Students and faculty finished the 2017 season with remarkable performances that brought audiences to their feet. Students were able to express themselves with their instruments through solos, improvisations and ensemble interpretations, as well as band and orchestra repertoire. Excellence in performance is not lucky; it occurs through hard work, close student-to-faculty mentoring and repeated practice. Only then does success emerge.

Birch Creek families, donors, volunteers and concertgoers are the benefactors; we see and hear it happen. Enjoy a glimpse of 2017.

**THE SUMMER OF 2017**

Birch Creek Music Performance Center is not only an academy for students to develop their instrumental skills and performance etiquette, but it creates opportunity to explore the future of a career in music.

Most students attending the 2017 Percussion & Steel Band session had never played the steel pan. After three days as members of the Birch Creek Steel Band, their skill, confidence and joy grew with each performance, seen in this lively Panoramic concert on June 29th.

From the left: Brandon Jaimes, Max Newcomer, Aaron Kaufman Levine and Ryan Robbins perform at a 2017 Jazz Barnwarmer concert. These smaller combo performances in front of peers and faculty allow for immediate feedback before the evening concert.

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Gillian King returned in 2017 to Birch Creek’s Symphony session for her third consecutive year to study harp under faculty member Faye Seeman.
This summer was something spectacular. From a Percussion & Steel Band session that opened our season with island fare, followed by concerts featuring Birch Creek faculty and students in a wide array of music genres, audiences experienced the special connections and camaraderie students and faculty have with one another. Percussion & Steel Band audiences danced in the aisles to Caribbean calypso music; later, they were transfixed while the steel band performed an excerpt from Dvořák’s moving New World Symphony. In our Symphony session, concertgoers heard breathtaking symphonic pieces as profound as the thinnest thread of sound from our faculty clarinetist, Trevor O’Riordan, which literally moved one’s soul. The Jazz sessions’ faculty and students performed everything from big band barn burners to a delicate bass duet by Jeff Campbell and Emiliano Lasansky. They came ready to explore, create, perform and inspire.

Audiences came back again and again, and spread the word in the community and among their friends, creating a ripple effect in the county. From one patron: “My sister’s cousin heard the performance Thursday night and told me I had to come!” And from another: “I heard the performance last night, and we had to come back! We love this!” There was a spellbinding moment during the first Jazz session when vocalist Katie Ernst sang Moonglow with colleagues Larry Brown, guitar; Jeff Campbell, bass; and Mike Lee, tenor sax. It was an impromptu rendezvous. Bandleader Campbell: “Let’s do Moonglow. Do you know Moonglow?” With a wry smile: “In E flat?” Aside from the birds quietly chirping, you could have heard a pin drop in the iconic Dutton Performance Barn. The season ended with an exuberant crowd that left the final concert with joy on every face.

These defining moments can’t be bottled, but they can be carried forever in our hearts and minds. They represent the unlimited opportunities that Birch Creek so firmly believes in creating. Students and parents carry these moments home; the opportunities they create define the futures for many students who first honed their skills as Birch Creek musicians. Faculty return each year for the opportunity to teach, perform and create the incredible music that binds them together. The same applies to Birch Creek staff, volunteers, board, donors and concertgoers, where returning each year reconnects them with those who believe in Birch Creek’s mission. I am heartened by and grateful for them all.

I hope you will join us for a concert or two in our Fall Series. And, please, if you were inspired by a performance at Birch Creek, your special gift today will help us create new opportunities for future generations.

Musically yours,

If we could bottle the Birch Creek experience, we wouldn’t find a container large enough to hold it.”

FROM THE DIRECTOR, MONA CHRISTENSEN

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSE MUSIC TRADITIONS AND EXCITING PERFORMANCES

Percussion & Steel Band: The high energy Steel Band thrilled Birch Creek audiences of all ages, bringing concertgoers to their feet to dance to the music that paid homage to the pan’s Trinidadian roots.

Symphony: Birch Creek clarinet faculty Trevor O’Riordan, principal clarinet of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, enthralled audiences as featured soloist performing Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto in A Major KV 622.

