



Oberlin Conservatory of Music Names 2012 Rubin Institute Fellows

Ten young writers hailing from California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Texas will participate in the week-long series of public and private events comprising

The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism

and be considered for the \$10,000 *Rubin Prize in Music Criticism*



2012 Rubin Institute Fellows: Front Row: Jacob Street, Sam Rosenberg, Mandy Hogan, Chad Putka.
Back Row: Meghan Farnsworth, Susan Lee, Megan Emberton, Gabe Kanengiser, Matthew Young, Charlotte Dutton.

December 13, 2011- Earlier this fall, Oberlin Conservatory of Music announced a creative new program with a focus on music criticism, *The Stephen and Cynthia Rubin Institute for Music Criticism*. A biennial week-long event, the Institute aims to be a positive force in the art of writing and talking about music, as well as a catalyst in sparking dialogue on the topic. Today, David H. Stull, '89 Dean of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, announced the names of the students who have been selected to participate in the inaugural *Rubin Institute* this January 18 – 22, 2012. The students, known as Rubin Institute Fellows, will:

- attend all of the Institute's events;
- review each of the four consecutive concerts at Oberlin College's Finney Chapel that comprise the Institute's performance component (January 18 – The Cleveland Orchestra; January 19 – pianist Jeremy Denk; January 20- baroque orchestra Apollo's Fire; January 21 – renowned performers of new works, the International Contemporary Ensemble, who also give the world premiere of a new work by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang);
- experience the reality of professional deadlines by having to submit their reviews by a specific time following each concert;
- have their work publicly and privately critiqued by the Institute's Writers Panel (Alex Ross, *New Yorker* Magazine critic and author; Anne Midgette, *Washington Post* critic and author; Heidi Waleson, *Wall Street Journal* critic; Tim Page, Professor, Journalism and Music, USC and author, and Stephen Rubin, President and Publisher, Henry Holt & Co., benefactor of *The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism*);
- have their work read by a vast audience via the Institute's website,
- be considered for the \$10,000 *Rubin Prize in Music Criticism*, to be awarded to one of the Fellows at the conclusion of *The Rubin Institute*.

Continued...

In making the announcement, Dean Stull observed, “This is a terrific opportunity for Oberlin and I am very pleased to have such an extraordinary group of students involved in the Rubin Institute. I am sincerely grateful to Brian Alegant for his work on this project, and to our fabulous colleagues in Cleveland, Don Rosenberg, Mike Telin, Daniel Hathaway, and Charles Michener for their excellent teaching and support. It promises to be an outstanding program in January.”

Selected to participate in the Institute by the teaching panel leading the Conservatory’s new fall course, *Introduction to Music Criticism* (Brian Alegant, Professor and Director of the Music Theory Division at the Oberlin Conservatory; Mike Telin ’84, Executive Editor, ClevelandClassical.com; Daniel Hathaway, Founder, ClevelandClassical.com, and Donald Rosenberg, journalist and President of the Music Critics Association of North America), the Rubin Fellows will also have spent two class sessions with guest speaker Charles Michener, author and former senior editor of *The New Yorker*.

Mr. Alegant added to Dean Stull’s congratulations, saying, “It’s been thrilling to see the students’ risk-taking growth, and achievement, throughout the semester. I am looking forward to seeing how they respond to challenges of the Institute, which is the ideal capstone for the course.

This is indeed a terrific opportunity; I wish I had in my undergraduate years the opportunity to take such a course.”

Biographies of the Rubin Institute Fellows follow below, along with an abbreviated schedule of events for *The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism*. Please visit www.oberlin.edu/rubinstitute for complete details, including event locations and times, ticket prices, photographs and biographies of the Writers Panel, Teachers Panel, Dean Stull, Mr. Rubin, and the musicians and ensembles performing during the week-long series, as well as information regarding the \$10,000 *Rubin Prize in Music Criticism* and the \$1,000 *Public Review Prize*.

2012 Rubin Institute Fellows Biographies (in alphabetical order)

Charlotte Dutton is a fifth-year double-degree candidate majoring in German Studies and Piano Performance at Oberlin College and Conservatory. The North Hollywood, California native believes that music has a unique power to bring people of all cultures and backgrounds together. She participated in Oberlin’s Entrepreneurship Scholars Program and was awarded a grant from Oberlin’s Creativity Fund to study the creation and sustenance of urban cultural societies with an emphasis on music. After her graduation in May, she intends to move to New York and follow her dream of becoming a non-performing music enthusiast, working in the fields of performing arts administration, music education, and music writing.

