

WELCOME BACK RETRIEVERS!

FEBRUARY

2026

UMBC DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Upcoming
Events

News

Current
Students

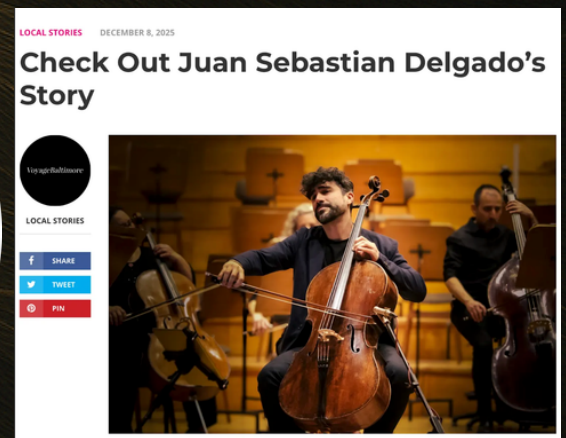
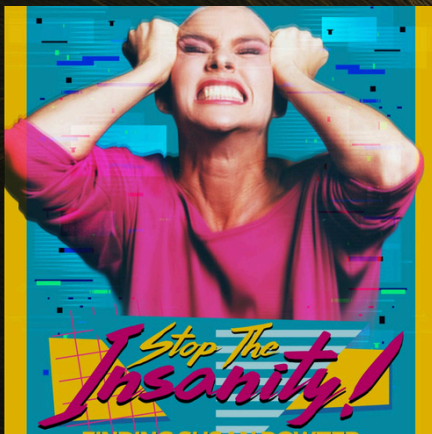
Alumni

Faculty

WELCOME TO OUR Monthly Newsletter

Through individual attention from extraordinary faculty, a supportive community, and real-world experience, we develop forward thinking musical citizens who make a positive impact in their communities and the world.

Welcome back Retrievers! Spring 2026!



Upcoming Events



3/6 UMBC Faculty Jazz Ensemble, 7:30PM

3/7 Susie Ibarra: Rhythm in Nature, 7:30PM
Spatial audio installation will open at 6:30

**3/8 Baltimore Classical Guitar Society:
Sérgio and Odair Assad - Farewell Tour, 3:00PM**

3/11 RUCKUS, 7:30PM
Highlighting the work of composer George Lewis

3/25 Huang-Miyamoto violin/piano duo, 7:30PM

**3/28 Chamber Music Maryland:
Anderson & Roe Piano Duo with Wordsmith, 7:30PM**

3/30 UMBC Faculty Woodwind Quintet, 7:30PM

Learn more and get tickets at music.umbc.edu/events

String Day 2026 Recap!



String Day was a tremendous success, welcoming 77 students from schools across Maryland for a day of inspiration, collaboration, and music-making at UMBC. Students were engaged and energized throughout the event, participating in presentations, coachings, and masterclasses led by our outstanding faculty. The event finished off with a fantastic string orchestra reading session in Linehan Concert Hall.

The day reflected the hard work and dedication of many contributors, from event planning and logistics to outreach, score preparation, scheduling, and design. With thoughtful coordination at every stage, String Day ran seamlessly and created a memorable experience for everyone involved. It was a joyful celebration of string playing, community, and shared musical growth.

Thank you to everyone involved!

Congrats to all of our students who gave Junior and Senior Recitals Last Semester!

Current Students

Elizabeth Galilov Junior Vocal Recital

Grace Kang Senior Piano Recital

Colin Powell Senior Composition Recital

Will Kuethe Junior Vocal Recital

Justin Whitmore Senior Vocal Recital



Jean Nguyen Senior Composition Recital

Joshua Epstein Senior Composition Recital

Frank Weaver Senior Jazz Guitar Recital

Charis Grant Senior Voice Recital

Alumni

Alum **Julian Brezon '13** composed and recorded *The East Reach* for the Otherwind Jazz Orchestra, featuring soloists Julian Brezon (tenor saxophone), Steph Clement (trumpet), and Xavier Kim (piano). This piece (along with the name "Otherwind") is inspired by author Ursula K. Leguin's *Earthsea* series. You can watch [HERE](#)



Kiersten Reid '25, now teaches exploratory instrumental music to students in grades 1–5 at Riverview Elementary, just down the road from UMBC. She hopes to bring her fifth-grade students to campus for a field trip to experience ensemble playing, observe real-life rehearsals, or even shadow a music major for the day.

Kiersten continues to collaborate closely with mentors from her time at UMBC, as well as several fellow alumni now working as music educators in Baltimore County Public Schools.

Alumni

Ahmed Warshanna '20, (Jazz Guitar) continued his graduate studies at the Peabody Conservatory, where he is pursuing a Master's degree in Jazz Guitar. This past fall, he was featured in an artist profile by the Baltimore Jazz Alliance, which highlighted his creative work and ensemble, *Ishta!* [Read the full profile here.](#)

In December, Ahmed performed at Manor Mill as part of a new concert series he helped curate, spotlighting emerging jazz artists in the Baltimore area. Earlier in the season, *Ishta!* also performed at the Walters Art Museum for the opening of *Soulful Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, an exciting collaboration that brought jazz to an unconventional and inspiring setting.



Christie Finn '07, has spent the past few years deepening their focus on scholarship and research. They are currently pursuing a PhD in Historical Musicology at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, where they also teach two seminars in musicology. In addition to academic work, they recently co-authored a book set to be published this year by University of Michigan Press, exploring the wide-reaching ways music interacts with the world around us.

