceeds benefiting a local non-profit agency, Youth Education in the Arts.

Because Mu Xi understands the value of friendship and support among musicians, Brothers attend as many of Muhlenberg’s vocal and instrumental concerts as possible. You can find active Brothers in almost all ensembles on campus, including Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Pep Band, and Musica da Camera. It is also important for the chapter to branch out of the “Muhlen-bubble” and hold events with other chapters of Kappa Kappa Psi in the Lehigh Valley and beyond.

Mu Xi holds rush at the beginning of every semester and is open to any student who is actively involved in a Muhlenberg instrumental ensemble. Since Kappa Kappa Psi is a service fraternity, first-year students are also welcome! Flyers with details about Fall 2012 rush will be posted around the CA and Seegeers. We look forward to meeting you! This semester’s officers include Louisa Vikner as President, Meg Falasco and Andrew Trautmann as Vice Presidents, and Ryan Gross as Recording Secretary. Feel free to email muxi.kky@gmail.com if you have any questions. Or, just stop and ask anyone wearing letters!

The Crest of Kappa Kappa Psi.

Muhlenberg Women’s Ensemble

According to director Ed Bara, Muhlenberg’s newest ensemble “had its unofficial beginning in the Spring of 2012 when 18 singers sang 4 pieces as part of the Chamber Singers’ Spring Concert. This small sample was designed to determine if a faculty-directed, women-only vocal group could sustain itself on campus. There was no doubt that the talent was there, but would it find its way to an ensemble like this?

“The effort is being rewarded, and so, too, will the campus community. That joint concert was well attended and extremely well received. One music-loving faculty member in attendance said that the concert had the best choral singing he had ever heard in our Chapel! Our 18-member ensemble has exploded to an amazing 49 singers that are taking ownership of this group in wonderful ways. We have begun to establish an Executive Board that will help lead and bring awareness of the group to a larger audience.

“Our official inaugural concert will be Saturday November 17th at 5:00 PM in Egner Chapel. It will feature an uncommon mix of sounds, often split into many smaller choirs, and spread around the sanctuary space in creative ways. We will perform pieces from all over the world in original languages. Our primary goal is to make outstanding choral harmony, but we hope that everyone who attends our performances will leave having heard or seen something for the first time. See you in November!”
Focus on Faculty/Staff: Michael Schnack

We are very pleased to welcome Michael Schnack to the Muhlenberg music faculty this Fall. Originally from Iowa, Michael has lived for the past twenty years in Vienna, Austria, where he has been privileged to work in all facets and genres of musical theater and vocal and choral music.

What brought this Midwestern boy to Vienna in the first place? “I took Russian in college and received a fellowship for study in Moscow after graduation. While I was waiting for my visa to clear, I spent two months visiting my twin brother who was studying in Vienna. During that time, I went to the opera almost every night in standing room, which cost about $2 a performance. I saw forty different operas. I fell in love with the city, and moved there after my stay in Moscow.”

Michael started working as a vocal coach, then as a ballet and rehearsal accompanist. Before long he was directing musicals, operetta, cabaret and industry shows. He served for sixteen years as artistic director and chief administrator of a successful musical theater training academy, composed four musicals, received prizes for his vocal and choral compositions, sang in and conducted many choirs, and founded a production company specializing in rarities and new works.

So why the change to Muhlenberg? “I’ve always been an academic at heart. I love languages, libraries, and the ‘community of scholars.’ And I truly believe in the undergraduate liberal arts experience as fostered in the US. I had considered a return to academia many times over the past years. Three years ago, the time was right for me to start my doctorate. Now I’m excited to mentor new generations at Muhlenberg, and hope my international experience can help broaden the students’ horizons even further. I would like to have the choirs collaborate on projects with other departments -- dance, theater, media, art -- and also to start some touring. My dream would be to establish a study abroad program in Vienna.”

That sounds great, Michael. Welcome to Muhlenberg, and best of luck to you!
The SNAAP Survey Follow-up

In the Spring 2012 newsletter, we presented the results of the SNAAP (Strategic National Arts Alumni Project) survey, which indicated, among other things, that 65% of arts graduates have occupations within the arts and 76% continue to practice art separate from work. We thought you might be interested in a sampling of Muhlenberg alums and the role of the arts in their lives.

Philadelphia composer Andrea Clearfield ’82 was the recipient of Muhlenberg’s 2012 Alumni Achievement Award in the Arts. While at the ‘Berg, she studied with her mentor, composer Margaret Garwood, and met “my dearest friend,” Jeannette Ickovics, who received an honorary degree from Muhlenberg last May.

After graduating from Muhlenberg, mezzo-soprano Selena Moretz ’02 obtained a Master of Music from the Boston Conservatory. She recently premiered the role of the Governess in Thomas Pasatieri’s newest opera, God Bless Us Everyone, with Dicapo Opera Theater in New York City, and last season she sang the alto soloist in the world premiere of Edward Thompson’s Through all Generations (Psalm 150). Selena will sing our Alumni Recital on Saturday, September 22, at 4 pm in Recital Hall.

Sara Schmidtchen Phillips ’04 sings with Essential Voices USA, currently in residence with the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall; works for Urban Assembly, serving schools in underprivileged areas of NYC; and cares for 18-month-old Connor.

Deanna Howarth ’04 holds a PhD from Duke and works as a postdoctoral research associate at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She plays clarinet with 3 ensembles in NYC: the 40-member Manhattan Wind Ensemble, founded in 2007; Columbia Summer Winds, formed in 2002 and playing free outdoor concerts in Manhattan in July and August; and the Doctor’s Orchestral Society of New York, now in its 75th season – in a recent concert the group performed the Dvorak cello concerto with Juilliard student Michael Katz as soloist. As Deanna says, “I can’t say I ever thought I’d be ‘backing up’ a Juilliard grad!”

