Michelle Rossi ‘13

When Michelle Rossi entered Muhlenberg, she thought she would major in Biology and minor in Music. She found a home in the Music Department and realized she could earn both her Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts. “Music was a perfect contrast to my biology studies. I was sold on earning a dual degree,” Michelle says.

A piano performance major studying with Michael Toth (more on Michael on p. 4), Michelle has also taken lessons in voice, guitar, and viola da gamba. As Michelle says, “Each of these areas of study has allowed me to think about music in a new way.”

Michelle has been involved in Collegium Musicum, our early music ensemble, since her freshman year, singing and playing harpsichord and viola da gamba. “Dr. (Ted) Conner asked me to come to a rehearsal after my second class in his First Year Seminar. I thought that I was simply sitting in to listen, and suddenly I had signed the form to register for the group. Collegium has allowed me to work closely with my musical peers,” she says. “Being able to present our concert at the end of the semester feels like we are bringing our audience into our rehearsals, into what we get to experience every week.” Michelle has also performed in College Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Musica da Camera, and the Handbell Choir. “The opportunity to experience various music ensembles is really what has made my time at Muhlenberg special,” Michelle says.

In Spring 2012, Michelle studied abroad with SEA Semester, sailing as working crew from Tahiti to Hawaii. While performing oceanographic research, she also studied the music of French Polynesia and found that music helped her cross the language barrier.

The recipient of the 2012 Muhlenberg Woman’s Auxiliary Scholarship in Music and Phi Mu Fraternity’s 2011-12 Florence Williams Sheehan scholarship, Michelle is a prospective dental student for the fall of 2013, but she hopes to continue learning new instruments and furthering her music studies. “The Muhlenberg Music Department has given me all of the tools I need to keep performing and learning music throughout my life.”
Lauren Curnow, a Muhlenberg alum who returned to teach here, spent 6 weeks in Japan last Spring, singing in the Saito-Kinen Festival’s production of Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. The tour included performances in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kyoto. The renowned conductor Seiji Ozawa coached the singers in rehearsal and worked with the orchestra, comprised of a group of college students from the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy. The understudies and opera chorus were also students from the Academy. Ozawa’s assistant, Pierre Valle, conducted the performances after Mr. Ozawa became ill. This is Curnow’s third time working with Ozawa: She performed *Janáček’s Cunning Little Vixen* with him in Matsumoto, Japan, and Florence, Italy.

A graduate of the Rubin Academic of Music in Israel and Westminster Choir College, soprano Raya Gonen has performed leading roles on the opera stage and in recital. She represented Israel at the *Cardiff Singer of the World Competition* in Wales, performed works by Chopin in honor of Polish President Lech Wałęsa, and sang songs by Grieg in Oslo, Norway. Gonen is the first and only vocalist to devote an entire recording, *Vocal Jewels from Israel*, to contemporary art songs by Israeli composers. She will join forces with award-winning film producer/director Henry Nevison in an endeavor to transform her Holocaust Music Recital Program into an educational documentary film. The film will feature Gonen singing the works of the composers who wrote and performed in concentration camps and ghettos during the Holocaust era.

Recently elected president of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Steven Snow also heads the Artist Development Wing for the Opera Project, a venue for classical singers based in Lambertville, NJ, that presents recitals and showcase concerts throughout the Fall and Spring. In July 2013, the Artist Development Wing will sponsor the Hunterdon Vocal Workshop, a week of intensive master classes and scene study. Snow will be performing Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at the Shannondell Arts Center, and will perform "Two American Songs" here at Muhlenberg in a concert of works by Douglas Ovens on February 26th (see our Concert Calendar below for details).

Christa Warda has taught at Muhlenberg for many years and is the liaison between Muhlenberg College and the Lehigh *Saengerbund* (Saengerbund is German for “Singer’s Association”), a German singing society that was founded 155 years ago, in 1858, in Allentown. It is a community chorus that rehearses Tuesday nights in Egner Chapel and performs twice a year—an annual Christmas concert in early December, and a concert celebrating its anniversary every Spring, usually the first Saturday in May. Warda was the soprano soloist in a recent performance of the Mozart *Requiem* at the Episcopal Cathedral of the Nativity in Bethlehem (Dr. Diane Follet is a member of the Cathedral Choir). Warda is working on a collaborative project with fellow faculty members Michael Schnack and Stephen Williams. Stay tuned!

