



# SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, INC.

*... dedicated to the  
promotion, composition,  
performance, understanding  
and dissemination of  
new and contemporary  
music ...*

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XLIII: 4, July–August 2013

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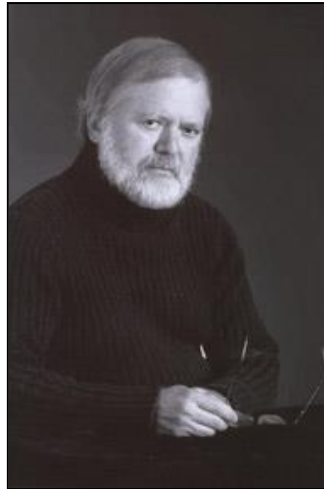
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## Remembering Charles Argersinger

Edited by Michael Torres

Composer Charles Argersinger passed away on April 16, 2013. Argersinger taught at Cal State Bakersfield, DePaul University, and finally Washington State University, where he served as Coordinator of Composition and Theory as well as Professor of Jazz Keyboards until 2009. Below is a brief tribute to the life of Charles as remembered by his friends and colleagues.



### Ryan M. Hare

As someone who counted Charles as a friend and colleague, and as the second and current director of the Festival of Contemporary Art Music at Washington State University--a Festival which Charles Argersinger founded and which will live on in his memory--I can hardly express how his passing saddens me. And I am saddened that there will never be an Argersinger *Sonata for Bassoon and Piano*, which he had prom-

ised to write for me someday. Charles was the chair of the search committee that hired me at WSU, and he was a mentor and a dear friend. How much I owe him can hardly be calculated! I miss the rapport and banter he and I shared in the composition seminar; I miss his abundant creativity and intelligence; I miss his superb jazz piano playing. He was a lovely human being, and a great composer. His passing is a loss for us all.

### Mark Phillips

One of my earliest memories of Charles was sitting in on a rehearsal of his DePaul University jazz ensemble back in the 80s. At the top of the rehearsal, Charles kicked off a breakneck tempo and the group tore into the chart and pinned my ears to the back wall of the rehearsal room. It was immediately obvious that this was an outstanding collegiate ensemble and that everyone already knew their part cold. Caught off-guard by the speed and precision of the ensemble and the impressive start to the rehearsal, I would have been

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## About the Newsletter

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## How to Submit Items to the Newsletter

**Articles:** The Newsletter welcomes submissions of articles to run in future issues. Articles, if accepted, may be edited for length and content. Please include a photo with all submissions if possible (photo may be of author).

**Member News + Photos:** Please send all member news and activities with a photo. Submitted items may be edited.

**Ideas/Suggestions:** The Editors welcome any other ideas or suggestions.

Submit to the newsletter via email at: [newsletter@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:newsletter@societyofcomposers.org)



## Upcoming SCI Events

### 2013 Region IV Conference October 17–19, 2013

Eastern Kentucky University  
Richmond, KY  
Thomas Couvillon, Host

### New Voices@CUA: A Festival of New Vocal Music January 24–25, 2014

Catholic University of America,  
Washington, DC

### 2014 Region VIII Conference March 7–8, 2014

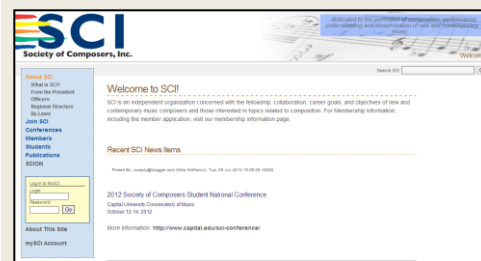
University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA

### 2014 National Conference March 20–22, 2014

Ball State University  
Michael Pounds and Jody Nagel, Hosts

### 2014 Region V Conference March 27–29, 2014

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo  
Christopher Biggs and Lisa Coons, Hosts



## Internet & Email

[www.societyofcomposers.org](http://www.societyofcomposers.org)

- Conference dates and submission guidelines
- Contact information and links to member web-pages
- Student chapters and opportunities
- CDs and journals produced by SCI
- Details on SCI such as membership, contacts for officers, regional structure, by-laws, newsletter archives and more...

## SCION

SCION is a listing of opportunities on our website exclusively for members. It is updated on a continual basis so that it may be checked at any time for the most current notices. In addition, members are emailed on the first Monday of each month to remind them to visit the site for new or recent postings. The large number of listings is easily managed by a table of contents with links to the individual notices. In-depth coverage; contest listings in full; all items listed until expiration; this is a valuable resource that you may print in its entirety or in part at any time.

