

## SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2019-20:

- The 84th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Alumnus Victor Goines merits #6 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merits #10 Alto Sax, #10 Flute, and places in the Soprano Sax and Alto Sax categories, and the Christian McBride Big Band in which he performs merits #4 Big Band. James Genus places in Electric Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, places #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, with Wynton Marsalis and featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, and which visited with our students a couple of years ago, merits #2 Big Band of the Year and #8 in Jazz Album of the Year. And the Wynton Marsalis Quintet in which Victor performs merits #5 Jazz Group of the Year. The Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merits #3 Big Band of the Year and #5 Jazz Album of the Year.
- The 67th Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson places in Alto Sax and Flute. Darius Jones is cited in the Alto Sax category and merits #1 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines places #8 in the Clarinet category. Alumnus James Genus places in Electric Bass. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, in which Victor performs, merits #4 in the Big Band category. The Count Basie Orchestra, in which our trombone alumnus Alvin Walker performs, also places in that category. The Christian McBride Big Band, in which Steve Wilson performs, places in the Big Band category. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again places first in the Jazz Violinist category.
- Jazz sax alumnus Steve Wilson is one of the jurors (along with Billy Childs and Rufus Reid) of the Ravinia Festival's third annual Bridges Composition Competition. His jazz program at the City College of New York was the subject of a feature in the April issue of *Down Beat* magazine.
- The eclectic funk/jazz deep-groove band Butcher Brown will release their next record, "Tidal Wave," on the Concord label. While the band's summer tour had to be canceled due to COVID-19, it reschedules its dates at the famed Blue Note Jazz Club in New York for August 31-September 2. The band releases its new single, "#KingButch," and continues its socially distanced #MothershipMonday performance series. Members of the jazz, hip hop, funk ensemble include former VCU students Tennishu (Marcus Tenney), Morgan Burrs, Andrew Randazzo, and DJ Harrison (Devonne Harris), along with VCU Jazz Day alumnus Corey Fonville.
- Jazz Trumpet alumnus Victor Haskins continues to couple his career as a performer and composer with that of an educator. He directs the In-School Jazz Ensembles for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and teaches Jazz Trumpet, Improvisation, and the Jazz Ensemble at the College of William & Mary.
- The R4nd4zzo Big Band, led by bassist/alumnus Andrew Randazzo and comprised mostly of VCU alumni and students, has been increasingly busy. Live performances pre-COVID-19 are followed by a string of multitracked videos by large and smaller combinations of musicians.
- May 8 marks the band Spectrum's 35th anniversary, led by sax alumnus Gary Shaver. The band is approaching its 2000th-show mark.

- Jazz drum alumnus Clarence Penn is interviewed within the June *Down Beat* article “Andy Milne: Sonic Architect.” Penn is a member of Milne’s trio, Unison, whose debut CD “The reMission” issues on Sunnyside Records in April.
- Jazz alumnus Gordy Haab has been scoring various “Star Wars” and other games for years.
- Alumnus David Glen Russell works with Kevin Kiner, providing additional music for the animated Star Wars series “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” and “Star Wars Rebels.” He is one of a select few composers who have contributed nearly 11 hours of music to the Star Wars canon.
- “Sherman Irby’s Inferno,” “The Fifties: A Prism,” and “Black, Brown and Beige” (Blue Engine Records) are the latest albums by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis including VCU Music alumnus Victor Goines.
- You can hear VCU Jazz bass alumnus James Genus on the latest CD from saxophonist Tia Fuller, “Diamond Cut” (Mack Avenue); the latest album by vocalist Lorraine Feather, “Math Camp” (Relarion); and the new CD by drummer Sanah Kadoura, “Hawk Eyes.” Genus is featured on the internet rebroadcast of the International Jazz Day concert 2019 in Melbourne, Australia alongside Herbie Hancock and other jazz luminaries, as the 2020 event had to become virtual.
- Spacebomb Studios, led by VCU Jazz alumni Matthew E. White and Trey Pollard, is the focus of a feature on National Public Radio (<https://www.npr.org/2020/04/01/825262466/a-look-inside-spacebomb-studios-the-creative-hub-in-richmond-va>).
- The December *STYLE Weekly* lists its best musical memories of the 2019 within the article “A Year of Music,” and VCU Jazz and VCU overall connections are well represented. *STYLE* salutes the bands Butcher Brown and R4nd4zzo Big Band; alumni Steve Wilson, Reggie Chapman, Trey Pollard, Bryan Connolly, Billy Williams, Chet Frierson, Nate Clark, Alan Parker, Morgan Burrs, Daniel Clarke, John Winn; GRHSJB alumnus Dexter Moses; faculty members Hector “Coco” Barez, Rex Richardson, Taylor Barnett, J.C. Kuhl; and former faculty Doug Richards, Brian Jones, and Al Regni. The article notes that VCU Music’s “recitals, which are always inspiring, typically brilliantly performed, and frequently free, remain one of the best musical values in town.”
- The October 22 edition of *STYLE Weekly* names VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Trey Pollard as one of Richmond’s key “2019 Top 40 Under 40,” noting that Trey has “been juggling roles as touring music director, notably with Natalie Prass and Foxygen, writing orchestrations and producing for artists, and running the publishing side of Spacebomb...writing string arrangements for an upcoming Charles Owens Trio gig at Vagabond and composing a concerto for world-traveling Virginia Commonwealth University trumpet virtuoso [VCU Prof.] Rex Richardson....”
- Trombone alumnus Alvin Walker continues as a member of the Count Basie Orchestra.
- Trumpet alumnus (and former JO I member) Zack Forbes continues his work in Malaysia. “I have enrolled at Sunway University in Malaysia to pursue Audio Technology. I love playing trumpet but hate paying other people to record me. I want to teach myself!” Forbes is Primary & Middle Years Programme Music Teacher at Fairview International School in Kuala Lumpur and performs in the KL Brass Project and the Fairview Orchestra.

- Jazz piano alumnus Ryan Corbitt moves and re-brands his business, formerly Grove Avenue Piano, into the Westwood Music Club, 2323 Westwood Avenue, where they “focus more on music lessons, camps and classes. In addition to piano, the company also offers classes for drum, voice, and guitar.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-19:

- The 66th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson merited #8 in Soprano Sax and placed in Alto Sax and Flute. Darius Jones was also cited in the Alto Sax category and merited #2 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed #9 in the Clarinet category. Alumnus James Genus placed in Electric Bass. Former VCU Music Chair Darryl Harper again placed in Rising Star/Clarinet. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, in which Victor performs, merited #3 in the Big Band category. The Christian McBride Big Band, in which Steve Wilson performs, merited #4 in the Big Band category. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category.
- The 83rd Annual *Down Beat* Reader’s Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Victor Goines received #6 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #8 Flute and placed in the Soprano Sax and Alto Sax categories, and the Christian McBride Big Band in which he performs merited #4 Big Band and placed in Jazz Album of the Year. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, and which visited with our students last year, merited #2 in the Jazz Album of the year category, #2 Big Band, and placed in Historical Album of the Year, with leader Wynton Marsalis placing #4 Jazz Artist of the Year, #5 Jazz Group, #1 in Trumpet, #2 Arranger, and #5 Composer. And the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #1 in the Big Band category.
- Jazz Trumpet alumnus Victor Haskins is the subject of a full-page feature in the June *Down Beat*, “Path to Self-Discovery,” noting his performing, composing, and teaching skills and his latest album, “Showing Up.”
- Spacebomb receives front-arts-page coverage in the March 24 edition of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, heralded for its new studio space at 106 South Robinson in Richmond; its visit to the SXSW event in Austin, Texas; and its recent influx of funding. The lengthy article, “Moving Music,” complete with four photos, notes Spacebomb founder Matthew E. White’s road to Richmond to study jazz at VCU, his co-hosting informal concerts in the attic of his apartment, and his demo recording that soon became the label’s initial hit, “Big Inner.” Following more successes, the label received a seven-figure investment in 2017 from “the New York-based Glassnote Entertainment Group-affiliate Resolved Records.” Said White, “There is a unique community of musicians here in Richmond. It’s different than anywhere else I’ve been. That’s the reason why I live here. It’s taking that [community] and creating an economy around it.”
- VCU Jazz drum set alumnus and composer Scott Clark’s latest record, “ToNow” (Clean Feed Records) receives a four-star review in the August *Down Beat*. Recorded locally by Lance Koehler at Minimum Wage Studios, the ensemble is comprised of

Clark's usual 4tet (Cameron Ralston, Bob Miller and Jason Scott) plus two guitarists (Alan Parker and Tobin Summerfield)—all but Summerfield VCU alumni.

- The NoBS! Brass Band, which includes so many VCU alumni and faculty, performs at the Monterey Jazz Festival, meriting praise from the *Down Beat* web site: “With zigzagging rhythms, torrents of brass and hip-hop flavors, the 13-piece band playfully delivered their energetic originals, including the buoyed ‘3 A.M. Bounce’ and charged covers, including Michael Jackson’s ‘Thriller’ and a delicious take on the Tears for Fears hit ‘Everybody Wants To Rule The World,’ sung soulfully by recently enlisted vocalist Samantha Reed.”
- The December *Down Beat* includes a four-star review of the latest album by VCU alumnus/bass trombonist/composer Reginald Chapman, now based in New York City. Collaborators with VCU connections include Reggie Pace, Bryan Hooten, Marcus Tenney, John Lilley, David Hood, Rob Quallich, Devonne Harris, Macon Mann, and Andrew Randazzo. Of “Prototype” (Fresh Selects) the magazine writes: “Chapman’s spongy, pliable solos soak up the mood, reflecting and reacting with quick clusters of notes and smears of tonal color.... Everyone rises to the occasion on “Prototype” with dauntless performances and ample heart.”
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Trey Pollard’s debut album “Antiphone” (Spacebomb SB019) comes out November 16. He directs live concerts of the music November 13 at The Hofheimer in Richmond (Classical Revolution) and November 15 at Rough Trade NYC in Brooklyn, NY.
- VCU Jazz alumnus Gordy Haab has been scoring various “Star Wars” and other games for years. The May 31 *Billboard.com* features an article on Gordy, noting: “When composer John Williams in February told KUSC that 2019’s Star Wars: Episode IX is the last entry in the fabled franchise he plans to score, it triggered an industry guessing game as to whom the legendary maestro would pass the baton. If quantity factors with quality, game composer Gordy Haab may have an edge. Haab has created more than 15 hours of music for nine Star Wars games. The most recent—Electronic Arts’ Star Wars: Battlefront II—was recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at Abbey Road Studios, earning him the video game score of the year at May 23’s ASCAP Screen Music Awards.”
- Alumnus David Glen Russell works with Kevin Kiner, providing additional music for the animated Star Wars series “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” and “Star Wars Rebels.” He is one of a select few composers who have contributed nearly 11 hours of music to the Star Wars canon.
- The CD “Una Noche con Rubén Blades” (Blue Engine) features the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis (and our clarinet alumnus Victor Goines) with nine-time GRAMMY winning singer, songwriter, actor, and activist Rubén Blades.
- You can hear VCU Jazz bass alumnus James Genus on the latest CD from saxophonist Tia Fuller, “Diamond Cut” (Mack Avenue); the latest album by vocalist Lorraine Feather, “Math Camp” (Relarion); and the new CD by drummer Sanah Kadoura, “Hawk Eyes.” Genus performed on the International Jazz Day concert in Melbourne, Australia April 30 alongside Herbie Hancock and other jazz luminaries.
- Guitar alumnus Alan Parker is featured on the newest CD by pianist Justin Kauflin, “Coming Home” (Qwest).

