

# SAXOPHONE STUDIO

*2022-2023 Newsletter*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC



# From: *Buckeye Saxo Prime*



The end of each spring semester is often a time of introspection and this year in particular there is much to celebrate and reflect upon. Indeed, the 2022-2023 academic year at The Ohio State University School of Music was an intensely stimulating and rewarding season of artistry, progress, and musical fellowship. There has been tremendous energy between the opening of the state-of-the-art Timashev Family Music Building, the first year of our School's new Director, Dr. Michael Ibrahim, and the abundance of visiting world-class musical artists. Most important, however, amongst the many wonderful experiences of the year are the vast accomplishments of our talented students. In my eighth year teaching saxophone at Ohio State, I continue to be inspired by the quality of artistic work of our saxophone community and this next generation of Buckeye Saxos from The Ohio State University Saxophone Studio does not disappoint. Please understand, this newsletter will share the musical accomplishments of my current saxophone students, but know that these accomplishments are only possible through their charisma, grit, humor, determination, humility, and good character. I am proud of these students, not just for their music making, but for who they are and who they are becoming as people, just as I have been proud of *all* the Buckeye Saxo family.

*Michael Rene Torres*

Dr. Michael Rene Torres  
Assistant Professor of Practice  
Saxophone and Composition



# Michael Ibrahim

## Director

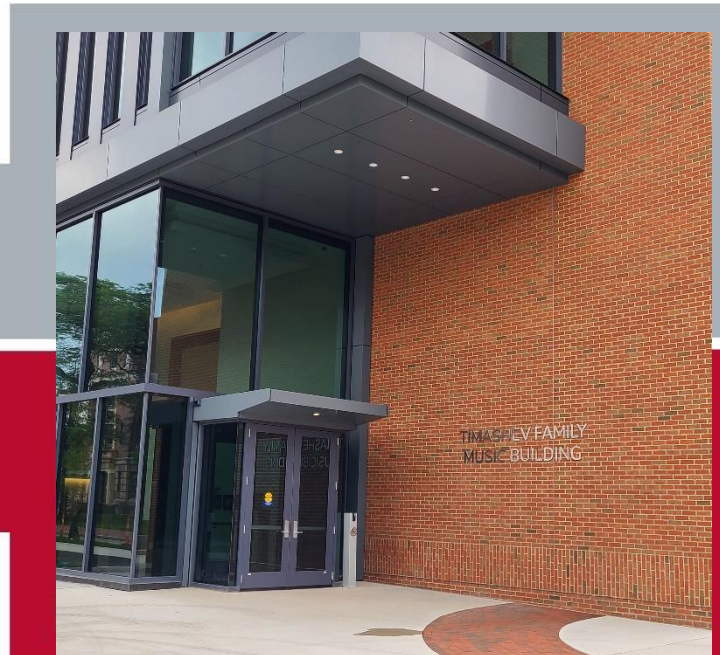
Saxophonist, Dr. Michael Ibrahim began his role as Director of the School of Music at The Ohio State University on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Previously he served as Director of the School of Music at West Virginia Univer-

sity where he also served as the Associate Director, Faculty Reporting Officer in the Office of the Provost, and as an Academic Leadership Fellow. He further served on the Faculty Executive Senate, the Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, the Oversight Committee for the Employment of Foreign Nationals, the Faculty Welfare Committee, and as Chair of the Senate Committee for Research and Scholarship. As a saxophonist, Ibrahim has performed throughout the US and internationally and he has worked with ensembles including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Manhattan Sinfonietta, PRISM Quartet, and Wet Ink. His solo and chamber music performances have taken place in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Merkin Hall, Miller Theater, Symphony Space, and the Kitchen. He has won numerous competitions including the North American Saxophone Alliance Classical Artist Competition, the Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition for Woodwinds, the Coleman Chamber Music Competition, the MTNA Woodwind Collegiate Artist and Chamber Music Competitions, and a Darmstadt Performance Prize for Contemporary Music. Learn more about Dr. Ibrahim and the excellent work that he is doing at Ohio State here: [music.osu.edu](https://music.osu.edu)

# Timashev Family

## Music Building

The Ohio State University alumnus Ratmir Timashev (MS '96) and his wife, Angela Timashev, committed their charitable foundation to provide the largest philanthropic contribution made by an individual or foundation in the College's history. This supported construction of a new music building as part of the University Arts District. This new facility, connecting to the existing Weigel Hall, brings together all music education and instruction under one roof. It is a stunning five-floor building with classroom, performance, studio and office space on all levels, with a new expansive lobby that connects the new Timashev Family Music Building to the historic Weigel Hall and adds a new 195-seat recital hall that joins the existing 720-seat Weigel Auditorium.



