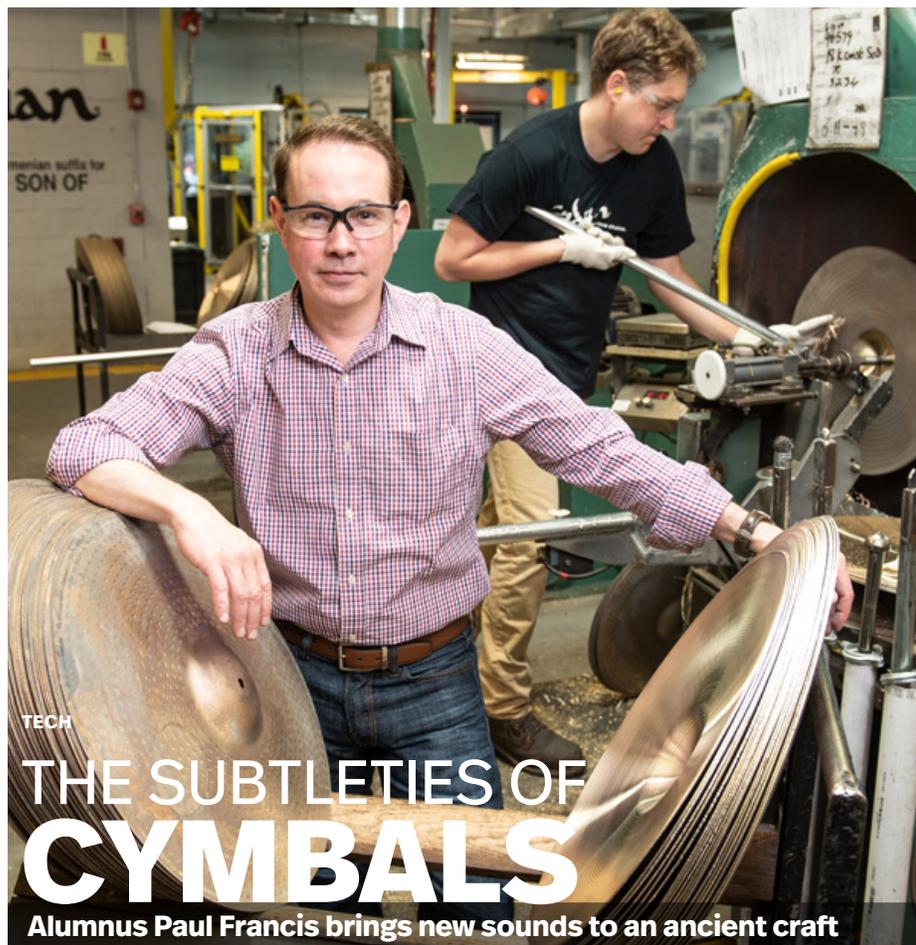


Northeastern
College of
Professional Studies

Alumni News



TECH

THE SUBTLETIES OF CYMBALS

Alumnus Paul Francis brings new sounds to an ancient craft

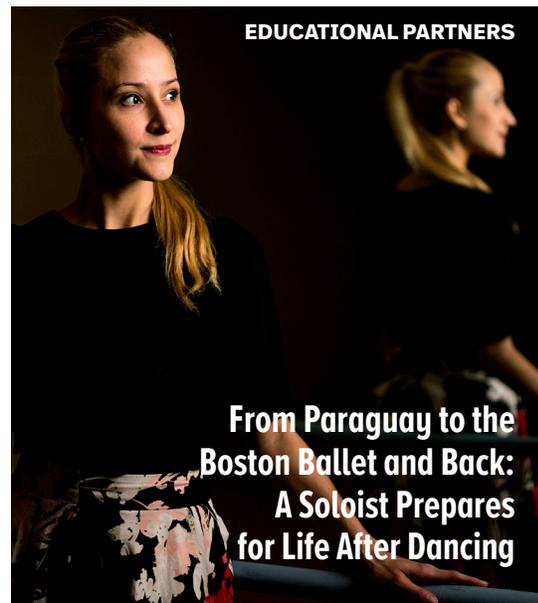
Crashes that cut like glass. A nice bright ping on the ride. For the uninitiated, such phrases might sound nonsensical. For **Paul Francis (CPS '07)**, they are terms of art.