June Thomas, a 2012 graduate of the University of the Arts in Philadelphia with an MM in Jazz Studies, is a new addition to our faculty. She is a jazz vocalist and pianist and will appear with the Maria Woodford Band at the International Blues Competition this Spring in Memphis, TN. She also performs regularly with blues guitarist/songwriter Mike Dugan, a local “favorite son,” and provided background vocals on jazz legend Bob Dorough’s latest CD project, “Duets.” Thomas also recorded her original arrangement of “Deck the Halls” (entitled “Deck the What”) for the PA Jazz Collective’s debut holiday CD. The track was a collaborative undertaking by several Muhlenberg jazz faculty members: Thomas (piano, vocals), Tom Kozic (guitar), Gary Rissmiller (drums), Tony Gairo (tenor saxophone), and Domenic Fiore (acoustic bass). The project was recorded at Spectra Sound Studios in Nazareth, PA. In addition to her studio at Muhlenberg, Thomas teaches at the Lesson Center in Bethlehem and Coopersburg, and she looks forward to continuing to make creative connections with artists, students, and lovers of music in the upcoming year.
Due Colori

Megan Monaghan and Daniel Boring are a husband/wife duo who perform all over the world. Their duo “Due Colori” means ‘two colors’ in Italian and reflects the musical combination of voice with various instruments such as classical guitar and lute. Formed in 1998 while both performers were attending Ithaca College, they made their European Debut in Lucca, Italy, later that year.

Due Colori maintains a busy concert career throughout the United States, Europe and Mexico. In the Philadelphia area, both perform with the orchestra ‘Vox Ama Deus,’ where Dan performs as a continuo player and Megan as soprano soloist. Both have been featured on several Vox Ama Deus recordings during the past years with fellow ‘Berg faculty member Ed Bara (story follows).

At Muhlenberg, Megan Monaghan maintains a vocal studio of approximately 30 students and directs the Muhlenberg College Opera Group, a class that focuses on operatic roles, styles and technique. Both Music and Theater Majors benefit greatly from this class as it stresses the role of the singing actor that is in high-demand in today’s entertainment industries.

Daniel Boring’s duties at Muhlenberg include teaching applied lessons in classical guitar, lute, and historical instruments as well as various plucked instruments such as ukulele, mandolin and banjo. Additionally, he has been the director and conductor for the Muhlenberg College Chamber Orchestra since 2006. The Chamber Orchestra presents concerts every semester with music spanning from the Baroque to Contemporary periods.

A Spring ’12 collaboration between the Opera Group and the Chamber Orchestra led to performances of “Bell’ Italia,” a program of all-Italian opera scenes. This successful collaboration will be repeated Spring ’13 with performances of baroque composer Henry Purcell’s opera “Dido and Aeneas.”

Ed Bara (featured in our Spring, 2010, newsletter) maintains an active performing career, teaches over 40 individual voice lessons per week, and serves as Director of Music Ministries at Peace Lutheran Church in Bucks County. Bara also directs the Muhlenberg Women’s Ensemble.

Bara has been featured as bass soloist in recordings of works by Bach, Mozart, Handel, Dvorak, and Mendelssohn. He has also sung at Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center in performances ranging from Handel’s Judas Maccabaeus to Verdi’s Requiem and Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. Equally at home on the opera stage and in musical theatre, Bara has performed over 100 lead roles in the U.S and in 14 countries worldwide as well as numerous recital and small concert performances.

This Spring, Bara, in the role of Jesus, will be joined by Megan Monaghan and Daniel Boring in a performance at the Kimmel Center of J.S. Bach’s St. John Passion, which will also be recorded for a 2013 release. He will also sing two recitals, one featuring song sets of Gerald Finzi with his friend and fellow Muhlenberg colleague Vincent Trovato (more on p. 4), and the other titled “Kings, Fathers, and Villains,” which will feature Bara with some of his students in a wonderful evening of dark, menacing characters. In the summer, Bara will again join the Muhlenberg Summer Music Theater program for his 5th season with the company and 3rd as musical director.
Notes from 3 instrumentalists...

Jim Thoma, a Missouri native and a graduate of the Juilliard School, appears regularly as timpanist with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, a post he has held for the past 25 years. He also plays with the New York City Opera, whose recent performances include the VOX Festival (premiering excerpts of 10 new operas at NYU’s Skirball Performing Arts Center), the world premieres of Rufus Wainright’s Prima Donna and John Zorn’s Machine de l’Etre, as well as the New York premiere of Leonard Bernstein’s A Quiet Place. In December, Thoma performed at the Barclay Center with tenor Andrea Bocelli and played with both the Long Island Masterworks Chorale and the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players. Thoma’s latest project, of which he is particularly proud, is the founding and facilitation of the Muhlenberg College Drum Circle. The group meets on Wednesday evenings during the semester to promote mental and psychological health as well as providing a forum for those interested in drumming to meet, talk, and perform together. In addition to his work at Muhlenberg, Thoma teaches at Kean University and maintains a private teaching practice in Clinton, NJ. Thoma is also a passionate and award-winning photographer.

