WHARTON IS ALL BUSINESS

Brandon Wharton ’17 juggles more than two majors as the only student helping to plan the university’s 150th Anniversary celebrations.
Welcome to our seventh, biannual issue of COFAC Today. This issue focuses on students and significant events in COFAC since spring 2015.

This fall we are thrilled to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Towson University, both as a college and a community. In May 2015, Towson launched a 13-month celebration including a variety of events, presentations and creative works highlighting its rich and diverse history. Among these creative works is the composition of Towson’s new alma mater, as well as the design and production of the university mace. In addition, mass communication major Brandon Wharton ’17 has had a defining role in developing the anniversary celebrations as the only student on the 150th Steering Committee.

As part of spring anniversary programming, COFAC will offer “Dance on Bones,” a dystopian story in which the world is fighting back against the loss of culture and memory with art and music. The work to be presented on the MainStage in March, is designed to be a true collaboration, including all six departments and multiple art forms. In addition to “Dance on Bones,” the Center for the Arts gallery will host “Visions of Place,” an exhibit that explores the complex geographies in contemporary Israeli art, while also piloting a docent training program in which students will learn to conduct audiences through the exhibits.

While COFAC has several celebrations coming up this spring, we continue to grieve the loss of our former dean and president emerita, Maravene Loeschke ’69’71. On the pages to follow you will hear from alumni, students, staff and faculty who were touched by this inspiring woman. Maravene personified the spirit of Towson University, motivating students to be “their best selves.”

As a college we have been charged with the responsibility of carrying out this message through the work we do with our students. We must ask ourselves, as Maravene taught us, “How will the world be better because of you?” Each student comes to us with his or her story, and each discipline has its own challenges. Brandon Gray, former TU dance major, worked to overcome the bullying he experienced throughout school, stemming from societal stereotypes of male dancers. The Department of Dance has worked hard to nurture its male dancers with a strong mentoring program and a supportive atmosphere. Max Radbill ’15, always dreamed of being a filmmaker, and with the support of his professors and student production society, he made this come true. Radbill won top honor at the Rehoboth Beach Film Festival for his short, “Movie Palace.”

It has been a year of celebration and a year of great loss, but we forge ahead as we face the next 150 with the energy and passion exemplified by our late beloved leader. To read more about our students and the wonderful projects and events happening in our college, please visit the COFAC website (www.towson.edu/cofac). You’ll also find listings for dance, music and theatre performances, art exhibitions, film screenings, and community programs in the Arts & Culture Calendar (see www.towson.edu/main/arts&culture).

We hope you’ll join us for COFAC’s spring 2016 events.

Susan E. Picinich, Dean
College of Fine Arts and Communication
Wharton is All Business

Brandon Wharton ’17 juggles more than two majors as the only student helping to plan the university’s 150th Anniversary celebrations

By Daryl Lee Hale

After glancing at his resume, it’s hard to believe Brandon Wharton ’17 is only a junior. In just over two years at TU, he has served on numerous committees, held a range of positions across campus and now helps plan the university’s 150th Anniversary celebrations. In addition to his extracurricular pursuits, he manages to juggle two majors—mass communication and political science.

While it may seem like he spent the past two years carefully constructing the perfect resume, for Wharton, it’s about more than just looking good on paper. For him, it’s about Towson University.

“I was excited about the 150th Anniversary, and I somehow convinced people to let me onto the 150th Anniversary Steering Committee and probably about five other committees that I wound up being on,” Wharton recalled. “This is something I wanted to do, and I was lucky enough to get the opportunity.”

As the public relations and marketing associate in the student agency of the Department of Integrated Marketing, Wharton has helped orchestrate many of the events held so far to celebrate 150 years for Towson.

His typical day consists of attending strategy sessions, working on an event like the campuswide Rita’s day, and determining how best to spread the word about campus news. The position, Wharton said, brings a lot of responsibility.

“To be part of Towson’s ‘next 150,’ there is a lot that we have to achieve,” Wharton explained. “We have now begun cementing that message that Towson is going places, that we are on the move, and that there is a lot to expect from Towson graduates.”

And Wharton himself is not one to shy away from those expectations. Despite his marketing job and being a full-time student, he also holds positions on the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, the University System of Maryland Student Council and Towson’s Presidential Search and Screening Committee.

