

## Professors Honored with Prestigious Musicology Awards

Two University of Rochester and Eastman School of Music professors have received prestigious awards from the American Musicological Society. Honey Meconi was named a recipient of the Noah Greenberg Award and Ralph P. Locke received the H. Colin Slim Award at the organization's recent annual meeting.

The Slim Award, which is given for an article of exceptional merit published during the previous year, was presented to Locke for his article "Beyond the Exotic: How 'Eastern' is *Aida*?" The article appeared in the July 2005 edition of the *Cambridge Opera Journal*.

In his article, Locke, who is professor of musicology at the University's Eastman School of Music, proposes a new approach to studying how Western composers portray ancient and non-Western cultures. Though critics traditionally have focused on a few short passages in Verdi's *Aida* that sound particularly "different" or "foreign," Locke demonstrates that other musical passages in the opera interact with drama and visuals to characterize ancient Egypt and its citizens in various specific ways. He points out that early costume designs represented the Ethiopian captives as uncultured and violent while early interpretations of the slave Aida emphasized her anger and energy over her vocal exquisiteness. Locke's study reveals that the opera is richer in social and dramatic implications than current performances and analyses suggest. The award committee described the article as "a tour-de-force of analysis," praising its "fresh perspectives, combining musical analysis, cultural history, and information from a wide array of primary sources that many scholars have overlooked."

Locke is a four-time winner of the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award, which is presented annually by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers for excellence in music writing. He is a highly regarded scholar and widely published author on American musical life and on the music of Berlioz, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Verdi, Schumann, and other composers. He is senior editor of *Eastman Studies in Music*, a book series published by the University of Rochester Press; the author of *Music, Musicians, and the Saint Simonians*; and co-editor of *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*.

The Greenberg Award, given for distinguished contributions to historical performing practices, recognized Meconi for her two-part project titled "Extreme Singing." The project, which focuses on Renaissance music composed and performed in very low registers, involves a forthcoming CD by the Vox Early Music Ensemble, a 12-member professional a cappella ensemble based in Ann Arbor, Mich., and co-winner of the Greenberg Award. The CD will include Pierre de la Rue's *Requiem*, one of the lowest-pitched pieces of music for a cappella voices. Meconi is also writing an article, titled "Extreme Singing," that points out evidence confirming the performance of such pieces at written pitch rather than transposed to a higher range. The award committee described the project as "a marvelous integration of work in music history, theory, performance, and performance practice, with spectacular results."

Meconi holds dual positions as professor of music in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering and professor of musicology at the Eastman School of Music. A specialist in music before 1600, she is author of *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court*. She is the editor of *Early Musical Borrowing* and *Fortuna desperata: 36 Settings of an Italian Song* and has published articles in numerous journals, including the *Journal of the Royal Music Association*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, and the *Journal of Musicology*. Meconi is also the coordinator of The Hildegard Project, a long-term undertaking to perform all of the 12th century nun's music. She

has been a Fulbright Fellow, an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, and a Fellow at the Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence.

The American Musicological Society, the premiere scholarly organization in the music field, was founded in 1934 as a non-profit organization to advance research in the various fields of music.