



On Collaborating

The Journal of the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society

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On Collaborating is the journal of the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society (IKCAS). This multi-media platform is the nexus between performance and research in collaborative piano. It aims to bring together our international community of researchers and performers to further scholarship in this collaboration. As a multimedia journal, *On Collaborating* offers contributors the opportunity to showcase their work in written articles, lecture-recital presentations, or a blend of different media within the same submission. We welcome your feedback via email at collabpianosociety@gmail.com.

<p><i>Article Submission Deadlines</i></p> <p>July 1, 2023, for Vol. 1 No. 2, August 2023</p> <p>March 1, 2024, for Vol. 2 No. 1, April 2024</p> <p>Link to article submission HERE</p>	<p><i>On Collaborating</i></p> <p>Nico de Villiers, Editor-in-Chief Katie Hughes, Associate Editor Paul A. Lee, Associate Editor Claire Marquardt, Associate Editor Luis Vallés, Associate Editor</p>
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Announcement: Call for CollabFest 2023

CollabFest

TeamWork Makes DreamWork

October 12-14, 2023

Please save the date now for the flagship annual event for IKCAS, **CollabFest** – again (in the name of accessibility) held fully virtually **October 12-14** and featuring the one and only **Rita Sloan** as **Keynote Speaker and Master Clinician!**

The call for presentation, panel discussion, and performance is now open for presentations, panel discussions, and performances. We are developing some special activities for this CollabFest, and even if you don't plan to submit a proposal, we always welcome your ideas and suggestions. Thank you for being part of this community!

- **Apply to present** at CollabFest 2023 **before May 20th.**
- **Apply to perform** at CollabFest 2023 **before September 15th.**

For more information, visit www.IKCAS.org

Cordially,
Your CollabFest Team

Letter from The President



Elvia Puccinelli

This is a special moment, the moment in which I have the honor of welcoming you to *On Collaborating*, the first scholarly journal we know of to be dedicated exclusively to collaborative piano.

If you have joined us for any IKCAS event since 2020, you know our firm belief that collaborative pianists are superheroes because we have the power and the opportunity to make the world a better place, one phrase at a time: by creating a safe space for our partner to freely express their truest self, and meeting that with our own truest self, we nurture awareness, empathy, care, and listening in a world in deep need of such things. And, dear one, at the heart of the IKCAS mission is the curation of an intentional space for pianist-superheroes from training years through all stages and expressions of the profession to gather for support, connection, interaction, and enrichment. We are so glad you are here. Welcome!

This space would not be possible without the trailblazing work of our collaborative heroes, one of whom you will read about in this issue, and so this moment honors our mentors and our artistic heroes, as well as all those who have supported us along our own paths. At this moment, I gratefully acknowledge the leadership of Nico de Villiers, ChoEun Lee, Lauren Koszyk, and our IKCAS *On Collaborating* Editorial Board.

I gratefully honor my own mentor, Alan Smith, whose birthday celebration in 2015 (thank you, Lisa Sylvester, for dreaming up that epic event!) led to the idea of an association dedicated to collaboration, leading us to where we are today—and to where IKCAS will be tomorrow.

I thank those generous superheroes who freely shared their time and expertise from that very first CollabFest at the University of North Texas in 2016. Among them was Anne Epperson, whose motto, “Onward,” we have respectfully and intentionally adapted to honor her trailblazing through our journal title, *On Collaborating*.

And so onward we go! We celebrate and are inspired by our collaborative trailblazers, we make music despite challenges and across barriers, and we do what superheroes do: we connect heart-to-heart and human-to-human to bring beauty into our world.

Thank you for your work and thank you for being here, superhero. We are stronger together.

Onward!

Elvia Puccinelli
Founder and President, IKCAS
Artistic Director, CollabFest

Letter from The Editor-in-Chief

Dear Superheroes,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *On Collaborating*, the journal of the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society (IKCAS). As is the case with IKCAS as an organization, this journal is the first of its kind and I am honored to have been invited to be the journal's first Editor-in-Chief. As IKCAS aims to congregate practitioners in the multi-faceted world of collaborative pianists, so does the editorial board of *On Collaborating* aim to develop this journal as the go-to platform to share the work each of you do and to learn from one another.



Nico de Villiers

First steps can easily be considered as the beginning of a journey. But by only looking forward, as important as that optimism is, we should not forget that each step has a history of strides that preceded it. In this inaugural edition, we are taking first steps into documenting both the histories and realities of our collaborative colleagues. In the feature article, "Tracing the Legacy of Collaborative Piano," Seoyon Susanna MacDonald meets with Dr. Jean Barr, who recounts her journey as a collaborative pianist and how she forged a path by creating the first doctoral degree in collaborative piano. Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is often viewed from the perspective of the performer versus the audience but in her article "Addressing Music Performance Anxiety in Collaborative Partnerships," Jessica Koebbe, founder of Mindful Music Pedagogy, explores ways in which to address MPA within ensembles. As we are celebrating several firsts in this inaugural edition, I would like to congratulate both Susanna and Jessica for now having published their first articles.