Wharton’s varied experience gives him the demeanor of someone with years of professional expertise, said Louise Miller, director of integrated marketing services in the Division of University Marketing and Communications. Miller works with Wharton on planning many of the 150th events.

“When I am talking to Brandon, I feel that I am talking to someone who is at my level, my age and my experience,” Miller said. “He has a good perspective on things and, most of the time, he’s on the mark when he says something. I have to step back and say, ‘Remember, he’s 20.’”

Wharton decided to put his all into his career because his passion lies in public relations and marketing. After graduation, he hopes to “help transform an organization, whether it’s a nonprofit or a Fortune 500 company, and take it to the next level.”

As a self-proclaimed innovator, Wharton knows the value of continuing to improve. But at the end of the day, his biggest motivator is that he’s doing exactly what he wants to do.

“It’s a great reason to come to work every day. I get to say, ‘I’m helping plan the biggest party Towson’s ever had.’”

Brandon Wharton, ’17 is surrounded by the 150th in his office in University Marketing as the only student helping to plan the university’s 150th Anniversary celebration.

Photo by Lauren Castellana

Wharton helps serve students during “Rita’s” day as part of the 150th celebration.
The College of Fine Arts and Communication remembers beloved TU President Emerita Maravene Loeschke ’69/’71, whose legacy lives on

By Wanda Haskel

A ll the world was indeed a stage for Maravene Loeschke. Each personal interaction was a scene, in which her motivation was to help others to be loved, performed and worked with her, she was extraordinarily gifted at those roles.

The roles she played included teacher, artist, mentor and administrator. And, according to those who knew, extraordinarily gifted at those roles.

During the three decades that followed her 1969 graduation, she earned a Master of Education degree from Towson and a doctorate from the Union Institute in Cincinnati. She was a professor, department chair, and dean of the college, returning as Towson’s president in 2012 after 10 years serving as provost and president for schools in Pennsylvania.

“Maravene’s impact on COFAC is tremendous and enduring,” says the college’s current dean, Susan Picinich. “She was instrumental in building the excellent programs within the Department of Theatre and a force behind the entire college’s growth, the results of which can be seen in the studios, performance venues, galleries and learning spaces of our beautifully renovated Center for the Arts.”

Throughout many of her years at Towson, even as she rose through the administrative ranks, Loeschke taught, sharing her expertise in the dramatic arts with aspiring actors, writers, theatre technicians and educators. Her former students remember her as a highly effective combination of tough and nurturing, especially in her legendary acting conservatory, in which latency meant failing the course (except in one storied case when a panicked and resourceful student convinced a police officer to appear before Loeschke to explain her tardiness).

In a blog post, Kate Danley ’97, playwright, author and actress, described her conservatory experience. Sharing a memory of delivering a subpar performance during class, Danley writes:

“Mar had that ability to know what was there in front of her, what was needed and the best way to go about getting there,” says Casciero. “And always with a deep compassion and love.”

Support for her students did not stop upon graduation. A relationship with Loeschke meant you had a cheerleader for life. Students, colleagues and friends going back to the 1970s all say the same thing: that Loeschke never stopped checking on them, encouraging them, connecting them with people and opportunities that could help them further their careers and reach their greatest potential.

“She had this warmth and sincerity about her,” says Shannon Wollman ’91, who was honored when her dear friend and mentor requested that she sing at her memorial. “You knew that she would always guide you along your best path.”

Funny Girl

Though Loeschke chose to pursue a full-time career in higher education rather than the theater, her artistic side remained active throughout, with many of those same qualities that made her an exceptional teacher and mentor also contributing to her skill as a performer.

“Maravene had this gift of knowing how to get to what made you tick,” says Wollman, speculating that her ability to laser focus on the motivations and hearts of other people is “probably why she was such a good actress—because she was always so concerned with the inner workings of the character.”

Loeschke shared her theatrical talents as a fixture in the Maryland Arts Festival, performing and directing for 20 seasons, including starring in four one-woman shows. She was a regular on Maryland Public Television’s comedy series “CRAZY,” and her play “K” was professionally produced at the Baltimore Theatre Project. Additionally, Loeschke authored numerous scholarly articles, a monograph and three books, including All About Mime, which she used in establishing a mime troupe in the Towson theatre department.