- Drum alum Clarence Penn can be heard on the latest CD from saxophonist Denis Gabel, “The Good Spirits” (Mons).
- Drum alum Nate Smith + Kinfolk performed March 16 at the Kennedy Center Atrium. He is joined by singer/songwriter Van Hunt for Smith’s first solo project: an urban pop/jazz hybrid. A track from his CD “Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere” was spun for the Blindfold Test of drummer Johnathan Blake in the June issue of *Down Beat*. Said Blake, “I loved how the drummer started very soft and minimalist with mallets, and then built. Even though the cymbals are washy, you can still hear the articulation of the stick on the cymbal, which I dig. 4 stars [of 5].” Smith was the focus of the article “Nate Smith’s Universe of Beats” in the January *Down Beat*. It examines his thought-process approaching his new release, “Nate Smith Vol. 3: Pocket Change.” Nate’s NPR Tiny Desk concert with Kinfolk has garnered over a half-million views. The December 2018 *Down Beat* noted Smith’s performance with vocalist Jose James at the Monterey Jazz Festival last December.
- “Five Years” is the new release by Brunswick, founded in 2012 by trombonist/composer and VCU classical guitar alumnus John Hulley. The horn-lined band is stocked with many VCU Music alumni, and while the band has successfully covered many a pop-rock tune in the past, this CD is all Hulley originals. Said the June 15 *STYLE Weekly*, “The multi-leveled architecture of the melodies shines clearly through on the recording. But you would have to play it lease-breaking loud to capture the sonic power of the band live.”
- Saxophonist/VCU Jazz trumpet alumnus Marcus Tenney’s release “Moment” (American Paradox Records) offers only trumpet on this one, partnering with VCU alumni Alan Parker (guitar), Andrew Randazzo (bass), and Billy Williams (drums).
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus and former faculty member Adam Larrabee wrapped up teaching at Bela Fleck’s first-ever banjo camp at Brevard Music Center. Larrabee is a longtime member of the band Love Canon, whose latest CD, “Cover Story,” hit #1 in the *Billboard* Bluegrass charts. The band specializes in applying its acoustic-roots sensibilities to the electronic-tinged pop hits of the ‘80s and ‘90s, this album covering music of Peter Gabriel, Billy Joel, Depeche Mode, and Paul Simon. Guests include Jerry Douglas, Aoife O’Donovan, Keller Williams, Michael Cleveland, and Eric Krasno.
- Last August when alumnus and VCU Jazz Orchestra II Director Dr. Steven Cunningham accepted the Assistant Professor/Assistant Band Director post at Grambling State University in Louisiana. In December Grambling awards him the Conrad Hutchinson Endowed Professorship in Music, a one- to three-year appointment supporting his research/writing, teaching, and service. He merits this honor among a pool of new and veteran professor-candidates there.
- VCU Music alumna Madison Bunch and Marketing/Business alum Brian Zimmerman—both alumni of VCU’s Music Industry class—are working at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in Washington, D.C. Madison is a Royalty Assistant, Brian a Customer Service Representative.
- Trombone alumnus Reggie Pace is chosen by the readers of *Richmond* magazine as “Best Local Horn Player” in its “Best of Richmond” poll.
- The band “Butcher Brown” toured with saxophonist Kamasi Washington. Drummer Corey Fonville, who in his high school years attended VCU Jazz Day, partners with

- VCU-connected members Marcus Tenney (sax), Morgan Burrs (guitar), Andrew Randazzo (bass), and “DJ Harrison” (Devonne Harris, keyboard and guitar). The December *Down Beat* includes a positive review of Butcher Brown’s CD “Camden Session” (Gearbox). The album was recorded in London with no edits or overdubs.
- On October 9 VCU Jazz alumnus Lucas Fritz announces that he has founded The Broadberry Entertainment Group, partnering with Jessica Gordon (owner of The Trigger System, LLC/RVA Shows). As such, two of the largest concert-promoters in Richmond have officially merged together to bring even more live entertainment to Virginia. The Broadberry Entertainment Group exclusively books live entertainment in three of Richmond’s most thriving venues: The Broadberry, The Camel, and Richmond Music Hall at Capital Ale House Downtown and will be exclusively booking the historic Ashland Theatre, a newly renovated, seated venue with an approximate capacity of 300 that is set to open in late 2018. The Group also books entertainment into other venues non-exclusively.
  - When the December *STYLE Weekly* listed its best musical memories of the 2018 within the article “The Music Never Stopped,” VCU Jazz and VCU Music connections were well represented. *STYLE* saluted the bands Bio Ritmo, Miramar, Quatro na Bossa, Afro-Zen All-Stars, Yeni Nostalji, NoBS Brass, Thorp Jensen, Brunswick, Butcher Brown, Andrew Randazzo’s Big Band and more; plus alums Trey Pollard, Marcus Tenney, Reginald Chapman, and VCU Greater Richmond High School Jazz Band alumnus Calvin Brown; and the venues The Broadberry (managed by alum Lucas Fritz), the Vagabond (music curated by alum Macon Mann), and the JAMinc concerts at In Your Ear studio (owned by alum Carlos Chafin). The article noted that “free Virginia Commonwealth University recitals remain one of the area’s great values....”
  - Sax alumnus Steve Wilson can be heard on the album “Ice on the Hudson” (SMK Jazz), featuring songs by Renee Rosnees and David Hadju.
  - Sax alum Mark Shim is the face of an ad for the Zoom H1n Handy Recorder, seen on a full page of the December *Down Beat*.
  - Trombone alumnus Alvin Walker continues as a member of the Count Basie Orchestra, which has a new CD out: “All About That Basie.” Featuring guests Take 6, Kurt Elling, Joey DeFrancesco, and Stevie Wonder.
  - See Emre Kartari, Taylor Barnett above.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2017-18:

- The 65th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Drummer Nate Smith places in Jazz Album of the Year for “Kinfolk: Postcards From Everywhere.” Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson merits #10 in Soprano Sax and places in Alto Sax and Flute. Darius Jones is also cited in the Alto Sax category and merits #5 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines places #7 in the Clarinet category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs places in Jazz Album of the Year and #5 in the Big Band category. The Count Basie Orchestra in which trombone alumnus Alvin Walker performs also places in the Big Band category. Alumnus James Genus places in Electric Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again places first in the Jazz Violinist category.

- The 82nd Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU alumni. Victor Goines received #6 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, and Flute categories; and the Christian McBride Big Band in which he performs merited #5 Big Band. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, and which visited with our students last semester, merited #2 in the Big Band category and placed in Jazz Album, with leader Wynton Marsalis placing #1 in Trumpet, #2 Arranger, and #5 Composer. And the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #3 in the Big Band category.
- The September issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine salutes VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Chris Ryan—a.k.a. Thorp Jensen—as one of “10 Country Artists you should know” (<<http://www.rollingstone.com/country/lists/10-new-country-artists-you-need-to-know-september-2017-w500707/thorp-jenson-w500714>>. “A deeper, raspier-voiced Ryan Adams...for fans of Tom Petty, Jared Deck, and John Moreland’s Big Bad Luv...,” said the *Stone*. The new album, “Odessa,” “explores some vintage melodies and illustrative tales of life in the American heartland—with a heap of influence from the notably non-American Rolling Stones.” The band also includes VCU Jazz alumni Suzi Fischer (sax, but on keyboards and vocals) and Andrew Randazzo (bass).
- Music Ed alum and former member of JO II Jonathan Forbes starts his post as Music Instructor at the Saigon South International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
- Performance grad and JO I alum Jared Broussard accepts a full-time position as Lecturer in Trumpet at the University of Texas Rio Grand Valley.
- VCU Trumpet (and JO I) alumnus Zack Forbes starts “working at Fairview International School Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as an International Baccalaureate music teacher teaching Music Theory/Concepts and Brass to grades 1-7. I am on a team of music teachers, co-teach Brass, co-teach in the Fairview Orchestra, and teach the conceptual/theory classes alone. Aside from the exhausting work as a teacher, I am also a student learning about the IB program and taking multiple classes to enhance my skills as a music educator.” His future plans include performing in some of the orchestras and jazz bands in Kuala Lumpur.
- Music Ed and JO II alum Scot Mitchell is appointed to a full-time job at Forest Hills Elementary in Danville, directing fifth-grade band, chorus, and an Orff ensemble, as well as teaching general music.
- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Scott Clark celebrates the May release of his newest album, “ToNow,” on the renowned avant-jazz label Clean Feed. Bandmembers include VCU alums Jason Scott (sax), Bob Miller (trumpet), and Alan Parker (guitar) plus former VCU student Cameron Ralston (bass).
- Dr. Steven Cunningham, a VCU Music alumnus and instructor, becomes a Cannonball Artist.
- Jazz alum Victor Haskins solos on cornet with Roberto Fonseca’s group at La Zorra y El Cuervo in Havana, Cuba.
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Connor Thompson’s band, Blue Prototype, releases its debut album, “Believe in Nothing.” The band includes VCU Mass Communications alumnus

- Larri Branch on piano plus VCU Jazz alumni Brian Cruse on bass and Joe Lubman on drums.
- VCU Trombone alumnus Reggie Pace is the full-page picture as *Richmond* magazine's August issue salutes the "No BS! Brass Band" as "Next Local Band That Should Be On Late-Night Television" within the periodical's 30th Annual Best and Worst poll.
  - VCU Jazz Drum alum and multi-instrumentalist Devonne Harris is the subject of the cover story of the August 2 edition of *STYLE Weekly*. "Perfect Pitch" describes his Yellowstone studio, his background, and his current direction, with comments from many VCU alumni. He is then the subject of a profile in the October 2017 edition of *Virginia Living*. "Bonus Level" describes his Yellowstone studio, his background, and his current album "Hazy Moods." He and VCU Jazz alumnus Marcus Tenney (trumpet) are then featured on the cover story of the February *Virginia Living*.
  - VCU Jazz Sax alumnus Samson Trinh is profiled in the July 4 *Richmond Times-Dispatch* along with an exploration of his background, musical arrangements and thought-process for the preceding weekend's "Hamilton Live at the Dell" concert. Hear and read more at [http://www.richmond.com/news/local/michael-paul-williams/williams-hamilton-immigrants-and-the-meaning-of-america/article\\_54c514e7-c629-5680-bff4-af5b37a27bb2.html](http://www.richmond.com/news/local/michael-paul-williams/williams-hamilton-immigrants-and-the-meaning-of-america/article_54c514e7-c629-5680-bff4-af5b37a27bb2.html).
  - Jazz Guitar alumnus Sean Moran continues his improvisatory musical adventures and is working on a CD with a Brooklyn-based trio, "Sun Tiger," that includes cellist Hank Roberts and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza. Watch for its release on Skirl records. Sean has also been teaching composition, theory, counterpoint, and jazz studies for many years at Brooklyn Conservatory.
  - Piano alumnus and vocalist Loston Harris performs in Beijing, China with his trio in February to kick off a spring tour. His shows at The Blue Note in Beijing precede his shows in California, Florida, Maryland, and then a run from April 17 to June 30 at Bemelmans Bar at The Carlyle in New York City.
  - Sax alumnus Mark Shim's tenor is featured on the Vijay Iyer Sextet CD "Far From Over" (ECM). The album merits "Best New Recording" accolades in NPR's Fifth Annual Jazz Critics Poll.
  - Bass alumnus James Genus is featured on saxophonist Alex Han's CD "Spirit" (3 Deuces).
  - On September 23 "RVA Live!" comes to the Dominion Arts Center's Carpenter Theatre. This one-of-a-kind event is presented by The Broadberry in partnership with the Richmond Symphony and is curated by VCU Jazz alumnus and Broadberry owner Lucas Fritz. Artists include Matthew E. White, Natalie Prass, Tim Barry, Bio Ritmo, and Clair Morgan—on one stage with a full live orchestra for the first time. Orchestrations will be created by VCU Jazz alumni Trey Pollard and Toby Whitaker along with Marlysse Simmons.
  - Spacebomb Records and its House Band brings a slice of Richmond, Virginia to London for a one-night-only Revue October 6 at The Barbican, hosted by VCU Jazz alumnus Matthew E. White (Spacebomb Founder). He brings a horn section and strings to back such guests as Natalie Prass, Slow Club, Mike Scott (of The Waterboys), Bedouine, Cocoon, Georgie, Foxygen, Charlie Fink (Noah and the Whale) and Howard Ivans (The Rosebuds). A lengthy feature in London's "The Evening Standard" of October 6 notes that White is "based in Richmond because he and many of



Spacebomb's key musicians hail from the jazz studies course at the city's Virginia Commonwealth University." "Jazz is not where I can express the deepest parts of who I am, but it informs what we do," he says. "The idea of having a singer, a rhythm section, supportive arrangements, and it being groovy: that's jazz music." Jazz alums Pinson Chanselle (percussion) and guitarist Trey Pollard (arranger) are also mentioned as part of the Revue at <https://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/music/matthew-e-white-interview-we-re-outsiders-who-have-done-it-our-way-a3651981.html>. The November 3 *Richmond BizSense* then reports that the record label founded by VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Matthew E. White "has received a seven-figure capital investment from New York-based Glassnote Entertainment Group affiliate Resolved Records that will be put toward artist signings, releases, and artist development over a three-year period. The deal calls for Resolved Records to provide financial, marketing, and industry support to the label and its production, publishing, and artist management arms, collectively known as Spacebomb Group." This will allow "the group to grow its local operations, sign more artists, produce more records, and expand the reach and resources of its recording, publishing, and production capabilities.... The deal also brings with it Glassnote founder and president Daniel Glass and general manager and CFO Chris Scully, who are now part of Spacebomb's ownership team that includes Baldwin, White and fellow co-owners and musicians Dean Christesen\*, Jesse Medaries, Matt Rawls, Trey Pollard\*, Pinson Chanselle\*, Cameron Ralston\*, and Travis Robertson" [\* = former VCU students]. "In their announcement, Glass and Scully called Spacebomb unique in that it's a record label that also has production capabilities and in-house musicians, called the Spacebomb House Band, consisting of the group's owners. Glass likened the setup to legendary record labels Stax and Motown. Scully added Thursday that Spacebomb's varied business structure impressed Glassnote and made it an appealing investment.... The investment will allow Spacebomb to add five more employees over the next six months. It also will allow it to seek out bigger digs, as the company's outgrown the 1,300-square-foot space it rents in the Haxall View complex at 11 S. 21st Street.... Spacebomb's four companies collectively saw a 50 percent increase in annual revenue each year from 2014 to 2016. 'It's worth noting that Spacebomb is a Richmond-based company but now owns Dreamboat Management, a UK-based (private limited) company; and Spacebomb's revenue and reach is very international,' [Spacebomb CEO Ben] Baldwin said, noting a recent company showcase revue the group put on in London with various artists, including White, performing with the Spacebomb House Band." For more information, visit <https://richmondbizsense.com/2017/11/03/record-label-gets-7-figure-boost-global-music-group-seeks-bigger-digs/>.