I am honored to introduce the *On Collaborating* editorial board, a group of superheroes representing different stages in the collaborative pianist career and reflecting our IKCAS membership. It is my privilege to be one of such a team of talented and inspiring artists. We would welcome your submissions for the August 2023-edition of *On Collaborating* by July 1. May I encourage you to reach out to your colleagues as well, invite them to join our community, and remind them that one of the many perks of IKCAS membership is the opportunity to publish articles, lecture-recital presentations, or a blend of different media right here in our IKCAS journal.

Nico de Villiers
Editor-in-Chief, *On Collaborating*

FEATURE ARTICLE
**Tracing the Legacy of Collaborative Piano:
Dr. Jean Barr and
the World's First Collaborative Piano Doctoral Degree¹**

Seoyon Susanna MacDonald

On April 19, 2022, I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Jean Barr, the legendary pianist and pedagogue, who was in residence at the University of Southern California (USC) for the semester. I learned that this meeting coincided with the 50th anniversary of the conferral of her collaborative piano DMA from USC—the first doctoral degree in collaborative piano in the world. The conferral of this degree was a significant milestone in the history of collaborative piano studies in academia. Madame Gwendolyn Koldofsky, widely regarded as the founder of the collaborative piano discipline, established the Bachelor of Music degree in Accompanying in 1947 at USC. This program was a groundbreaking initiative that laid the foundation for the field's development, recognition and growth at large. Like many of Madame Koldofsky's students, Dr. Barr has had an incredible career as a sought-after educator and collaborative pianist. Her life journey serves as an invaluable primary source for the history of the collaborative piano field, and was very inspirational to me, meeting her during my own doctoral studies in collaborative piano at USC. During our meeting, Dr. Barr spoke candidly about her upbringing, training, and career. Her words demonstrate her fortitude, resilience, kindness, and generosity. Her thoughts serve as a tribute to her remarkable leadership in the profession.



Jean Barr

Early Life and Musical Upbringing

Jean Margaret Barr was born in 1942, at a hospital where her aunt was the chief surgical nurse. Her mother was Gertrude Loos Barr and her father, James Robertson Barr. Jean Barr's upbringing was steeped in music, with both of her parents involved in musical pursuits.

JB: "I grew up in a house full of music. My mother was director of the organ department at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music in Milwaukee. She also was organist and choir director at All Saints Episcopal Cathedral from shortly before I was born until I was in middle school. During religious holidays, I regularly heard the sounds of various instruments at the cathedral where my mom would amplify the choir with a string quartet and sometimes trumpet as the choir sang the church masses of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Rossini. My dad was a singer, but back in

¹ Susanna expresses her sincere gratitude to Dr. Jean Barr, for her gracious and enthusiastic support of this project, and also to Dr. Elvia Puccinelli, for her encouragement and editorial contributions in the development of this article.

the 1920s and '30s you couldn't easily make a living as a singer, so he worked in business. He was a tenor with flaming red hair and, by all accounts, he was a good dancer and a good sword fighter. He sang the tenor lead in many light opera productions in Milwaukee.

[My mother] taught at the conservatory in downtown Milwaukee, and that's also where I had my piano lessons. Mom was wise enough not to teach me herself...she taught me organ, but not piano. She sent me to a colleague of hers, and he was my piano teacher from the time I was about four and a half until I went off to college.

Before I reached my teenage years, mother was invited to become organist and choir director at Immanuel Presbyterian Church. Because singing is such an important element in the Scots Presbyterian tradition, and my dad's family were Scots emigres, we often had hymn sings at home with our extended family. Amazingly, we happened to have both a pipe organ and a grand piano in our house, which was highly unusual in the day. My mother played the organ, I played the piano, and everyone sang.... I grew up hearing big sounds, rich sounds, and the colors that are produced by voices and instruments. And I strongly believe it influenced the rest of my life."

Clearly, Dr. Barr's upbringing was characterized by a musically enriching and nurturing environment. She described how she was constantly exposed to beautiful sounds and colors which influenced her life. Her first encounter with Vladimir Horowitz at a concert also demonstrated how she was musically fascinated and very curious from early childhood.