Beyond entertaining and enlightening audiences, Loeschke always found ways to turn her art toward elevating the people around her. Like when she started a mime program at the Maryland School for the Blind, and when she founded a women’s collaborative to support and promote female within the greater Baltimore theater world.

The Importance of Being Earnest

Accounts of Loeschke’s dedication both to her work and her relationships leave the listener wondering if she ever slept.

She had “amazing work ethic,” says Tony-Award-winning actor John Glover ’66, who credits Loeschke for keeping him closely connected with his alma mater. But perhaps more notable was that her life was filled with countless acts and interactions that expressed what he calls her “astonishing human ethic.”

That compassion revealed itself constantly in personalized gestures that stacked up to make thousands of people feel valued and inspired. She gave her number out freely and actually picked up. She memorized the names and circumstances of every student she met, delivered her celebrated hugs exactly when they were needed and never forgot a
The Mace

Towson University
Mace Makes Inaugural Appearance

By Gay Pinder

Throughout the United States, many universities use a mace during commencement exercises. Commonly borne by the university president, provost, or marshal of the faculty, the mace is a ceremonial symbol of authority and independence.

In commemoration of its 150th anniversary, Towson University received its first mace, which was generously commissioned and given to the institution by President Emerita Maravene Loeschke ’69/’71, who died June 25, 2015. It was designed and crafted by Joshua DeMonte, Jen Figg, Kimberly Hopkins and Jon Lundak, all members of the College of Fine Arts and Communication faculty. Loeschke served as COFAC dean from 1993 to 2002.

The mace’s design represents the history of Towson University. The seal of the Maryland State Normal School serves as the base, representing the university’s strong foundation. The stem of the mace grows from this foundation, passing through five rings that represent five major historical moments in the university’s history:

- 1915: Campus Moved to Towson
- 1935: Renamed State Teachers College
- 1963: Renamed Towson State College
- 1976: Renamed Towson State University
- 1997: Renamed Towson University

A set of prongs at the base connects the seal to four black anodized aluminum metal forms encompassing the maple stem. These linear, geometric forms merge and embed in the curvilinear wood as the stem rises. This convergence represents the fusion of analytical and abstract thinking offered in a liberal arts education at Towson University.

Topping the mace, lined with a touch of gold to reflect light, is an interpretation of the cupola atop Stephens Hall. Inset in the cupola is a glass sculpture rendition of a Fresnel lighthouse lens, providing a figurative guiding light to represent our graduates and their bright futures.

Maravene Loeschke died June 25, 2015, of complications from cancer at Gilchrist Hospice Care in Towson. She was 68.

Left photo: Loeschke performed throughout her career in on-campus and off-campus productions.
Right photo: President Emerita Maravene Loeschke.
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

Object Lessons

New exhibitions in the Center for the Arts are a perfect training ground for aspiring art educators and museum workers

TU senior Marie Amegah not only loves making art, but she also plans to craft a career that will include sharing art with others.

That’s why the art and design major, minor in museum studies, is enthusiastic about growing opportunities to get real-world experience doing museum work right on campus.

Thanks to a partnership between TU’s Community Art Center and three art galleries, Amegah is learning by doing—developing and leading hands-on art activities and gallery tours for members of the public participating in free Family Art Days in the Center for the Arts. This drop-in programming is similar to what visitors to popular museums commonly experience when they explore an exhibition and then engage in an activity that is linked to the exhibit’s themes. Practice offering community programming is an important step toward focusing in on and preparing to achieve career goals for students like Amegah.

Before getting involved with the Family Art Days, says the native of West Africa, “I really didn’t know what to do with my major. I’m learning there are a lot of possibilities.”

Stacy Arnold, Community Art Center director, is excited that TU’s talented students are playing an important role in the center’s offerings. Those interested in education and museum studies are “especially hungry” for these opportunities, she says. “It gives them concrete, real-life experience, and they get to work with the community and have a real impact.”

Plus, plans are in the works to expand even further this kind of on-the-job preparation.

In conjunction with the upcoming exhibition “Visions of Place,” an exploration of complex geographies in contemporary Israeli art, and a concurrent exhibit of video art from Israel, TU organizers will pilot a docent training program in which students will learn to conduct audiences through the exhibits, offering age-appropriate guidance and information on the artworks. They will also be prepared to answer questions about the exhibits.