When **Megan Emberton** isn’t studying Piano Performance at Oberlin Conservatory, her musical preoccupations include improvisation, unusual instruments, education, and music for dance. She has accompanied ballet classes for the Royal Scottish Ballet, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Oberlin College, and the Youth Dance Theater of Michigan. The Chelsea, Michigan native is also a student of piano tuning with the Oberlin Conservatory piano shop, and spent last summer interning at a Philadelphia accordion shop. After graduation, she may enroll in the Royal Scottish Conservatoire’s

dance accompanying program, or else travel the world and take a deep breath before entertaining the possibility of further formal education.

Meghan Farnsworth, a violinist and senior Musical Studies major at Oberlin College, has always considered Oberlin a source of musical inspiration. Raised in nearby Wellington, Ohio, she began her training as a singer with the Oberlin Choristers at age 7, with whom she continued to work through high school, and began studying violin through Oberlin Conservatory’s String Preparatory Program.

At Oberlin Farnsworth has taken full advantage of the many unique musical opportunities the school has to offer. Through covering jazz, classical and contemporary music, and historical performance for publications such as ClevelandClassical.com, the *Oberlin Review*, Oberlin Conservatory Communications and Sonic Bridges – her blog – she has developed a passion for the way music speaks across a range of sonic mediums.

Farnsworth has continued her study of the violin with Oberlin’s Community Music School and Alla Aranovskaya of the St. Petersburg String Quartet. This January she will be interning at the *Hechinger Report*, a publication of the Teachers College at

continued...

Columbia University.

Mandy Hogan is a third-year double degree student from Jersey Village, Texas. At Oberlin, she studies Politics and Viola Performance, proudly serves on Student Senate and as Junior Class President, researches the arts in underserved communities for Music in America, and maintains a small studio of students.

Hogan is also a committed teacher and champion of the arts in underserved communities outside of Oberlin. She has worked for the Underground Railway Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as a facilitator of cross-cultural collaboration, exhibition, and performance in the arts, and as a Teaching Artist for the Noel Pointer Foundation in Brooklyn, New York.

Last summer she received a Creativity and Leadership grant to intern with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Knights Orchestra in New York City. This winter Hogan will be working on an array of employment discrimination projects through an internship with the Legal Aid Society–Employment Law Center in San Francisco.

In her spare time, Hogan enjoys doing absolutely nothing (and drinking coffee). After Oberlin, she intends to practice law and advocate for LGBTQ and low-income persons.

Gabe Kanengiser, a California-hailing sophomore at the Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences, is working on majors in Creative Writing and Arts Business and Management, a self-designed program of study. Kanengiser began managing bands in his hometown Los Angeles in 2008, and less than a year later co-founded arts management, production, and promotion company Pickup Music. As the head of business and management, Gabe oversaw all projects and acted as manager for all of Pickup Music's clients. In high school Kanengiser studied jazz and classical saxophone with Lee Secard at the Colburn School of Music.

At Oberlin Kanengiser, who writes for the student publications *Fearless and Loathing* and the *Oberlin Review*, is working towards opening a shop specializing in instrument repair, an avocation he picked up during a 2011 Winter Term internship with prominent L.A. repairman Jay Work.

Susan Lee, born and raised in Los Angeles, California, finds that service and performance have always gone hand in hand. The 22-year-old pianist began training with her mother at age 5, and

volunteered and performed in retirement homes across L.A. during her high school years.

At Oberlin Conservatory, where she is a piano performance scholarship student with Professor Haewon Song, Lee has taught private piano lessons for students in the Conservatory and College of Arts and Sciences, as well as community members, since her freshman year. Her teaching and volunteering experience also includes tutoring math at Oberlin's Prospect Elementary School.

As a performer, Lee has won numerous competitions throughout Southern California and has participated in master classes with renowned pianists such as Menahem Pressler, André Laplante, and Daniel Epstein, among others. During the summers, Susan has participated in the ARIA International Summer Academy, the Toronto Summer Music Academy and Festival, and the Casalmaggiore International Festival in Italy.