- Sax alumnus Steve Wilson tours with the Chick Corea-Steve Gadd Band, featuring Lionel Loueke (guitar), Carlitos Del Puerto (bass), and Luisito Quintero (percussion). In the October 2017 *Down Beat* pianist Manuel Valera is given the DB "Blindfold Test" and correctly identifies Wilson as the altoist on pianist Billy Childs' track "Dance of Shiva" from the Mack Avenue album "Rebirth": "Super killing," said Valera of Wilson. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences felt the same, awarding The Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Album to Childs. You can also hear Steve on the Christian McBride Big Band album "Bringin' It" (Mack Avenue), which won The Grammy Award for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album! "Without a

Trace” (Origin Records) by the Scott Reeves Jazz Orchestra features Wilson and vocalist Carolyn Leonhart. As a leader, Steve then leads his quartet Wilsonian’s Grain at The Village Vanguard January 23-28. The ensemble includes Uri Caine (piano), Ugonna Okegwo (bass), and Bill Stewart (drums).

- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Nate Smith tours the U.S. and European Union in support of his bandleader-debut CD “KINFOLK: Postcards from Everywhere” (Ropeadope Records), bringing along Jaleel Shaw (sax), Jon Cowherd (keyboards), Brad Allen Williams (guitar), Fima Ephron (bass), and Amma Whatt (vocals). He then presents an NPR Tiny Desk concert with his bandmates. Catch the video at <[https://www.npr.org/event/music/560893025/nate-smith-kinfolk-tiny-desk-concert?utm\\_source=Nate+Smith+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=59e16b8f22-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_11\\_03&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2987a330b4-59e16b8f22-93856833](https://www.npr.org/event/music/560893025/nate-smith-kinfolk-tiny-desk-concert?utm_source=Nate+Smith+Newsletter&utm_campaign=59e16b8f22-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_11_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2987a330b4-59e16b8f22-93856833)>.
- Former VCU Jazz Drum student Tyler Williams continues to make his mark on the pop music scene while living in Richmond. “He’s on a brief break from a summer of touring that took him to Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, and Austin City Limits,” stated the full-page article “Back to His Roots” in the September 24 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. “Williams is the drummer for The Head and the Heart, the indie folk band that shot to stardom a few years ago with its hit ‘Lost in My Mind....’ More recently, Williams started Lights Out Management with Brandon Crowe, who’s very active in the Richmond music scene and known for Crowefest, a backyard music party he throws every year. Lights Out Management manages a small roster of local talent, including Richmond breakout star Lucy Dacus.” Read more at <[http://www.richmond.com/entertainment/tyler-williams-on-the-head-and-the-heart-richmond-s/article\\_5989172b-031e-5258-b076-e6247e14ee56.html](http://www.richmond.com/entertainment/tyler-williams-on-the-head-and-the-heart-richmond-s/article_5989172b-031e-5258-b076-e6247e14ee56.html)>.
- The band Mikrowave releases a new album, “Nice Things” (Crystal Pistol). Frontman Edward Prendergast’s ensemble includes VCU alumni Kelli Strawbridge (drums and backing vocals), Toby Whitaker (tuba and trombone), Bob Miller (trumpet), and John Lilley (tenor sax). “The band has always to me been a combination of Afro-Caribbean, African and New Orleans....” The August 31 CD-release party also features the band Brunswick, led by VCU alumnus John Hulley, itself staffed by many with VCU connections.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2016-17:

- Profs. Taylor Barnett and Darryl Harper, affiliate faculty member Carlos Chafin of In Your Ear Studios, VCU Jazz alumni Victor Haskins and Connor Thompson, and Music alumna/staff member Karmalita Bawar were among those connecting music, mothers, and children through a partnership with Carnegie Hall’s Lullaby Project as “an intervention for new or expectant mothers facing the hardships of parenting in challenging settings such as correctional facilities, group homes for teenagers, and hospitals....”
- In “Jazz and the Live Scene,” the December 28 *STYLE Weekly* noted the deep influence of VCU Jazz faculty and alumni on the Richmond music scene, naming faculty Rex Richardson and Doug Richards; faculty/alumnus Marcus Tenney; and alumni Macon Mann, Devonne Harris, Alan Parker, Scott Clark, and the members of the NoBS Brass,

- Butterbean, Bio Ritmo, Afro-Zen Allstars, Future Prospects, and Butcher Brown--each strongly populated with VCU alumni and/or faculty.
- VCU Music percussion alumnus Kevin Estes became the new Personnel Manager of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra effective June 5, 2017. He had most recently served as the Program Coordinator for the Performing Arts at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, coordinating and expanding the live music and performing arts offerings within the hospital facilities. Kevin is the second alumnus of VCU's Music Industry class to become RSO Personnel Manager (the other being Emily Avesian).
  - VCU Jazz sax alum David Bailey has been extremely active in church music for years and is the focus of an article in *Christianity Today* (<<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/julaug/david-bailey.html>>).
  - Prof. Reggie Chapman demonstrates his signature B.A.C. bass trombone at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago and becomes a clinician for the company's tuba as well.
  - In January four former VCU students are featured on Conan O'Brien's show with the group Foxygen: Trey Pollard (who got his degree in Jazz Guitar and here is on keyboard), Cameron Ralston (bass), Pinson Chanselle (drums), Rob Quallich (trumpet), and alumnus/Jazz faculty member Reggie Chapman (bass trombone). You can check the video out at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPkrPImpb6c>>.
  - The NO BS! Brass Band—including faculty members and alumni Taylor Barnett, Reggie Chapman, and Marcus Tenney as well as alumni Reggie Pace, Bryan Hooten, David Hood, John Hulley, and Sam Koff—completed their second of two European tours in late-summer 2016.
  - VCU Jazz Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson is heard on “Portraits and Places,” the new CD of The Scott Reeves Jazz Orchestra, and on trombonist Michael Dease's CD (All These Hands” (Posi-Tone). Wilson continues to perform, along with VCU drum alumnus Clarence Penn, in the Grammy Award-winning Maria Schneider Orchestra.
  - VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Nate Smith and his ensemble KINFOLK releases “Postcards From Everywhere” (Waterbaby Music, Inc./Ropeadope Records).
  - VCU Jazz bass alumnus James Genus performs with Herbie Hancock at this August's edition of the Richmond Jazz Festival, one of a number of stops on tour for the ensemble. He is the focus of a full-page ad campaign in several periodicals by Hartke amplifiers.
  - The 64th Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #9 in Soprano Sax and placed in Alto Sax and Flute. Darius Jones was also cited in the Alto Sax category, merited #4 Rising Star/Alto Sax, and placed in Rising Star/Jazz Artist. Victor Goines placed #7 in the Clarinet category. Clarence Penn placed in Rising Star/Drums. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs placed third in the Big Band category. Alumnus James Genus placed in Electric Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category; and vocalist Charenee Wade's newest album, on which Alvester performs, placed in Album of the Year; she also merited #4 Rising Female Vocalist.
  - The 81st Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #6 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, and Flute categories; and

the Christian McBride Big Band in which he performs merited #5 Big Band. James Genus placed in Electric Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #1 in the Big Band category and placed in Jazz Album; the Wynton Marsalis Quintet, in which Goines often performs, merited #5 in Jazz Group; and the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #3 in the Big Band category.

- Alum pianist/vocalist Loston Harris performs two sets at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center on March 6 with bassist Gianluca Renzi and saxophonist Mike Lee. Alumnus/saxist/clarinetist Victor Goines follows with his quartet (pianist Jo Ann Daugherty, bassist Emma Dayhuff, and drummer Greg Artry) and guest vocalist/guitarist/banjo player Don Vappie, with two sets a night on March 24-26.
- Clarinet alumnus Victor Goines' image graces the pages of the December and January *Down Beat* magazines in articles about the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. The latter highlights his commissioned composition "Untamed Elegance," premiered by the band October 2016. He also speaks May 24 at the Cooper Hewitt Morse Historic Design Lecture of The Smithsonian Institution regarding its exhibition "The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s" regarding the exhibition's key themes of experimentation and collaboration, also performing original compositions inspired by design objects on view.
- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Alvester Garnett performs on the latest CD by violinist Regina Carter, "Ella: Accentuate the Positive" (OKeh Records/Sony Music Masterworks).
- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Clarence Penn is heard on the CD "City of Poets" (Whirlwind) by trumpeter Jason Palmer and pianist Cedric Hanriot and on the latest CD by bassist Michael Blanco: "Spirit Forward" (Brooklyn Jazz Underground).
- Jazz guitar alumnus Adam Larrabee is now both Jazz and Classical Guitar Instructor at James Madison University.
- Jazz sax alum Brendan Schnabel is Adjunct Faculty at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, teaching woodwinds.
- Jazz trumpet alum Victor Haskins is Instructor of Jazz Trumpet at William & Mary.
- VCU trumpet alum (and former JO I member) Prof. Steven Cunningham receives his D.M.A. in Trumpet Performance from the University of Maryland.
- VCU Jazz alum Les Owen's film "Victory Remembered, Legacy of The Black Devils" is now streaming live online at Amazon, Google Play, iTunes VUDU, Vimeo, and more. Hear from the veterans and family members the emotional story of the Black Devils during and after the war. Les runs LDO Video Productions and Treehouse Dreams Films.
- Jazz guitar alumnus Willie Denton-Edmundson releases his new CD, "Thunder Train," in October, followed by a tour.
- The Afro-Zen Allstars, which regularly includes a number of VCU alumni, release their debut CD, "Greatest Hits," after many years together.
- Drum alum Forrest Young releases a new CD by The Danktet: "One Thing Right."
- VCU Jazz sax alumnus John Winn receives the award for Best Musical Direction at the 2016 Richmond Theatre Critics Circle Gala for his work for "Dreamgirls" at the Virginia Repertory Theatre.

- VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Matthew E. White produces a single for a new artist on his Spacebomb label. “Georgie” sings her debut single “Company of Thieves,” with musical arrangements by VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Trey Pollard. Spacebomb also releases the single “Dusty Eyes” as a prelude to the planned June release of the full-length album by Bedouine.
- Jazz sax alumnus Jason Arce performs on “The Daily Show” with the musical guest, Blood Orange.
- Drum alumnus Emre Kartari joins the VCU Jazz faculty in January.
- Sax alumnus Trey Sorrells is named a D’Addario Woodwinds Performing Artist. Check out his artist-profile at [http://www.woodwinds.daddario.com/woodwindsArtistDetails.Page?ActiveID=2022&ArtistId=47012&ArtistName=Trey\\_Sorrells&sid=32f781e9-8317-46c0-ad8f-d1e7f4d49097](http://www.woodwinds.daddario.com/woodwindsArtistDetails.Page?ActiveID=2022&ArtistId=47012&ArtistName=Trey_Sorrells&sid=32f781e9-8317-46c0-ad8f-d1e7f4d49097).
- VCU Jazz Trumpet alumnus Lucas Fritz will partner with the Richmond Symphony to present “RVA Live!” at the Dominion Arts Center’s Carpenter Theatre on Saturday, September 23. Artists will include Natalie Prass, Tim Barry, Bio Ritmo, Clair Morgan, and VCU Jazz alumnus Matthew E. White, with VCU-related musicians performing in a variety of chairs throughout the evening. Orchestrations will be created by alumni Trey Pollard and Toby Whitaker along with Marlysse Simmons. Fritz is owner and talent-buyer of The Broadberry.
- Drum alum Devonne Harris, widely known at producer DJ Harrison, leads the work on the album “This is Love” by vocalist Sam Reed. Harris is co-founder with trombone alumnus Reggie Pace of the Yellowstone label (<https://jellowstone.bandcamp.com>).
- Pace spoke at the February 28 “RTD Speaker Series” presented by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* regarding the city’s arts scene, along with representatives from the Richmond Symphony, Virginia Film Office, VCU Institute for Contemporary Art, and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Pace and Jazz Piano alumnus Macon Mann are curating various nights of music for the space beneath Vagabond restaurant.
- Jazz Piano alumnus Ryan Corbitt moves Grove Avenue Piano, his music-lessons and piano-tuning business, into a new store at 5705 Grove Avenue in the Westhampton area of Richmond (<http://www.groveavepiano.com>).
- Multi-instrumentalist and VCU Jazz sax alumnus Ron Fix is now a D’Addario artist. He also serves as Adjunct Faculty at Woodberry Forest School.
- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Scott Clark releases the album “Clark:Rempis:Roebke Live at The Hungry Brain” (<http://scottwclark.bandcamp.com/album/clark-rempis-roebke-live-at-the-hungry-brain>), tours the Midwest and East in support of the recording, and begins to curate music at Candela Books and Gallery in Richmond.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2015-16:

- Alumnus/Prof. Taylor Barnett starts the summer off with a ten-day performance tour of Turkey sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, joining American and Turkish musicians in performances of traditional Turkish folk melodies, arranged to incorporate elements of American jazz improvisation. VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Emre Kartari wrote the grant that funded the trip. Sax alumnus Kevin Simpson was also a member of the ensemble.

