

UC's CCM: The next Juilliard?

By Mary Ellyn Hutton

Cincinnati Post

Publication Date: 11-21-2003

Dean Douglas Lowry of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music isn't afraid to dream.

When famed violin teacher Dorothy DeLay died in March, 2002 leaving "a crater" in CCM's violin program, he got to work.

Thursday Lowry announced a new dream team for the school, one that will not only fill the gap left by DeLay -- Juilliard-based mentor of a whole generation of top violinists - but make CCM a destination for violin students on a par with the best music schools in the country.

- Succeeding DeLay as Dorothy Richard Starling professor of classical violin is Kurt Sassmannshaus, chairman of the CCM string department and founder/director of CCM's renowned Starling String Project.
- Cho-Liang Lin and Chee-Yun Kim were named distinguished guest artist in violin and adjunct professor of violin, respectively. Both are internationally known concert violinists.

The announcement was made at CCM preceding Lin's inaugural master class as a CCM faculty artist.

"We have the opportunity not only to send a message to other schools about the level we expect (in violin teaching) but also the levels we expect for our students," said Lowry. "It is singularly noteworthy," he added, that both Sassmannshaus and Lin were DeLay students at Juilliard.

CCM currently has 68 violin majors, roughly divided between undergraduates and graduates. Many more participate in CCM's preparatory program, including members of its centerpiece Starling Chamber Orchestra made up of advanced string players ages 10-18.

Led by Sassmannshaus, the 25-member Starling Chamber Orchestra has toured Europe and the Far East, made several CDs and been the subject of an award-winning video "Classical Quest." The group presents an annual subscription series at the Aronoff Center's Jarson-Kaplan Theater and was featured on Public Radio International's "From the Top."

"Kurt has done a stupendous job with Starling," Lowry said. "He's a dreamer and a schemer and he gets things done."

Lin, nicknamed "Jimmy" Lin, has performed in Cincinnati many times, not only with the Cincinnati Symphony but as a guest of the Linton Chamber Music Series. A native of Taiwan and multiple Grammy nominee, he also teaches at Juilliard and is founder of the Taipei International Music Festival and artistic director of SummerFest La Jolla in California.

Korean born Chee-Yun Kim has also performed with the CSO and maintains a busy international performing schedule. (Visit her web site at www.chee-yun.net.)

As a guest faculty member, Lin will spend one or two days at CCM each quarter, said Lowry, "although he is prepared to discuss more." He will teach privately, present master classes and coach chamber music.

Chee-Yun, who makes her home in Cincinnati, will teach students on a regular basis with regard for her performance schedule, according to Lowry.

"We already have a terrific program," he said. "What this does is give it an ignition spark."

Publication Date: 11-21-2003
<http://www.cincypost.com/2003/11/21/ccm112103.html>
September 2, 2004