JB: "We went to Milwaukee Symphony Concerts [and] to hear the Chicago Symphony [when] they had run-out concerts in Milwaukee. On occasion we also got tickets to solo recitals. I clearly remember sitting in overflow seats directly opposite the keyboard when Horowitz came out and glared at me, because there on stage was this tiny little girl whose feet didn't touch the floor. He was very, very kind afterwards because I didn't move a muscle."

Musical Training and Education: Northwestern University

After her early piano training, Dr. Barr attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Her love for making music with others was discovered and encouraged by her professors while she was pursuing her piano performance degree. Dr. Barr shared her special memory of participating in Pierre Bernac's masterclasses.

JB: "I went to Northwestern University in 1960 for my freshman year. I was a piano performance major [and] studied with a remarkable Belgian pianist by the name of Gui Mombaerts who was the head of the piano department. He was a wonderful teacher and musician, and I credit him with [a great deal], including ease of playing technically.

I was extraordinarily lucky that our professor recognized that I liked—and was good at—making music with others. As a freshman, I already was playing for the opera department, for a class in

pantomime, and for some scenes. I also managed to find my way to play with many excellent singers and instrumentalists, so I had a wide range of voices and various instruments [with whom I worked]. In my freshman year, Professor Mombaerts selected me to be one of the pianists who played for the Pierre Bernac [public] masterclasses. I think I'm right in saying it was the first year that Bernac came to the United States, giving masterclasses at universities. There's a fairly famous picture of him standing in front of a wooden wall which happens to be the stage of Lutkin Hall on the Northwestern campus. He was there for two weeks, I think. It was a fabulous opportunity and experience."

Music Academy of The West and Gwendolyn Koldofsky

Dr. Barr reminisced about the "wonderful serendipity, opportunities, and experiences" during her early stage of collaborative piano training. Through her singer friends' recommendation, Dr. Barr attended the Music Academy of the West. Her encounter there with Madame Gwendolyn Koldofsky's wonderful playing inspired her to return to the Academy the following summer and then to apply to join Madame Koldofsky's program at USC.



Gwendolyn Koldofsky

JB: "As my sophomore year at Northwestern started, I continued playing for some of the graduate singers that I accompanied the previous year. They said, 'Jeannie,' as I was called, 'you *have* to go to the Music Academy of the West!' They explained that Lotte Lehmann was there teaching at the time, [and] that they had had such a wonderful experience the previous summer. They thought that I would really soak up listening to her masterclasses and observing her colleague, pianist Gwendolyn Koldofsky [who] was playing for those masterclasses. As one did, in those days, I applied as a solo pianist. I got a very modest scholarship and was required to do something for it. My assignment was to play for the entire cello studio, which I did, and I loved every minute of it. I played for the cello studio, served as orchestra pianist, had piano lessons, and even won the concerto competition. At the same time, I was haunting the masterclasses of all of these famous musicians [at the Academy]. I had been accepted, however, by the time I arrived that summer, Lotte Lehmann had retired. A wonderful gentleman, a baritone by the name of Martial Singher, had taken her place on the faculty.

It was the summer of 1962. I was playing for [Singher's] studio classes and some of his [private] students as well. I would regularly attend his weekly vocal masterclass so I could hear Gwendolyn Koldofsky play, because I was so taken—awestruck, even—[and] inspired by her sound, particularly her sound. She would walk through the hall of the main building of the Music Academy with her little dog Tippy [who] followed her everywhere [and would] sleep underneath the piano in her studio. There [also] was a resident cat, Walter, at the Music Academy. From time to time, Walter would wander in from the gardens, hop up on the stage during masterclasses and sit until he was bored, and then he'd leave.

I [attended] the Music Academy in the summer following my sophomore and junior years, and in those two summers I became aware that this remarkable pianist, Gwendolyn Koldofsky, happened to offer a degree program in accompanying at USC. It was the only such program in the country at that time, and in those pre-internet days, people who lived elsewhere didn't particularly know of its existence.... In my senior year, it was time to apply to grad schools. I knew what I wanted to do then, having been to the Academy those two summers. I applied for this program, I got in, and the rest was wonderful serendipity, opportunity, and experiences that I wouldn't trade for the world."

Graduate Study in Accompanying at USC with "Gwen"

Dr. Barr reflected on the "golden age of USC," describing what it was like to attend USC as a graduate student and to study with "Gwen" as her loving mentor and teacher. I suspect that many of us can relate to Dr. Barr's remarks as we reflect on how we started out in the collaborative piano field.

JB: "Many colleagues of my vintage came from small towns—rural perhaps, in some instances. We possibly grew up in a church where we accompanied.... We also accompanied the school choirs. We were falling in through this backdoor of something that hadn't yet been created.... We loved doing it and it was fun, and somehow we found ourselves heading in the direction of this specialization. [We] were extraordinarily lucky, I think.