# Meet **THE** Saxophone Graduate Teaching Associate



## Frankie Wantuch

Saxophonist and educator, Frankie Wantuch is Instructor of Saxophone at Wright State University (Dayton, Ohio) and Instructor of Saxophone and Director of the Jazz Ensemble at Muskingum University (New Concord, Ohio). Ms. Wantuch holds degrees in saxophone performance from Ohio University (BM) and Ohio State University (MM) and is currently a doctoral saxophone student at Ohio State where she serves as the Graduate Teaching Associate for the Saxophone Studio and studies with Dr. Michael Rene Torres. As a saxophone soloist she is a winner of the Ohio State University Concerto Competition and the Ohio University Concerto Competition, has performed at regional conferences of the North American Saxophone Alliance and the U.S. Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, and has served as a member of the 100th Army Reserve Band in Ft. Knox, Kentucky since 2017. Wantuch regularly performs with the funk brass ensemble, Largemouth Brass Band, which released their self-titled album in Fall of 2018, as well as their second album, "Repilot," in early 2021. Ms. Wantuch's teaching philosophy is rooted in cultivating an environment for personal and musical growth.

# BUCKEYE SAXO STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS



*(Right to left: Lindsay Smithson, Ben Syme, Katia de Jong, Tito Leong, Nick Paul, Frankie Wantuch, Joel Caniff, Willow Mauldin, Brennan Colvard, Colin Howell, Sean Bauman, Noah Brown, Chris White, Zach Langbein, Alex Lowe, Colin Fogerty, Austin Spillman, Cooper Greenlees, Dr. Michael Rene Torres)*

We added two new instruments to the School of Music inventory: a Selmer Series III tenor and a silver plated Selmer Series III baritone. Both of these instruments were put to work this year with some intense playing. In fact, the Buckeye Saxos performed in **60+ concerts** this academic year!

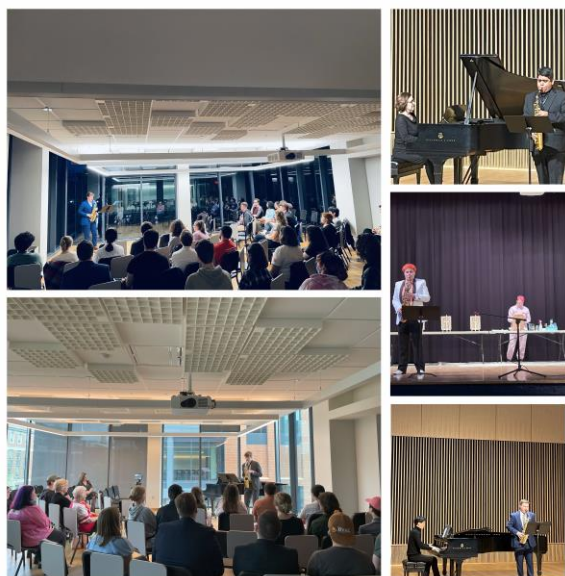


As part of the School of Music's new **Opus 88** initiative in which we are working to engage with communities throughout the state to share the joy of music through each of Ohio's 88 counties, the Buckeye Saxo Quartets performed at several schools including: Jackson Middle School, Mason Middle School, Grove City High School, Westland High School, Upper Arlington High School, and Olentangy Orange High School.

Congratulations to the following Buckeye Saxos for graduating and completing their undergraduate degrees this year: **Colin Howell**, **Lindsay Smithson**, **Scott Snyder**, and **Ben Syme**! Colin has been appointed Assistant Director of Bands at Lexington High and Junior High School in Northeast Ohio, Scott has accepted a position in the Pleasant Local School District in Marion where he will be teaching K-4 Elementary Music, and Ben will begin a graduate degree in Jazz Pedagogy at the University of Northern Iowa where he will serve as a Graduate Assistant.