- Doug Richards' CD documenting his Great American Music Ensemble is released March 4. Says *JazzTimes* online in February: "The album – which delivers 15 cuts! - is a musical marvel in every regard.... In the shrewdest of ways, Richards shows he knows the fine line between creative experimentation and jejune jive (of which there's none). The ensemble is admirably and swingingly up to the task. They cover the challenging material with flair and precision." Almost every regular member of The Great American Music Ensemble on this disc has ties to VCU Jazz as an alumnus or former or current faculty member.
- Reggie Chapman performs his composition "Mysterious Hope of Glory" with the VCU Trombone Ensemble and Friends in March at the American Trombone Workshop.
- Kendrick Lamar's "To Pimp a Butterfly," on which VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Keith Askey performs, receives five stars and a rating of "masterpiece" within *Down Beat's* "Best Albums of 2015." "A political commentary on racism and capitalism in America filtered through 21st century black countercultural music, *To Pimp A Butterfly* is more prescient and ambitious than almost anything else out there. The album's massive length complements the weight of its achievement."
- VCU Jazz Studies Trumpet alumnus Lucas Fritz becomes part-owner of The Camel and 50% owner of The Broadberry.
- The NO BS! Brass Band—including faculty members and alumni Taylor Barnett, Reggie Chapman, and Marcus Tenney as well as alumni Reggie Pace, Bryan Hooten, David Hood, John Hulley, and Sam Koff—becomes an artist for the 2015-2016 Mid Atlantic Tours program of the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Their latest CD, "Brass Knuckles" (self-released), receives an enthusiastic review in the February issue of *Down Beat* magazine, which noted the band's "power and conviction" and that "nearly every member of the group has had conservatory training." The band prepares for two European tours this summer.
- VCU Jazz Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson is featured in a massive article in the June edition of *JazzTimes*. He is also featured on the new release by pianist Chantale Gagne, "The Left Side of the Moon," on the latest CD by trombonist Scott Reeves, "Portraits and Places" (Origin), and on the CD "Written in the Rocks" (Smoke Sessions) by pianist Renee Rosnes. He is the featured saxophonist within a full-page ad by Vandoren reeds, as published in the April *Down Beat* magazine, and is then among the musicians performing at "Ray Charles: In Performance at the White House," airing on PBS stations nationally in February and March. He was featured soloing over "Unchain My Heart." Wilson continues to perform, along with VCU drum alumnus Clarence Penn, in the Grammy Award-winning Maria Schneider Orchestra.
- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Nate Smith continues to receive acclaim for his on-screen performance drumming in the movie "Birdman." Percussionist/film-scorer Antonio Sanchez then had to perform Nate's on-screen drum-work, re-recorded by Antonio stroke for stroke to match what Nate's on-screen visuals had been.
- The 63rd Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #8 in the Alto Sax category and #9 in Soprano Sax. Darius Jones was cited in the Alto Sax category, merited #2 Rising Star/Alto Sax, and placed in Rising Star/Jazz Artist. Victor Goines placed #10 in the Clarinet category. VCU Music Chair Darryl Harper merited #6 Rising Star/Clarinet; alumnus Jason Scott also placed in that category. The Jazz at Lincoln

Center Orchestra in which Victor performs placed third in the Big Band category. Alumnus James Genus placed in Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. Our guitar alumnus Keith Askey performed on Grammy-winning tracks for Kendrick Lamar last year, who placed #3 in Beyond Artist or Group.

- The 80th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #7 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, and Flute categories; and the Christian McBride Big Band in which he performs merited #7 Big Band. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #1 in the Big Band category; the Wynton Marsalis Quintet, in which Goines often performs, merited #3 in Jazz Group; and the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #3 in the Big Band category. Kendrick Lamar, whose album "To Pimp a Butterfly" benefited from the guitar work of VCU Jazz alumnus Keith Askey, placed in "Beyond Artist or Group" and "Beyond Album."
- VCU Clarinet alumnus Victor Goines performs within the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra's CD/DVD "The Abyssinian Mass (Blue Engine), directed by Wynton Marsalis.
- Trumpet alumnus Steven Cunningham, a veteran of the VCU JOs and SJE's, performs with vocalist Josh Groban. The May *Down Beat* magazine includes a review of the Black Masala self-released CD "I Love You Madly" (Self Release), calling it "a hotbed of international music," a "Gypsy-punk/Balkan-funk hybrid." *DB* noted "a Cunningham solo suggesting a midnight reverie in a deserted jazz club. He is also selected into the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Collegiate Jazz Orchestra.
- VCU Jazz alumnus and former Prof. Bryan Hooten moves on to a post directing bands at Collegiate.
- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Alvester Garnett is heard on vocalist Charenee Wade's CD "Offering: The Music of Gil Scott-Heron & Brian Jackson" (Motema Music).
- VCU Jazz Piano alumnus Ryan Corbitt wins a Richmond Theatre Critics Circle "Artsie" Award in October for Best Musical Direction for the musical "Caroline, or Change." The production by Cadence Theatre Company won four Artsies overall, including Best Musical.
- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Scott Clark's ScottClark4tet features former VCU students Jason Scott (saxophone), Bob Miller (trumpet), and Cameron Ralston (bass). He releases the CD of his work, "Bury My Heart," on Lisbon's Clean Feed label, then tours with Natalie Prass for a month (alongside fellow VCU Jazz alumnus and guitarist Trey Pollard). On February 24 the 4tet plays at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts Millennium Stage, on February 26 ShapeShifter Lab in New York City.
- VCU Jazz Saxophone alumnus Darius Jones wins support from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation for his tour of the Darius Jones Quartet featuring vocalist Emilie Lesbros as part of MAAF's 2015-2016 French-American Jazz Exchange Tours. He releases the ensemble's latest CD, "Le Bébé de Brigitte (Lost in Translation)" (AUM Fidelity AAUM095).

- VCU Jazz alumnus Gordy Haab continues to score music for the Star Wars “Battlefront” videogame.
- Jazz Piano alumnus Brian Mahne is now music director for the 12-piece corporate/wedding band “Big Ray and the Kool Kats” often staffed by alums Suzi Fischer (saxophone) and James Beard (guitar).
- Former VCU Music Industry class members/now-alumni Matt Hill (Computer Science) and Sulaiman Popal (Music), who had received a VCUarts Undergraduate Research Grant, release their new app, RealRaag, on iTunes. The app is completely free to all iPhone and iPad users and features Afghanistan’s national instrument, the Rubab. The grant is mentored by Dr. Anton Brinkwirth (VCU World Studies) and Prof. Antonio García (VCU Music), with the sounds of RealRaag recorded from an authentic Rubab at SpaceBomb Studios, owned by VCU Jazz alumnus Matthew E. White, engineered by alumnus Trey Pollard.
- Drum alumnus Zachary Hanbury is promoted to Assistant General Manager at The National, a busy venue in downtown Richmond.
- Jazz saxophone alumnus Myrick Crampton is the composer and performs on saxophones and flutes, leading fellow alumni Nate Bernard (bass) and C.J. Wolfe (percussion), along with current Jazz major Macon Mann (keyboard) in “Immaculate Confection,” the debut CD of their quartet, Pxxl.
- Jazz saxophone alumna Suzi Fischer and alumnus Myrick Crampton are members of the last edition of VCU Prof. Al Regni’s American Saxophone Quartet.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2014-15:

- London’s *The Guardian* notes that “many of [the great musicians in Richmond]—including most of the [Matthew E. White] Spacebomb collective, who initially went on to perform improvised music—are alumni of Virginia Commonwealth University’s celebrated jazz studies programme, which White describes as ‘exceptional in its musicality and as a sort of training ground.’ It produces a constant turnover of student musicians, while the sheer level of musical ability engendered by the course means that Spacebomb can work quickly, according to [Trey] Pollard.” The article focuses on VCU Jazz Studies alumnus Matthew E. White, his Richmond-based label Spacebomb (<spacebombrecords.com>) and studio Spacebomb East, his label’s latest artist Natalie Prass, featuring the arrangements of alumnus Trey Pollard and the performances of White and Pollard with alumnus Pinson Chanselle and former VCU student Cameron Ralston.
- On March 16, 2015 White, Ralston, Chanselle, and VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Alan Parker perform on “The Late Show with David Letterman,” delivering “Rock & Roll Is Cold” in support of Matthew’s latest CD, “Fresh Blood.” March also sees the band perform at Austin’s SXSW. In April White’s band launches a tour to the U.K., The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, France, and around the eastern U.S.
- During the 57th Grammy Awards on February 8, 2015, VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Keith Askey wins two Grammys—Best Rap Song and Best Rap Performance—for contributing to Kendrick Lamar’s single, “I.”
- The 62nd Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson places in the Soprano Sax and Flute categories. He and alumnus Darius Jones are both cited in the Alto Sax category;



Darius merits #5 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines places #9 in the Clarinet category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs places third in the Big Band category; and the Count Basie Orchestra, in which trombone alumnus Alvin Walker performs, also places. Alumnus James Genus places in Electric Bass. Clarence Penn places in Rising Star/Drums. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again places first in the Jazz Violinist category. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider, who has spoken three times to VCU's Music Industry class, again wins in the categories of Big Band, Composer, and Arranger. The drummer in her band is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn, and Steve Wilson has also performed and toured with her.

- The 79th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #5 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, and Flute categories. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #1 in the Big Band category; and the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #4. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider, who has spoken three times to VCU's Music Industry class, won the Composer and Arranger categories and placed #3 in Big Band. VCU alumni Clarence Penn (drums) and Steve Wilson (sax) are regulars in her ensemble.
- The NO BS! Brass Band—including faculty members and alumni Taylor Barnett, Bryan Hooten, and Marcus Tenney as well as alumni Reggie Pace, David Hood, John Hulley, and Sam Koff—performs Summer 2014 at the Ottawa Blues Festival, Festival D'été Internationale de Quebec, and Low Down Hudson Festival (NYC), along with sites in Alabama, Ohio, Baltimore, and New York City including The Hamilton (D.C.) and the Iron Horse Music Hall (MA). Barnett and Hooten orchestrate an entire 35-minute set for the No BS! Brass Band with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, performing January 31; and the band then tours again in February/March 2015. They are selected for the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation touring roster for the 2015-16 season. The October 15 *STYLE Weekly* presents its annual "Top 40 [Richmonders] Under 40," including VCU trombone alumnus Reggie Pace, "one of the most familiar and hard-working musicians on the scene."
- The Latin band Bio Ritmo, whose members are full of VCU connections, performs for an NPR Tiny Desk concert, the first salsa band to do so. The band's recent album, "Puerta Del Sur," makes the "Top 10 Latin Albums of 2014" list of France's *LeMonde* newspaper.
- The August 2014 edition of *Down Beat* devotes its back page to a "Blindfold Test" with VCU Jazz drum alumnus Clarence Penn. His new release "Monk: The Lost Files" (Origin 82674) receives four stars from the January 2015 *Down Beat*.
- Drum Alumnus Nate Smith appears in the 20th Century Fox release "Birdman" and on recordings by Mark de Clive-Lowe, Takuya Kuroda, Robin Eubanks, and Chris Potter, the latter receiving a 4.5-star review from the April *Down Beat*.
- Much VCU-related talent performs at the first-ever Jellowfest staged by Jellowstone Records in August 2014 at The Broadberry. Jellowstone is an independent label founded

by VCU Music alums Reggie Pace (Bon Iver, NoBS! Brass) and Devonne Harris (DJ Harrison).