[Gwendolyn Koldofsky] rarely raised her voice. She was a quintessential British (Canadian) gentlewoman. She was very clear on what you needed to fix, if something needed fixing. We all remember her saying, 'And then to there, and then to there,' referencing pickups to downbeats. She would always talk about thin fingers when playing, particularly French repertoire, because she had studied in France when she was a young woman. There was so much...how do you talk about a woman who's a legend and an icon? Her sound was extraordinary, and it was effortlessly so.

It was a very interesting time in the late forties to the late sixties when programs were springing up. [My colleagues will have] their own memories of people who paralleled Gwen or came shortly after her and started programs elsewhere: Samuel Sanders at Juilliard, Eugene Bossart at the University of Michigan, John Wustman at the University of Illinois.... Those were amongst the very first schools to offer degrees in accompanying. And the term 'accompanying' lasted for a very long time. My dear friend Margo Garrett will tell you the story about the terminology change and how that came about.

Martin Katz and I were [in Koldofsky's studio] at the same time. Michael Tilson Thomas, now known as a conductor, took courses with Gwen, as he did with others of the famous faculty. And there were so many singers...."

Just like today's MM degree in collaborative piano, at that time USC normally expected the accompanying graduate program to take two years. Dr. Barr, however, found a creative way to finish her degree earlier due to financial constraints.

JB: “The Master’s degree for most schools is usually a two-year degree, but USC was an expensive school and I didn't have a lot of money. So, I did it in one calendar year, from September of ‘64 to August of ‘65. The coursework was pretty much what it is for most Master’s degrees—you take music theory, music history, [private] lessons and specialization courses. In our case, [this] included voice repertoire with Gwen Koldofsky. [Since] I crammed the degree into a year, it was busy because I was taking the usual courses, doing [my own degree] recitals, and playing for friends’ recitals. At the time, William Primrose (viola), Gregor Piatigorsky (cello), and Jascha Heifetz (violin) were all on the faculty here [at USC]. Each of them had a class which met twice a week. Over the years there were a number of pianists who played for these classes. The year of my Master’s degree, I was asked to play for the William Primrose classes, but right at the start of school, it turned out that my colleague who was to play for the cello classes of Piatigorsky was unable to do so.... I was asked to do that one as well.

Just think about the opportunity of learning this repertoire and being in the presence of these phenomenal world-famous artists! And of course, the students were...well, they are in the ‘who’s who’ list of their respective instruments now. It was an amazing opportunity and I was very lucky.”

The 1960s-70s: An Extraordinary Time to Be at USC

JB: “The music building that we are sitting in is new. It was built in 1973, the year after I left. The old building where we all took lessons was called Clark House. It was an old mansion that had been acquired by the University of Southern California, and there was this beautiful wooden staircase that curved down. Gwen’s studio was at the bottom of that staircase, to the right, in what had been the mansion’s dining room. It had a window seat and beautiful big windows overlooking the gardens. There were other piano faculty members on that same floor. If you turned a sharp left at the bottom of the stairs, Alice Ehlers, who was an iconic harpsichord professor, was in that office. It was fun to be waiting for a lesson, watching Jascha Heifetz, or whomever, come down the grand staircase and greet Lillian Steuber, another piano faculty member, and Gwen Koldofsky. [Mr. Heifetz] was always very gentlemanly towards them both.

You know, it was an extraordinary time, with a lot of history and beginnings here. For example, voice teacher William Vennard wrote the first book on vocal technique. He also was the first person to have the medical school doctors put cameras down singers’ throats.”

After School, A First Job, and Back to School

Dr. Barr shared her own experience of something that many of us can relate to: the struggles of job hunting, adjusting to a professional life, and the constant effort of furthering a career. An example of her proactive pursuit resulted in the birth of a doctoral degree in accompanying nationally and globally.

JB: “[After] I got my Master’s degree I needed a job, and got one in a small college. It was a job that exposed me to a lot of responsibility. I taught solo piano and classes in chamber music, class piano, accompanying, and piano duet. I also taught remedial theory. I played all the faculty recitals and the Master’s degree recitals. (There were no doctorates at this institution.) I also played the organ for the choir concerts, was the rehearsal pianist for the opera, and even played bass drum when they couldn’t find somebody to do it with the band! Oh, and I played a concerto with the band every year that I was there. As an example, you haven’t lived until you’ve played the Schumann concerto with B-flat clarinets on the violin parts!

