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**GEORGIA
SOUTHERN
UNIVERSITY**

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

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**Professor of Music Named to
Advisory Board of COVID-19 Aerosol
Study in the Performing Arts**



Dr. Allen Henderson, professor of music at Georgia Southern University, was recently invited to join the advisory board of an important research study at Colorado State University. The study, *Reducing Bioaerosol*

Emissions and Exposure in the Performing Arts: A Scientific Roadmap for a Safe Return from Covid-19 aims to reduce the risk of human exposure and co-infection to SARS-COV-2 aerosol during performing arts activities. Only scant evidence exists to document the rate of aerosol release during performing arts activities and whether there are effective means to control such releases and reduce the risk for human exposure). This research seeks to enact a rigorous, data-driven approach to inform a safe return to activities for the performing arts community. “The research group will be testing approximately 100 singers and instrumentalists of varying age and gender, measuring the amount and size of bioaerosols emitted by them when undertaking various musical activities,” says Henderson. This study along with associated studies at the University of Colorado and University of Maryland hope to gather a strong data set to provide direction on the effectiveness of various control measures such as masks and room ventilation and filtration. “Each singer will go through a variety of singing exercises, speaking exercises, and will sing in a variety of styles so that we can provide guidance for those who sing music theater as well as pop styles in addition to classical literature. We will also be including singers of varying ages and who primarily sing non-classical styles in the study as well,” says Henderson.

Collectively, these studies will be the first of this magnitude in the United States to specifically measure the aerosols emitted by performers. A number of others studies have measured airflow but airflow studies conducted have not specifically measured aerosols which have been so often connected with the transmission of COVID-19. Henderson was invited due to his active work in the performing arts during the pandemic with the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) (www.nats.org). He helped conceive and produce one of the most viewed webinars (<https://youtu.be/DFI3GsVzj6Q>) specifically on singing and COVID-19 which has been viewed on YouTube over 200,000 times since May 5th. He also helped produce a series of ten other events online to educate the singing community and provide training and resources to singers and teachers of singing. He and the staff and leadership of NATS converted a national conference slated to involve over 150 speakers and presenters into a virtual event in 8 weeks which drew record attendance and was lauded for its ability to bring the singing community together.

IN MEMORIAM: SUSAN THOMSON

Long-time faculty member **Dr. Susan Thomson** passed away on July 18. A remarkable pianist, her kindness and gentle spirit made her a beloved teacher and friend. There will be a service to honor her Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at Skidaway Island United Methodist Church. Her obituary appears below.

Susan passed away peacefully at home surrounded by loving family and friends the early morning of July 18, 2020, at the age of 65.

She lives on through the hundreds of music students she taught. A Regents, National Merit and Eastman School of Music scholarship winner, she went on to earn advanced degrees from Florida State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she was a Holderness Doctoral Fellow. She was winner of the Vienna Modern Masters Competition and radio broadcasts of her performances have been featured throughout the U.S. Some of her notable piano teachers include Frank Glazer, Arminda Canteros and John Salmon.

Susan was named to the National Honor Roll of Piano Guild Teachers and performed with the Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra. She served on the faculty at both campuses of Georgia Southern University, where she frequently performed as a soloist and accompanist.

Her recordings include Fantasy Rondo by Lukas Foss, who was the subject of her doctoral thesis.

She is survived by her husband, Douglass; sister, Mollie; daughter, Caitlin; and granddaughter, Ella.

A funeral service will be held at Skidaway Island United Methodist Church, Savannah, Georgia, on Saturday, August 1, 2020, at 11 a.m. Masks will be required and social distancing will be practiced.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a gift to the Dean's Fund for Piano at the Eastman School of Music. Donations may be made out to Eastman School of Music and mailed to Eastman Advancement Office, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, NY 14604; or at esm.rochester.edu/gift; or given to the St. Joseph's/Candler Foundation towards the Lewis Cancer Research Pavilion, 5356 Reynolds Street, Suite 400, Savannah, GA 31405.

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