

## Peabody Institute Student Forum – September 26, 2008

**Date:** September 26, 2008  
**Location:** Peabody Institute  
Baltimore, Maryland  
**Forum:** Issue Based  
**Facilitator:** Clifford Murphy  
**Scribe:** Janel Cohen

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### Major Themes:

- Baltimore is a fertile environment for Peabody students aspiring to professional careers in music, particularly for classical guitarists.
- Peabody, MICA, and theater programs should collaborate.
- Maryland presenters of Classical/Art Music need to be more innovative:
  - o More works by contemporary/living composers need to be presented;
  - o More multi-media presentations/venues need to be developed (combine visual and audio art);
  - o “Hip” venues – music club-style or coffee house-style – need to be developed for classical/Art Music performances;
  - o Classical/Art Music radio stations need to diversify programming, move away from “greatest Classical hits” format.

### Key Quotes:

- o “For a guitarist, it’s great for us here...so many people can come here, make a living, can go out and perform.”
  - o We have a very healthy arts community to start with, but a lot of it is very tradition bound. There is a lack of proper venues to present collaborative type of performances...would like to see venues for exploration. I think there’s an audience her for it.”
  - o “If I look at a [concert] program and I know everything, I won’t go.”
  - o “I would like to see traditional arts presenters be more innovative – state could support by providing grants to innovative programmers/presenters.”
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Introduction by Cliff Murphy: Thank you for coming, this meeting is part of our Strategic Planning for the Maryland State Arts Council and is one of many meeting we’ve been having around the state. Notes from this and previous meetings can be found on our website at [www.msac.org](http://www.msac.org).

### Around the room introductions:

- Singer, last year supported myself through art.
- Vocal Performance
- Harp Performance
- Moved to Baltimore 3 years ago – guitarist

- Viola
- Composition
- Guitar
- Guitar Performance
  
- Why did you choose Maryland? What makes this place appealing?
  - The geographical location – DC, NYC, cheaper to live here
    - Went to Hopkins for undergrad
    - Baltimore drew me here, diverse
  - I applied to 5 and was accepted by all grad schools, but chose Maryland because of location. Everyone knows east coast as “arts”
    - MICA and different arts schools, opportunities fit
  - For a guitarist, it’s great for us here. As far as being able to meet other guitarists – so many people can come here, make a living, can go out and perform
  - Students who graduate have a lot of opportunities to perform, accessible
  - Most people come to this place because there is a specific teacher or program. Its up to the creators to make sure what we have is competitive and attractive. Careers are built starting with location. This is a very fertile place to begin a career, lots of opportunities to perform and collaborate
  - Of all the places I lived, this is the most finest and accessible place
  - Peabody is the place to go for guitar, but easy to branch out to different areas
  
- Do you think you’ll stay after?
  - What made it easy to stay, Baltimore is sort of small town for a city, easy to make connections
  - Diversity exists without complete saturation in the market, people don’t have to be so cut throat. My colleagues are supportive.
  - Depends on where my career takes me, may go to the west coast. Want to try and cross over
  - I’ve been in Maryland my whole life, definitely want to stay on the east, but need to go out and experience other places... may come back
  - Needed to be where I could jump start my music, Baltimore is kind of like the center. Whole coast is saturated with the arts
  
- What are some major issues facing the arts today? Are any of you doing anything to address those issues?
  - Performing for people – there is always social pressure to like the popular culture. Kids take for granted what art is. MTV
  - Youth today has so much on TV and the internet, that the idea of going out to experience art. There hasn’t been enough collaboration. TV/internet can be multi-dimensional. Need more collaborative art. Need to do things that speak to the public.
  - Question: Did you guys ever have music education in the small towns? Not really. The arts need to be part of culture
  - In my town, as far as culture goes; you have to try really hard to get people to come out. In public schools, the orchestra would come and do

concerts for free, in our guitar program; our teacher also offered other non-traditional instruments.

- We have a very healthy arts community to start with, but a lot of it is very tradition bound. Lack of proper venues to present collaborative type of performances. Need more of that. Would like to see venues for exploration. I think there's an audience her for it. Diverse people in this area are looking for new things. i.e. theatre project
- Theatre project – everything there seems very intimate. A lot of places don't have the same connection – people need that closeness and intimacy, connection
- Economically, it would make more sense to amalgamate – no one wants to pay for just one thing
- Maybe it's all in the advertising – providing for more diverse audience. Something in it for everyone.
- Club scene-ish and include classical music – put on a show
- I performed at a place that had very different performances, it was really interesting. I'm always more likely to patronize companies that want me there, that are catering to me (students, etc.). Advertise younger/diverse people in brochures.
- As an artist, how do you plan to grapple with finances
  - Fundraising
  - Collaboration
- What do you know about the MSAC?
  - I knew it existed, but didn't know what you did
  - I knew about funding a guitarist, I knew through the Peabody newsletter
- 5 Years from now, what do you see?
  - Hipper venues
  - Different ideas of programming, integrate
  - If I look at a program and I know everything, I won't go – not new
  - Program new things, experimental
  - Innovative programming, would like to see traditional arts presenters be more innovative – state could support by providing grants to innovative programmers/presenters
  - Now - Overplayed with traditional – contemporary. No actual difference between classical and contemporary now – difference between good and bad compositions.
  - Play music of living composers
  - Seeing older works with a fresh take.
  - Free fall is one of the best initiatives in this area.
  - People/audiences like free stuff
  - Success when you use a venue for other performances... i.e. Shakespeare and concerts ... cross pollination.
  - Classical musicians can go the other way too – classical going into popular venues.
  - Give grants to get diverse audiences in ... i.e. soulful symphonies
  - Present more traditional things from other societies

- What can MSAC can do for you?
  - There were so many fresh ideas, glad MSAC has come to tap the young
  - Publicity
  - I feel like a lot of opportunities are passed because we don't know about?
    - Where do you go to learn about events?
      - Word of mouth
      - City paper
      - City search
      - Could use bi-weekly publication
      - Put events in the city paper? More?
      - Email
      - People who like arts, like coffee – put things in coffee shops.
      - “Live Baltimore” has lots of information. Other venues (theatre project, MICA) you can get information. Online community bulletin board.
      - High-zero – Peabody is a big funder of high-zero (experimental music). Lets people know ideas aren't capped.
      - Continue these kinds of dialogues – increase them and increase the scope. Talk to our audiences as well; know how to keep our audiences. Focus groups of listeners/arts appreciators among different demographics.
      - Tendency to shy away from online things, and we need to have more of that. Need to advertise online.
      - The “dream venue”
      - Digital – expanding – find out websites and advertise on that (i.e. Facebook)
      - Combine all the art forms, advertise for all of the art forms
      - Focus groups with different art forms. Get ideas to cross paths.
      - Rotation days – have visual arts teach dance, dance teach music, etc. it was amazing in my school.
      - I get inspiration from other artists in other art forms.
      - Drop off material at theater project, Peabody, mica

Thank you for coming