- Jazz sax alumnus Steve Wilson is featured on a new CD by pianist/composer Leslie Pintchik, “In the Nature of things” (Pintch Hard Records). He is also featured in a lengthy article within the November 2014 *New York City Jazz Record* and received a full-page feature in the November issue of *Down Beat*, titled “Musical Chameleon.” He releases his new recording “Live in New York: The Vanguard Sessions” (Random Act Records) in March 2015. It receives four stars in the May *Down Beat*.
- Geraldine Seay—wife of former VCU Jazz Bass Prof. Clarence Seay and the inspiration behind the September 2012 gathering “A Jazz Reunion with Alumni and Friends”—is named a 2014 Tallahassee FL Jazz Hero by the Jazz Journalists Association.
- Trumpet alumnus Victor Haskins presents a clinic at the 2015 Jazz Education Network Conference in January 2015 on “Melodic Improvisation.” He also presents at TEDxVCU and at TEDxLizardCreek. He endorses Denis Wick instruments.
- The October 2014 *Down Beat* includes a review of the latest CD of Jazz sax alumnus Darius Jones with pianist Matthew Shipp, giving it four of five stars.
- Guitar alumnus and former VCU faculty member Adam Larrabee tours Ireland with Love Canon, headlining the Bluegrass Festival at Ulster American Folk Park and performing on RTE Radio 1’s Sean O’Rourke Show, BBC TV, and BBC Radio.
- Butcher Brown is comprised of drummer Corey Fonville with Jazz alums Devonne Harris on keyboard (degreed in drums at VCU), guitarist Keith Askey, and bassist Andrew Randazzo. They collaborate with trumpeter Nicholas Payton, live and in the studio and in July 2014 release Payton’s CD “Numbers” (Paytone Records 003). The February 2015 *Down Beat* gives the album three stars.
- The fourth annual International Jazz Day takes place on April 30, with Paris, France, serving as this year’s host city. Bass alumnus James Genus shares the stage for the event, performing onstage with Herbie Hancock, Annie Lennox, and more.
- The December 31 *STYLE Weekly* article “Emotional Rescue” focuses on its view of the best of 2014. Dotting the line-up were kudos to Matthew E. White, Trey Pollard, NoBS! Brass, Rex Richardson, Doug Richards, Scott Clark, Devonne Harris, Reggie Pace, Bio Ritmo, and more with VCU Jazz connections.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2013-14:

- The VCU Izmir International Jazz Camp in July continues under the direction of drum alumnus Emre Kartari, whose faculty included current VCU faculty Randall Pharr (bass) and alumni/former faculty Adam Larrabee (guitar) and John Winn (saxophone).
- The August 27 edition of *STYLE Weekly* presents a thorough feature story on the No BS! Brass, comprised almost entirely of VCU alumni, students, and faculty, quoting trumpeter Dave Douglas, who on Facebook has called them “his favorite brass band.” Says Douglas in the article: “No BS! Brass is the real deal! Grooving, rocking, kick-a\$# brass playing with real impact and an imperative to dance. Lance Koehler’s drumming is totally mesmerizing and, when matched with that fat marching tuba and the sickest arrangements on the scene, it is over-the-top fun. Bryan Hooten and Reggie Pace take the cake for 21st-century brass hipness. They make me mad. Every time I hear them my face hurts the next day from smiling so hard.”

- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Matthew E. White continues to grow on the music scene, launching an Australian tour in the summer and then buying into the former Songwire Studios, co-owned by VCU Jazz alumni Trey Pollard and Ryan Corbitt, renaming the studio Spacebomb East. Numerous VCU-related personnel are involved on the Australian tour. White then tours DC, NC, PA, MA, NY, and VA with Howard Ivans (a.k.a. Ivan Howard of The Rosebuds), including VCU Jazz alums Pinson Chanselle (drums), alumnus/faculty Bryan Hooten (trombone), and former VCU student Cameron Ralston (bass).
- The VCU Alumni Jazz Quartet, formed by Antonio García and including him and Brendan Schnabel, saxophone (VCU Africa Combo alumnus), Victor Haskins, trumpet (VCU Africa Combo alumnus), and Reggie Pace, bass trombone (VCU alumnus) performs at the National Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. in December. The event is streamed online and later released on DVD.
- Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis selects our VCU Jazz drum alumnus Alvester Garnett for the big band performing in Broadway's "After Midnight" musical, a remake of "The Cotton Club Parade" (<<http://www.aftermidnightbroadway.com>>). The musical merits seven Tony Award nominations and features the rotating female leads of Fantasia Barrino, Patti LaBelle, and Gladys Knight.
- VCU Jazz Bass alumnus James Genus is seen and heard during the Kennedy Center Honors tribute to medal-recipient Herbie Hancock, performing alongside Kurt Rosenwinkel, Aaron Parks, Joshua Redman, and Terri-Lynne Carrington in a rendition of Hancock's "Watermelon Man."
- The 61st Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax category. He and alumnus Darius Jones were both cited in the Alto Sax category; Darius merited #5 Rising Star/Alto Sax and was also cited in the Rising Star Jazz Group category. Victor Goines placed in the Clarinet category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs placed fourth in the Big Band category. Alumnus James Genus placed in Electric Bass, Rising Star/Bass, and was #4 Rising Star Electric Bass. Clarence Penn placed in Rising Star/Drums. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category.
- The 78th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerged in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #6 in the Clarinet category. James Genus placed in the Electric Bass category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, and Flute categories. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #1 in the Big Band category; and the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #4.
- The trio comprised of Jazz sax alumnus Steve Wilson, pianist Renee Rosnes, and bassist Peter Washington performs at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York in October.
- The August Richmond Jazz Festival features our Jazz Trumpet alumnus Victor Haskins at the Hippodrome and the outdoor stage, including contributing to the set of pianist

Jason Moran. In March he becomes the first person to lead a jazz outreach program for the Kennedy Center National Symphony Orchestra Education Department. He is now an endorsing artist of Sonare Pro Brass trumpets and flugelhorns and Denis Wick trumpet, cornet, and flugelhorns mouthpieces.

- VCU Jazz alumnus Samson Trinh attracts the attention of *USA Today* in January with his ukulele-based music education. “Ukuleles Tiptoeing into Music Classrooms” offers a video interview and accompanying article about how he has brought “the ukulele to his fourth- and fifth-graders at Glen Allen Elementary (<<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/01/21/ukuleles-in-music-classrooms/4719949/>>)
- The December 25 *STYLE Weekly* article “Turn It Up” focuses on its view of the best of 2013. Dotting the line-up are Matthew E. White, NoBS! Brass, Bryan Hooten, Scott Clark, Cameron Ralston, Victor Haskins, Rex Richardson, Taylor Barnett (and VCU guest artist Dave Douglas), Devonnie Harris, and more with VCU Jazz connections. VCU alum/trombonist Reggie Pace is a guest contributor to the list-making.
- The August 27 edition of *STYLE Weekly* presents a thorough feature story on the No BS! Brass, comprised almost entirely of VCU alumni, students, and faculty, quoting trumpeter Dave Douglas, who on Facebook has called them “his favorite brass band.” Says Douglas in the article: “No BS! Brass is the real deal! Grooving, rocking, kick-a\$\$ brass playing with real impact and an imperative to dance. Lance Koehler’s drumming is totally mesmerizing and, when matched with that fat marching tuba and the sickest arrangements on the scene, it is over-the-top fun. Bryan Hooten and Reggie Pace take the cake for 21st-century brass hipness. They make me mad. Every time I hear them my face hurts the next day from smiling so hard.”
- Sax alumnus Les Owen’s short film “Sons of Soldiers” enters the GI Film Festival and receives screenings in both LA and NYC in November, leading up to the main event in Washington, D.C.
- Many VCU alumni and some students perform as members within the Central Virginia Jazz Orchestra; its most recent CD, “James River Jazz,” is nominated in September for a Grammy Award.
- The 350-seat venue “The Broadberry” opens in April, with VCU Jazz Trumpet alumnus Lucas Fritz as Chief Operating Officer.
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Ben Misterka continues to live, perform, and teach in Shanghai, China.
- Banjo-led indie folk band Luray features VCU Jazz alumni C.J. Wolfe on percussion and Brian Cruse on bass and in the past has also included alums Chris Ryan and Scott Burton on guitar. A live performance by Luray recorded in November airs on National Public Radio’s Mountain Stage in March 23 on NPR stations nationwide. NPR calls their debut record of last August, “The Wilder,” a “beautifully lush album.” The band tours the East Coast, New England, and the Midwest.
- VCU Guitar alum Phillip Cardwell is pursuing his entrepreneurial side, completing his Masters of Product Innovation with VCU’s da Vinci Center for Innovation, having started a company that builds software solutions to increase productivity in communication.”

SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2012-13:

- The initial VCU Izmir International Jazz Camp in July is a resounding success under the direction of drum alumnus Emre Kartari, whose faculty included current VCU faculty Skip Gales (saxophone) and Adam Larrabee (guitar), along with former VCU faculty Bob Hallahan (piano) and Howard Curtis (drums). Two VCU Jazz students, trumpeter Victor Haskins and bassist Andrew Randazzo, assisted and participated in the camp. Forty students from Turkey, Russia, and Croatia participated.
- Alumnus/faculty Bryan Hooten and faculty J.C. Kuhl tour the East Coast with VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Matthew E. White in support of his new album, “Big Inner” (Hometapes/Spacebomb).
- In March 2013 Bryan Hooten assists an overseas faculty member in a presentation at the Tasmeeem Doha 2013 Conference “Hybrid Making,” an international art and design conference held in Qatar. He is also named one of two guest artists for the April 2013 Mars Hill New Music Festival in Asheville, North Carolina.
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Matthew E. White explodes on the music scene, launching a new album, “Big Inner” (Hometapes/Spacebomb), last August and an East Coast tour that leads to a European tour and this summer an Australian tour. Numerous VCU-related personnel are involved, including Pinson Chanselle (drums); Cameron Ralston (bass); Trey Pollard (pedal steel); Scott Clark (percussion); Daniel Clarke (keyboards); Bob Miller, Marcus Tenney (trumpet); Reggie Pace, Bryan Hooten (trombone); Reggie Chapman (bass trombone); J.C. Kuhl, Jason Scott, John Lilley (woodwinds); Melissa Sunderland, Jessika Blanks, Amy Peterson (violin); Matt Jewell, Shanice Harris (viola); Evan Setzer, Daniel Levin (cello); and Lauren Serpa, Stephanie Auld, Abbey Stinnett, Abby Outlaw, Lindsey Prather, Audrey Tillack, David Hood (background vocals), along with Dean Christesen (public relations).
- Steve Wilson (sax) graces the cover of and is interviewed within “Blowin’ The Blues Away,” a book by Travis A. Jackson, an Associate Professor of Music and the Humanities at the University of Chicago. His trio performs December 5 at The Village Vanguard and his quintet at the Jazz Standard in New York City April 18-21. Steve is also the jazz headliner for the 36th International Saxophone Symposium held January 4-5 at the George Mason University Center for the Arts in Fairfax, Virginia.
- Jason Gay (sax) and his Navy band unit are involved in “Pacific Partnership,” which began after the big tsunami hit the area in 2004. “Every two years the Navy and various other military branches deploy for about four months to give aid to the various South Asian countries that were affected by the tsunami.”
- Jazz Guitar alumnus and Guitar Prof. Kevin Harding, Jazz bass alum Rusty Farmer, vocalist Laura Ann Singh, and percussionist Andy Brockman comprise Quatro na Bossa, performing September 2012 in a concert series at the Berklee Performing Arts Center in Boston, the Olympia Theatre at the Gusman Center in Miami, and the Frederick P. Rose Hall at Lincoln Center and the Merkin Hall in New York—and self-releasing their latest CD, titled “Bossa Nossa.”
- M.M. Clarinet alumnus Victor Goines releases his new album “Twilight, promptly hailed as one of the “best jazz recordings of the year—so far” by *The Chicago Tribune*. The October *Down Beat* gives the CD four stars, noting he “balances the romanticism with several fiery uptempo performances.”

- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Alvester Garnett is the focus of a BBC article and video. He also leads his band for a two-week engagement in Doha, Qatar at the new Jazz at Lincoln Center Doha in The St. Regis Hotel.
- The 60th Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerges in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus and recent guest Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax and Flute categories; he merited #2 Rising Star/Soprano Sax. He and alumnus Darius Jones were both cited in the Alto Sax category; Darius merited #3 Rising Star/Alto Sax and was also cited in the Rising Star Jazz Group category. Victor Goines placed in the Clarinet category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs placed sixth in the Big Band category. Alumnus James Genus placed in Electric Bass, Rising Star/Bass, and was #9 Rising Star Electric Bass. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category.
- The February issue of *JazzTimes* names VCU Jazz sax alum Darius Jones' CD "Book of Mae'bul (Another Kind of Sunrise)" (AUM Fidelity) one of the top 40 jazz releases of 2012.
- The 77th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerges in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #8 in the Clarinet category. James Genus placed in the Electric Bass category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Soprano Sax and Alto Sax categories. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #2 in the Big Band category; and the Count Basie Orchestra, with which our alumnus Alvin Walker tours, merited #3.
- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Emre Kartari continues the VCUarts Izmir International Jazz Camp in Turkey (see "Program Accomplishments).
- VCU Jazz guitar alumnus James Beard III is completing two and a half years teaching and gigging in Doha, Qatar.
- Rob Quallich joins The Glenn Miller Orchestra, one of the world's most active road bands, as second/split lead trumpet.
- As a member of The DJ Williams Projekt, VCU Jazz Trumpet alumnus Mark Ingraham is a co-recipient of the 2012 Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts in the category of Ensemble, as announced in *Richmond* magazine.
- Jazz woodwind alumnus Ira Wiggins, Director of Jazz at North Carolina Central University, releases a 2-CD set titled "When Freedom Swings." Drum alum Alvester Garnett staffs the set.
- The Marcus Tenney Trio, with VCU Jazz alumni Tenney (tenor sax), Andrew Randazzo (bass), and Devonne Harris (drums), are featured in the February 27 *STYLE Weekly* article "Young Lions," which notes they are "three of the best players in the city."
- VCU Music alumnus Carlos Chafin, President of In Your Ear Studios is appointed as an Affiliate Faculty member at VCU Music.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2011-12:

- Alumnus/Prof. Bryan Hooten releases his debut solo trombone album, "Richmond Love Call."