“We get teased quite a bit that when we describe cymbals, it’s like we’re describing wine,” says Director of Cymbal Innovation Paul Francis, at the legendary cymbal maker Avedis Zildjian Company in Norwell, Mass. “We want to be sure that it’s balanced, that it has a full body. It could be dark, it could be bright. You want pure tones. You don’t want out-of-phase frequencies. When drummers talk to us, we know exactly what they’re saying.”

Francis began his own training as a drummer at 10 years old. Though he wasn’t able to afford a professional kit until years later, he was always attuned to the sound of cymbals.

“If you were to look at some of the pictures from high school,” he says, “my cymbals would cost more than the rest of the drum set. The cymbals really color the drum set. It’s the accents. It’s the exclamation points. I always had professional-series cymbals.”

After his graduation from Quincy High in 1986, Francis dreamed of fame and fortune as a professional musician. He studied briefly at Berklee College of Music, earned a certificate in drumming at New York City’s Drummers Collective, and then headed back to Boston, where he moved home and began to confront the stark realities of trying to earn a living as a gigging drummer. *continued on page 3*



EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

From Paraguay to the Boston Ballet and Back: A Soloist Prepares for Life After Dancing

Diana De Ojeda (CPS '18) started taking ballet when she was a toddler in Asunción, Paraguay. She accompanied her aunt to and from her cousin’s ballet lessons. One day, she, 3 years old at the time, asked if she could join.

“And I never left,” she said, with a wide smile.

It’s hardly a stretch to say the ballet world is better for it. De Ojeda studied ballet in Paraguay, as well as Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and across the United States. She’s currently second soloist in the Boston Ballet and was named one of El Mundo’s “30 Under 30,” as one of the most influential Latino leaders in Boston.

But De Ojeda is no longer under 30. She’s 33. And, she said, most professional ballet dancers are considered past their prime by their 40s. So, she started considering new ways to express her artistry and her love for Latin America. A first-of-its-kind partnership between the Boston Ballet and Northeastern that helps professional ballet dancers earn college degrees to prepare them for careers after dancing provided the answer.

Now, she’s launching Apartment No. 3, a home décor company dedicated to selling handmade crafts that are native to Paraguay.

“Northeastern gave me the tools to be able to start my own company,” De Ojeda said. “The experience gave me the confidence to do it.” ■

Read more about Diana’s journey as dancer, student, and entrepreneur at cps.northeastern.edu/alumni

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



When the college conferred more than 1,600 degrees at our spring graduation, it was a time for celebration and swapping stories about all of the unexpected places education can

take us, including to the edge of one's seat for a baseball no-hitter.

Here's the story: One of the 2019 class marshals, Donald D.J. Stadtler, reflected on the surprise he received in an undergraduate management course. During the first class, as students introduced themselves online, Donald recognized the name of a classmate, Nate Schierholtz, a retired Major League Baseball player who had played right field for the Washington Nationals. Nate was now studying for a bachelor's degree in Management for a post-baseball career.

The former player and fan connected about one the Nationals' most memorable games—a no-hitter pitched at Nationals stadium in 2014—and discovered to their delight that they had both been there. Nate was a player on the team and Donald was a fan in the stands with his son. The excitement of that day is a cherished memory for all three.

While our students most often find connections with each other through coursework or shared professional interests, sometimes what they share is a perfect day for a ballgame or another memory close to their hearts. I am glad that Donald and Nate chose Northeastern as the place where their paths crossed on their road to what's next.

In this issue we celebrate all the ways our students find their way to us and most of all, the meaningful and interesting things they do with their Northeastern education. Thank you to all who support our mission and students.

Sincerely,

Mary Loeffelholz
Dean



IN MEMORY

One Scholar's Dream Opens Doors for Others

William "Bill" Simonetti always wanted to be a teacher. His caring smile and sharp sports jacket gave him the air of someone who knew what he wanted: to make the world a better place through education.

While pursuing his bachelor's degree in education at Northeastern University, he worked as a counselor, tutor, and classroom instructor for children with learning disabilities—and in his free time, among other hobbies, sang and played the conga in a five-piece band.

