

Jonathan Swartz, BM, MM, DMA, Violinist
Candidate's Statement

Overview

There are four main areas in the arts for which I am recognized as making an impact: 1) as a performer; 2) as a researcher/creator; 3) as a teacher; and 4) as an arts administrator. In academia, the area of performance is considered part of research/creative activity.

1) My colleagues consider me an outstanding concert violinist and chamber musician. I am regularly invited to perform with some of the most celebrated artists in classical music and at internationally acclaimed venues. My performances incorporate the commissioning and premiering of new music, an essential element in ensuring the creation of new art.

2) My performing has been the impetus behind my research, through which I have developed a unique approach for conceptualizing bow technique. My contributions to violin pedagogy have received critical recognition that has resulted in invitations to give lectures at national conferences and a feature article in one of the two critically recognized major publications in my field.

3) The attention garnered by my research has led to invitations to give master classes at music schools and festivals throughout North America and to teach at summer music programs. These activities have contributed to attracting a higher level of violin applicant to ASU, increasing both the quality and quantity of national and international students in my studio.

4) Through my additional positions at ASU as Artistic Director of the Visiting Quartet Residency Program (which I founded), and String Area Coordinator (to which I was elected by my colleagues), I have developed innovative curricula resulting in, among other benefits, the creation and presentation of new music in the community in a unique way. In the Phoenix metropolitan area, I have established partnerships with the Mayo Clinic, the Phoenix Symphony, and the Phoenix Art Museum in which students, faculty, and guest artists of ASU interface with the public.

Research/Creative Activities

As a member of the IRIS Chamber Orchestra since its inception in 2000, I perform regularly with world-renowned stars of classical music including cellist Yo-Yo Ma; violinists Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Gil Shaham, and Midori; pianists Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet; and bassist Edgar Meyer. Having received critical acclaim from the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune, the IRIS Chamber Orchestra has established itself as one of the elite chamber orchestras in the country, comprised of a select group of musicians from around North America chosen exclusively by its conductor, Michael Stern.

IRIS is also at the forefront of commissioning, performing, and recording new compositions, fulfilling the important goal of creating and performing new music. I have performed in the world premieres of works by many of the today's most recognized composers including Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Grammy Award winner Richard Danielpour, and award winners Stephen Hartke and Jonathan Leshnoff.

With IRIS, I have recorded five CD's, two of which have been released on the prominent recording labels Naxos and Arabesque. These recordings have received national critical acclaim: **American Classics: Stephen Hartke** on the Naxos label (2003) made the New York Times Critics' List of Best CD's of 2003; **In the Arms of the Beloved: Music of Richard Danielpour** on the Arabesque Recordings label (2003) received praise from Fanfare Magazine and American Record Guide. The other three CD's will be released in the near future.

In addition to thirty-six concerts with the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, I have performed over fifty concerts as a soloist and chamber musician since I joined the ASU faculty. In addition to my performances at ASU, many are at distinguished national and international venues including Colorado's Strings in the Mountains Festival, and the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, the largest chamber music festival in the world. Other artists invited to perform at the Ottawa festival include the Juilliard, Emerson, Tokyo, and St. Lawrence String Quartets as well as prominent soloists from around the world.

In continuing to fulfill the important goal of creating and performing new music, I have also commissioned and given world premiere performances of two works for unaccompanied violin by Canadian composer Kieren MacMillan: *Chaconne* (2001) and *Suite No. 1* (2004). In addition, I composed a new *Cadenza* for Brahms' Violin Concerto, and gave the world premiere performance at ASU with the ASU Symphony Orchestra and conductor Timothy Russell.

Mastering the technical aspects of performing inspired my research program to create a different way to understand and teach violin technique. I have developed a method that involves conceptualization using mental models as a means to solve technical issues. In particular, my methods for dealing with bow technique have made a significant impact in violin pedagogy. Teachers from around North America send their students to study with me specifically to learn my technique.

