

Jane Frazee Distinguished Scholar-Artist Series

Sunday, July 18, 2021, 1-4:30 p.m.
Anderson Student Center, Woulfe Alumni Hall

The 2020 distinguished scholar-artist is Dr. Vanessa Cornett-Murtada, Director of Keyboard Studies and Associate Professor of Music at the University of St. Thomas.

The Counterculture of Contemplative Education

Mindfulness is a counterculture in a society that values busyness and burnout as indicators of success and status. Teachers and students alike are more distracted, divided, and overcommitted than any generation before. Fortunately, our greatest resource is how we choose to direct our attention at any given time. Contemplative education is a philosophy of teaching that integrates introspection and experiential learning to develop awareness and self-understanding, to help students learn who they are, search for larger purpose for their lives, and become fully actualized human beings. Leaders in this growing field envision an education that facilitates the realization of our connection to each other, opening the heart and mind to true community, deeper insight, sustainable living, and a more just and compassionate society. Although mindfulness is a recent and popular trend in Western culture, it is frequently misunderstood and oversimplified. In this seminar we will explore the research on the benefits of mindfulness, strategies for implementing contemplative pedagogy in the music classroom, and applications of mindfulness to manage performance anxiety and strengthen music-making skills. We will emphasize accessible, informed, and inclusive mindfulness practices that encourage social connection, self-determination, and more joyful and transformative musical experiences.



Dr. Vanessa Cornett-Murtada

Vanessa Cornett-Murtada is the Director of Keyboard Studies and Associate Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy. Her areas of expertise include performance anxiety management for musicians, the psychology of peak performance, and the mental health and well-being of musicians. A certified meditation instructor, she is especially interested in contemplative practices in higher education, trauma-sensitive mindfulness practices, and the link between mindfulness and music performance.

*Dr. Cornett-Murtada is author of the book *The Mindful Musician: Mental Skills for Peak Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2019). An associate editor for the *Piano Magazine* (formerly *Clavier Companion*), she oversees the magazine's regular column on musician health and wellness.*

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