



Citation of

Professor Frederick W. Bianchi

for the

2023 Board of Trustees' Award for

Outstanding Research and Creative Scholarship

Since his arrival to WPI almost 30 years ago, Professor Frederick Bianchi has established himself as a world-class scholar, teacher, artist, and developer of cutting-edge applications in Music Technology. According to his peers, he possesses “one of the most original minds in the field today.”

Professor Bianchi’s Virtual Orchestra project, which he began in 1987, has steadily evolved into a worldwide musical game-changer in the fields of musical theater and opera. As is not uncommon for revolutionary advancements in technology, the project was initially controversial among pit orchestra musicians and their unions. However, the advantages and virtues of Professor Bianchi’s digital orchestra technology have become clear over time. After co-founding Realtime Music Solutions Inc., Professor Bianchi worked directly with London West End producer Sir Cameron Mackintosh, as well as acclaimed composers including Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sir Paul McCartney, and Claude-Michel Schonberg. His work on Broadway and across the United States and Europe has been covered in depth in the pages of *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, among other publications. His Virtual Orchestra has been used in several groundbreaking productions by Cirque du Soleil and in performances at the Switzerland Opera using 360 audio speakers. To date, nearly 300,000 licensed performances using the Virtual Orchestra have occurred. Professor Bianchi's inventions in Music Technology have earned him many national and international awards, including the Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music.

Professor Bianchi also possesses great skills and aesthetic range as a composer of international repute. His music has received major awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the Bourges International Confederation of Electroacoustic Music, and the Russolo-Pratella competition, attesting to the reception of his work in the composition community. His artistic sympathies span a wide range, and he utilizes this breadth effectively in

his courses, drawing in the students and rooting the technical material in the fertile soil of great music.

Professor Bianchi's work as director of music technology and a faculty member at WPI has provided a platform for sharing with students a deeper understanding of the relationship between media technologies and their increasingly important role in today's society. More importantly, Professor Bianchi and his colleagues have been creating a fertile environment for WPI students to explore both the technological and artistic aspects of interactive media as well as its social and philosophical implications. Professor Bianchi's fun personality motivates those around him, while also conveying a conscientious and disciplined approach to technical and organizational details. He has been resourceful in cultivating lab and studio environments in which class work, independent projects, graduate research, concerts, and recordings all take place. He also helped to establish the Interactive Media and Game Development major at WPI, recruiting colleagues from across many different disciplines at the Institute and beyond.

In conclusion, Professor Bianchi has attained significant international stature in music technology, with a substantial track record of creative and scholarly work. His reach in the professional musical theatre world can be considered unprecedented among his peers in academia—it is hard to think of another scholar in the field of music technology who has collaborated as closely with artists of the highest caliber. Today, the technology he developed and patented is a testament to Professor Bianchi's vision, ingenuity, and perseverance. Over the past 25 years, the worldwide impact of that technology in the performing arts, and the initial public resistance to the technology, is recorded in history and are now part of the public record. This is a history that unfolded on the world stage, at the highest levels of the performance industry, and has influenced the arts on six continents. Thus, it is our great honor to recognize Professor Fred Bianchi in acknowledgment of his outstanding scholarly achievements and service to the society, as a true embodiment of the values of excellence, innovation, and collaboration that define our institution.

2023 Committee

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