It was an interesting time. However, in my fourth year, I knew I needed to search for something else. By then, PhD degrees in music had been created. I know that the deans of Eastman, Northwestern, and Michigan had decided at one NASM [National Association of Schools of Music] meeting that there really should be a performance doctorate. They promoted it, and it got approved by NASM. I think it must have started with piano performance because, when I was here as a Master’s degree student, I had some good friends who were piano DMA, but there weren’t many...I seem to recall that it was quite new at the time. The doctoral degree in performance couldn’t have been more than ten years old. So, having that in the back of my mind, I phoned John Crown, who was chair of the piano department, and asked if USC would consider starting a doctorate in accompanying. And they did, to my delight!”

After returning to USC, Dr. Barr studied for three years as the first doctoral student in “accompanying.” She had some freedom to take what she desired. She took harpsichord lessons with Alice Ehlers and Malcolm Hamilton, in addition to her lessons with Mme. Koldofsky. Dr. Barr took three minor fields: theory, music history, and comparative literature because she enjoyed poetry and “things related to song rep” as she called it. Thanks to her previous training in Latin, French, and German, she was able to pass the language exams.

JB: “We kind of wrote the degree program as I went through it. It took a bit of time for the board of trustees to approve this new degree, but I have a diploma that says, ‘DMA in Accompanying,’ so I’m very proud of that. And it’s exactly fifty years ago this year, May of 2022.”

Dr. Barr’s training and early career demonstrate the embodiment of “Superheroism,” a quality that our IKCAS community embraces. I caught a glimpse of how our field has evolved and how it is built upon an incredible spirit of innovation and collaboration. Dr. Barr’s life story brought me so much pride for what we do.

As we come to the end of this article, I would like to share a beautiful message from Dr. Barr. Her words perfectly encapsulate the passion and commitment that have defined her remarkable life and legacy—a lifelong dedication to nurturing, training, and supporting future generations of musicians.

JB: “If there are any students who [are watching] this: don’t give up! Know how to learn courageously and deeply. Technique is important, but even more so—or at least, equally so—[are] artistry and playing from the heart. Find the best partners you can. Find joy in everything you play, and remember that in finding the joy, you are also giving it to your audience. It’s so easy in academia, particularly, to sort of crank it out. It’s a job. Please don’t let it be that! I think it’s really important that you have the courage to keep going, and to model for the people who come after you what is so joyous about being a musician of any sort. The friends you make can be lifelong because you share something in common, which is a deep love of music. So, hang in there! Don’t give up! Be the best you can be!”

To hear from Dr. Barr directly, feel free to watch this short [video](#).



*Seoyon Susanna
MacDonald*

Seoyon Susanna MacDonald is a Korean-American pianist with a versatile career spanning solo, orchestral, and collaborative music. She has performed in Europe, North America, and Asia, including at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Wigmore Hall. MacDonald recently debuted as a Hollywood recording pianist for the movie King Richard. She holds degrees from the Juilliard School and New England Conservatory and is currently pursuing a doctorate at the University of Southern California while working as a teaching assistant, vocal coach, instructor, and pianist in Los Angeles. For more information, visit her website at www.seyonmacdonald.com.

Addressing Music Performance Anxiety in Collaborative Partnerships

Jessica Koebbe, DMA

As professional performers, we understand that it is our job to manage our own performance anxiety issues, but when we collaborate, we must become skilled not only in the art of ensemble performance as well as also in understanding and navigating the anxieties of our musical partners. My doctoral research focused on Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) in elementary-aged children and resulted in several resources for teachers to use in lessons or rehearsals to comfortably begin to address this topic with their young musicians. But anxiety is ageless, and as I have continued to perform with musicians of all ages and levels, I have observed how performance anxiety can affect musicians in duos, trios, and both small and large ensembles. In the following article I share my empirical observations, some of which readers might have noticed in their own practices as well.

Imagine for a moment: it is Friday night and you are feeling confident and excited for your performance this evening. You arrive at the venue, eager to connect with your musical collaborators before the concert, but when you enter the green room, you notice an altered energy in the room. People who are normally chatty and relaxed during rehearsals are quiet and tight-lipped, while others are fidgety. It dawns on you: they are nervous. Caught up in your own thoughts about the performance, you had forgotten to consider what the rest of the group might be experiencing. Apprehension washes over you: “Oh no, what is going to happen on stage? What if their nerves affect the performance? What are we going to do?” How many of us have not been in a situation like this? Or maybe, like me, you have been one of the anxious performers backstage, worried that you might mess everything and everyone up.

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) affects most performers at some point during their career according to surveys of professional musicians.² Whether the symptoms are mental or physical, their presence and unpredictability can impact even the most seasoned performers.³ The practical outcome of that means that when we are sharing the stage with our musical collaborators, one or more of us is most likely experiencing some sort of physical or cognitive symptoms of MPA that might impact our performance.⁴ How are we best to navigate such symptoms as performers as well as colleagues?

