PILOT STUDY
EXPERT, GUEST ARTIST EDUCATION EXPERIENCES FOR MUSIC STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

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ABSTRACT

Many Universities have opportunities to work with guest and visiting artists of every musical genre and instrumentation. The University of Alaska Fairbanks, mainly because of the extreme distance between peer and aspirational universities, does not often host a visiting artist.

We wanted to gather data on how UF music majors, students, and community members and Fairbanks high school students would respond to a visiting artist.

Vijay Singh, currently on faculty at Central Washington University, has visited Fairbanks in the past. He has presented at UF Jazz Fest and the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival. Mr. Singh is also versed in several genres of music from jazz to choral and composition.

After a performance by Vijay Singh on Saturday, April 28, we will survey attendees to garner data on how the performance was received. Our hope is that Fairbanks will grow and flourish from visiting artists and such visits will become common at UF.

METHODS

The methodology of the pilot study is to invite one guest artist to visit UF for the purpose of conducting master classes, providing public school outreach opportunities, instructing private lessons, giving a public performance. The research component of the pilot is to generate and collect data for future funding proposals. We plan to measure and document the strength of interest among constituencies while examining the benefits for students, the public, and university personnel. Instruments for assessment include surveys designed in alignment with best practices from the research base using Likert scales and open-ended responses. This will establish baseline data, including testimonials, that are intended to be incorporated into future funding proposals leading ultimately, to a guest artist series that could contribute to improved retention and graduation rates for B.A., B.M., and M.A. music majors in addition to enhanced recruiting efforts for both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

INTRODUCTION

Outside Alaska, professional musicians frequently respond to expressed need by stopping, teaching and performing at nationwide university music programs largely because of geographical convenience between closely situated metropolises. However, UA remains a destination and not a stopping point. Therefore, instructive visits from professional performers are usually limited to large venues such as our Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra visits (three soloists per academic year). Fairbanks Concert Association visits (one-two per year), UF Jazz Festival visits (three-four per year); and UF New Music Festival visits (one per year). Other university music programs, including UF's current peer and aspirational peer institutions, benefit from more numerous visits by professional, traveling performers/educators.

The purpose of this pilot project is to generate and collect data for future submission to major granting institutions (National Endowment for the Arts; Alaska State Council on the Arts; and others). The design of this pilot project focuses on assessing interest and benefit to determine feasibility, and to quantify logistical support needs for a guest artist/scholar series in the UF Department of Music.

GUEST ARTIST

Vijay Singh is an active performer, composer, teacher, conductor, and clinician residing in Ellensburg, Washington where he is Professor of Music at Central Washington University. A graduate of Willamette University (B.M. Ed/Clarinet & Voice) and Portland State University (Masters in Choral Conducting/Vocal Performance), he has been rapidly gaining international attention for his eclectic musical compositions, performances, workshops, and conducting appearances. Vijay's teaching experiences have included work at public secondary schools, community college, and at university levels. He currently teaches voice, choral arranging, jazz pedagogy, directs the University Chorale, and award-winning CWU Vocal Jazz 1, and oversees the vocal jazz program (three jazz choirs). Vijay's student ensembles at CWU have been honored as some of the finest in the nation with invitations to perform at prestigious national IAJE, MENC, and ACDA conventions. Vocal Jazz 1 has been selected and will perform at the national ACDA conference in Chicago, IL, March 11, 2011, as a composer, Vijay writes for all levels in both the classical choral and jazz idioms. His compositions (over 170 currently in print) are widely available from a number of publishers and he often writes on commission for some of America's finest ensembles. Vijay's "MAMS with Orchestra" received its world premiere at Lincoln Center in New York City May 30th, 2011. As a composer, Vijay has appeared as featured bass-baritone soloist with such notable groups as Male Ensemble Northwest, Choral Cross Ties, the Oregon Symphony, the Robert Shaw Chorale, David Byrne (Talking Heads), Clark Terry, the Disciples of Groove, and as a member of the award-winning acappella jazz quartet Just 4 Kicks. He has appeared in professional opera and musical theatre productions, and maintains an active career in oratorio, recital, and contemporary music. Vijay served 4 years as the National Repertoire and Standards Chair for Jazz Choirs in the American Choral Director's Association and is in demand as a guest conductor of All-State and Honor choirs. He has conducted All-State choirs in over nineteen states and has the distinction of conducting both All-State Concert Choirs and Jazz Choirs within the same year. Vijay has served as adjudicator/jurist at International festivals in Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, and the United States. The recent recipient of a tenth ASCAP Composer's Award, Vijay is also a member of ACDA, MENC, ASCAP, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

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RESULTS

This study is in progress. Upon data collection and analysis, we will draft the results section.

CONCLUSIONS

This study is in progress. Upon completion of the results section, we will draft the conclusion section.

REFERENCES

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