

The logo for UNCSA, featuring the letters "UNCSA" in a white, serif font on a dark rectangular background.

THE ASSOCIATES

Creativity in the Service of Compassion

Christal Schanes entered our December 4th board meeting radiating energy – both creative and emotional. We knew from her introduction that she is a master wig designer whose work has been seen on stage and screen, from the Metropolitan Opera to *Saturday Night Live*, for which work she received an Emmy Award in 2012. We soon learned that she is also driven by a compassionate mission: to provide custom medical wigs to cancer patients in need, free of charge.

To grasp the magnitude of this mission, we need to understand how different these creations are from the cheap costume wigs sold in Halloween stores. Each wig Christal designs, and UNCSEA Design and Production students build, begins with a custom “block” - a fabric-covered armature the size and shape of the head for which it is being made. A clear plastic “bubble” - a bit like an old-fashioned swim cap – is fitted first to the head of the eventual wig recipient, then marked for that individual's hairline, location of ears and eyebrows, and the natural direction of that head of hair, including the “crown swirl” that many of us have never managed to tame.

The parameters of the bubble are then duplicated on the “lace” or net base to which individual high-quality human hairs are attached - about *a hundred thousand* of them. The “ventilating” procedure of hand-tying each hair employs the “latch hook” method, similar to crafting a rug, but on a much finer scale. This locks each hair in place, proof against vigorous brushing. The finished wig can then be cut, washed, and styled like the head of real hair that it truly is.

Needless to say, second-rate materials will not serve for a project involving this much artistry and labor. Schanes sources top-quality hair (synthetic is out of the question), and admits that she sometimes finds herself coveting a particularly fine head of hair of someone she sees in public.

The above process represents about one hundred and twenty-five hours of intensive, skilled labor, and a market value of five thousand dollars or more – gifts to enhance the morale and appearance of people battling a fearful disease.

Students in UNCSCA's highly-ranked Design and Production program are required to try their hand at each of its specialty disciplines, using tools ranging from a needle-and-thread to a table saw. The wig building operation at the school includes two workshops, each with stations for about a dozen students to operate. One day's visit saw several who have found here what they hope will be their life's work. Another, when asked what her professional goal is, said “I want to make monsters.” Sure enough, an adjacent workshop has several ghastly latex creations in progress. Thanks to this class, she'll be able to make convincingly hairy monsters.

Clearly, it's a win-win for the UNCSCA Medical Wig Class, to provide both professional experience for student wigmakers and attractive, comfortable wigs for their recipients. But Schanes is simultaneously gearing up for another entire enterprise: *CHRISTALine Studios*. Like the wig class, the studios will have multiple agendas, building wigs and facial hair for the entertainment industry and for individuals, as well as wig rentals and hair and makeup show designs. In addition, the studios will provide job opportunities for outstanding graduates of the UNCSCA program.



A UNCSA Medical Wig Class student positions a new, fully-ventilated wig for preliminary fitting.