Pianist Michael Toth

employs technology as part of teaching and performing. His iPhone/iPad app, “Lesson Book,” manages the many lessons he teaches. As one uses the app, a database of music is developed, with access to pdf files so the music can be viewed as the student plays. If the student has a compatible device, lessons can be sent through Bluetooth; lessons can also be emailed or printed. The app includes a metronome, audio recorder, and access to a database of student contact information. Toth wrote software to monitor the progress of scales in the practice room, and his website, www.virtualpianist.com, includes a “Hall of Fame,” recordings of his Muhlenberg students that parents can access to listen to the student’s progress and the pieces s/he has learned.

As a performer, Toth appears with the Lyra Ensemble, (Debbie Davis, cello, Stefan Xhori, violin, John Shwartz, clarinet), and this year they are performing a Mozart piano trio, Beethoven Archduke, and the Smetana g minor piano trio. The group started last year when Toth wanted to perform The Quartet for the End of Time by Messiaen. He also performs with the Crosswinds Trio, which consists of piano, trumpet, and French horn. Toth played Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue” with the Allentown Band in December, and he plays for a dinner theater in New Jersey. He uses “Virtual Page Turner,” a software application for displaying music and turning pages electronically with a foot switch.

In addition to his own website, Toth works with web applications created with Ruby on Rails, a public domain web development framework. Sites include http://virtualbookingagent.com, a web application to help connect musicians and performance venues and http://my-iphone-app.com, a web application to assist in creating iPhone apps.

Pianist Vincent Trovato

(featured in our Fall, 2010, Newsletter) continues to serve the Music Department in a variety of roles, but he is also active outside the Muhlenberg community. In May of last year, Trovato conducted a pops concert with the Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra, and he was the musical director and conductor for Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival this past summer. A sought-after accompanist, Trovato will appear on a number of Senior Recitals this Spring. He will also be participating in Douglas Ovens’ birthday celebration recital on February 20 (see our Concert Calendar), accompanying his colleagues Lauren Curnow and Brian Ming Chu.
### Spring 2013 Calendar of Events

| JANUARY | 25 Friday | Winter Recital I: Students taking Applied  
|         |          | 5:15 pm Music will perform, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 20 Wed.  | Love Songs and Other Wonders: Music by Douglas Oven;  
|         |          | 8:00 pm selected vocal music and piano works from 1985-present; Paul C. Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 21 Thurs. | German Diction Masterclass: Christa Warda, Lecturer in Voice, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
| MARCH   | 15 Friday | Piano Series Concert: Nobuyuki Tsujii  
|         |          | 8:00 pm Paul C. Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts; Tickets: Call Box Office: 484-664-3333, Muhlenberg students free with ID |
|         | 21 Thurs. | Lehigh Saengerbund Voice Competition  
|         |          | 7:30 pm Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 22 Friday | Class of 1969 Recital Competition:  
|         |          | 5:15 pm Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 22 Friday | Faculty Recital: Paul Windt, Violin  
|         |          | 8:00 pm Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 24 Sun.  | Senior Recital: Danielle Pampinella, Soprano  
|         |          | 2:00 pm Egner Memorial Chapel |
|         | 24 Sun.  | Senior Recital: Jacob Kraus, Tenor  
|         |          | 4:30 pm Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 28 Thurs | Pennsylvania Jazz Collective Concert,  
|         |          | 7:30 pm Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts |
| APRIL   | 3 Wed.   | Student Recital: Students of Applied  
|         |          | 5:15 pm Music perform, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 5 Fri.   | Student Recital: Students of Applied  
|         |          | 5:15 pm Music perform, Egner Memorial Chapel |
|         | 5 Fri.   | Senior Recital: Jacqueline Phillips, Soprano  
|         |          | 7:30 pm Egner Memorial Chapel |
|         | 6 Sat.   | Women's Ensemble: directed by Ed Bara  
|         |          | 2:30 pm Egner Memorial Chapel |
|         | 6 Sat.   | Senior Recital: Ben Doyle, Tenor & Violin  
|         |          | 4:00 pm Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts |
|         | 6 Sat.   | Senior Recital: David Cook, Baritone  
|         |          | 5:30 pm Room 101, Rehearsal House |
|         | 7 Sun.   | College Choir Concert: directed by Michael Schnack, Egner Memorial Chapel |
|         |          | 3:00 pm |