Jazz: Katie Ernst and Larry Brown began the gentle lyrics of Moonglow as the stage lights dimmed in the Dutton Concert Barn and the audience, familiar with this 1933 classic, softly remembered.
A large amount of gratitude: "We are extremely grateful that our daughter Nalani Bicoy was given the opportunity to play trombone this summer in the Jazz I Session at Birch Creek Music Performance Center. She is a talented young artist. Thanks to Birch Creek’s Play it Forward program, every student receives $2,700 assistance toward tuition.” — Bret Bicoy, Sturgeon Bay, WI

ADULT BAND CAMP

Sharing a mission: “I want you to know how profoundly important it was for Pat Sikorovsky, the founder of Bravo Waukegan, and me to visit Birch Creek this summer. Pat and I feel that Bravo Waukegan and Birch Creek are a wonderful match. During Pat’s acceptance speech for a lifetime achievement award from Ravinia Festival, she acknowledged the importance of programs for young musicians, naming Ravinia, Bravo Waukegan and Birch Creek! Thank you for solidifying a relationship between our organizations and shared mission.” — Karey Walker, CEO Bravo Waukegan, Waukegan, IL

OFF TO COLLEGE

Symphony Session
Alex Abreu, clarinet (2017), Oberlin College & Conservatory, Oberlin, OH; clarinet performance
David Caplan, cello (2016-17), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; cello performance
Rebekah Green, French horn (2016-17), University of Missouri in Kansas City; horn performance
Momo Hasselbring, French horn (2016-17), DePaul University, Chicago, IL; French horn performance
Angie Kein, cello (2015-17), St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN; biology with a pre-med track
Anna Niemoth, piano (2015-17), Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE; piano performance
Anne Pinkerton, oboe (2015 & 17); Oberlin College & Conservatory, Oberlin, OH; oboe performance
Spencer Porter, percussion (2017), University of Wisconsin, Madison; business | music
Maddy Tung, bassoon (2016-17), Yale, New Haven, CT; English | music

Percussion & Steel Band Session
Tristan Swihart (2016-17), Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY; percussion performance | finance
Maddy Tung, bassoon (2016-17), Yale, New Haven, CT; English | music

Jazz I Session
Karli Bunn, alto saxophone (2015-17), Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL; music education and jazz studies
Matt Jarosch, trombone (2015-17), DePaul University, Chicago, IL; jazz studies | trombone performance

Jazz II Session
Javier Cisneros, trombone (2015-17), Columbia College, Chicago, IL; jazz studies
Josh Garside-Meyers, drums (2015-17), University of North Texas, Denton, TX; jazz studies-drum set
John Offutt, alto saxophone (2016-17), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; saxophone performance
Juliana Voelker, guitar (2015, Jazz I; 2016-17, Jazz II), University of Oklahoma, Norman; chemistry | music
Don Makuen died on May 15, 2017 at the age of 86. He and his wife, Nancy, joined the Birch Creek Associates in 1999. Don was Associates’ president for 6 years and served on the Board of Trustees for 3 more years. As a member of the Capital Campaign committee, lent his great voice to the successful $3M project. In 2015 Don received the Associates’ Joan Guasta Distinguished Service Award. A scholarship fund in the Birch Creek Endowment has been established in Don’s and Nancy’s names.

Jill Cavanaugh, 72, of Sturgeon Bay, died at home of cancer in February 2017. Jill’s career as home economics instructor at Sevastopol High School, Sturgeon Bay, was a natural match for her position in Birch Creek’s kitchen during summers for more than ten years, until 2014, warmly greeting staff, students and faculty.
Jazz: Some of the most memorable music-making moments are spontaneous, like this one with Jazz I students and guitar faculty, Larry Brown (piano), during an impromptu jam session in Juniper Hall.

Just in time for the Percussion & Steel Band pre-concert show, the rain makes way for a rainbow. Faculty performer Anthony Di Sanza directs.

Symphony students at Birch Creek perform side-by-side with faculty in the 91-piece Birch Creek orchestra conducted by maestro Brian Groner.

Symphony students such as Yldis Rihter, violin, have additional performance opportunities during concert intermissions.