- Love Canon, featuring alumnus/Jazz Guitar Prof. Adam Larrabee, has just released a new album, “Greatest Hits, Vol. 1.”
- In February bassist Christian McBride received a Grammy award for his big band CD “The Good Feeling,” meriting Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. VCU saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson is a member of that ensemble. Alumni Dustin Faltz and Michael D. Congdon won Grammys as engineers of Chris Brown’s album “F.A.M.E.,” which won for Best R&B Album of the Year. Former music student Reggie Pace tours with the band Bon Iver, who won Best New Artist and Best Alternative Music Album for work completed before he joined the band. Bon Iver performed on Saturday Night Live on February 4, with Reggie heavily featured during the telecast.
- Alumnus Gordy Haab recently composed and orchestrated an original score for Microsoft and LucasArts’ *Star Wars* Kinect video game. Gordy also recently won Best Soundtrack for a Game and Best Instrumental/Orchestral Music in a Game at the 2011 Game Audio Network Guild Awards.
- The 59th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus and recent guest Steve Wilson merited #8 Alto Sax, #5 Soprano Sax, and #2 Rising Star/Soprano Sax. Darius Jones merited #10 in Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed #9 in overall Clarinet. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in which Victor performs placed second in the Big Band category. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. Alumnus James Genus merited #7 Rising Star Bass, #10 Electric Bass, and #8 Rising Star Electric Bass.
- The 76th Annual *Down Beat* Reader’s Poll emerged in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #7 in the Clarinet category. James Genus placed in the Electric Bass category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson placed in the Flute, Soprano Sax, and Alto Sax categories. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #5 in the Big Band category. The Dave Holland Octet, in which former VCU drummer Nate Smith performs, received placement for its “Pathways” CD in the Jazz Album category.
- The Richmond-based Latin band Bio Ritmo has included many VCU connections over its long life, currently among them Bob Miller (trumpet/synth), Toby Whitaker (trombone), Mark Ingraham (trumpet), and John Lilley (sax), all of whom made the cover of the February issue of *Latin Beat*. The mag noted the band is “currently celebrating their 20th anniversary and the release of their latest full-length production ‘La Verdad.’ Known for their unorthodox approach to making salsa music, this original independent ensemble is perhaps an alternative to the future of the salsa movement...this salsa band from Richmond, Virginia, is at the top of its game.” The band also released its “Live at SOBS” DVD, recorded March 2010.
- VCU Jazz sax alumnus Darius Jones was the subject of a full-page feature in the February *Down Beat*. The article, “Diving In,” highlights his latest CD on the AUM Fidelity label, “Big Gurl (Smell My Dreams).” Pianist Matthew Shipp remarks about the first time he heard Jones, in 2009: “I was completely blown away. My first impression was that Darius was approaching avant-garde playing with an extremely authentic jazz sensibility. His phrasing was so snakelike, elastic, and rooted in a Cannonball-ish way that night. I was shocked, because I didn’t expect to hear that from some younger guy.”

Said the December 2011 *Down Beat* in its four-star review of the latest CD, “Jones strikes hard from the onset and eschews conventions by developing over an insistent groove multifaceted choruses articulated around probing lines that open many avenues.... When not exploring the inner depth of the human soul, Jones can turn out some uplifting performances; and his effusive alto often cuts through with aplomb and purpose.” He joins Shipp on their CD *Cosmic Lieder*” (AUM Fidelity). Said the July *Down Beat*, “Jones speaks through his alto in an original and unforced language, conversing easily with Shipp in a dialog of equals.”

- Drum alumnus Alvester Garnett can be heard on a number of 2011 CD releases, including Dianne Reeves ‘He’s A Tramp’ and Regina Carter (and her Reverse Thread band) ‘Find Yourself’—both on the CD ‘Every Body Wants to Be A Cat: Disney Jazz, Vol. 1’; and Andy Farber & His Orchestra (big band, with special guests Jon Hendricks and Jerry Dodgion) – ‘This Could Be The Start Of Something Big.’” He toured for a Jazz at Lincoln Center/U.S. State Department Rhythm Road Tour in January and February, performing with the Jed Levy Quartet at the Panama Jazz Festival as well as teaching in Panama City, then similarly in Haiti at the Port-au-prince International Jazz Festival and surrounding schools, then on to Monterrey and Hermosillo, Mexico; Caracas, Venezuela; and Lima, Peru. He also toured with violinist (and wife) Regina Carter’s band for a week in Napa, San Francisco, Seattle, and Santa Barbara.
- Former VCU Jazz students James Genus (bass) and Clarence Penn (drums) can be heard on the latest CD by vocalist Rondi Charleston, “Who Knows Where the Time Goes” (Motema), where they partner with Dave Stryker (guitar), Brandon McCune (piano), and Myra Casales (percussion).
- Find VCU drum alum Clarence Penn on the new CD by vocalist Kate McGarry, “Girl Talk” (Palmetto).
- At VCU Carlos Chafin majored in Music and Robbin Thompson majored in business. For years they’ve been hosting select live performances at their superb studio. “In Your Ear” is a new radio show heard locally on WCVE 88.9 FM Saturdays at 1p—and hopefully soon syndicated across the U.S. The hour-long show features three musical snapshots a week, spanning jazz, blues, old-time, bluegrass, gospel, Celtic, singer-songwriters, and more in a program co-hosted by Carlos and JAMinc’s Tim Timberlake.
- National Public Radio’s online jazz site “A Blog Supreme” featured drum alumnus Scott Clark in a video interview about the life of a jazz musician.
- VCU Jazz sax alumnus Samson Trinh & The Upper East Side Big Band won a 2011 Theresa Pollak Prizes for Excellence in the Arts in the category of Ensemble, announced in the October 2011 edition of *Richmond* magazine. The band’s personnel bursts at the seams with VCU alumni. Said the awards panel, “Under the guidance of Richmond native and human dynamo Samson Trinh, the Upper East Side Big Band pulls together a variety of musicians who combine jazz, rock, and old standards into performances that end up surprising both the audience and the conductor. Samson’s joy in creation is truly infectious.”
- VCU Jazz Drum alumnus Emre Kartari has founded the VCUarts Izmir International Jazz Camp, debuting this July in Turkey.
- VCU Music alumnus and former JO I bass trombonist Reginald Chapman’s jazz trombone ensemble at the University of Illinois has won the Eastern Trombone



Workshop Jazz Trombone Ensemble competition and performed at this year's event in Fort Myer, VA.

- The “No Land Quintet” of Marcus Tenney (tenor saxophone), Chris Harrison (bass), Larri Branch (piano), Devonne Harris (drums), and Mary Lawrence Hicks (trumpet/composer) celebrated the Richmond screening of independent film “No Land” at Balliceaux, as well as a showcase of the original music, which had been recorded by Lance Kohler at Minimum Wage Studios in July 2010. “No Land” was written and directed by Robert Gregson, who now resides in New York City.
- VCU Jazz Guitar alumnus Paul Willson has released his band's first album: “Sounds Before The Silence.” The band, Old Soul, includes his guitar work and vocals, plus current and former VCU students (even former VCU Greater Richmond High School Jazz Band students) including David Hood (alto saxophone), Marcus Tenney (tenor saxophone), Devonne Harris (keyboards), Evan Sarver (bass), and Matt Coyle (drums). The album was also recorded and mixed by alumnus Trey Pollard at Songwire Studios in Richmond.
- VCU Jazz drum alumnus Robby Sinclair's new band, Lazer Cake, features him on drums, keyboard, and voice along with VCU alums Colin Killalea (guitar and keyboard) and Colin McEneaney (guitar), plus Jordan Brooks on the bass.
- VCU Jazz guitar alumnus James Beard III continues teaching and gigging in Doha, Qatar.
- The band of VCU Jazz trumpet alumnus Lucas Fritz, the Compass Rose Orchestra, released its debut CD February 17. Band members besides Lucas are also VCU-related, including Suzi Fischer and Jonathan Gibson (woodwinds), Alex Powers (trombone), Paul Willson (guitar), Andrew Randazzo (bass), Devonne Harris (keyboards), and Abinnet Berhanu (drums).
- In 2009, VCU Jazz piano alumnus Bryce McCormick wrote and recorded a brand new song every day for an entire year, blogging about it for his followers. He then teamed up with alumnus Trey Pollard, co-owner of Songwire Studios), to make an album of the best songs from that year. His debut album “Let It Go” is now released! The band includes Trey Pollard (guitar) and fellow alumni Scott Clark (drums) and Andrew Randazzo (bass).
- VCU Jazz sax alumnus Les Owen reports: “Recently I got the job of full-time video producer for The United States Army Band, ‘Pershing’s Own.’”
- Former VCU Jazz Drum student Tyler Williams received a full-page spread in the March issue of *Richmond* magazine, timed with his return to Richmond to perform at The National with the sextet “The Head and The Heart.” The band sold 10,000 copies of its debut recording and was then signed to Sub Pop Records.
- The *STYLE Weekly* “Best of 2011” list saluted VCU Jazz connections, mentioning Brian Jones, Daniel Clarke, No BS Brass, Spacebomb, Scott Clark 4tet, Glows in the Dark, Samson Trinh, Reggie Pace, UTV Chamber, Ombak, Bryan Hooten, Beast Wellington, and Bio Ritmo—all with VCU connections. And the “Best CDs of 2011: included a nod towards Bon Iver’s “Sing” (the band now including Reggie Pace) and k.d. Lang’s “Sing it Loud” (featuring VCU alum Daniel Clarke on CD).

SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2010-11:

- The 58th Annual *Down Beat* Critic's Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #3 Rising Star/Soprano Sax, #8 overall Soprano Sax, and #5 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed #11 in overall Clarinet. Darius Jones merited #7 in Rising Star/Alto Sax. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. April 2010's guest, Dave Douglas (regularly collaborating with alums James Genus and Clarence Penn), won the Trumpet category, merited #12 in the overall Jazz Artist category, #3 Composer, and #8 in Rising Star/Composer. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider again won in the categories of Big Band, Composer, and Arranger of the Year. (The drummer in her band is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn, and Steve Wilson has also performed and toured with her.)
- The 75th Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll emerged in December to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Victor Goines received #8 in the Clarinet category. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #14 Soprano Sax. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #1 in the Violin category. The Dave Holland Octet's "Pathways" CD, including VCU alum Nate Smith on the drums, ranked #3 on the Jazz Album list; the Dave Holland Big Band placed at #2. The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, featuring our alumnus Victor Goines on reeds, merited #5. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider again won in the category of Big Band, as well as in Composer and in Arranger. The drummer in her band is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn, and Steve Wilson has also performed and toured with her.
- VCU Jazz Studies alumnus Steve Wilson celebrated his 50th Birthday with an extended stint at New York's premiere jazz club, Jazz Standard, featuring five different bands over six nights.
- Music alumnus and VCU jazz ensembles veteran Victor Goines is featured on clarinet, tenor sax, and soprano sax within the release of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis' Vitoria Suite (Emarcy). He was frequently spotted performing and occasionally chatting with CBS correspondent Morley Safer when "60 Minutes" broadcast an extended feature January 2 on Wynton Marsalis and The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra's first trip to Havana, Cuba.
- Drum alumnus Nate Smith propels "Pathways" (DARE2 004), the latest CD of the Dave Holland Octet. Said the June issue of *Down Beat*: "Resourceful drummer Nate Smith continues to be most impressive, driving the immaculate arrangements, spurring exciting statements especially from [Gary] Smulyan and [Chris] Potter."
- VCU Music Composition alumnus and jazz ensembles veteran Michael Congdon engineered "Deuces" for vocalist Chris Brown, rap artist Tyga, and producer Kevin McCall in Richmond at alumnus Carlos Chafin's In Your Ear Studios last year. The song then went number one and picked up the Grammy nomination for best Rap/Sung Collaboration.
- Alumnus Gordy Haab composed an original score for LucasFilm's video game, "Star Wars: The Old Republic" with the San Francisco Symphony and a full choir. Prior to that he composed the music for "Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings," also a LucasFilm project.
- Former VCU student James Genus was featured across four pages of the June 2011 *Down Beat*. The bassist, perhaps most visible at his weekly "Saturday Night Live" post but most audible in his recorded and touring ventures with such artists as Dave Douglas, Herbie

Hancock, Uri Caine, Bob James, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Dominique Eade, and so many more, was saluted by many for his versatility, musicianship, and winning personality.