After graduating from the University of Connecticut Law School, Jared Fine ’06 began working at Goodwin Procter, a law firm based in Boston. He is a 3rd year corporate associate, working mostly with technology and startup companies. Jared tells us, “I’ve been playing a lot of guitar, and I play my sax every now and again, too.”

Eric Brower ’10 is the Marketing Associate for Center City Opera Theater in Philadelphia. He built their new website, www.operatheater.org, and plays bass in the orchestra for their productions.

Representative of our alums who are in graduate school are Karen Uslin ’04, Jeff Williams ’06, Ally Wente ’09, and Tori Ahrens ’11 who are studying musicology, vocal performance and pedagogy, music theory, and ethnomusicology, respectively.
Fall 2012 Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER
18 Tuesday 8:00 pm FACULTY JAZZ RECITAL: Gary Rissmiller, drums, Tom Kozic, guitar; Recital Hall
21 Friday 8:00 pm PIANO SERIES RECITAL: Richard Goode; Empie Theatre; Tickets: $25.00, 65+ $17.00, Students $12.00. Call Box Office: 484-664-3333. Muhlenberg students free with ID.
22 Saturday 4:00 pm ALUMNI RECITAL: Selena Moritz ’02, Mezzo-Soprano; Recital Hall
27 Thursday 8:00 pm DIKTAT: Sound Art Improv Ensemble from Europe; Co-sponsored by Music and Art Departments; Recital Hall

OCTOBER
10 Wednes. TBA Orpheus Chamber Orchestra Side-by-Side Workshop and Panel Discussion with Music and Business Faculty and Students; Recital Hall
19 Friday 8:00 pm FACULTY RECITAL: Michael Toth, piano, with the Lyra Trio; Recital Hall
21 Sunday 4:00 pm COLLEGE CHOIR CONCERT: directed by Michael Schnack, Egner Memorial Chapel

NOVEMBER
6 Tuesday 8:00 pm JAZZ IMPROV CONCERT: directed by Ted Conner, Recital Hall
7 Wednes. 8:00 pm JAZZ IMPROV CONCERT: directed by Tom Kozic & Gary Rissmiller, Recital Hall
9 Friday 5:15 pm FIRST STUDENT RECITAL of Music Dept., Recital Hall
10 Saturday 4:00 pm COLLEGIUM MUSICUM CONCERT: Directed by Dr. Ted Conner, Egner Memorial Chapel
10 Saturday 8:00 pm CHAMBER ENSEMBLE RECITAL: Recital Hall
11 Sunday 3:00 pm MUSICA DA CAMERA: String & Woodwind Chamber Music, coached by Dr. Diane Follet, Egner Memorial Chapel
14 Wednes. 5:15 pm SECOND STUDENT RECITAL of Music Dept., Egner Memorial Chapel
16 Friday 8:00 pm PIANO SERIES RECITAL: Joseph Kalichstein; Empie Theatre; Tickets: $25.00, 65+ $17.00, Students $12.00. Call Box Office: 484-664-3333. Muhlenberg students free with ID.
17 Saturday 5:00 pm WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE CONCERT, directed by Ed Bara; Egner Memorial Chapel
17 Saturday 8:00 pm BIG BAND CONCERT: Jazz Ensemble directed by Tony Gairo; Empie Theatre
19 Monday 5:15 pm THIRD STUDENT RECITAL of Music Dept., Recital Hall
30 Friday 8:00 pm WIND ENSEMBLE CONCERT: directed by Al Neumeyer, Empie Theatre
DECEMBER

1 Saturday 4:00 pm LEHIGH SAENGERBUND CHRISTMAS CONCERT, Egner Memorial Chapel; Free will offering

1 Saturday 8:00 pm CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONCERT: directed by Daniel Boring, Empie Theatre

8 Saturday 7:30 pm CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICES, Egner Memorial Chapel, Tickets required, For information call the Chapel Office 484-664-3121

9 Sunday 3:30 pm &

7:30 pm CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICES, Egner Memorial Chapel, Tickets required, For information call the Chapel Office 484-664-3121

Please note: Recital Hall and Empie Theatre are both located in the Baker Center for the Arts. Admission is free unless otherwise noted. These events are subject to change; for the latest information, consult the College Calendar online.

...I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness. –Maya Angelou
Global Pop

In describing her newest course, Dr. Karen Hiles tells us: “Music is a worldwide phenomenon. As listeners, we enjoy sounds from around the world every day, from flamenco to hip-hop, bluegrass to bhangra, Jay-Z to the Eurovision Song Contest. Designed for majors and non-majors, Global Pop will engage the students in listening, thinking, and discussing the music of their world.

‘Popular music has emerged as a primary site for understanding and participating in global culture as it participates in identity formation, globalization, consumerism, and cultural imperialism. This course will introduce students to new musics and places and encourage them to think more critically about their roles as consumers of music in a global marketplace.

“Questions the course will ask are: What is the relationship between local and global music? How are indigenous and folk musics transformed when they begin to reach mass audiences? What role do technology and commercialism play in constructing local identity (even self-identity) on a global stage?"

Bhangra, a genre of Punjabi music and dance

“Music exalts life, enhances life, and gives it meaning . . . It is an irreplaceable, undeserved, transcendental blessing.

~Anthony Storr, Music and the Mind

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We hope you have enjoyed reading about us. If you have ideas for articles, alumni news, or comments about this newsletter, please contact the Editor at dfollet@muhlenberg.edu.

We’re on the Web:
http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/music/