John Bilotta, SCION Editor  
[scion@societyofcomposers.org](mailto:scion@societyofcomposers.org)

## scimembers

**scimembers** is a member-driven e-mail mailing list that is intended to facilitate communication between members of the Society on topics of concern to composers of contemporary concert music. It conveys whatever notices or messages are sent by its members, including announcements of performances and professional opportunities, as well as discussions on a wide variety of topics. For more information, including how to join and participate in the listserv:

<http://www.societyofcomposers.org/publications/listserv.html>

## National Council

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### Region 8

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*University of Montana*

### President Emeritus

Greg Steinke

## Membership Information

For complete details, please visit  
<http://www.societyofcomposers.org/join/membership.html>.

**Full Membership** (\$55/year): Eligible to submit scores to the National Conferences, regional conferences, SCI Recording Series, SCI Journal of Music Scores. Access to the SCI Newsletter in electronic form. Optional subscription to [scimembers], the SCI listserv and all other SCI publications. Eligible to vote on Society Matters and in elections for the National Council.

**Joint Membership** (\$75/year): Same benefits as full members

**Senior Membership** (\$27.50/year): Open to those 65 years of age or older, or retired. Same benefits as full members.

**Associate Membership** (\$27.50/year): Open to performers and other interested professionals. Receives the SCI Newsletter in electronic form and can participate in national and regional conferences.

**Student Membership** (\$27.50/year): Eligible to submit to national and regional conferences and to vote in society matters. Access to all SCI publications.

**Student Chapter Membership** (\$17.50/year): Same benefits as student members, but only available on campuses having Student Chapters.

**Institutional Membership** (\$25/year): Organizations receive hard copy of the SCI Newsletter and other mailings.

**Lifetime Membership** (\$1100 or \$120/year for 10 years): Benefits the same as full members, for life.

## Executive Committee

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## Remembering Charles Argersinger

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hard-pressed to think of anything to say in the way of constructive criticism when they'd stopped playing. There certainly had been no major problems that demanded correction, so I was curious to hear what Charles would have to say. Those of you who are familiar with his work probably know what happened next. In his quiet and gentle manner, he proceeded to list off a number of things he wanted his players to improve. These were all small-scale issues of fleeting duration, none of which I'd noticed on first exposure to the impressive sound of his ensemble tearing through that arrangement. His comments were extraordinarily precise and typically addressed to individual players. Instead of "this passage is not quite together," he would say something like "alto 1 you're playing the staccato notes in this passage a tiny bit longer than the rest of the ensemble; trombone 3, you are a tiny bit behind the ensemble getting to this downbeat, we need more 4th trumpet to balance this chord." Meanwhile, I was sitting there thinking, whoa, I need to up my game here in order to keep up. The rehearsal proceeded along these lines for the rest of the hour. The group would play a passage in which even most trained listeners would find nothing to critique. But Charles would gently point out small details for the players to watch out for and correct. Then they'd play the passage again and you would hear the subtle improvement, if you listened very closely and with very "fast" ears. I am absolutely not ashamed to admit that I never felt like I'd completely caught up with Charles in that rehearsal - he had an amazing set of ears. But I do know that by the end of the rehearsal, I was hearing at a much higher level of detail than when it began and I'm sure the same was true of the players in his ensemble. Everyone walked out of that rehearsal a better and more attentive musician... and that is no small feat.

### Frank Felice

Charlie was a great, great guy all around—so wonderful to spend time with him, and he was a first rate composer—I will miss him greatly.

### Mike McFerron

I have fond memories of conversations with Charlie and hearing his music in performance (many times at SCI conferences). As one SCI member wrote on his Facebook page, he was "an amazing composer, jazz pianist, and human being. With him, the world was a much better place." I couldn't agree more. You can hear his music on his website at [www.charlesargersinger.com](http://www.charlesargersinger.com). Charlie was a mentor to many students and colleagues—my thoughts are with them.

### Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn

I had the good fortune of being both a student and colleague of Charles. Charlie was my mentor and teacher through my masters degree. Later when his illness accelerated and he had to retire in the summer he was kind enough to recommend me as a stand-in for his position at Washington State University where I stayed for three years. Many will share the memories they have of the incredible musician and composer Charles was. I remember how in my lessons he would spread my scores across his desk, plug his ears to block out the random buzzing and humming from electronics in the room, and "hear" my score. After five or ten minutes of silence he would have one or two comments that were, as always, right on the mark. We would then discuss other musical issues for the remainder of the hour. At the end of almost each lesson he would say, "Aleks, remember 80% of what I told you today were good ideas and your job will be to figure out which part was the 80%". Yes he was a great musician and composer, but I would like to speak about the great person he was. Charlie was a man of humor, kindness, and adventure. After he retired Charlie would often come back from long stretches spent in the desert, hunting for turquoise and other gems. He was a man of adventure. Charlie was always generous with his time and mentorship. Often as a student, Charlie would let me be a part of his recording sessions, never impatient with the varied and many questions I posed. But mostly I will remember him as a man of a dry and layered humor. He once told me about a long-standing gig, playing piano at the Chicago Playboy Club referring to it as "the best gig ever". Whenever he and I and our other compo-

sition colleague Ryan Hare were gathered together he would refer to us as an “Ego of Composers”. However my favorite Charlie comment was in regards to whether he would use Charles or Charlie in his music. On most of his jazz compositions and in gigs he was always Charlie Argersinger, however, in his classical life it was always Charles. As a grad student I asked him once why he didn’t just use Charlie for everything. In his most serious and dry tone he looked me square in the eyes and said “Aleks, do you know any Charlies who have won the Pulitzer?” I will miss Charlie’s music, his playing, his adventures and kindness but most of all I will miss his humor. His legacy and ideas will continue to live on through his students and colleagues. We will share his stories, thoughts, ideas, and if you are really nice I’ll share with you the secret handshake Charlie taught me, that “only the cool kids know”.

**David Vayo**

Charles and I got to be friends during the early 90’s, when he and I coincided at many SCI and CMS events. I attended the SCI Region VIII conference he hosted at Washing-

ton State University in 1992, and hosted him at Illinois Wesleyan a few years later. Although soft-spoken, Charles was steely about things that mattered to him; he was a deep thinker who took life and art seriously. Highly organized and hard-working, Charles was called a “dynamo” by one of his WSU colleagues; the regard in which he was held there was obvious from the enthusiastic participation in the conference by so many of his colleagues. In a conversation I had with Charles during that conference, he made one of the most apt summaries I know of the current era’s Zeitgeist. Referring to fax, overnight mail, and long-distance telephone (this was when email and cell phones were still in the cradle) he said that he didn’t feel isolated in eastern Washington because “nowadays, everywhere is a suburb.” How much more true this is twenty years later. I miss Charles not only as a person but also as a composer. Like its author, his music is serious but never pedantic, full of vital energy and with a brilliant spectrum of harmonic color deriving from and extrapolating from his other musical preoccupation, jazz. I’m sorry Charles isn’t around to create more of his wonderful pieces; everything I heard by him taught me something.

S C I T I N G S : M E M B E R N E W S & A C T I V I T I E S

**SCItings**  
*Member News and Activities*

Performances, Awards, Commissions, Honors, Publications and other Member Activities.

**Wes Flinn**

On February 22, 2013 Flinn’s *Psalm 120* for soprano and euphonium was premiered by soprano Tianna Smith and euphoniumist Benjamin Jumper in Edwards Hall at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina.

**Brett L. Wery**

On May 20, 2013 at The Maple Ave. Middle School, the 6th and 7th grade

band under the direction of Andrew Janack premiered Wery’s *Facets of Pele*, a concerto for young band and professional bass trombone with Mr. Michael Meidenbauer as soloist.

**Vivian Adelberg Rudow**

The premiere of Rudow’s *A Universal Prayer For Peace And Reflection* was given by the American Boy Choir, Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, conducting, on June 9, 2013 at the Chapel, Princeton, New Jersey.

**Jason Bahr**

At the International Trumpet Guild conference the premiere of Bahr’s *Fantasy for Five Trumpets* was performed by

the Alabama Trumpet Guild Ensemble on June 12, 2013.

**Mark Wings**

The San Francisco Choral Artists premiered Wings’ *Scherzo Diabolique* on June 15, 2013 at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church.

**Evan Williams**

*Grime* was premiered at the Make Music Chicago Grand Finale on June 21, 2013 in St. James Cathedral by members of Fifth House Ensemble and participating instrumentalists in this year’s Fresh Inc Festival as part of the Rush Hour Concert series.