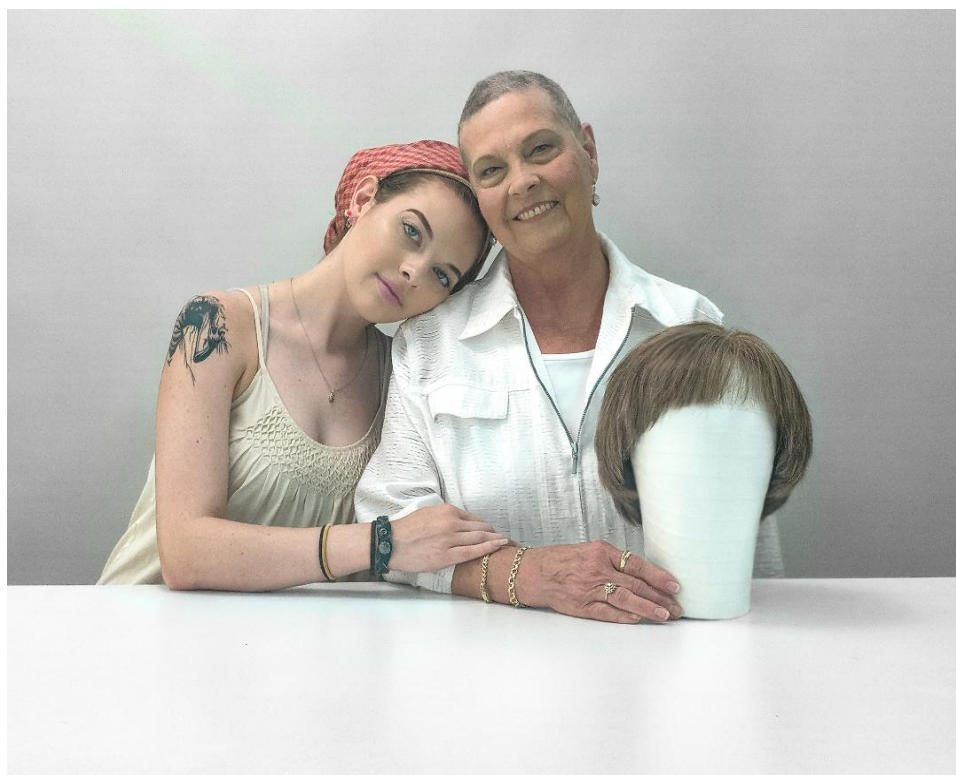


Christal Schanes and a client strategize the cutting phase.

CHRISTALine Studios will donate twenty per cent of the proceeds from these commercial products to its medical wig initiative, *WIGwell*. As with the Medical Wig Class, the *WIGwell Wellness Experience* will involve five phases: consultation; integration of the patient/client's own hair into the wig, if desired; provision of a temporary wig; and wig education, culminating in the fitting, cutting, and styling of the new, gifted wig.

While CHRISTALine Studios is already in operation, its brick & mortar facility is still in the planning-and-development stage, contingent upon the fruition of current fundraising efforts. The current plan calls for a part of the historic 1001 South Marshall Street space to begin internal upfits this spring, with hopes of an official opening on Jan 1, 2020.

Tax-deductible contributions to the WIGwell fund may be made through the Winston-Salem Foundation, or by accepting the *Wacky WIG Challenge*, which involves a donation, the posting of a selfie, featuring pretty much anything you're willing to be seen wearing on your head, and a challenge to friends on social media to join you in supporting WIGwell. Information can be found at christalinestudios.com.



One Instrument, Many Paths

If the UNCSA Orchestra could be likened to an Imperial Battle Cruiser, and the school's Jazz Ensemble to the Millennium Falcon, then student solo performances are like X-wing Starfighters: you're part of a squadron, but out on stage flying alone. Recitals and group concerts by the students of a particular studio, provide an opportunity to discover the talents of individual students – and admission is free.

The range of music presented in the *Guitar Department Fall Concert* on December 7th certainly illustrated the instrument's boundless horizons. Selections ranged from chaste Renaissance lute music of John Dowland, performed by Juliet Gervasi, to an incendiary performance of French guitarist/composer Roland Dyens' *Fuoco* by Harry Ngo. The program featured a couple of standards of the guitar repertoire, originally composed for piano by Isaac Albeniz, including *Granada*, performed by tenth grader Nicolas Mayers, and the theme from John Williams' film score for *Schindler's List*, performed by Payton Harkens. The concert concluded with Tommy Emmanuel's arrangement of Mason Williams' *Classical Gas*, performed by Carson Kilpatrick with the pedal to the metal.

The guitar is thought to have originated in the early sixteenth century – probably derived from the Spanish vihuela, in an era when the lute was the preeminent plucked instrument. It was much admired by Beethoven when played by Mauro Giuliani, and violin ultra-virtuoso Nicolo Paganini actually set his fiddle aside to play and compose for guitar for a while, but even by the early twentieth century it was still regarded by many as a folk instrument. Andrès Segovia elevated the guitar to the status of a “respectable” concert instrument virtually single-handedly, through his own performances and advocacy to the composers who created a modern repertoire for it.

When the North Carolina School of the Arts officially opened its doors in 1965, there was only one degree-granting guitar program in the country. The new school's founders consulted Segovia, himself, who recommended his longtime protege Jesús Silva to be its first guitar teacher. The program continued to thrive under the direction of the eminent guitar pedagogue Aaron Shearer, beginning in 1981.

Joseph Pecoraro has been Guitar Department Chair since 1998. His career reflects the multi-faceted niche in today's world of the instrument he teaches, including recordings and performances of “classical” repertoire, as well as jazz and finger-style guitar.

Truth be told, Pecoraro does not find the term “classical” useful. He suggests, instead, the term “composed music,” as distinct from improvisational music-making. The bottom line is: so many composers and performers are using the guitar in so many different ways today that it would be an exercise in futility to try and categorize it all. Like “classical,” Pecoraro finds “technique” to be a problematic term, saying “it’s not a list of instructions” for what to do with your instrument. Unlike discussing the mechanics of your golf swing, it concerns tiny issues of the muscles of the hand, position of the fingers – even the shape of the fingernails, that don’t lend themselves well to conversation with non-guitarists.