The Band Program had fantastic concerts all year long with saxos participating in Collegiate Winds, Symphonic Band, and Wind Symphony with performances of the highest caliber. There were several guest composers that visited with the ensembles including John Mackey, Joel Puckett, and Catherine Likhuta. The **Symphonic Band** performed a fantastic concert during the Ohio Music Education Association Professional Development Conference in February.



There were several student saxophone recitals including by **Cooper Greenlees**, **Colin Howell**, **Zach Langbein**, **Lindsay Smithson**, **Ben Syme**, and **Frankie Wantuch**. Several of these recitals featured chamber music, world premieres, free improvisations, and even performances of original compositions by the students themselves.



Graduate student, **Austin Spillman** who is currently pursuing an MM in Saxophone Performance, was selected to serve as the School of Music's ProMusica Chamber Orchestra Intern for the academic year. Austin assisted ProMusica with all aspects of their behind-the-scenes arts administration tasks. Austin also performed throughout the year as a member of the Ohio State student reed quintet.



Sophomore, **Zach Langbein** and Junior, **Nick Paul** have both been chosen to serve as School of Music Ambassadors for the 2023-2024 academic year. These students will represent the School of Music in a variety of recruitment and engagement settings, connecting with prospective students and their families.

Several Ohio State **alumni saxos** were able to connect with current Buckeye Saxos during the Ohio Music Education Association Professional Development Conference.

Three Buckeye Saxos were proud members of The Ohio State University Marching Band on their secondary brass instruments: **Sean Bauman** (sousaphone in L row), **Scott Snyder** (mellophone in R row), and **Chris White** (mellophone in E row). Chris was recently appointed Assistant Squad Leader of R row for next season.



Junior saxo, **Brennan Colvard** worked with several area high school band programs during the marching season including Circleville, Upper Arlington, and Grove City High Schools.



In October, Dr. Gail Levinsky (Professor of Saxophone at Susquehanna University) visited Ohio State for a masterclass which included performances by Buckeye Saxos **Colin Howell** and **Sean Bauman**.



The Saxos did not disappoint this year during the annual **HalleBOOia!** concert with a nostalgic look back to the 1990s as they performed a 10-minute choreographed production of the iconic SNES game, *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past!*



In November, the Studio was visited by Ohio State Saxo alumnus, **Ryan Alexis** who presented an inspiring lecture about music education for our students. Ryan is the Director of Bands at Worthington Kilbourne Middle School and is the Director of Junior Winds which is an 8th/9th grade honor band at Capital University. He was also one of the 2022 winners of the Columbus Symphony Music Educator Award.



Junior Music Education major, **Sean Bauman** was selected as a winner of the Ohio State University School of Music Concerto Competition and in January beautifully performed the *Légende*, Op. 66 for saxophone and orchestra by Florent Schmitt as a soloist with the Ohio State Symphony Orchestra!

There were several guest ensemble residencies in the spring semester including The **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** with **Wynton Marsalis**, the twice Grammy nominated **Imani Winds**, and the four-time Grammy award winning contemporary music ensemble, **Eighth Blackbird**. An Ohio State Reed Quintet and a Saxophone Quartet performed in masterclasses for both Eighth Blackbird and Imani Winds during their respective residencies.



In February, the Studio was fortunate to have special guest improviser, composer, saxophonist, and musicologist, **Dr. Rogério Luiz Moraes Costa** from the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil! He worked with our Saxophone Studio on developing as improvisers and ended his visit with a Free Improvisation Workshop!



Graduate student saxos, **Frankie Wantuch** and **Austin Spillman** traveled to Edmonton, Canada in March to perform “Crickets” for alto saxophone duet by Jordan Reed during the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Region 9 Conference at the University of Alberta.



We ended a fantastic year with our annual Studio Bowling Party. A new bowling champion was crowned! Congratulations, **Zach Langbein** who had a two-game average score of 132 (Dr. Torres’ two-game average was only 98.5 so he’ll have to work a little harder next year).



