Musical works are forever new as they are brought to life in performance, no matter when they were composed. This is one of music’s most magical gifts—and the greatest works can speak with passion and relevance to each succeeding generation.

But there is something especially exciting about being an “ear witness” to the birth, the premiere, the very first performance of a brand-new composition. This spring, the Indiana University community has been a witness to several significant musical births, highlighted in feature articles in this issue of IU Music.

Composer Bernard Rands’ and librettist J. D. McClatchy’s new opera, Vincent, commissioned by the Jacobs School of Music in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Indiana University music department in 1910, premiered this April in the Musical Arts Center.

Another celebration of the 100th anniversary is highlighted in a feature article on the Jacobs School’s Composition Department: faculty member Claude Baker’s new piano concerto, From Noon to Starry Night, given its premiere in January by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and pianist Marc-André Hamelin, conducted by Gilbert Varga. The work marks the first of a “decade of commissions” for IU faculty composers, celebrating the journey from the Department of Music’s founding in 1910 to the establishment of the IU School of Music in 1921.

The April 8th premiere performance of Vincent coincides with the ceremonial groundbreaking for the new Jacobs School Studio Building on the corner of Third Street and Jordan Avenue.

Exterior and interior views of the new building, marking the entrance to the university’s music, fine arts, and performing arts district, are included on pages 22 and 23.

This four-block district, on the eastern side of the campus, represents the richest cultural environment of any campus in our nation. And from this Jordan corridor comes infinite potential for artistic collaboration—the art museum and Vincent, the cinema and Metropolis, the African American Arts Institute and our Traditions concert, Radio and Television Services and our streaming projects, the IU Auditorium and our Cleveland Orchestra residency, the Theatre Department and Don Freund’s Passion with Tropes; cultural treasures each, admired for their excellence, beloved for their generous collaborative spirit.

This spring’s groundbreaking on Jordan Avenue is a reminder of the exceptional neighborhood in which we reside. The environment all of its residents create is a cultural wonder. And perhaps for you, as for ballet graduate Lauren Fadeley, the spring of the year conjures memories of the campus and these environs, as she recalls, “Every time it starts getting nice out in the spring, I think to myself, ‘Wow, I miss B-town and that campus right now!’ There’s just something about Little 500 and the end of the year and the blooming flowers by the Sample Gates that makes me feel all warm inside thinking about it.”

Our best wishes from Bloomington,

Gwyn Richards
Dean, IU Jacobs School of Music