Cont’d...
9 Tues.  JAZZ IMPROV CONCERT: directed by Ted  
7:30 pm  Conner, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

10 Wed.  JAZZ IMPROV CONCERT: directed by Tom  
8:00 pm  Kozic & Gary Rissmiller, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

12 Fri.  STUDENT RECITAL: Students of Applied  
5:15 pm  Music perform, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

12 Fri.  PIANO SERIES CONCERT: Gulsin Onay  
8:00 pm  Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts;  
Tickets: Call Box Office: 484-664-3333; Muhlenberg students free with ID

13 Sat.  COLLEGIUM MUSICUM: directed by Dr. Ted  
4:00 pm  Conner, Egner Memorial Chapel

13 Sat.  SENIOR RECITAL: Jessica Sepe, Soprano  
6:30 pm  Egner Memorial Chapel

14 Sun.  MUSICA DA CAMERA: Chamber Music, coached  
3:00 pm  by Dr. Diane Follet, Egner Memorial Chapel

14 Sun.  SENIOR RECITAL: Shawn Cherian, flute/tenor  
4:30 pm  saxophone, Recital Hall, Baker Center for Arts

17 Wed.  SENIOR RECITAL: Elizabeth Earle, Soprano  
8:00 pm  Egner Memorial Chapel

19 Fri.  STUDENT RECITAL: Students of Applied Music  
5:15 pm  perform, Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

19 Friday  BIG BAND JAZZ CONCERT: directed by Tony  
8:00 pm  Gairo, Empie Theatre, Baker Center for Arts

20 Sat.  SENIOR RECITAL: Gillian Irwin, Soprano  
4:00 pm  Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

20 Sat.  SENIOR RECITAL: Molly Gervis, Soprano  
6:00 pm  Egner Memorial Chapel

20 Sat.  SENIOR RECITAL: David Goodheart, Guitar  
8:00 pm  Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

24 Wed.  SENIOR RECITAL: LeeAnn Williams, Soprano  
7:30 pm  Egner Memorial Chapel

26 Fri.  CHAMBER ORCHESTRA AND OPERA GROUP,  
directed by Daniel Boring and Megan Monaghan,  
Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts

27 Sat.  SENIOR RECITAL: Allison Killeen, Soprano  
3:00 pm  Recital Hall, Baker Center for the Arts

27 Sat.  WIND ENSEMBLE, directed by Al Neumeyer,  
8:00 pm  Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts

30 Tues.  CHAMBER ORCHESTRA AND OPERA GROUP:  
directed by Daniel Boring and Megan Monaghan,  
Empie Theatre, Baker Center for the Arts

MAY

4 Sat.  LEHIGH SAENGERBUND CHORAL CONCERT:  
4:00 pm  Egner Memorial Chapel; Free will offering

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.
Strike Up the Band!

Ronald Demkee joined The Allentown Band, American’s oldest civilian concert band (since 1828), in 1964 as featured tuba soloist and was elected conductor in 1977. Under his leadership, the band has recorded twenty-six volumes of the highly acclaimed "Our Band Heritage" series, taken four trips to Europe, and performed at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center.

As Associate Conductor of The Allentown Symphony Orchestra since 1983, Demkee has worked with various ASO conductors, conducted many of the orchestra’s Young Peoples Concerts, Pops Concerts and Holiday Concerts, and led the ASO in Subscription Concerts featuring internationally famous artists.

In addition to conducting numerous high school honor bands and orchestras, Demkee has served as guest conductor a variety of military bands, including The U.S. Army Band, The U.S. Navy Band, and The U.S. Coast Guard Band. Demkee is the recipient of a number of awards: The National Band Association’s "Citation of Excellence," The John Philip Sousa Foundation’s "Sudler Legion of Honor," and The Allentown (Pennsylvania) "Arts Ovation Award" for Outstanding Achievements in the Performing Arts. In 1991, he received an Honorary Doctor of Music from Muhlenberg College, and in 2005, the Allentown Arts Council presented Demkee with a “Lifetime Achievement Award.” He is an inductee of the “National High School Band Directors’ Hall of Fame” and has been a member of the prestigious American Bandmasters Association since 1986.

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/