- “Fight the Big Bull,” an ensemble grown originally out of a trio formed by VCU Jazz alumni Matt White (guitar), Bryan Hooten (trombone), and Pinson Chanselle (drums) and including a variety of VCU Jazz alumni and faculty, had a banner year. Their CD “All is Gladness in the Kingdom” (featuring trumpeter Steve Bernstein) made the “Top Ten” list of National Public Radio’s “A Blog Supreme.” NPR then declared the band’s “I Mean to Live Here Still” CD (partnering with David Karsten Daniels) one of “The Five Best Genre-Defying Albums of 2010.” RVA found it to be one of Richmond’s ten best of the year. The December 29 *STYLE Weekly* chose it as “Best Local Album.” Then in early January FTTB founder, leader, and VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Matthew White—along with Jesse Medaries and VCU Jazz drum alumnus Dean Christesen—announced the launch of Spacebomb Records. The July 14 New York edition’s *The New York Times* ran an review, “Take a Little Thoreau, Mix With Spunky Jazz,” regarding FTBB’s “I Mean to Live Here Still” CD.
- VCU Jazz alumnus and alto saxophonist Darius Jones was nominated for a Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Award in the category of Up & Coming Artist of the Year. He was also nominated last year for the award.
- Jazz guitar alumnus Karl Morse left Richmond in September for a contract teaching guitar lessons five days a week and playing several jazz gigs a week in Doha, Qatar. Alumnus James Beard II followed several months later.
- The NO BS! Brass, filled with VCU connections and led by Music alumnus/trombonist Reggie Pace, has a new CD out (“Live in Richmond”).
- In its September issue, *Richmond* magazine highlighted “RVA Musicology (1980-2010): A Preview/50 major players of the local music scene, then and now,” Listed among the 50 were many with VCU connections, including Hotel X, Fight the Big Bull, Bio Ritmo, No BS! Brass Band.
- The April 26 *STYLE Weekly* saluted a number of VCU Music-related musicians in its “Best of Richmond 2011” article. “Choosing the best band from among Richmond’s rich and fluid jazz scene is inevitably arbitrary. No BS Brass Band draws the largest audiences; Fight the Big Bull has the most national attention. No one beats Glows in the Dark for Italian movie sex and violence, or Ombak for density of musical ideas. Bop Nation has a relaxed virtuosity, and if Beast Wellington doesn’t knock you out at Bogart’s, its signature drink—the Beast Bomb—will. Also consider UTV Chamber, Labragenda, the Scott Clark 4-Tet, Trio of Justice, or any of the Brian Jones lineups. Add your own choice, then pick any three, any order.” Every single one of those groups has roots in VCU Jazz students, alumni, and/or faculty.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2009-10:

- Prof. Rex Richardson’s latest CD, “Magnum Opus: 21st Century Trumpet Concertos,” is now available on the Summit Records label. The recording includes three major works, including Prof. Doug Richards’ suite, the “Intercontinental Concerto for Trumpet and Jazz Orchestra.” The piece was recorded at In Your Ear Studios, co-owned by former VCU student Carlos Chafin. Performers on “Intercontinental” include VCU alumni Rob Holmes, Trey Pollard, and Roland Karnatz; and several current and past Music Department faculty: Marty Nau, Roy Muth, Brian Jones, Kris Keeton, and alumni/faculty

John Winn, Adam Larrabee, Kevin Harding, and Randall Pharr. Additional works on the CD feature VCU Orchestra Director Daniel Myssyk and VCU Piano Professor Dmitri Shteinberg. In August Rex also received the 2009 VCU School of the Arts Excellence Award.

- VCU Jazz Prof. Bob Hallahan (piano) and alumnus/Prof. Adam Larrabee (guitar) released a duo CD, “The Street Where You Live,” which includes jazz and popular standards as well as compositions by the performers. VCU Jazz Faculty Brian Jones (drums) and alumnus/faculty Randall Pharr (bass) also joined Larrabee as leader in the new CD “The Adam Larrabee Trio Plays Money Jungle.”
- VCU Jazz Drum Prof. Brian Jones released two CDs, both laden with many VCU alumni and faculty: “a.m. thrift” by the Brian Jones Wurlitzer Trio (Jones, drums; Daniel Clarke, Wurlitzer; Randall Pharr, bass) and “el cuervo” by the Brian Jones Double Quartet (Jones, drums; Mike Kuhl, drums; Randall Pharr, bass; Cameron Ralston, bass; Bob Miller, trumpet; Reggie Pace, trombone; J.C. Kuhl, tenor and soprano saxes; Rick Rieger, bass clarinet, clarinet, and bari sax). The October 14 *STYLE Weekly* also saluted Jones within its annual feature on forty various Richmonders under age 40 making a positive difference.
- The 57th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #2 Rising Star/Soprano Sax, #6 overall Soprano Sax, #7 Rising Star/Alto Sax, #11 overall Alto Sax, and #12 Rising Star/Flute. Victor Goines placed #6 in the Rising Star/Clarinet category and #12 overall Clarinet. Brazilian vocalist Luciana Souza, with whom alums James Genus and Clarence Penn often perform, placed #9 in the Female Vocalist category and #3 in Rising Star Female Vocals. Dave Douglas (regularly collaborating with Genus and Penn) was again named Trumpeter of the Year. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. In the 74th Annual *Down Beat* Reader’s Poll, released in December, Steve Wilson merited #8 Soprano Sax. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #3 in the Miscellaneous category.
- “Fight the Big Bull,” an ensemble grown originally out of a trio formed by VCU Jazz alumni Matt White (guitar), Bryan Hooten (trombone), and Pinson Chanselle (drums), released its latest CD, “All Is Gladness in the Kingdom,” in May 2010. The CD features New York trumpeter/composer Steven Bernstein as guest, brought to Richmond in a visit in part supported by a VCU Jazz workshop appearance by Bernstein. The band currently includes VCU faculty member Bryan Hooten (trombone) and J.C. Kuhl (sax); alumni John Lilley and Jason Scott (sax), Bob Miller (trumpet), Matt White (guitar), and Pinson Chanselle (percussion); student Reggie Pace (trombone); plus bassist and former VCU student Cameron Ralston.
- Sax alumnus Steve Wilson performed the music of Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane in a concert with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble in December and closed out 2009 at Jazz Standard in New York, leading a multi-night tribute to Joe Zawinul. The December 11 *New York Times* praised Steve as “an endlessly adaptable alto and soprano saxophonist, at home in myriad settings.” National Public Radio featured Steve on *JazzSet: Steve Wilson*. He performed The Seven Last Words of Christ (Joseph Haydn), plus improvised interludes, with the Leipzig String Quartet at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City on February 3. He can be heard as a sideman on numerous CD releases in

2009-10. But “HOME: Live in Columbia, Missouri” is the new CD from Bruce Barth (piano) and Steve Wilson, who was also nominated for a Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Award in the category of Soprano Saxophonist.

- VCU Jazz alumnus and alto saxophonist Darius Jones has been nominated for a Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Award in the category of Up & Coming Artist of the Year. His CD debut, “Man’ish Boy (A Raw & Beautiful Thing)” on the AUM Fidelity label, with Cooper-Moore on piano and Rakalam Bob Moses on drums, attracted the notice. Said the December *JazzTimes*, “He plays sweetly, melodically, plaintively, raucously, and discordantly. He plays outside and in. He goes from blues to swing to free and back again. He never wastes a note or a breath. And he can write a gorgeous theme, like that of ‘Forgive Me.’”
- Drum alumnus Clarence Penn expanded his collaborations with acclaimed trumpeter Dave Douglas when Douglas’ quintet led 11 young musicians in an exploration of new works and innovative collaborations during a week-long Professional Training Workshop from February 7-12 through Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute. Penn can be heard on numerous CDs released during 2009-10.
- Drum alumnus Alvester Garnett is featured within the latest CD of jazz violinist Regina Carter (who also happens to be his wife). “Reverse Thread” is her first record in more than three years and her first independent release after CDs on Verve and Atlantic.
- In its article “Getting an Earful,” the December 16 edition of *STYLE Weekly* cited its top live and recorded jazz events in Richmond, including those with VCU connections. “Steve Bernstein’s springtime collaboration with Fight the Big Bull...Brian Jones’ annual Musicircus” ranked among the live events; while in “local recordings, Ilad’s ‘Here/There’ was heard everywhere as hip, atmospheric filler between ‘All Things Considered’ news stories. Miramar [which includes alumni Kevin Harding on guitar and Rusty Farmer on bass] quietly championed the almost-forgotten, anti-romantic beauty of Puerto Rican bolero. Bungalo 6 took a polished pop shot with ‘Radio Ready’ and Ombak’s ‘Framing the Void’ boiled down the local sound to its sinewy essentials—aided again by the ubiquitous Brian Jones, whose varied projects continue to be key supports of the local scene.”

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008-09:

- Alumnus/Jazz Bass Prof. Randall Pharr played on a tune with Bruce Hornsby and John D’earth for the new movie “World’s Greatest Dad,” starring Robin Williams. The cut is a remake of Louis Jordan’s “Is You Is Or Is You Ain’t My Baby.”
- The 56th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #3 Rising Star/Soprano Sax, #9 overall Soprano Sax, and #6 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed #7 in the Rising Star Flute and Clarinet categories. Alum bassist James Genus placed #11 in the Rising Star Electric Bass category. Bassist Dave Holland’s Quintet (including former VCU student Nate Smith, drums) was named #2 Jazz Group of the Year, with Holland #2 Bass of the Year. Brazilian vocalist Luciana Souza, with whom alums Genus and alumnus Clarence Penn often perform, placed #4 in the Female Vocalist category and #3 in Rising Star Female Vocals. Dave Douglas (regularly collaborating with Genus and Penn) was again named Trumpeter of the Year. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist

category. In the 73rd Annual *Down Beat* Reader's Poll, released in December, Steve Wilson merited #10 Soprano Sax. Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed #3 in the Miscellaneous category.

- VCU Jazz alumnus/pianist Daniel Clarke has continued touring with singer/songwriter k.d. lang, after completing a tour with pop singer/actress Mandy Moore.
- The 2008 Theresa Pollak Prizes for Excellence in the Arts were announced in the September 2008 edition of *Richmond* magazine. Cited in the category of "Ensemble" was The No BS Brass Band, which includes leader and trombonist Reginald Pace (current VCU student), along with former VCU Music students Rob Quallich and Marcus Tenney, trumpet; Reginald Chapman, Dillard Watt, and Sam Savage, trombones; Stefan Demetriadis, tuba; plus VCU faculty/alumni Taylor Barnett, trumpet and Bryan Hooten, trombone. Cited in the category of "Vocalist" was our alumna Terri Murphy Simpson.
- "Fight the Big Bull," an ensemble grown originally out of a trio formed by VCU Jazz alumni Matt White (guitar), Bryan Hooten (trombone), and Pinson Chanselle (drums), achieved multiple recognitions. Its latest CD, "Dying Will Be Easy," was released on Clean Feed Records (Portugal), the label described by *All About Jazz* as one of the top five most influential jazz labels today. The title track of the CD was featured as "Song of the Day" September 30 by National Public Radio. Said NPR: "...Fight the Big Bull has made some of today's most exuberant and relevant improvised music.... On 'Dying Will Be Easy,' the band sounds like the brainchild of a young composer who grew up with rock on the radio, jazz canons in the conservatory and everything else at his disposal on the Internet.... Cue Matthew E. White, who leads the band, plays the guitar and writes the songs. In the title track, his orchestration has the fullness and audacity of a Mingus or Ellington.... When White points to J.C. Kuhl for a sweet-hued yet driving sax solo, the beat turns forward-pushing and rockish—equal parts Sonny Rollins and Sonic Youth. Finally, when White indulges himself a little on his guitar, it sounds as if he were trying to restart a dying chainsaw by shouting into it.... The band's liberal mixing of musical metaphors seems to have long passed the experimental stage, and now sounds as if it were already the most natural thing in the world. If Fight the Big Bull can continue to make risk-taking sound this appealing, it'll be hard to keep the rumpus confined to Richmond." Said *All About Jazz* on September 30: "...the album's four tracks...span a little more than half an hour. It is a wholly remarkable feat that an album with so few tracks can be so captivating.... There are no attention-grabbing gimmicks here. Nothing is irrational, abstract to the point of being confusing or egalitarian to the point of being archaic. In the pursuit of being provocative, many musicians obsess about the art and forget about the matter. Not so with Fight the Big Bull. White is obviously a skilled guitarist, but it is his vision as a composer and orchestrator that makes the record refreshingly original and, at many points, breathtaking." The October *Down Beat* agrees. "This nonet from Richmond, VA makes an impressive debut [on Clean Feed] thanks to sharp tunes and arrangements by leader and guitarist Matt White.... The group excels with an ensemble-based approach, as deftly crafted harmonies and precise, contrapuntal blocks of sound propel the music." The band currently includes VCU faculty member Bryan Hooten (trombone); alumni John Lilley and Jason Scott (sax), Bob Miller (trumpet), Matt White (guitar), and Pinson Chanselle (percussion); student Reggie Pace (trombone); plus bassist and former VCU student Cameron Ralston. Also heard on the

CD are VCU faculty J.C. Kuhl (sax) and Brian Jones (drums), plus alumnus Adrian Sandi (clarinet).