In 1973, Bill was headed home from band practice when he was hurt in a terrible car accident. Bill's injuries left him unable to function or communicate in the ways he had before, and he would not be the middle school teacher he had dreamed of becoming. While his life would never be the same, Bill was determined to finish his degree at Northeastern. With the help of his family and friends, Bill persevered and graduated with his class in 1975. Although Bill's teaching ambitions were cut short,

his strength and positivity persisted. "Bill's faith, determination, and optimism pulled him through a very challenging life," says his aunt Mary R. Tornabene. "He never once complained about his circumstances."

To honor Bill's passion for teaching, Mary and his brother James Simonetti established the William P. Simonetti Scholarship at the College of Professional Studies to support students pursuing careers in elementary and secondary education. "Bill's eyes lit up when I told him about the scholarship his brother and I wanted to create for him." Mary adds, "He loved the idea."

Bill passed away on August 20, 2018, and through the Simonetti Scholarship, made possible by a gift from his brother, Bill's legacy will touch the lives of Northeastern students for generations to come. "Our family is grateful to those who have already contributed to the scholarship in Bill's memory," says Mary. "We hope that other Northeastern community members will recognize the importance of such a fund when planning their gifts to the university." ■

READ MORE

Read how **Phil McTigue (CPS'18)** went from stopping narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan to developing homeland security strategy. cps.northeastern.edu/alumni



BY THE NUMBERS

Last year,
the Scholarship Committee
awarded **186 students**
\$561,105 made possible by
donors like you



Megan Doe (CPS '19) was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach English in Germany after earning her master's in Global Studies and International Relations.

"The Fulbright program was created to help foster peace and mutual understanding. In many ways, the Northeastern program does this by bringing students and faculty of diverse backgrounds together to learn and to grow from one another," she explains. Her grandfather came to the U.S. from Germany in 1952 as a Fulbright scholar. While in Germany, Megan will also work with a civic organization that supports refugees in order to learn about migration law and policy.

Read more at cps.northeastern.edu/alumni

Foundation Year Learn about 10 years of improving college graduation rates of Boston high school students.

Request the report from Tamar Schiess, major gifts officer, at T.Schiess@northeastern.edu.



Francis, holding an unfinished K Constantinople cymbal, which is part of a series of cymbals that he designed with Armand Zildjian.

continued from page 1

His parents were supportive, but also practical, and they insisted that he find a day job. He landed an interview at Zildjian through his drumming teacher in 1989 and soon shoehorned his way into an entry-level position that had him sweeping the factory floor and hanging Christmas decorations in the front office lobby.

For a young drummer, Francis says, working at Zildjian was “much like being Charlie in Willy Wonka’s candy factory.” His enthusiasm and hard work impressed the bosses, and within a month he had begun to train as a lathe operator, using carbide cutting tools to shave material from each cast-metal disc until it reached the target weight for the cymbal it would become. For the next seven years, he honed his skill at lathing, the most difficult process in cymbal making, and in 1995 he was promoted to research and development technician, developing new cymbals for artists and the marketplace.

Making great cymbals, Francis says, is as much art as science. At Zildjian it started as a form of magic. According to the company’s website, Avedis Zildjian was “an Armenian alchemist in the city of Constantinople in the early 17th century. While attempting to create gold by combining base metals, he discovered an alloy of copper, tin, and traces of silver with unique sound qualities.”

Sustaining that tradition is part of Francis’s job. Following his 1995 promotion, he apprenticed under Armand Zildjian, then president of the company, who had learned the craft from his father, Avedis Zildjian III.

Under Armand’s tutelage, Francis became a master. Before Armand’s death in 2002, the two worked together to develop an array of Zildjian products including K Constantinople Orchestral and drumset cymbals, A Zildjian & Cie Vintage series and the A Zildjian 15” Sweet hats and 21” Sweet Ride. But there was much more to come.

“One day,” Francis says, “I got called up from the factory to one of the conference rooms. The vice president of manufacturing was there, the Zildjians were there, and my direct boss was there. I was thinking, ‘uh-oh, I must be in trouble.’”

Instead of a reprimand, they offered Francis the opportunity to continue his education. Soon he was enrolled in evening classes at Northeastern’s Lowell Institute School and on his way to a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering technology. He was also learning that returning to school as an adult was not without its challenges.

“In the beginning it was very scary,” Francis says. “I hadn’t taken a math or science class for many, many years.”