Professor Susan Isaacs, co-curator, who will lead the art historical and curatorial aspects of the docent training, says that the Israeli exhibits offer an ideal context in which to launch the docent program because Visions is a large, complex, international exhibition featuring a broad array of associated programming. Additionally, the development of the exhibit included the creation of a website packed with information on the artists, their works and the themes explored in the exhibit, which will serve as an educational tool for novice docents.

Students participating in the training are expected to come from the art history club, Hillel and various academic departments, including art and education. Marie Amegah isn’t sure if she will be one of them but is very interested in finding out more about the opportunity.

“I need experience with galleries and museums,” she says, “so that I’m not walking blindly into a field.”

Helping students prepare for their careers through a combination of classroom work and practical experience is at the heart of a TU education, according to Isaacs.

“That’s what Towson is about.”

“Visions of Place: Complex Geographies in Contemporary Israeli Art” and “Staring Back at the Sun: Video Art from Israel, 1972-2015” will be on exhibit in the Center for the Arts February 5-April 3, 2016. The Family Fun Day offered in conjunction with the exhibits will take place in March. Free and open to the public.

Adi Nes Nagar, 2006
c-print, Edition SEP of 10, 40 x 40 in (101 6/10 x 101 6/10 cm)
©Adi Nes. Courtesy of the Artist and Sommer Contemporary, Tel Aviv and the Jack Schainman Gallery, NYC
Photo credit: Adi Nes

Those interested in education and museum studies are “especially hungry” for these opportunities.
Dor Guez
Two Palestinian Riders, Ben Shemen Forrest, 2011
transparency on light box
49 x 118 in
(124 ½ x 300 cm)
Courtesy of the Artist and Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv
Photo credit: Dor Guez

Tal Shochat
Afarsemon (Persimmon), 2011
26 x 27 9/16 in (66 x 70cm)
Courtesy of the Artist and Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel Aviv
Photo credit: Tal Shochat

Michael Halak
Syrian-African Cracked Olives, 2014-15
oil on canvas
47 ¼ x 31 ½ in (120 x 80cm)
Courtesy of the Artist and Noga Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv
Photo credit:
Dance on Bones

COFAC departments collaborate to offer 150th anniversary celebration performance

By Wanda Haskel

Ever since she came to Towson, junior Laura Gede has been looking for new ways to bring together the many talented artists who work, practice, perform, exhibit, write and create in the Center for the Arts.

“If I could, I would have a major in every department of the college,” laughs the third-generation Towson legacy, who settled for double majoring in theatre and film. “I think it’s incredibly important that we all know each other and we all work together.”

That’s why Gede is delighted to play an important role in “Dance on Bones,” a dystopian story in which the world is fighting against the loss of culture and memory with art and music. The performance, slated for March 2016, will feature work from students and faculty representing multiple departments within the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

Gede is drawing from her movie-making side for the project, using a directed independent study to create a segment of film to fit into the multimedia production.

One for All

“Dance on Bones” is a play written in 2013 by TU Associate Professor David White, though it’s anything but conventional theater. Each individual page in the script is a succinct unit. So, according to White, “you could throw the whole script in the air and perform it in any order that it landed.”

Indeed, the words themselves that the playwright provides are what he calls a “template” to be interpreted by the artists developing their distinct “panels” and linked into a cohesive vision by the director—in this case Professor Peter Wray. At press time, the artists were entering into the collaborative brainstorming phase of developing the production. Their plan, says Wray, is “to enliven the material by creating a post-apocalyptic celebration ritual that reaffirms life and survival through heartfelt storytelling, song, dance, multimedia film and art, along with music at the core of this dynamic endeavor.”

And does not knowing exactly what the final product will look like make the organizers nervous? Maybe, but they wouldn’t have it any other way because it is the loose structure that makes “Dance on Bones” so fit for collaboration.

True, the whole work could be performed as an opera or a monologue, but its flexibility also enables the script to be construed within the contexts of several disciplines at once. This, says White, gives the different areas in COFAC a platform to jointly “show what we’re capable of imagining.”

