

Department of Music

SCSU Music Therapy student to be new program's first graduate



Southern's Music Therapy program, now in its third year, has reached an important milestone with its first student to be currently completing her culminating internship and preparing for graduation. Alexis Sorrell is interning with Progressions Music Therapy under the supervision of MT-BC Courtney Biddle. In this crucial pre-professional experience, students take the lead in providing music therapy services to clients while under the supervision of a board certified therapist.

This semester, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, has Alexis going to two rehabilitation facilities for adults recovering from addiction in Groton and Haddam. On Thursdays and Fridays, she works with children with trauma at a middle school in New London. Alexis reports, "We provide a variety of experiences with clients in their healing process, from lyric analysis, learning new instruments, song collaging and writing, art and music experiences, and psycho-educational music lessons in mostly group therapy settings...I am really enjoying it and I can't wait to start practicing soon! I will be finishing up my internship in August, and then I'm eligible to take my board exam to be licensed."

Message from the Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Hello from the Music Department! Another school year is wrapping up with some exciting beginnings and fond farewells. You can read on this page about our Music Therapy program's first student to enter internship and prepare for graduation. Congratulations, Alexis! Alexis is also the winner of the first SCSU Graduating Student Award from the New England Region of the American Music Therapy Association.

Elsewhere, we say good-bye to two long-time and highly-valued colleagues, Professors Walter Stutzman and Mark Kuss. The department won't be the same without them, but we wish them the best in the exciting endeavors they have lined up.

And we're already starting to turn the page towards next year, too. We'll be welcoming the new cohort of students for Fall 2025 to campus in just a few weeks for Orientation. In the meantime, I hope we might hear from you—please write to say hello and tell us how you've been!

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
or (203) 392-6625

Faculty Retirements

The Music Department is marking the retirement of two colleagues, Prof. Walter Stutzman and Prof. Mark Kuss. They will be missed around the department—they have played a central role in making the department what it is today and things will certainly feel different in the fall without them. We are extremely grateful for everything they have done for the department and their students, and they are to be congratulated on distinguished and varied careers in their fields!



Prof. Walter Stutzman will be retiring at the end of this year having taught at Southern since 2009.

Prof. Stutzman taught across several programs, regularly offering sections of Music in the Western World, multiple interdisciplinary courses as part of the Honors Program, and the First-Year Experience seminar. His commitment to advising and helping students just beginning their college careers to make a successful transition to higher education has been particularly impactful.

During his time at Southern, Prof. Stutzman was also highly active in service work, serving on multiple department and university committees; most recently, he was the Music Department representative to the steering committee for the new Arts Administration & Culture Advocacy program, aiding the initial creation and roll-out of that exciting new program.

Prof. Stutzman is also an alum of Southern, having earned his degree in music (and studying, in part, with Prof. Kuss)! Although Prof. Stutzman will be stepping back from active teaching, he will continue several collaborations at Southern, including an ongoing interdisciplinary study with Prof. Kate Marsland in Psychology and research into the music of J.S. Bach.



Prof. Mark Kuss has taught in the Music Department since 1997. In that time, he taught courses in music theory, musicianship, composition, music technology, and orchestration/arranging. He was largely responsible for developing the department offerings in music technology, including the Music Technology specialization within the music major and the minor in Music, Technology, and Media; he was also central to the creation of the music technology lab where technology courses are taught. In his teaching of theory and musicianship, he brought a unique and student-focused approach that resonates with contemporary music sensibilities and learning styles. Outside of Southern, Prof. Kuss is a composer whose work has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and received many recent high-profile performances, including at Tanglewood and the Jackson Hole Chamber Music series. Recently, Prof. Kuss has begun work as a broadcaster with WMNR Fine Arts Radio, which he will continue upon his retirement from Southern.

Congratulations and best wishes to Prof. Stutzman and Kuss!

Spring 2025 Music Events



Creative Music Orchestra
& Guitar Ensemble



Open Mic



Vocal Scenes Workshop



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



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

William Ahearn (Music Technology)

Final mixing and mastering for Grayson Hugh's album, *Save Your Love for Me*. ADR for TV shows including Star Trek's *Strange New Worlds*, *A Different Man*, and HBO's *The Gilded Age* and *And Just Like That*. Tracking background vocals for a [video with gospel producer Kevin Powel](#).

David DeLucia (Piano)

In collaboration with Donna Cialfi, performed "The French Touch," a presentation of French music for duo and solo piano, at SCSU as part of the Stutzman Family Foundation Recital Series.

Jonathan Irving (Music History)

Joined the Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble, a professional a cappella vocal ensemble led by Dr. James John. The 25-member choir recently performed with guest artists Parthenia celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the of the English Renaissance composer Orlando Gibbon.

Heather Wagner (Music Therapy)

Three-hour Continuing Music Therapy Education course at the New England Region of the American Music Therapy Association conference in Portland, ME: "Integral Medical Music Therapy Practice."

Nathan Ewusie-Mensah (Music Therapy)

Keynote speaker at the Great Lakes Region AMTA Music Therapy Conference in Columbus, OH in March. Co-author of a chapter in a new Music Therapy educator book (forthcoming).

Jennifer Sokira (Music Therapy)

Co-authored chapter, "Music Therapy, Stress, and Anxiety" will be published in the *Music Therapy Handbook* (2nd Ed.), forthcoming from Guilford Press.

Faculty Spotlight

Emily Miclon is a New Haven-based percussionist whose work spans performance, education, and arts administration. She has premiered works by composers including Aaron Perrine, Oswald Huýnh, and Santiago Beis, and collaborated in the US and abroad with groups such as the Missouri Contemporary Ballet, A.R. Rahman's Sunshine Orchestra, and Third Culture Collective.



Emily's study of non-western percussion has led her to share the stage with master musicians from Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Guinea, and her contemporary music endeavors include training with groups such as Sō Percussion and Tigue. In 2022, Emily was awarded the Frank Huntington Beebe Award, supporting immersive study and teaching in Chennai, India and she continues her training in Kanjira and Carnatic voice, returning to India for a second time this past January to complete a three-day Kanjira intensive with her teacher, Ganesh Kumar.

As an arts administrator, she has held roles in development and operations at various arts organizations and was selected for the League of American Orchestras' 2024 Essentials of Orchestral Management at Juilliard. Currently, she is an Adjunct Lecturer of Percussion at Southern Connecticut State University and a Teaching Artist at Neighborhood Music School, while performing regularly throughout the region. She also serves part-time as a program manager for India Cultural Center, a non-profit celebrating Indian arts and culture. Emily earned her BA in Music Performance from Eastern Connecticut State University and her MM in Percussion Performance at the University of Missouri.