Some of those early nerves settled as he began to form bonds with his peers, many of whom were, like him, professionals earning degrees related to the fields in which they worked. In study groups at Snell Library, they would meet to work out problems and help each other understand the course material. Under the pressure of learning a new discipline, lasting connections were forged. “I have some lifelong friends because of Northeastern,” Francis says.

Still, there were times when he thought he might not make it.

“I ran into some trouble my first semester with pre-calculus and was going to quit school,” he says. “I just didn’t get it. I was getting tests back with grades of 40 and 50. I just could not wrap my head around that material.”

His wife suggested he seek help from his professor outside of class, and he followed her advice. During office hours, and in the teachers’ lounge before class, Francis turned problems over and over with instructors who, he says “just wanted you to learn.”

The persistence paid off, and Francis was particularly proud that his mother, his wife, and two of his three children were able to attend his 2007 graduation. Promotions followed at work, and in 2017 he returned to Northeastern to present a speech at a scholarship reception. Addressing current students at the college, he reflected on his own experience and offered some words of encouragement. “Especially for night students,” he says, “it’s tough. I was raising a family and working 50, 60, 70 hours a week. The only thing that I can say is, and it’s in that speech: Don’t stop. Just keep going. It’s worth it.”



His employer agrees. Craigie Zildjian, Armand Zildjian’s daughter and the company’s president and chair of its board of directors, says Francis is an essential member of the Zildjian team.

“My father devoted the last ten years of his life to achieving his succession plan,” she says. “In working closely with Paul Francis, Armand provided us with a seamless transition and an even more ambitious level of product innovation for the future.” ■

Four Countries. Four Students. One United Nations Summit to Promote Gender Equality

For four Northeastern students, volunteering at a United Nations commission was more than just a course assignment; it was a chance to represent their countries on the world stage.

Barbara Alcena, Movlan Aliyev, Aislinn Mangan, and Juan Ning, graduate students in Dr. Tatjana Kobb's public diplomacy class in the Global Studies and International Relations program, volunteered at the 63rd annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at U.N. headquarters in New York City in March.



The U.N. Commission, founded in 1946, is the principal global diplomatic body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Representatives from U.N. member states and certain nonprofit organizations gather each year to assess global issues

that affect gender equality in order to come up with specific plans to address those issues, country by country.

In her class, Kobb offered students a chance to volunteer at the two-week-long summit if they made a compelling case for being there. The volunteers helped facilitate discussions and took notes on what was discussed, as well as attended forums for their own learning. ■

Read more at cps.northeastern.edu/alumni



DEVELOPMENT

\$4.4M Federal Grant Provides Funding for Diversity in STEM

Northeastern University President Joseph E. Aoun and Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced last fall a program developed by Northeastern and Middlesex Community College to offer students a fast track to earning associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees in biotechnology as preparation for careers in life sciences. The \$4.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation funds scholarships that support low-income and underrepresented minorities—a critical focus for industry, government, and higher education institutions as they work together to increase the number of students in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

The grant will fund approximately 530 scholarships of up to \$10,000 per year per student in the Biotechnology associate to master's program. The scholarships, when combined with federal financial aid and other assistance, will completely cover or significantly reduce students' out-of-pocket tuition costs. It will also prepare students for the region's biotechnology job market by providing them with research experiences, paid internships, mentorship, and academic and career advising. ■

Read more at cps.northeastern.edu/alumni

TECHNOLOGY

Using Remote Sensing to Unearth Mayan Ruins in Guatemala



In 2014, **Matthew Cardona** was standing in a shed near his father's childhood

home in Guatemala. The walls were lined with boxes and buckets filled with unearthed Mayan artifacts. He was shown intricate pottery and obsidian masks and knives.

Cardona, a master's student in geospatial services (the modern tools for mapping and analysis), was able to investigate the origin of these artifacts as part of a class on remote sensing for archaeology. Looking through satellite images on his laptop, he started noticing unusual shapes in the landscape that he believed to be undiscovered Mayan ruins near his extended family's farm in southeastern Guatemala. ■

Read more about what Cardona and his classmates found at cps.northeastern.edu/alumni

The Northeastern College of Professional Studies Alumni Newsletter is published for the alumni of the College of Professional Studies, the School of Professional and Continuing Studies, University College, the Boston Evening School, Lincoln College, the Lowell Institute School, and the School of Education.