

FIRST FRIDAY NEWS

A Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of Bower School of Music & the Arts,

2020 turned out to be an unprecedented year in the history of the world, and the 2019-20 academic year ended up being a transformational period for university education in particular. Our year started out exceptionally well. Our students won important competitions, secured grant funding, engaged in meaningful research, and produced inspiring works of art. The 2019- 20 artistic season was full of outstanding highlights and offered a wide range of moving performances. I am particularly proud of the fact that, despite extraordinary disruptions and global challenges, the Bower School of Music & the Arts stayed its educational course and managed to accomplish its inspiring mission. Full transition to virtual learning was very challenging especially for hands-on subjects like sculpture, ceramics or ensemble disciplines like music, theater or dance. Nevertheless, our faculty, staff and students rose to the challenge. What was particularly impressive was the fact that the entire university switched to complete online delivery in a matter of days.

Until the shutdown, the Bower School served as the cultural hub of FGCU campus offering over 150 artistic events while preparing our students to excel as professionals in the arts, music and theater. Despite of the challenges brought on by the pandemic, creativity and interpretation of creative endeavors continues to be a defining attribute of the human experience and remains that much more important to a comprehensive liberal arts education. Regardless of the chosen delivery mechanisms, education of students in the creation and appreciation of music, theater, art and design remains a paramount mission. Despite obvious challenges, faculty continued to emphasize the importance of context in history and contemporary culture, provided our students with a clear sense of direction and hope towards a career in new creative industries, and taught artistic subjects with a keen awareness of profound global challenges, renewed perspectives, and unknown future responsibilities.

Despite reopening efforts and fragile signs of improvement, we are anxious to see what it means to be an artist in the post pandemic world. Even though we continue to face many unknowns, I remain optimistic and trust the power of innovative spirit. I am convinced that, through our combined creative endeavors, we will find brave new ways of making the world a better place.

I look forward to our next season when we start the school year with a renewed sense of energy and optimism. I promise you that we will reopen our doors soon enough with a full season of concerts, art exhibitions and theater performances featuring outstanding artists, excellent student ensembles and world-class faculty members.

I hope to personally see you, or join you virtually, at the Bower School of Music & the Arts this fall. Until then please take care of one another, stay healthy and have a good summer.

Go Eagles!

Dr. Krzysztof Biernacki
Director, Bower School of Music & the Arts

Student News

The Gray Perry Competition sponsored by the Florida State Music Teachers Association has a yearly competition for all freshmen and sophomore piano students in the state. FGCU pianists have won this competition several times in the past but have not competed for a couple of years because of the May date involved for traveling when most of our students are gone. This year the competition was on-line and received more than twice their usual number of applicants from all over the state. Arturo Fernandez (sophomore, Music) received first place and Jair Zacarias (freshman, Music) received second place. Congratulations to both students and their professor, Dr. Michael Baron (Music).

If you have any questions or comments concerning the *First Friday News*, or if you have information about the work being done by our alumni, please feel free to contact Joanna Hoch, Events Coordinator, by email at jhoch@fgcu.edu.