All Together Now

The collaborative nature of “Dance on Bones” makes the production ideally suited for celebrating Towson University’s big anniversary. The work honors the cooperation that was needed to progress from a small teachers college to the diverse academic institution the university is today. And, as the practice and understanding of all areas within the arts and sciences require ever more interdisciplinary approaches, the piece looks toward the future of the university in which finding innovative ways to work together will be critical to providing the very best experience for Towson students.

“Collaboration always prepares you for your future,” notes Gede, who hopes one day to direct a similar type of cooperative production, “because you’re always going to have to work with people no matter how independent you want to be.”

During the Soviet era, vinyl was not readily available so music was etched onto old X-rays. Even though the quality was poor, it served a booming black-market of bootleg recordings from beyond the Iron Curtain providing an opportunity for Soviet citizens to hear jazz. This photo, one of the X-rays used during the Soviet era, is a poignant image for “Dance on Bones.”
Gender Bender

TU's dance department nurtures male dancers with a strong mentoring program and supportive atmosphere

By Wanda Haskel

Serious dancers are required to be both artists and athletes. That means rigorous daily training, long hours rehearsing, and an extraordinary level of discipline and commitment—both in mind and body.

And that’s only part of why pursuing dance can be difficult.

Many men who live and breathe dance also face challenges stemming from societal stereotypes, which researchers trace back to homophobic reactions to ballet performed in the mid-1800s. Those stereotypes, which have persevered into the 21st century, characterize dance as inherently feminine and men who dance as somehow less than men.

For Brandon Gray, a dance major taking time off from Towson to study at the Ailey School (the official school of the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Manhattan), middle school was the hardest. “I got teased so much, and people wanted to fight me,” remembers Gray, “because I loved to dance.”

But that didn’t stop the tween from learning every step of the choreography from Beyoncé’s famous 2008 “Single Ladies” video. Nor did it hold him back as a young teenager from enrolling at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., and the Ballet Arts Academy in Waldorf, Maryland.

“I wasn’t going to stop,” says Gray with determination. “I just kept going for it.”

The bullying lasted all through high school, but life improved markedly when Gray began his freshman year at Towson in the fall of 2014, thanks to the caring environment in TU’s Department of Dance.

Space on the Stage

In a major where he was well outnumbered by his female peers, the 18-year-old says that faculty and classmates alike had his back.

TU dance students are assigned mentors by the department, and Gray was fortunate to be matched with senior Darnell Williams who also experienced bullying in his early years as a dancer but stuck with his passion.

“It’s hard for men to continue,” explains Williams, describing some of the thoughts that go through the minds of many males as they consider their futures as dancers. “Do I want to do this and take all the teasing? Or do I want to just do something else?”

According to Williams, mentoring can mean the difference between persisting at what you love and dropping out. He not only offers support to peers in the dance department at Towson but also as a choreographer and teacher in multiple private studios in Maryland, Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C.—checking in on students, encouraging them, and offering advice and an opportunity to talk.

Communication, says dance Associate Professor Vincent Thomas, is a critical part of mentoring and creating an environment where men feel safe, supported and nurtured.

Thomas and his colleague Runqiao Du—the two full-time male instructors in the department—make a special effort to build a community of trust among their male dance students with a welcoming, open-door policy, thoughtful touches like toiletry packages for their lockers, and sit-downs to discuss anything from professional expectations to personal struggles.

“Male students need to know that they have a place in the department, a place in this art field,” says Thomas, “so it’s a lot of conversing and keeping each other in check and making sure that we’re doing what we need to do at a high level of excellence.

Thomas also offers a movement skills class for men who are non-dance majors. The course demystifies dance for participants from various disciplines and backgrounds, and is an opportunity for Thomas to challenge perceptions about men and dance.

Movement Skills for Men has been filling two sections with students from all areas of the university every semester for several years. Through a curriculum grounded in the latest research, athletes and aspiring accountants, chemistry and psychology majors undergo an “intense personal experience,” according to Susan Kirchner, who chairs the dance department. Participants emerge changed, she says, in part, because “when the ‘other’ becomes you, then you immediately switch perspectives.”

One student at a time, the class is helping to create a culture in which males can soar next to their female counterparts free from ingrained societal judgment.

A Bright Future

Uplifted by his experience at Towson and a personal drive to prove to all the childhood bullies that he has what it takes, Gray followed his heart and is now living his dream in the Big Apple.