Faculty News



Dr. Natalie Groom (Affiliate Artist of Clarinet) and soprano Jennifer Piazza-Pick, the duo behind Whistling Hens, released their second album *Big Crass Monster* on October 17, 2025. The album features four world premiere recordings of works by Jennifer Stevenson, Melissa Dunphy, Jenni Brandon, and Cherise Leiter. These compositions highlight forgotten voices, misunderstood legacies, and the power of reclamation through music.

The album is available to stream, download, or purchase at www.whistlinghens.bandcamp.com.

On Wednesday, February 4, **Dr. Liana Harron** presented a dynamic piano recital as part of UMBC's professional concert series, in celebration of America's 250th birthday. The program featured Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, jazz selections, and loopstation-based performance, offering a rich and varied musical experience.

The recital also included a groundbreaking collaboration with guest visual artist McCoy Chance in a performance of Ekki Hugsá (*Don't Think*) by Ólafur Arnalds, arranged by Dr. Harron for loop station and piano.



Faculty News



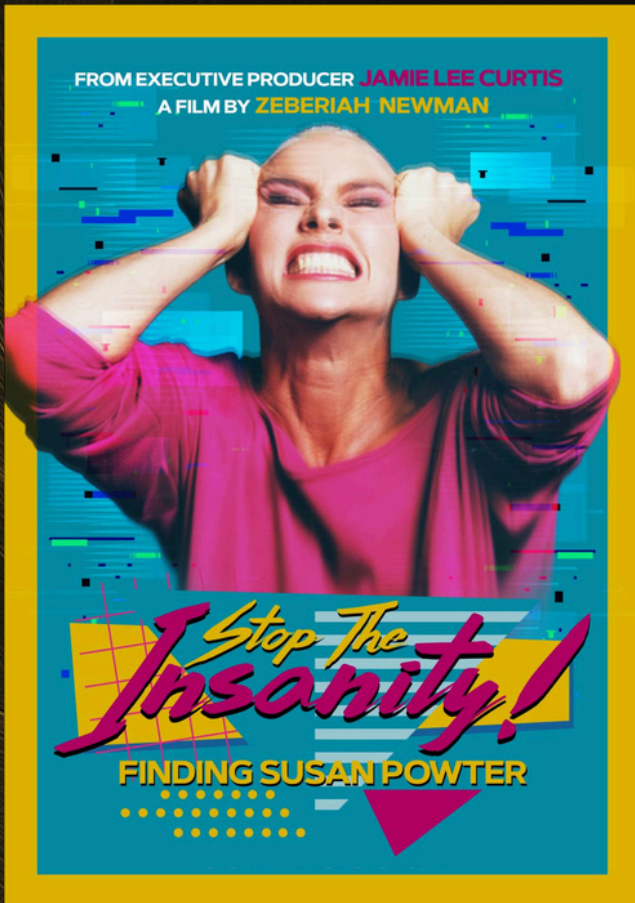
Dr. Angelica Brooks will present at the CMS Think Tank Conference at the University of Houston, joining colleagues from the College Music Society's Music Education Committee. She was also named a CMS NAMM Fellow for 2024–2025 and will attend the NAMM Show in Los Angeles.

In March, Dr. Brooks will serve as Keynote Speaker for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Conference, where she will lead two workshops on Hip-Hop History and Hip-Hop and Choral Music, continuing her leadership in inclusive and culturally responsive music education.

Dr. Audrey Andrist, Affiliate Artist in Piano, was the featured soloist with ROCO in Houston, Texas on February 7, where she performed Duke Ellington's New World A-Comin' for piano and orchestra. The concert was live streamed worldwide for free.



Faculty News



Greg Kalember, UMBC Music Technology professor, composed and produced the original score for the documentary film *Stop the Insanity: Finding Susan Powter*. The film was released in theaters on November 19, 2025, and premiered on Amazon Prime on December 9, 2025. Kalember's music plays a central role in shaping the film's tone, supporting the narrative of rediscovering the iconic fitness and media personality.

Dr. Juan Sebastián Delgado was featured last December in Voyage Baltimore as part of the "Baltimore's Most Inspiring Stories" series. In the interview, he shares insights into his artistic journey and creative practice.

Read the full article here: voyagebaltimore.com/interview/check-out-juan-sebastian-delgados-story



Faculty News



Daniel Rich, Affiliate Artist in Voice, participated in *Roots and Resonance: An Operatic Love Letter to Baltimore*, presented by Opera Baltimore at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture on Saturday, February 14, 2026. The daylong program launched the Voices in Solidarity initiative, exploring the intertwined musical histories of Baltimore's Black and Jewish communities through conversation and performance. As part of the event, Prof. Rich curated and performed in the afternoon recital, *Tapestry: Heart & Soul*, featuring opera, spirituals, and new works by Baltimore composers.

Dr. Ismar Gomes, Affiliate Artist in Cello, recently returned from a national tour with the Valencia Baryton Project, the leading ensemble dedicated to reviving long-neglected works for the baryton, an 18th-century string instrument championed by Haydn. The tour brought the ensemble to major concert series in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hawaii, Arizona, Utah, and more.



Thank you!

Please send your updates to the
music office so we can share your
accomplishments with the
community!

<https://forms.gle/Mz9dPRfVRmkGCLhy5>



**UMBC
MUSIC**

For more information and to view our 2025 arts +
concert series, visit us at

music.umbc.edu