Sophomore, **Zach Langbein** will be traveling to Vienna, Austria this summer as part of the School of Music’s study abroad course, “Music, Education, and Artistry” where, among many other musical and cultural experiences, he will have an opportunity to study with Dr. Barbara Strack-Hanisch, professor of saxophone at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Earlier in the semester Zach performed in the pit orchestra of Disney’s Freaky Friday the Musical with Off the Lake Productions, the fully student-run theater production at Ohio State University, now in its 26<sup>th</sup> season.

This summer we are excited for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual **Ohio State University Saxophone Camp** held June 11-14, open to saxophone students of all levels from entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade to just graduated 12<sup>th</sup> graders!

## SAXOPHONE CAMP

at Ohio State

# June 11–14

[music.osu.edu/outreach/ysmp/saxophone-camp](https://music.osu.edu/outreach/ysmp/saxophone-camp)



# What is Dr. Torres up to?



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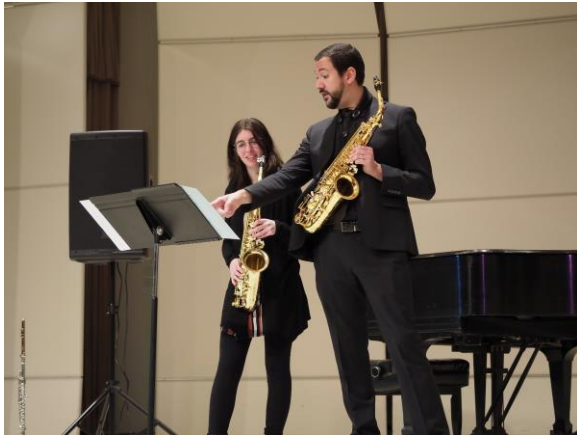
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In the 2022-2023 academic year, Dr. Torres celebrated his eighth year of teaching at Ohio State University and his second year in his new position as Assistant Professor of Practice. This is also his second year teaching composition at Ohio State and in the spring semester he became area head of Composition. Dr. Torres has deepened his commitment to the work of diversity initiatives in the academy and in classical music by serving on the North American Saxophone Alliance Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility and is serving as the Chair of the Ohio State University School of Music Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Dr. Torres continues to serve as the Program Director of the Johnstone Fund for New Music which produced the New Music at Short North Stage Series, bringing prominent contemporary music ensembles from across the United States to Columbus. He had several performances throughout the year including an improvisation during the Faculty Collage Concert (September), a performance in a chamber recital featuring the works of guest composer, Catherine Likhuta (November), a performance as a soloist with the Ohio State Chorale with conductor, Robert Bode (November), and a duet performance with professor of percussion, Susan Powell during the Winds, Brass, Percussion Spectacular faculty recital (February).



In October Dr. Torres traveled to Brazil with his Ohio State colleagues, Dr. David Hedgecoth (music education), Dr. Michael Ibrahim (director), and Dr.

Susan Powell (percussion) for an exciting artistic exchange of masterclass teaching and performing. In São Paulo, Dr. Torres taught a masterclass to the talented saxophone studio of professor Milton Vito and professor Josué Dos Santos at the Escola de Música do Estado de São Paulo. He then was a guest lecturer in the composition class of professor Rogério Luiz Moraes Costa at the Universidade de São Paulo where he discussed improvisation as a compositional tool and as a creative practice and later performed a recital with Dr. Powell at the Universidade de São Paulo. In the city of Curitiba, Columbus' sister city, Dr. Torres taught a saxophone masterclass at the Escola de Música e Belas Artes do Paraná and performed a recital in the beautiful Capela Santa Maria Espaço Cultural.



Tower Duo, Dr. Torres' new music duet with his wife, flutist, Dr. Erin Helgeson Torres, presented a concert, chamber music masterclass, and entrepreneurship lecture as guest artists at Heidelberg University in November.



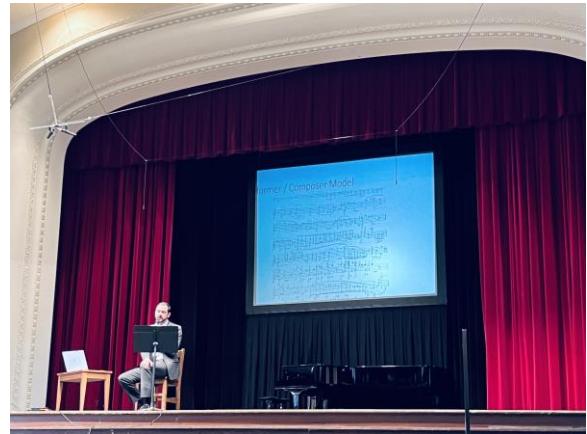
In the beginning of the spring semester, Dr. Torres had the pleasure to work with several talented high school students from across the state in both the Ohio State Honor Band Festival and the OMEA All-

State Band saxophone sectionals.