Owning Our Own Energetic Contributions

As conductors, pianists, ensemble musicians, singers, chamber partners, and musicians in general, all of us are both affected by and able to affect the energy in every performance and rehearsal space. To perform from a place of relaxed concentration and confidence, we must determine what kind of energy

² Linda H. Hamilton, *The Person Behind the Mask: A Guide to Performing Arts Psychology* (Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing, 1997): 57.

³ Anna Wiedemann, Daniel Vogel, Catharina Voss, and Jana Hoyer, “How Does Music Performance Anxiety Relate to Other Anxiety Disorders?” *Psychology of Music* 50, no. 1 (2022): 205.

⁴ For more detailed information on MPA, its symptoms, potential causes, and building a framework to better understand MPA, please consult Dr. Dianna Kenny’s work, *The Psychology of Music Performance Anxiety*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

we wish to create for ourselves as well as accept from others before we ever enter the room.⁵ This starts with recognizing the mental and physical state we are in just before a rehearsal or performance. Think about this: what happens when we are running late, are disorganized, or are operating from a perfectionist mindset? What type of impact does that have on our own selves as well as our musical partners? How many of us have entered a rehearsal or performance where other members of the ensemble arrived in this state? In my experience, this type of energy can contribute to a chaotic environment, subconsciously resulting in shallow breathing, physical tension, and disrupted concentration. In turn, this can have a detrimental effect on the productivity of our rehearsal time or performance. To many of us, this is obvious. And yet, how many of us have unintentionally contributed this kind of energy to a group at some point?

If we made a conscious decision to recognize the mental space we are in before we ever walk into the room, imagine the difference that would have on ourselves and how it could affect our musical collaborators, resulting in a stronger performance. This can be done in two simple steps.

First, we must become aware of our own feelings and connect with the reality of what we are feeling physically, mentally, and spiritually. My preferred method of doing this is to engage in what I call the “Three B Scan: Breath, Body, Brain.” In this exercise, I pause and examine the state of my breathing to determine if it is shallow, deep, fast, or slow. Then I scan my body for areas of excess tension, and finally I assess what is occupying my thoughts. If changes need to be made in order to be more present, I make them. This is something I encourage my students to do as well before performances. Maybe we are stressed, unprepared, perfectionist, tense, or are dealing with something incredibly challenging outside of our music making. On the other hand, perhaps we are feeling excited and joyful, energized, or at peace. It is possible to name all these emotions without engaging with them. Simply acknowledging the reality of where we are is grounding.

Second, we need to learn to recognize the type of headspace our collaborative partners are in. Like us, they are also dealing with many things that might overflow into the energy they bring into the room. Accepting the reality of our own mind and body allows us to create space for others.

What Does “Owning It” Look Like?

Sometimes the most helpful thing is the most obvious: to name how we are feeling out loud can often clarify a situation. It might look like saying to your partner(s), “You know what? I am feeling a little anxious about this rehearsal or performance today” or “I am so excited to get to make music with you tonight!” Perhaps we might choose to recognize it privately rather than share it with our partners. Either way, taking the time to become aware of our energy and actively articulating what we are experiencing is necessary.

As a next step, we may feel comfortable enough to encourage our musical partners to connect with their reality as well. We can invite them into a direct discussion if we think that would be well received. One way to step into such a conversation would be by asking a neutral question such as “how are you feeling?” Such a less direct approach before a rehearsal or a performance might help settling down our colleagues and ourselves and would give everybody the opportunity to draw conclusions from their answers.

⁵ The HeartMath Institute is dedicated to the study of the mind/body/gut connection and human energetic contributions. For readers interested in further exploration of this, please visit heartmath.org.

Another way to address anxiety could be by modeling behaviors that help decrease tension and lower the heart rate. Behavior modeling is a widely-recognized tool that can be beneficial when seeking to redirect or reinforce certain conduct.⁶ You may wish to ask your colleagues if they would like to take a moment before the rehearsal or performance begins to breathe and set intentions together. Indirectly modeling works well too. You can simply tell them that you need a moment to get into the right mental place, close your eyes, be still, and breathe. Often that alone will change the atmosphere in the room; the key is remembering to do it.

What If?

But what if your musical partners are not willing to do this work with you or you do not have the kind of time or relationship to directly address all of this?