Chad Putka is a vocalist from Worthington, Ohio, who enjoys performing a wide range of styles, from 19th century romantic fare to 1970s pop. Putka's first and greatest love, however, is barbershop music. Someday, he hopes to study this uniquely American culture and art form as a professor of musicology, and is already teaching others as an instructor in Oberlin's Experimental College program.

As a performer, Chad loves to sing in choirs, solo performance, and in quartets. He is studying with Gerald Crawford in preparation for a voice recital this spring and sings regularly with the Columbus-based Alliance of Greater Central Ohio, a barbershop chorus that recently placed 8th in international rankings. He is also a long-time member, soloist, arranger, and Official Liaison and Tour Manager with the Obertones, Oberlin's all-male contemporary a cappella group. His own group, Three Dudes and a Guy, is preparing for competition in April, hoping to qualify for this summer's Harmony Foundation Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Competition in Portland, Oregon.

Chad will complete a Bachelor of Arts in Musical Studies with a minor in Anthropology in May.

When at age 6 **Sam Rosenberg** transcribed the Power Rangers' theme song on a toy piano given to him by his parents, he began an uncommon musical career. Fast forward through piano and drum-kit stints to age 12, and Rosenberg was a rock and roll guitar player, performing in party and dance bands at his middle school in Brooklyn, New York. Skip to

continued...

school and Rosenberg was playing jazz at the Beacon school, where he helped found the Beacon Jazz Band and was one of 25 students selected to perform multimedia music in three cities across India, a trip recorded in Anand Kamalaker's 2010 documentary *Building Bridges*.

Rosenberg, now 22 and a Jazz Guitar major in his senior year at Oberlin Conservatory, has become a cornerstone of Oberlin's hip-hop scene. He's held the position of Hip-Hop Director at WOBC (Oberlin's student-operated radio station) since 2009, and regularly brings MCs to campus through Hip-Hop 101, a student booking and promotional organization. In 2010 Sam lived in Argentina for 7 months, where he studied at the national school of arts and learned natural construction on an organic farm in Patagonia. Beginning in the summer of 2011, Rosenberg began working with Brooklyn based Dutty Artz record-label boss DJ/Rupture on "The Soy Waltz," an installation piece for Netherlands' Incubate Festival.

Jacob Street, from North Reading, Massachusetts, graduated *summa cum laude* from College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. As the organ scholar of the class of 2010, he studied with James David Christie. Street is pursuing a Master of Music in Historical Performance at Oberlin, where he has studied organ with Olivier Latry and James David Christie, harpsichord with Webb Wiggins, and clavichord with David Breitman. Currently, he holds

the position of Minister of Music at Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Cleveland.

Street has been a prizewinner in national and international organ competitions, and was recently accepted as a semifinalist in the upcoming Jurov International Harpsichord Competition. He has had the opportunity to study, compete, and perform in several European countries, including Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, and Estonia. In 2006, under the direction of Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Julian Kuerti, Street played the organ with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for about three and a half measures in the last two minutes of a Tchaikovsky symphony.

19-year-old **Matthew Young** of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, is honored and thrilled to be participating in *The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism!* Young, who is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and a Bachelor of Arts in English or Creative Writing, has won several competitions and scholarships in Florida, and was invited to perform chamber music with other young musicians at the inaugural Emerging Young Artists Summer Music Festival at Friday Musicale. In summer 2011, he attended Spain's Valencia International Piano Academy where he studied with Julian Martin, Hamish Milne, and Yong Hi Moon. Young is also interested in reading and writing fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and songs, as well as singing.



Oberlin Conservatory Of Music, Oberlin, Ohio.

January 18 – 22, 2012

All concerts are at Finney Chapel. Keynote addresses are at Finney Chapel or Joseph R. Clonick Hall, Kohl Building. All Public Panel Sessions are at Clonick Hall. (Artists, programs, and panel sessions are subject to change.)

The full *Rubin Institute* schedule is available at www.oberlin.edu/rubinstitute.

The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism, the Rubin Prize in Music Criticism (to support further study or internships in the field of music criticism) and the \$1,000 Public Review Prize is made possible at Oberlin Conservatory of Music by the generosity of Stephen Rubin, President and Publisher of Henry Holt & Co.



Photos: Tanya Rosen-Jones.
Additional images of the Rubin Institute Fellows available in j-peg format upon request.