Dr. Torres' faculty recital in January was his first full recital since before the pandemic. He collaborated with his friends and colleagues, Dr. Jiung Yoon (piano) and Dr. Susan Powell (percussion). The recital was filled with music that was not only beautiful but was also deeply personal.

In February, Dr. Torres joined his two graduate students at the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) Region 9 Conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada where he performed the world premiere of one of his original works, presented a lecture, "The Performer-Composer Model and Beginning Composition Project Ideas for the College Saxophonist," and served on a panel discussion as a member of the NASA Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility.



In April Dr. Torres was a co-organizer of the Ohio State Contemporary Music Festival with special guest, four-time Grammy award winning new music ensemble, Eighth Blackbird. Along with Eighth Blackbird's wonderful contributions, the Festival also included several student performances and a faculty composition recital. During the composition recital Dr. Torres performed one of his original works for saxophone, a work for saxophone by Dr. Tom Wells, and a duet for saxophone by Dr. Vera Stanojevic with DMA student, Frankie Wantuch. He also presented the world premiere of his most recent composition, ["Water Vignettes: Ten Miniatures for Fixed Media and Film."](#)



Two of Dr. Torres' compositions were choreographed in March by local Columbus dance company, Hixon Dance for their show "Like the Hidden Tide."

Dr. Rogério Luiz Moraes Costa from the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil and Dr. Torres hosted a Free Improvisation workshop during Dr. Costa's residency which had 40 participants on Weigel Auditorium stage!



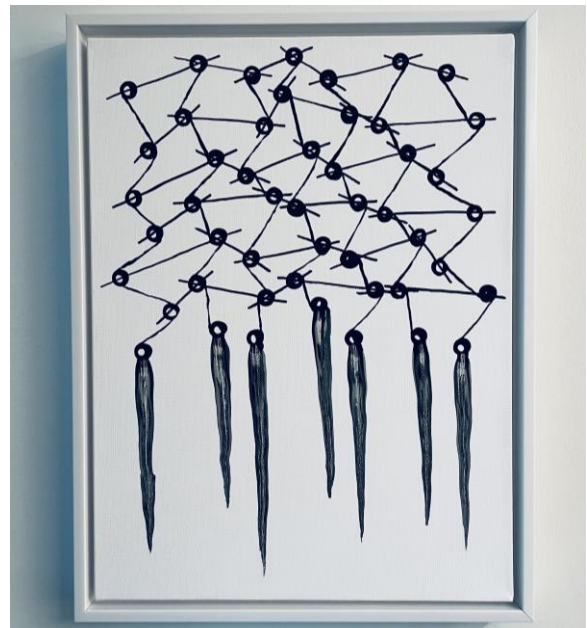
Dr. Torres returned to his alma mater in April to perform as Tower Duo at Northwestern University's, contemporary music festival, NUNC!5 where they performed the title work of their album, "Crosswind" by Chin Ting Chan.



**SAVE THE DATE:** On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Dr. Torres' chamber ensemble, Tower Duo will premiere "*Mountains upon Mountains Like Waves Upon Waves*" for Flute, Saxophone, and Orchestra by award winning composer, Evan Williams, as soloists with the Lima Symphony Orchestra.



Dr. Torres completed several new acrylic paintings for his new office in the Timashev Family Music Building and for his home practice/composing office! He celebrated his birthday this year with his wife in Chicago where he enjoyed time at the Art Institute of Chicago and a lovely concert by the Chicago Symphony.



*Hey Alumni...*



...stay in touch! Send Dr. Torres your current email address! Reach him at [torres.I73@osu.edu](mailto:torres.I73@osu.edu). Can't wait until the end of the year to hear about all this wonderful news? Sign up for our weekly School of Music e-newsletter, [Ovation!](#)

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Saxos Here:*