As a result of the national attention given to my research, I was invited to lecture at the 2006 American String Teachers Association (ASTA) National Conference in Kansas City on the subject *Conceptualizing Arm Weight*. Based on the success of this presentation, STRINGS magazine, one of the two critically recognized publications in string playing, wrote a feature article on my approach that appears in the October 2006 publication. I have been invited to lecture again at the next ASTA National Conference (2007) in Detroit on further applications of my bow technique, *Conceptualizing Arm Weight: Part 2*.

Teaching

My research and creative activity provides synergy with my teaching. As an invited guest, I have given master classes at twelve universities and music conservatories including Vanderbilt University, Bowling Green State University, Florida State University, and Stanford University. My work during the summers at the Interlochen Center for the Arts (since 1999) and the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory (since 2003) has led to an increase in the number and level of violin applicants to ASU, contributing to almost doubling the number of students in my ASU studio within three years. In 2003-2004, 35% of my undergraduate students had worked with me previously at Interlochen, and in 2005-2006, 66% of my graduate students including my teaching assistant, came to me from the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory. Many of these students have made significant contributions to the School of Music, serving as concertmaster and principal second violin (both competitive positions) in the ASU Symphony Orchestra, with one student also being a winner of the concerto competition and chosen several times to represent the string area at school-wide convocation performances.

Several of my students have gone on to teach in the Arizona school system, and others are pursuing graduate studies at major music schools. One of my students was selected as one of two students nationwide to perform in a master class given by violinist Midori at the 2005 ASTA National Conference in Reno NV. This student has also appeared as soloist with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra in Nebraska. My students' studies also reflect my creative initiatives, as they regularly study and perform contemporary repertoire, and compose their own cadenzas for appropriate concerti.

When I first joined the faculty at ASU, 90% of my students were from Arizona and not one person in my studio represented an ethnic minority. Over the five years since, I have had students from Costa Rica, Venezuela, Taiwan, and Croatia, as well as an African-American from Detroit, and a Jamaican-Mexican from Tucson, contributing to greater diversity in the university.

Through my efforts to improve curricula, the School of Music has modified its Master of Music degree plan by expanding it to allow 'orchestra emphasis' as an option. This will help attract additional talented students to the program and ensure that they are prepared more specifically for orchestral careers.

In 2005, I created an innovative string chamber music curriculum and established the Visiting Quartet Residency Program at ASU, a unique program among music schools nationwide that integrates visiting resident artists with a comprehensive string chamber music curriculum. As Artistic Director of this program, I engage a different major professional string quartet to serve throughout an academic year as Distinguished Artist Teachers. I choose the ensemble in conjunction with the curriculum, ensuring the students are always working with the leading artists in the field. The quartet visits the ASU campus multiple times throughout the year, working with students on projects that form the basis of the curriculum. In 2005-2006, the internationally acclaimed St. Lawrence String Quartet inaugurated this program, working on Haydn, Mozart, and Shostakovich. In 2006-2007, the illustrious Juilliard String Quartet is serving in this role, working on Schubert, Beethoven, and Bartók. Over the course of an undergraduate degree, students will have had the opportunity to work with and develop relationships with four world-renowned string quartets, while studying all of the major string chamber music literature.

Even though this program was created with the purpose of addressing string chamber music, I have created opportunities for non-string music students to work with the Distinguished Artist Teachers as well. Woodwind, brass, piano, and composition students have all participated in this program.

One of the most meaningful projects from the inaugural year of the Visiting Quartet Residency Program yielded fourteen new works for string quartet. The St. Lawrence String Quartet worked with ASU composition students, advising them as they composed for string quartet. I paired the composers with ASU student string quartets, creating the 'real world' experience of composer working with performer, helping each other better understand the process and responsibilities in this mutually dependent relationship. This project culminated in the world premiere performance of all of these new works.

In 2006-2007, the composition and string students will work together with assistance from the Juilliard String Quartet and the Phoenix Art Museum. The composition students will compose new works inspired by art at the museum; the string students will premiere these compositions at the museum in conjunction with the works of art on display, presenting the music and the art in a unique way. Through this project, our students will be participating in the creation and performance of new music, the combining of art disciplines, and community engagement.