Jonah Roeper, tenor saxophone, performed an improvisation solo in concert with the Jazz II Studio Band directed by Nic Meyer.

Jovan Williams, Trinidad; Nicholas Venuti, Edgewater, MD; and Connor Foust, Oshkosh, WI bring together culture and distance in their Percussion ensemble performance.
Gifts from grantors and Named Scholarship donors provide endless opportunities.

The Nancy Andriacchi Named Scholarship was awarded to Momo Hasselbring, French horn, Symphony.

The Birch Creek Associates presented the 2016 Joan Guasta Named Scholarship Award to Yildis Rihter, violin, who was a returning Symphony session student in 2017.

Bravo Waukegan gave two named scholarships in honor of the organization’s founder, Patricia Sikorovsky. Scholarship students were Andrew Clark, trumpet; and Jason Farias, drums, Jazz I.

Don Blanchard Memorial Scholarships were awarded to Elena Galentas, viola; Symphony; and Jazz I students Brandon Jaimes, trombone; and Jonathon Musto, alto saxophone.

Paul & Fran Burton Named Scholarships were awarded to Jonathan Bass, piano, for Symphony and Jazz II sessions.

The Burton Concerto Competition $1,000 prize winners for 2016 were returning to the Symphony Session in 2017 were, viola, Symphony; and Jazz I students Brandon Jaimes, trombone; and Jonathon Musto, alto saxophone.

Egg Harbor Business Association and the Town of Egg Harbor underwrote four free family/community concerts at Birch Creek.

Hatco Corporation has provided Birch Creek with a new belt toaster for the purpose of field testing.

For the fifth year, the Les Paul Foundation provided program support for jazz guitar instruction.

Karen Mehigan Named Scholarship was awarded to Daniel King, clarinet, Symphony.

The Kiwanis Club of Northern Door County provided tuition support for Symphony student Noah Laabs, tuba.

Herb Kohl Charities continued their ongoing support with a scholarship grant for Wisconsin student Lizzy Novak, trombone, Jazz I.

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John and Carolyn Peterson Charitable Foundation, Inc. of Madison has underwritten Named Scholarships since 2006. Peterson Foundation scholars for 2017 were Symphony students Qwien (Wendy) Lai, violin; Anna Niemoth, piano; and Guillermo Ulloa, oboe; and Jazz II student Adam Hobson, trumpet.

The Sargent Family Foundation awarded Birch Creek a grant for unrestricted support, applied to infrastructure renovations.

The Raibrook Foundation Named Scholarships for Door County students were awarded to Sturgeon Bay students Nalani Bicoy, trombone; and Isabella Dippel, piano. Both attended Jazz I.

Robert Schaupp Named Scholarship recipients were Jazz I students Gage Bachmann and Daniel Brown, bass; Matthew Dardick, alto saxophone; Rufus Parenti, tenor saxophone; and Alejandro Salazar, drums. Jazz II recipients were Daniel Burgess, guitar; and Jasper Kashou, tenor saxophone. Other Schaupp scholars included Symphony students Naama Friedman, piano; and Ben Spicer, violin; and Sylvanus Tetzner, Percussion & Steel Band.

The family of Bertha “Bert” W. Schenker awarded two Named Scholarships in her memory as a recognition of her love for youth symphonies and her gifts to music education. Colin Priller and Alexander Laskowski were 2017 recipients, both viola students in the Symphony session.

The Skinner Family Fund of the Door County Community Foundation continued its annual support of Artists in the Schools, an outreach program for Door County schools.

Roger and Lynn Van Vreede scholarship recipients were Brandon Jaimes, trombone, Jazz I; Jazz II students Naomi Patten, trumpet; and Caleb Otto, trombone; and Symphony students Anna Niemoth, piano; and Leah Zhao, violin.

The Wisconsin Arts Board awarded Birch Creek a grant for operational support. This is the 17th year of support from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“Birch Creek has taught me what a career in music can look like, how to prepare for it and how to be successful at it. I loved the experiences I had at Birch Creek!” —Tristan Swihart, Percussion & Steel Band