

Atlanta Alumni Awards the 2015 Professional Advancement Grant

The Professional Advancement Grant (\$1,000) is awarded in January of odd numbered years. For 2015, there were a number of outstanding project applications. Applicants sought help and/or recognition in endeavors other than scholarship, such as: performance, composition, research, writing, publishing and other appropriate venues of development including special projects and/or research. Margie Deer, (Beta Tau), is the chair of the Professional Advancement Grant Committee.

The Professional Advancement committee announced that two outstanding winners, Dr. Paula Thomas Lee and Lisa Foltz will split the 2015 \$1,000 award.

Dr. Paula Thomas-Lee (Zeta Omicron) plans to attend course work in June 2015 to accomplish the highest level III for ORFF instructors, followed by attendance in a week-long Masterclass by Konnie Saliba. This highest level certification will help her in her private studio teaching, her university teaching and her research endeavors.

In 2015 she had a research proposal study accepted for presentation at the Music Teachers National Association National Conference in Las Vegas this March. This topic related directly to her work with piano proficiency students at Reinhardt University. The accepted proposal was entitled, Piano Proficiency Requirements in Higher Education and the Application of Skills Utilized by Music Classroom Teachers: A Comparative Study of Keyboard Competencies, was selected for presentation at this conference. It was one of only 41 accepted proposals from 364 total proposals received.

Dr. Thomas-Lee has now turned her research attention to the younger child. As a beginning piano teacher, she strived for ways to communicate to my students the many avenues of musical expression. As a Teacher-Leader in higher education, she is constantly looking for additional ways to speak the language of music to young people. Over the last few years, her research led to the work of Carl Orff. After studying and discussing his applications and research in the "Elementary Music Education Teaching Methods" course she teaches at Reinhardt University, she noticed a strong correlation with his ideas of using the pentatonic scale in teaching improvisation and its possible implications for teaching improvisation to piano students. His concept of using the pentatonic scale for improvisation may be applied to the piano by using the black keys on the keyboard. This led her into to an increased interest in applying these improvisatory elements in the studio piano lesson. Over the last few years, she has received Levels I & II ORFF certification. Her goal is to return in summer 2015 and complete level III and Master Class certification. This is the highest level of certification for ORFF instructors and will truly provide a "specialists" knowledge of this topic. The Level III course work spans two weeks in June and will cost \$650. The final level of ORFF certification involves participating in a week-long masterclass with an ORFF specialist in the country. This year, the masterclass teacher is Dr. Konnie Saliba and will cost approximately \$300. Dr. Thomas-Lee said, "The knowledge and experience I hope to gain from this opportunity will help me in my private studio teaching, my university teaching, and my research endeavors. My research area of focus is early childhood music, specifically piano instruction. I am currently working on a potential article focusing on using ORFF applications with the preschool child in piano instruction. The proposed title for this research article is Orff Schulwerk and the Beginning Piano

Student: A Study of the Orff Philosophy and Possible Implications for Improvisatory Techniques in the Piano Studio.”

Dr. Thomas-Lee, has been recognized by her peers at Reinhardt University and received the 2015 Faculty Research and Scholarship Award. She serves at the Faculty Adviser for Zeta Omicron Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon.

Lisa McDaniel Foltz (Beta Beta) is Assistant Conductor of the Big Bend Community Orchestra, holds a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from The Florida State University. At FSU she studied choral conducting with Dr. André Thomas, orchestral conducting with Dr. Alexander Jiménez and Dr. Edward Kawakami, and voice with Dr. Wanda Brister. She also holds Bachelors degrees in Political Science and Music (organ and voice) from Jacksonville University, with minors in International Studies and Business Administration.

Ms. Foltz was a conductor participant in the Frederick Fennell Memorial Conducting Masterclass at the Eastman School of Music held February 19-21, 2015. Masterclass clinicians were Mark Scatterday, Frank Battisti, and Brad Lubman. The Eastman Wind Ensemble and Eastman Wind Orchestra played for participating conductors during masterclass sessions. Participants also attended evening concerts by the Eastman Wind Ensemble and Eastman Philharmonia. The masterclass helped to further her career goals to conduct a professional orchestra and/or lead a university orchestral program. She is working to gain all the experience she can in hopes of returning to Florida State University to pursue a doctorate. Lisa was also one of fifteen participants accepted into The String Orchestra of Brooklyn’s May Conducting Workshop, 2015. The Workshop was led by Tito Muñoz (Music Director of The Phoenix Symphony) and Eli Spindel (Artistic Director of the String Orchestra of Brooklyn). The workshop repertoire was Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica").

Lisa was also accepted into the 2015 International Institute for Conductors this summer in Romania. She will be a conductor participant in both the Advanced Conducting Academy and the Conducting Choral Masterpieces workshops for a total of four weeks! Clinicians for the Institute include Robert Gutter (Artistic Director and founder of the Institute), Ovidiu Balan, and Charles Gambetta. William Wienert, Director of Choral Activities at Eastman School of Music, will also be a clinician at the inaugural Conducting Choral Masterpieces Institute. Lisa may select the orchestral and choral repertoire she would like to conduct from a list of masterworks works which includes Mozart's "Requiem," Brahms' "Ein deutsches Requiem," and Poulenc's "Gloria."

In addition to the prestigious Conductor’s Institute at Bard College Conservatory of Music in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, and she attended the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Youth Orchestra, and Chorus (VA) Conducting Workshop. Most recently, Mrs. Foltz was selected as a conductor participant for the String Orchestra of Brooklyn’s May 2015 workshop. Lisa is now in her third year as a part-time Leon County Schools Elementary String Orchestra Teacher.

Atlanta Alumni is proud of both of our 2015 Professional Grant awardees.

Submitted by Arietha Lockhart, Co-President (Beta Gamma)

Atlanta Alumni Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon

Photos:

Will be attached to the email.