There are four ways in which you could strive to create your own positive energy which, through behavioral modeling, could influence the behaviors of your collaborating colleagues. Psychologist Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theories provide much insight into how and why such modeling behaviors work.⁷

Start with some audible, deep breaths. It is amazing how influenced people are by hearing others breathe deeply. Maybe you even found yourself more aware of your breath after reading that sentence. Our breath, our life-giving force, contains power and energy that is easy to overlook both in ourselves and in others. George Catlin's documentation of the Native American traditions and reverence for breath in his work *Breath of Life* and James Nestor's recent publication *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art* both offer historical and modern perspectives on the impact that our breath has on our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

As you breathe, stand up to stretch slowly and purposefully. Again, you might be surprised with how often this will catch on: you stretch, often they stretch.

Name your intention for the rehearsal or performance directly and beforehand. You can simply state your goals for the performance. If you are in a rehearsal, try simple comments such as, "I'd love to run this at tempo to get an overall sense of the work," or, "Today I'd love to tackle the work in sections," or, "A slow, under-tempo run-through would be beneficial for me today: can we work some of that into our rehearsal?" These can direct the focus of the rehearsal towards something productive. Another strategy could be by asking for colleagues' aspirations in an email or text prior to the rehearsal if there is concern about putting a less extroverted colleague on the spot. If you are about to perform, you can keep your intentions general and say, "I'm excited to breathe with the phrases," or, "The acoustics in here are amazing and I'm looking forward to how we sound." This also invites your partners to contribute their own goals and intentions.

⁶ Kathryn Dumper, William Jenkins, Arlene Lacombe, Marilyn Lovett, and Marion Perlmutter, "Observational Learning (Modeling)," *Introductory Psychology*, open access textbook (<https://opentext.wsu.edu/psych105/chapter/6-5-observational-learning-modeling/>)

⁷ Bandura's work is widely published in many journals and texts, but readers may find this entry useful as a starting point: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Bandura>

Finally, remember to create the energy you want. If your musical collaborators are not on board with this idea or if you sense they are disconnected, that is fine. We cannot control the choices others make. In those instances, imagine putting up an emotional forcefield around you so that you are unable to absorb negative energy and can focus instead on what you are creating. For centuries, mindfulness practitioners have understood the importance of mantras in quieting the mind.⁸ Treat this practice like a musical mantra: block what is unwelcome by focusing on something positive that you wish to create such as humming a musical line or developing an even stronger connection with the rhythmic pulse.

Use It to Your Advantage

Regardless of your partner's mental, physical, or emotional state, you can still use every rehearsal and performance as an opportunity to practice attuning to your own energy. Research has shown that a combination of physical and mental practice generates higher levels of skill acquisition than physical practice alone.⁹ If you establish the habit of beginning rehearsals and performances with a strong mental intention, you might be surprised how quickly it becomes second nature. You might even discover that you begin to attract certain types of performers because of your intention and energy.

Let us return to our scenario at the beginning of this article, imagining a new outcome: you take a few moments to check in with your breath, your body, and your mind to connect to the reality of your physical and mental states. You are conscious that you and your musical partners will no doubt experience some anxiety about the performance, but because you as individuals as well as an ensemble have prepared for that, you are in a state of acceptance, creativity, and curiosity. You are ready to confidently walk onstage and enjoy the performance.



Jessica Koebbe

Dr. Jessica Koebbe is a pianist and educator with an interest in exploring the humanity of music making. She serves on the teaching and collaborative faculty of William Jewell College in Liberty, MO, is the director of the Puerto Rico Center for Collaborative Piano, and maintains a thriving private piano studio and many freelance collaborative partnerships. Jessica Koebbe is the founder of Mindful Music Pedagogy (www.mindfulmusicpedagogy.com) and is conducting research on music performance anxiety for collaborative pianists. Visit her site to learn more and take her survey. (<https://jessicakoebbe.com/>)

⁸ Yolanda Álvarez-Pérez, Amando Rivero-Santan, Lilisbeth Perestelo-Pérez, Andrea Duarte-Díaz, et al. "Effectiveness of mantra-based meditation on mental health: a systematic review and meta-analysis," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, nr. 6 (2022): 3380.

⁹ Jim Taylor and Gregory Wilson, eds., *Applying Sports Psychology: Four Perspectives* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2005): 121.

