The Auburn Symphony Orchestra has appointed School of Music alumna Emilie Choi ('14 BM, Strings Performance; BS, Speech and Hearing Sciences) to be the organization’s new concertmaster. She currently holds the Assistant Concertmaster position at the Pacific Northwest Ballet, which she joined in 2017, and is an active player with Lincoln Center Stage.

“A considerable factor in hiring Emilie is on account of her outstanding musicianship which we all enjoyed at the season finale concert in April,” Music Director Wesley Schulz said in a recent article in the Auburn Examiner. “Emilie is a big asset to the orchestra and we all look forward to sharing in her musical gifts in the season to come.”

In her new role, Choi is the lead musician of the orchestra and provides technical advice and expertise to the string section, along with being a community ambassador.

Born and raised in Seattle, Choi holds a Master’s of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music, a Certificate of Historical Performance Practice from Case Western Reserve University, and Bachelor’s degrees in Music Performance and Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of Washington, where she studied violin with Professor Ron Patterson and chamber music with Professor Melia Watras.

Jiannan Cheng ('14 MM Wind Conducting), now a student in orchestral conducting at the Cincinnat
Conservatory, has accepted a new position as the Director of Orchestral Ensembles at Fordham University in New York. She also has been selected to participate in the Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna, Italy this summer and the Dallas Opera's Institute for Women Conductors in the fall.

Alumnus Jonathan Armstrong ('06 Jazz Studies), director of jazz studies at Idaho State University, was one of five Idaho state residents to be awarded a 2019 Idaho Commission on the Arts Fellowship Award. The award, which includes a $5,000 cash prize, is granted every three years by the Idaho Commission on the Arts to recognize outstanding artists, judged on the basis of existing work and professional history. In addition to serving as director of Jazz Studies at Idaho State University, Armstrong co-founded the modern jazz quartet Slumgum and the electronic psychedelic group Pitch Like Masses and has toured throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan and composed music for film, theater, and dance.

Music Education faculty report that the entire graduate cohort now consists of PhD candidates. The students—Juliana Cantarelli Vita, Giuliana Conti, Skúli Gestsson and Chris Mena—gathered with faculty Patricia Campbell, Steven Morrison, and Christopher Roberts at year-end to bid farewell to Professor Morrison, departing UW for a new appointment beginning in the fall at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. "This group of five recently minted PhD candidates is unprecedented, we do believe, in all of UW School of Music history," says Professor Patricia Campbell, "and most certainly so in the three decades of the PhD in Music Education!"

Recent accomplishments for the cohort include the following:

Gestsson and Mena spear-headed, for the second year, a collective songwriting project with the students of the Yakama Nation Tribal School (part of the School’s 19-year program Music Alive! In the Yakama Valley). In addition, their song-work with Seattle agency Path With Art this past winter was recognized with an award by the King County Housing Development Consortium (see article here). Mena, meanwhile, recently had the mariachi curriculum he designed accepted by the San Diego Unified Schools (district) for implementation in secondary schools through the city.

Cantarelli Vita was a visiting artist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for a week of workshops, masterclasses, and lecture-recitals. Besides her residency, Juliana has presented workshops for the Northwest Kodály Educators in Seattle and will be part of the leading faculty of the Smithsonian Folkways Course in World Music Pedagogy at West Virginia University. Conti has been re-elected to a second year as president of the University of Washington Graduate and Professional Student Senate, for the academic year 2019-2020.

May 2019 saw the publication of World Music Pedagogy: School-Community Interactions, co-authored by Patricia Shehan Campbell and PhD alum Chee-Hoo Lum (National Institute of Education, Singapore).

Voice alumna Tess Altiveros (MM, Vocal Performance) performed the role of the Child in Pacific Symphony’s (Irvine, California) recent production of Ravel’s L’enfant et les sortilèges, earning high notes from the Los Angeles Times, which praised the production for its “outstanding cast headed by Tess Altiveros as a particularly soulful child.” Other recent engagements include roles in the world premiere of "Borders," by John Muelheisen at Carnegie Hall, New York, and a lead role in Seattle’s Pacific MusicWorks 2019 presentation of Leading Ladies: Barbara Strozzi and the Female Virtuosi of the 17th Century.

Hyunju Juno Lee ('15, DMA Flute), Professor of Flute at Kunsan National University in Korea, and local pianist Li-Tan Tsu presented a guest artist recital at Brechemin Auditorium this past May, performing works by Gaubert, Guiot, Bach, and Martin. She also presented a performance masterclass with the University of Washington flute students followed by a career and pedagogy question-and-answer session.

DMA student Chris Young has been appointed Assistant Principal cello of Symphony Tacoma.

Logan Esterling, student of Mary Lynch who graduates this year with a BM in oboe performance, recently won an oboe position with Symphony Tacoma. He also has been a frequent performer with Yakima Symphony Orchestra and other community ensembles as well as principal oboe in the UW Symphony and Wind Ensemble.

School of Music alum Dr. Joseph Kinzer ('17 PhD Ethnomusicology), has accepted the position as Senior Curatorial Assistant for the Archive of World Music at Harvard University.

Jon Hansen, ('13 DMA, Tuba), a former student of Chris Olka, was recently awarded the 2019 International
Tuba-Euphonium Association (ITEA) Jim and Jamie Self Creative Tuba Award for his original composition "SpaceTuba." "It feels great to be recognized by my peers this way," Hansen reports, "especially as it sometimes feels like we're all shouting in the void out here on the wacky edges of the tuba world."

Choral Conducting doctoral student Jennifer Rodgers is presenting at the Guildhall School of Music's Finding a Voice Conference in London, England in July. Her presentation defines a spectrum of musical image among adult amateur singers.

People Involved: Skúli Gestsson, Patricia Shehan Campbell, Christopher Roberts, Logan Esterling, Joe Kinzer, Jennifer Rodgers

Related Areas of Study: Choral Conducting, Conducting, Ethnomusicology, Instrumental Performance, Jazz and Improvised Music, Music Education, Strings, Vocal Performance, Voice Program

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