Service

I have served on numerous committees for students' doctoral documents, comprehensive exams and mock auditions, and as advisor for my graduate students. I have also served on and chaired faculty search committees in the School of Music and adjudicated in the community multiple times for the Phoenix Symphony Guild Competition and the All-State Regional Orchestra auditions. My work as Artistic Director of the Visiting Quartet Residency Program at ASU has aspects of service as well, as I fulfill all administrative duties in addition to the curriculum and artistic planning. This includes scheduling all instructional activities, hosting the Distinguished Artist Teachers during their visits, and working with the Mayo Clinic and the Phoenix Art Museum. I am currently also serving as String Area Coordinator in the School of Music, a position I have held since 2004.

When I assumed the duties of String Area Coordinator, there were no formalized written policies and practices setting out how the area was to function. I proceeded to write and compile a String Area Handbook which also includes a review of all teaching and advising responsibilities. Through regularly scheduled faculty meetings I explored and codified with my colleagues all area policies and procedures.

String chamber music at ASU had not been treated as an integral part of the curriculum, despite the shared belief among the string faculty of its importance in our students' education. I persuaded my colleagues to commit at least one hour a week to coaching chamber music even though the School of Music did not require this of us. In 2004, I created a Coordinator of String Chamber Music position which has been filled by one of my colleagues, establishing the structure around which a chamber music program could exist. The following year I established the Visiting Quartet Residency Program at ASU, and now string chamber music is one of the strengths in the School of Music.

Through the Visiting Quartet Residency Program, I have forged a relationship with the Mayo Clinic to assist in their goal of combining humanities and medicine. In 2005-2006, the St. Lawrence String Quartet and ASU string students performed there together; in 2006-2007, the Juilliard String Quartet will perform a concert there. Four additional concerts have been arranged both at the Clinic and Hospital involving two by ASU string faculty and two by ASU string students.

The Visiting Quartet Residency Program has brought the community to ASU through its public events. Many of the instructional activities and all of the concerts have been free and open to the public. In 2005-2006, the St. Lawrence String Quartet gave three feature concerts to full houses at Katzin Concert Hall, and the excitement in the community has intensified since the announcement that the Juilliard String Quartet will be at ASU for 2006-2007, during their 60th anniversary as a quartet.

Having met world-renowned violinist Gil Shaham when he performed with the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, I brought Mr. Shaham to ASU to work with our students. Instead of the traditional master class, I provided our students the rare opportunity to perform with this preeminent artist. This highly successful event was free and open to the public, attracting more than 200 people from the community including members from the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, in addition to ASU faculty and students.

Prior to assuming the String Coordinator's position, there had been little interaction between the School of Music and the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra and I thought it only natural that a music school and the professional orchestra in the community work together to serve mutual interests. I organized a meeting with their general manager to build the foundation for increased reciprocity. One catalyst for the improved relationship was my inviting members of the Phoenix Symphony to attend the Gil Shaham master class/performance at ASU. The concertmaster and principal violist, Borivoj Martinic-Jercic and Peter Rosato respectively, were so impressed with the level of playing demonstrated by our students, that they offered to help bring their former teachers to ASU for master classes: living legend violinist Ruggiero Ricci gave a class in 2005, and the great violist Joseph dePasquale will give a class during the 2006-2007 academic year. This impression has also led to a substantial increase in the number of ASU string students regularly invited to perform with the Phoenix Symphony as substitutes. We have also been working together to enable guest artists of the Phoenix Symphony to come to ASU to give master classes – most recently, this resulted in Peter Oundjian, Music Director of the Toronto Symphony and former first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet giving a violin and chamber music master class at our school. As this relationship continues to grow, I am hopeful that Phoenix Symphony musicians will teach string orchestra repertoire classes and lead string sectional orchestra rehearsals at ASU.

Continuing Goals

I look forward to advancing the major areas in which I have made a significant contribution, including expanding the influence of my violin technique, developing more innovative curricula for ASU, and broadening my activities to help ASU make a significant impact in the larger community. My accomplishments noted above have laid the foundation for the continuing growth of the music school as a unique and engaging place to study. Ultimately, the fulfillment of these goals will help enhance ASU's position as a leader in higher music education.