Introducing *On Collaborating*: The Editorial Board and Design Team

Nico de Villiers, Editor-in-Chief



Nico de Villiers

South African-born Nico de Villiers is a coach, collaborative pianist, and author. He is the Deputy Head of Vocal Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. He performed as soloist and collaborative pianist at London's Royal Festival Hall, the Salzburg Mozarteum, the Bonn Kammermusiksaal, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

Dr. De Villiers's research interests include themes of identity and migration in art song with a specific focus on the Dutch-American composer Richard Hageman (1881–1966). In addition to founding the [Richard Hageman Society](#), De Villiers co-authored the groundbreaking biography *Richard Hageman: From Holland to Hollywood* (Peter Lang, 2020) with Kathryn Kalinak and Asing

Walthaus, and recorded *Voices: Songs by Richard Hageman*, the first album solely dedicated to Hageman's songs, with Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg (ALIUD, 2022). He published several articles in *Classical Singer*, *Opera*, *Pianist Magazine*, and the New York Singing Teachers Association's journal, *VOICEPrints*. He holds an undergraduate degree in Solo Piano Performance from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow, a Master's degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and a practice-based PhD in Music from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. (www.nicodevilliers.com)

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Katie Hughes

Katie Hughes is a pianist originally from Boulder, Colorado, USA, who enjoys collaborating with instrumentalists, soloists, and ensembles in a variety of genres. She is currently the Accompanist and Event Coordinator at Chadron State College, where she collaborates with all of the music students. She graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley with a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance in 2019, and graduated from the University of Cincinnati–College Conservatory of Music with a Master's degree in Collaborative Piano in 2021. Katie has held various church music positions, directed and played for theater companies, and accompanied camps such as Rocky Ridge Music Center, Broadway Academy, Interlochen Classical Voice Intensive, and Opera Classica. Throughout her undergraduate degree, she

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Paul A. Lee

Paul A. Lee is currently an Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of West Alabama, where he teaches courses in music theory, history, and class piano, in addition to teaching lessons in the piano and organ studio. Outside UWA, Dr. Lee also collaborates with the faculty and graduate students at the University in Alabama, particularly in the trombone, violin, and viola studios. His recent engagements have included multiple recitals in Arizona, string and chamber recitals in Alabama and Mississippi, Schubert's *Winterreise*, and performances in New York City with the Litha Symphony Orchestra. With long-time collaborator Dr. Alex Lapins (tuba and euphonium), the two have performed throughout the Southwest and South. Dr. Lee holds undergraduate degrees from Virginia Tech (piano and mechanical engineering), a Master's degree in collaborative piano from the University of Tennessee, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in collaborative piano from Arizona State University. (www.paulleepiano.com)

Claire Marquardt, Associate Editor



Claire Marquardt

Claire Marquardt of Poteau, OK, started playing piano at age four. During her time as a piano major at East Central University, she won the collegiate division of the national Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Contest. Claire then received a Master of Music in Piano Performance at the University of Oklahoma where she studied with Dr. Stephen Beus and held a graduate assistantship in accompanying in the Weitzenhoffer School of Musical Theatre.

While living in Ada, OK, Marquardt helped to organize and found the Chickasaw Nation School of Piano and taught all classes and lessons for the School for two years. She simultaneously served as the choir pianist for Ada and Stratford public schools. Claire also completed a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano from the University of Central Oklahoma, studying with Dr. Sallie Pollack. She currently is Assistant Professor of Music (staff pianist) and Preparatory Department Director at Oklahoma Baptist University.

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Luis Vallés

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ChoEun Lee

ChoEun Lee, a native of Korea, has given numerous performances in Korea, the United States, Austria, Australia, Italy, Taiwan, and New Zealand, in major venues, including Carnegie Hall in NY City, Ozawa Hall in Tanglewood Music Center, and Harris Concert Hall in Aspen Music Festival. Lee was twice invited to Tanglewood Music Festival and was named a Grace B. Jackson Prize recipient. As a répétiteur, Lee has been invited to the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. Recently, Lee was a featured performer in Lori Laitman's recording project, *The Ocean of Eternity* (Label: Acis).

Dr. Lee is a director of LeeU Collab Music and an assistant professor of collaborative piano and vocal coaching at Lee University. She serves on the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society (IKCAS) leadership team and is an assistant artistic director of CollabFest. Lee holds a B.M. from Kyungwon University, an M.M. from the University of Cincinnati, and a D.M.A. from the University of Southern California. (www.ChoEunLee.com)

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Lauren Koszyk

Lauren Koszyk currently maintains a versatile career as a collaborative pianist, educator, and arts administrator in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Ms. Koszyk has given performances and presentations across Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, and the United States. She currently serves on the piano faculty at Tarrant County College Northwest and works for leading arts organizations including the Cliburn, Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, and the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society.

Ms. Koszyk earned her Master of Music in Collaborative Piano from the University of North Texas and her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and Bachelor of Arts in German from Illinois State University. She has been presented with top honors by the Governor of Illinois and President of Illinois State University and has been invited by Steinway Hall, Dallas to tour the Steinway & Sons Factory in New York. (www.laurenkoszyk.com)