And guess what?
The proud dancer reports that he never gets teased anymore.
Rad Max
Electronic media and film grad Max Radbill ’15 wins top honor at Rehoboth Beach Film Festival

By Wanda Haskel

Max Radbill always knew he wanted to make movies. His childhood room wasn’t just a place to sleep. It was a set.

“I would play with my toys and act out scenes,” chuckles the bespectacled filmmaker.

In high school, Radbill used a flip camera to create amateur clips but was itching to get his hands on professional equipment. So when it came time for college, Towson University was an “easy choice.” The Frederick native planned to stay in Maryland, and TU’s strong film program was calling.

Nowadays, the recent graduate is living his dream. His childhood room wasn’t just a place to have fun. It was a set.

“Movie Palace is his best work yet,” says Assistant Professor Joseph Kraemer, who taught the advanced film production class for which Radbill created the 15-minute short. The Rehoboth screening, adds Kraemer, “is just the beginning, I’m sure.”

That’s a Wrap

Radbill credits engaged faculty members, including Kraemer, and Towson’s student media production society, Lambda Kappa Tau, with providing the support he needed to take on the ambitious project.

It was encouragement from a friend in the society that pushed Radbill to turn his idea about hiding in a movie theater during the apocalypse into a script. Workshopping with classmates and writing professors helped him polish the piece. And collaboration with students Devin McBay, cinematographer, and Ali Miller, producer, enabled Radbill to get the film shot in just a couple of days. (Time was tight because they were paying for the location.)

The result, says Kraemer, reflects Radbill’s “distinctive style and voice” through a “playful blending of genres.”

The Reel Deal

With this experience under his belt, Radbill regularly returns to campus to sit in on Lambda Kappa Tau meetings. Sharing his creative process with current undergraduates benefits them (he hopes!) and himself as he continues to receive feedback from people whose opinions he highly values.

When he’s not workshopping with his TU electronic media and film peers, Radbill takes on freelance gigs doing production-assistant work on commercials and big-name projects like Netflix hit “House of Cards.” He also is revising a feature film he wrote while at Towson that he hopes to shoot next summer.

“Making the rent by hanging on to his job as a barista, the 22-year-old is both realistic and optimistic about becoming an internationally influential filmmaker.

“I know it’s really out there and not likely to happen,” says Radbill. “But I don’t want to just accept that. I want to try as hard as I can to make it happen.”

Melody Maker
Towson alum composes university’s new alma mater

By Wanda Haskel

What better soundtrack for a university’s 150th celebration festivities than the school’s alma mater, right?

It should be, but when the music department surfaced Towson U’s school song, all agreed that the dated piece just would not do.

“For years,” says TU marching band director John Miliusakis, “I didn’t even know we had an alma mater.” That’s because it hasn’t been used at university functions in decades. Administrators decided that TU deserved a fresh new tune to ring in the 150th. After great success holding a fight song contest, the alma mater committee, including Miliusakis and Vice President for Student Affairs Deb Monarty, agreed to turn again to the deep talent pool within the Towson University community. The competition was open to faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends and publicized on campus and through alumni channels. A prize of $1,000 and the honor of helping to establish a TU tradition would go to the composer of the winning, original piece of music (lyrics not required).

“We wanted a homegrown alma mater,” says Miliusakis, “something that was ours in ownership and came from Towson people.”

Once the word was out on social media, the submissions came rolling in. Three of those entries arrived a few weeks before the April 17, 2015, deadline because composer Kyle Richards ’98, an accountant, knew he would be too busy during tax season crunch time to focus on his side of writing music.

“An alma mater,” says TU music professor Phillip COLLISTER, “is trying to capture and convey the soul and earth of what makes an institution what it is.”

One of Richards’ compositions did just that, according to Collister, who says the piece selected has a warm, nurturing tone that honors Towson’s history while taking a forward-looking contemporary approach.

TU’s renowned marching band premiered the new alma mater at the Homecoming football game in October, using the opportunity to announce another contest. This time, for lyrics to accompany the anthem.

“Towson University is a fantastic university,” says Richards, who studied composition at Berklee College of Music in Boston before eventually switching to accounting at TU. “And it makes me really happy to help define how it will sound.”