

## Department of Music

### SCSU music students record, produce, & research



In this edition of the newsletter, we're featuring interviews with two upper-level students who have been chasing their musical dreams in fascinating directions.

#### **Joshua Arizmendi, class of 2025, B.A. Music**

Joshua hails from Bridgeport, CT. He worked on a research project in spring 2024 titled "Religious Music in Judaism: A Comparative Analysis of Composition and Practice Across Connecticut's Major Denominations." We reached out to Joshua to hear more about his work.

**What is the project about?** It is an analysis of composition and musical practice in religious services. I visited synagogues of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox denominations to  
*(continues next page)*

## Message from the Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from Earl Hall! The spring semester, and the 2023-2024 academic year, have concluded with Commencement held on May 17. But summer doesn't bring much of a slow down for SCSU Music. Our University Choir, under the direction of Dr. Terese Gemme, leaves at the end of this month for their international tour to the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, back in New Haven, the department is looking forward to welcoming a new cohort of first-year and transfer students for New Student Orientations. And, of course, the music never stops: summer applied lessons are also underway, an ongoing reminder of our support from the Stutzman Family Foundation, which funds our private lessons program.

In this newsletter, you'll find news about some stellar student work from the past year, faculty and student achievements, department concerts, and a faculty spotlight on one of our music therapy instructors. Thanks for reading—and, we hope we might hear from you soon, too!

Joshua Groffman  
groffmanjl@southernct.edu  
Associate Professor & Chairperson, Music

## Send us your news!

Students and alumni: do you have some interesting projects or stories to share? We'd love to hear about them! E-mail or call us with news that we might be able to feature in a future newsletter.

Share your story:

Email: [music@southernct.edu](mailto:music@southernct.edu)  
or (203) 392-6625

## Student spotlights (cont.)

(interview with Joshua Arizmendi cont.)

observe the services. Some services were in English and others in Hebrew. I observed the setting of music, age demographics, musical instruments, etc. I interviewed rabbis and community members and discussed the roles that music played, talked about the music that was chosen and why it was chosen. I experienced what every week looks like and what does "traditional" music sound like to these different denominations.

**How did you get involved in this project?** I received an email from the SCSU Undergraduate Research mentioning this opportunity and how there would be faculty mentoring and I would receive a grant for the study material. The integrity of work inspires me!

**How much time have you dedicated to this project?** This required a lot of time. I thought about it as activity. I would bring the information into classes as I feel it happened simultaneously with classes. The services were approximately 1-2 hours each. One service lasted 3 hours. I attended Zoom meetings, visits, reading translations, data collecting, etc. My brother also joined me at the services and it was interesting to hear his findings. Having a second person there gave the project more dimension and made it more rounded so I was able to get two perspectives. He saw the emotions and I was looking at the readings.

**Where can we find out more?** I am currently writing the paper which should be approximately 10-15 pages in length when done. I would like to do presentations at a conference.

### Jocelyn Rich, class of 2025, B.A. Music

Jocelyn hails from Seymour, CT. She released her first album on Spotify on Valentine's Day 2024. We asked her about the experience, her inspirations, and musical journey.



**What skills have you learned that will help you in your signing career?** I joined Chamber Singers and the University Choir this year which has helped with my pitch. I have done self breathing exercises to increase my diaphragm. I started on the guitar and taught myself to sing in key. No one is a bad singer if you practice and train yourself.

**What kind of singer would you classify yourself as?** Both indie and pop. I am also trying R & B.

**What inspires you?** Artists such as Raye from the UK. She started with house music and also sings blues. The passion in her music inspires me as well. My goal is to inspire others and connect with their emotions and experiences.

**How was the journey to the album release?** It was intense and I put pressure on myself. There were a lot of sleepless nights with quiet night recordings of different chord ideas and melodies. Sometimes the chords and melodies intertwined. I would first mumble rhythms and the words came afterwards. I would format the song in my head. The album was supposed to be called the *Ten Stages of Grief* but then came *Shades of Blue* which show the levels of sadness.

**How long did it take to record the album?** It was about six to eight months of coming up with ideas, recording, mixing, etc. Hollywood expects a certain sound but when an artist mixes and works on developing their sound, and if it sounds good, people will know that the mixing is technical.

**Do you anticipate more albums in the future?** Yes, I am working on *Shades of Red*.

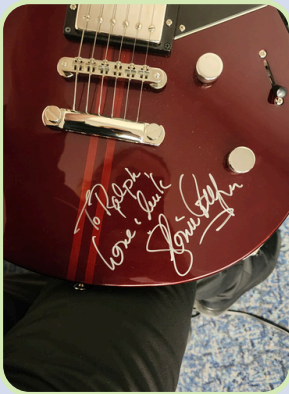
Hear Jocelyn Rich's new album, *Shades of Blue* on Spotify, [here](#).