- The film “Border Town” features a score by VCU Jazz alumni Ryan Corbitt and Trey Pollard, including the lead trumpet-playing of VCU faculty member Rex Richardson.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2007-08:

- The 2007 Theresa Pollak Prizes for Excellence in the Arts were announced in the September 2007 edition of *Richmond* magazine. Cited in the category of “Ensemble” was Modern Groove Syndicate, whose members include Jazz faculty member J.C. Kuhl (sax) and alumni Trey Pollard (guitar) and Daniel Clarke (keyboard).
- The 55th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #1 Rising Star/Soprano Sax, #11 overall Soprano Sax, and #13 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed #8 in the Rising Star Flute category. Dave Douglas (collaborating with alumni James Genus on bass and Clarence Penn on drums again on his latest CD) was again named Trumpeter of the Year. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider, who spoke a couple of years ago to VCU’s Music Industry class via teleconference, again won in the categories of Big Band, Composer, and Arranger of the Year. (The drummer in her band is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn, and Steve Wilson has also performed and toured with her; both are on her latest CD.) Violinist Regina Carter, in whose combo our drum alumnus Alvester Garnett performs, again placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. Brazilian vocalist Luciana Souza, with whom alums Penn and Genus often perform, placed #3 in the Female Vocalist category. Bassist Dave Holland’s Quintet (including former VCU student Nate Smith, drums) was named Jazz Group of the Year, with Holland Bass of the Year.
- VCU Jazz alumnus/pianist Daniel Clarke has been touring with singer/songwriter k.d. lang, after completing a tour with pop singer/actress Mandy Moore.
- M.M. Performance alumnus Victor Goines was named as Northwestern University’s Director of Jazz Studies and Professor of Music, effective Spring 2008.
- Former VCU student Steve Wilson was featured in a full-page interview within the November 2007 *Down Beat*: “Backstage with Steve Wilson.”
- “Fight the Big Bull,” an ensemble grown originally out of a trio formed by VCU Jazz alumni Matt White (guitar), Bryan Hooten (trombone), and Pinson Chanselle (drums), achieved multiple recognitions. On October 25, 2007 it performed at The Stone in New York City, perhaps the most prestigious avant-garde and experimental venue in New York City. It was then signed to Clean Feed Records, a label based in Portugal. Next it was invited by MacArthur “Genius Grant” recipient Ken Vandermark to Chicago for a series of performances, April 12-17. The band currently includes VCU faculty member Bryan Hooten (trombone); alumni Jason Arce and Jason Scott (sax), Bob Miller (trumpet), and Matt White (guitar); students Reggie Pace (trombone) and Pinson Chanselle (percussion); plus bassist and former VCU student Cameron Ralston.
- VCU Jazz alumnus and guitar faculty member Kevin Harding and his group Quatro na Bossa have been offered a record contract by the Japanese label Venus Records. A CD was recorded in Manhattan in August and is due for release. Along with Kevin, the musicians on the recording include singer Laura Ann Boyd, bassist and VCU Jazz

alumnus Rusty Farmer, Brazilian percussionist Adriano Santos, and Brazilian flautist and saxophonist Rodrigo Ursaia.

- VCU Jazz sax alumnus Samson Trinh was selected as one of only five finalists for the 2007 Independent Music Awards in the Jazz category for his nominated song, “I Can’t Believe I’m Addicted To The O.C.”
- VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Matt White was named by the 25th Anniversary issue of *STYLE Weekly* as one of “Nine Artists to Watch” (October 24, 2007).

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2006-07:

- The 54th Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll emerged in August to showcase a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophonist alumnus Steve Wilson merited #2 Rising Star/Soprano Sax and #6 Rising Star/Alto Sax. Victor Goines placed in the Clarinet category. Dave Douglas (regularly collaborating with alums James Genus on bass and Clarence Penn on drums) was named Trumpeter of the Year. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider, who spoke last year to VCU’s Music Industry class via teleconference, won in the categories of Big Band, Composer, and Arranger of the Year. (The drummer in her band is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn, and Steve Wilson toured with her last year.) Violinist Regina Carter, who received a 2006 MacArthur Foundation “Genius Grant” and in whose combo our drum alum Alvester Garnett performs, placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. Brazilian vocalist Luciana Souza, with whom alums Penn and Genus often perform, again received the #1 slot in the Rising Star/Female Vocal category and placed in the Overall category.
- VCU Jazz alumnus/pianist Daniel Clarke has been recording and touring with pop singer/actress Mandy Moore, recently appearing on Rachel Ray’s TV show.
- VCU Music alumnus and guitarist David G. Russell worked as a synthesist on the film score to the movie “Ghost Rider” (grossing \$200 million worldwide) and worked as a synthesist on “Spiderman 3.”
- Composer/arranger and VCU alumnus Gordy Haab’s latest film score is for the award-winning horror movie, “Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon.”
- VCU Music alumnus/guitarist Kevin Harding’s Brazilian music ensemble Quatro na Bossa landed a week-long engagement at Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola in New York City in April for a tribute to Antonio Carlos Jobim presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center.
- VCU Jazz alumnus/trombonist Pete Anderson of Hermitage High School received a \$10,000 REB Award for Teaching Excellence to develop a Geometry II curriculum by studying the geometry of art and architecture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery in Washington, and the Uffizi Art Gallery and the Accademia Gallery in Florence, Italy; and to develop a jazz-appreciation curriculum by studying privately with living legends of jazz music.
- VCU Jazz sax alumnus Samson Trinh was named a semi-finalist in the 2006 International Songwriting Competition in the Instrumental category for “Very Strange Night” and in the Jazz Category for “I Can’t Believe I’m Addicted to the O.C.”
- The Virginia Commission for the Arts has added to its 2007-2008 Performing Arts Tour Directory the group Neighborliness: alumni John Winn (sax and vocals), Daniel Clarke (piano), Curtis Fye (bass), and Robby Sinclair (drums). Also added are Modern Groove Syndicate (which includes Clarke as well, along with VCU Jazz sax faculty member J.C. Kuhl) and The Jackie Frost Ensemble (featuring bass alumnus Rusty Farmer).



- Vocalist, saxophonist, bandleader, and VCU Music alumnus Roger Carroll was presented a Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts by the September 2006 edition of *Richmond* magazine in the category of “The Jazz Singer.”

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2005-06:

- The 53rd Annual *Down Beat* Critic’s Poll recognized a number of VCU-related artists. Saxophone alumnus Steve Wilson merited #2 Rising Star/Soprano Sax and #8 Rising Star/Alto Sax and also placed in the category of Overall/Soprano Sax. Bass alumnus James Genus placed #2 in the category of Rising Star/Electric Bass. Alumnus Victor Goines placed in the Overall/Clarinet category. Grammy-winning composer/bandleader Maria Schneider (and VCU Music Industry guest lecturer) won in the categories of Jazz Album, Composer, and Arranger of the Year and also placed in the Jazz Artist and Big Band categories: her drummer is VCU alumnus Clarence Penn. Violinist Regina Carter, for whose combo our drum alumnus Alvester Garnett performs, placed first in the Jazz Violinist category. Former VCU student Nate Smith was saluted on drums via DB’s recognition of The Dave Holland Quintet as Jazz Artist, Big Band, and Bassist of the Year. Also placing in the Artist of the Year category were Wynton Marsalis (allied with alumnus Victor Goines) and Dave Douglas (regularly collaborating with alumni James Genus on bass and Clarence Penn on drums). Brazilian vocalist Luciana Souza, with whom Penn and Genus perform, again received the #1 slot in the Rising Star/Female Vocal category and placed in the Overall category.
- Steve Wilson’s “Generations” ensemble performed at the Kennedy Center Jazz Club in Washington, D.C. in October 21 and 22, a concert then featured on the National Public Radio syndicated series “Jazz Set” (hosted by vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater) on February 2.
- The 26th Annual Telly Awards, a national event, presented “Wilder” An American First,” a documentary about our mayor and former governor, with its award in the category of “Educational Film or Video.” It was also a finalist in the categories of “Cultural Film or Video” and “Documentary Film or Video.” The film score was composed by alumnus Daniel Clarke, who also served as keyboardist, guitarist, and music producer. Also heard on the score are VCU Jazz faculty member J.C. Kuhl and alumni Curtis Fye (bass) and Robby Sinclair (drums).
- VCU Jazz faculty member and alumnus John Winn was presented a Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts by the September 2005 edition of *Richmond* magazine in the Vocalist category.
- Also presented a Pollak Prize in the Ensemble category was Hotel X, a group that includes VCU alumnus trombonist David Brogan and VCU Jazz saxophone student Ron Fix on *trumpet*.
- The January 25 issue of *STYLE Weekly* cited “The Originals: Richmond’s Artistic Class of 2006.” Under the heading of “Creative Organizers” the publication recognized the work of the Patchwork Collective, a presenting organization barely a year old founded by Scott Burton, Chris Elford, and VCU Jazz guitar alumnus Matt White.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2004-05:

- The John Winn Quartet, selected for the Jazz Ambassadors Program sponsored by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the United States Department of

State, includes alumnus John as vocalist/saxophonist, plus his alumni rhythm section: pianist Daniel Clarke, bassist Curtis Fye, and drummer Robby Sinclair. Their tour will likely take them overseas. During the five-week tour in the summer of 2004 they played numerous concerts at a variety of venues in Busan, South Korea; Vladivostok, Russia; Phnomh Penh, Cambodia; and Guadalajara and Juarez, Mexico. They also led jazz-related workshops at universities in three of those countries. They were immediately invited back to Russia to perform in Vladivostok at a jazz festival October 14-17, 2005.

- The 52nd Annual *Down Beat* Critics Poll in the August 2004 issue cited VCU alumnus Steve Wilson as winner in the “Rising Star, Soprano Saxophone” category and #3 Rising Star/Alto Sax and was featured in a six-page interview.
- Former VCU student Nate Smith was saluted on drums via the same poll’s recognition of The Dave Holland Quintet as Acoustic Group of the Year and with Jazz Album of the Year (“Extended Play—Live at Birdland), with his bandleader, bassist Holland, also capturing Jazz Artist of the Year and Bassist of the Year.
- The Independent Music Awards selected Modern Groove Syndicate as winner in its Jazz category for 2005. The winning song title, “Too Good That It’s Gone,” is track six on MGS’ second CD, “Vessel,” released in February 2004. Alumnus Daniel Clarke and faculty member J.C. Kuhl are ensemble members. Judges for the 2005 awards included Delbert McClinton, Erykah Badu, and Victor Wooten.
- The Devil’s Workshop big band was given a Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts by the September 2004 edition of *Richmond* magazine in the Ensemble category. The ensemble includes many current and former VCU students: saxes Tony Forgey, Tim Turner, and Jason Gay; trumpets Bob Miller and Mark Ingraham; trombonists Sam Savage, Toby Whitaker, Reggie Pace, and Stefan Demetriadis; Trey Pollard, guitar; Daniel Clarke, piano; and Curtis Fye, bass—plus faculty members J.C. Kuhl (sax), John Winn (sax), Taylor Barnett (trumpet), and Rex Richardson (trumpet).
- Also note the following a regarding jazz artist and VCU Music clarinet alumnus: Victor Goines, director of the jazz program at the Juilliard School and a member of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, performed at the opening in October 2004 of the new Frederick P. Rose Hall, dubbed “The House of Swing.” His solos in live performance and on such recent CDs as “Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson” and “A Love Supreme” merit rave reviews from the jazz media.

#### SELECTED VCU JAZZ-RELATED ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2003-04:

- The John Winn Quartet has been selected for the Jazz Ambassadors Program sponsored by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the United States Department of State. Seven quartets led by vocalists were selected out of 72 quartets applying from throughout the United States. John, the vocalist/saxophonist, is an alumnus, as is his rhythm section: pianist Daniel Clarke, bassist Curtis Fye, and drummer Robby Sinclair. They tour will likely take them overseas.
- The 51st Annual *Down Beat* Critics Poll in the August 2003 issue cited VCU alumnus Steve Wilson as runner-up in the “Rising Star, Soprano Saxophone” category, also commending him as fourth in the “Rising Star, Alto Saxophone” column. He received a full-page feature in the September *JazzTimes* regarding his latest CD release, “Soulful Song” (MaxJazz) and received the Virginia Jazz Musician award from the Richmond Jazz Society.

- The same *Down Beat* Critics Poll cited James Genus in the second spot in the “Rising Star, Electric Bass” area.
- Alvester Garnett tours and records with internationally renowned jazz violinist Regina Carter.
- Drummer Clarence Penn backs vocalist Luciana Souza on her “North and South” CD (Sunnyside), nominated for a Grammy Award in the category of Best Jazz Vocal Album and picked by *JazzTimes* in its February issue as one of its “Top 50 CDs of 2003.”
- The February 2004 *Down Beat* gave a four-star rating to the first formal CD of the Devil’s Workshop, “Idle Hands” (Grantham Dispatch Records). This outstanding ensemble includes many current and former VCU students.

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