But, whereas any young person who aspires to be a concert violinist or pianist is likely to have received similar grounding in the long-established technique of playing their chosen instrument from an early age, the previous training, experience, and ambitions of guitar students are likely to be much more diverse. Pecoraro says some of his students have begun guitar study as early as age three, others not until their teens, but that intense motivation tends to compensate for any lack of earlier instruction. All UNCSA guitar students are required to learn an “all nylon” [string] - formerly “classical” - repertoire. They will all find that foundation helpful to them for the rest of their careers, regardless of the direction they take.

Pecoraro travels the country as a trainer of teachers of the Suzuki method, perhaps best known to the general public for its instruction in violin. In that capacity, his focus is on the Suzuki technical approach to teaching. He finds that students who have had the benefit of Suzuki instruction from an early age continue to have an advantage at the college level, the key being not a fundamentally different technique but an immersion from an early age in becoming musical – the way one hears, feels, and externalizes music. Pecoraro is also in the process of completing training in teaching the Alexander Technique. In its simplest terms this approach is designed to enable musicians to have a long, healthy career without injuries but, here

again, there's more to it than that. Healthy technique that obviates injury conduces to superior music-making - the musician is never compensating in un-musical ways for physical difficulties.

The UNCSA guitar studio currently has seventeen students, divided between Pecoraro and visiting faculty member Luke Payne. Each young musician has the option of pursuing interest in composing and arranging, in addition to performing. Pecoraro says he has a genuine interest in most of the kinds of music that can be played on a guitar, which he finds entirely consistent with the stated mission of the school: to prepare young artists for a professional career. In working with students' own projects, the emphasis is on what actually works on the instrument, regardless of style.

On the afternoon of December 13th the guitar studio presented a “Combo Concert.” With the rigors of the academic semester behind them, this informal gathering was an opportunity for the students to play for each other and a few friends and, for a number of them, try something new: jazz. To help them explore these uncharted waters, away from written notes, they were joined by a pair of professional jazz musicians - bassist Matt Kendrick and drummer John Wilson.

During a pair of opening pieces, the two jazz veterans were like attentive parents, running alongside their child's first bike ride without training wheels, then gleefully fist-pumping at their first separation to independence. Later in the program, jazz standards *Cherokee* and *West Coast Blues* were more like space walks, the young musicians confidently venturing out, while still securely tethered to their seasoned rhythm section.

Some of the young guitarists also accompanied their own singing. Carson Kilpatrick and Alexis Ward channeled Stevie Wonder in *You Are the Sunshine of My Life*. Juliet Gervasi gave a beguiling performance of *There Will Never Be Another You* which was worlds apart from Dowland lute songs.

Throughout this informal event the amicable culture of the UNCSA guitar studio was palpable, with more advanced students boosting those who are less far along, and everyone having some fun.

Pecoraro devises a theme for the studio's spring concert each year. Asked for a hint about the next one, he says its title will be “Guitwosomes.” So now we know it will be duos, involving guitars. Beyond that, the possibilities are just about limitless.

Another Great Nutcracker, Another Bountiful Nutcracker Feed

One of the extraordinary things about UNCSEA's acclaimed annual presentation of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet is that it is entirely student-produced. Hundreds of students from the school's Dance, Design and Production, and Music schools contribute, with students managing and leading every technical aspect of the production.

As in past years, there were both matinee and evening performances scheduled on the two Saturdays during the show's run. And, by tradition, The UNCSEA Associates again provided hearty sustenance between the performances on the first Saturday, December 8th. This year Bob McNair managed the Nutcracker Feed, backed up by long-time “Nutzfeed” wrangler Carloyn Peddycord and a dozen other energetic Associates.



The Associates and Nutcracker Feed Team

Left to right: Judy Scurry and her granddaughter, Ken Davis, Linda Bettis, Judy McNair, Bob McNair, Carloyn Peddycord, Bennett Perry, Tim Bohon, Pam Short, Vicki Davis and Danny Spillman (not pictured, Sonja Nielsen)

Bob reports that well over a hundred dancers, backstage personnel, Stevens Center managers and guests dined together this year in the festively decorated Banquet Room on the Center's tenth floor.

Special thanks to o'So Eats, Aramark Food Service at UNCSA, Salem Kitchen, and Lowes Foods, plus UNCSA faculty member Dave Olson and fellow Associate Mindy Bloom for generously contributing foodstuffs for this event. The Associates also purchased a plenitude of Firehouse Subs, for which our hungry guests have you to thank, as well.



General Information—Important Links

The Associates Website: <http://www.uncsa.edu/Associates>

At our website, you will find membership forms, a list of our Board members, and other general information.

Email Address: uncsaassociates@gmail.com

The Performance Calendar Website: <http://www.uncsa.edu/performances/>

Our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/uncsaassociates>

Newsletter: uncsaassociates.news@gmail.com