# SCSU Latin Jazz x Gloria Estefan

For the 2024 Distinguished Lecture series, Grammy award-winning singer Gloria Estefan visited SCSU on April 27. The SCSU Latin Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Dr. David Chevan, were featured performers at the post-lecture reception and got to participate in a private meet-and-greet with Ms. Estefan before the show!

*Gloria Estefan poses with the SCSU Latin Jazz Ensemble*



*Ms. Estefan even took the time to autograph a guitar!*



*Ms. Estefan meets Music Department staff*

## Spring highlights

### Small Ensembles (March)



*See more pictures throughout the year at the SCSU Music Instagram feed @scsumusicdept*

### SCSU Strings (April)



## News & notes from Department of Music faculty, students, & alumni

### **David Chevan (Ensembles, Music History)**

Release of new album *Our Feet Began to Pray* with the ensemble Afro-Semitic Experience, which he co-leads with Warren Byrd. Hear the new album [here](#).

### **David DeLucia (Piano)**

Invited adjudicator for Young Musicians Piano Festival and the New London Piano Festival.

### **Joseph Getter (World Music)**

Original musical scores for short film *Coming Into Being* (produced by ArtFarm theater company), dance piece "Sonogenesis," choreographed by Laura Manzella, and theatrical production of *Lord of the Flies* (produced by Oddfellows Playhouse).

### **Joshua Groffman (Theory, Technology)**

Publication of the article "Listening to the Hudson River Valley" in the Spring 2024 volume of *Hudson River Valley Review*.

### **Jonathan Irving (Music History)**

Pre-concert lecture for New Haven Symphony Orchestra on Reena Ismail's work *Testament*, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, and Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony in Woolsey Hall, New Haven.

### **Senad Mehinovic (Guitar)**

Performance of two original arrangements by Belgrade Guitar Orchestra (Serbia), directed by Marija Alatic.

### **Nathan Mensah (Music Therapy)**

Presentation of "Being Alive: Exploring Benefits of Musical Theatre with Music Therapy for Adolescents in Healthcare Settings" at the Global Online Conference for Music Therapy. Composer and lyricist for *Super Cyber Battle Rangers*, featured as part of the Kentucky Playwrights Workshop in January and part of the Indy Fringe Festival in fall 2024.

### **Steve Nystrup (Technology)**

Release of his fifth CD of original songs and guitar instrumentals, *Stay A Little Longer* (Rare Duck Records).

### **Stan Scott (World Music)**

Paper presentation at national meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Ottawa, Canada.

### **Eric Trudel (Piano)**

Teaching and performance at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria and Showa University in Tokyo, Japan.

### **Heather Wagner (Music Therapy)**

Publication of the co-authored article "Indicators of Self-determination in Lyrics Created by Adults with Very High levels of LDL Cholesterol During Therapeutic Songwriting" in the *Journal of Music Therapy*. Eight invited presentations to professional and community groups, three appearances as a faculty member for continuing education programs in music therapy, and multiple presentations at regional, national, and international conferences including the World Congress of Music Therapy, national and regional meetings of the AMTA, Association for Music and Imagery, and the Nordic Music Therapy Conference.



## Faculty Spotlight

Nathan Mensah, MA, MT-BC, joined the faculty at SCSU in spring 2023 and also teaches at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. He provides music therapy services at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital and St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Services as part of Hartford Healthcare. Nate works on a wide variety of pediatric units, and also provides services to adults with mental health and dual diagnosis substance use disorders. He regularly presents at music therapy conferences and enjoys providing online education opportunities through organizations such as Music Therapy Ed, Pediatric Music Therapy, and the Music Therapy Spot. He specializes in topics related to clinical musicianship, genre and stylistic authenticity, and culture-informed music history. He currently performs with the Yale Medical Symphony Orchestra, and composes and arranges music for a variety of projects.



## Graduate Pizza Party - congratulations, seniors!



### SCSU Music Class of 2024

*Alexina Cristante*  
*Joshua Cruz*  
*Isabelle Dennehy*  
*Matthew Feinberg*  
*Nancy Kelly*  
*Angel Rodriguez*  
*Alianna Santana*  
*Sam Soto*  
*Jillian Valeta*  
*Austin Vance*  
*Ryan Walker*  
*Justyn Wongwiwat*





# Congratulations

to our

# GRADUATES!

Best wishes for  
a bright future!

*WELL  
Done*



Music Dept  
Staff

*Congrats!*

