

*ARTICLE as it Appeared in Hampton University Press
by Matthew Smith 22 February 2002*

If a jaw drops in an auditorium, and the person is too awestruck to notice, did it really happen? This is a most welcome paradox affecting those who attended composer Stephen Melillo's seminar "***Correlations between Music, Mathematics, and Physics***" on February 19th in Dett Auditorium. Mr. Melillo holds degrees from the Boston Conservatory of Music and Columbia University, is a member of numerous professional organizations, holds black belts in multiple martial arts, and has served as a guest conductor at far too many venues to list. Additionally, he has written (or "organized" as he would say, since music already exists: it cannot be created) more than 900 musical works, including over eleven hours of music for wind and percussion ensembles of the 2nd and 3rd millennium, symphonies, concertos, as well as many television and film scores, for which he has received Emmy- and Academy-Award nominations. Also, Mr. Melillo served for many years as a music educator, and the more than 50 programs he has consulted and arranged for have achieved innumerable accolades in their respective musical realms. Even with this greatly abbreviated list, it is safe to say that Stephen's resume speaks for itself.

Steve is certainly no stranger to Hampton University. He has guest conducted several times, including the first and second annual Hampton University High School Honor Bands, and the Symphonic Winds have also been under his baton. This past November, Steve included Hampton University band members in two of three videos in his Teaching Suite: "***Let's Find Out – Strategies for the Music Educator.***" Amazingly, he teaches students how to teach themselves all 15 major scales ("*and much more*") perfectly in 15 minutes, and also how to read and write any rhythm in the span of one lesson period. For anyone unfamiliar with these concepts, the teaching techniques he uses are truly revolutionary.

Students and faculty from many different fields had their eyes opened to seemingly fundamental concepts within all three disciplines, employing relationships that most had never before encountered. He began the lesson by distributing a Concept Intersection Chart outlining relationships between topics that seem vastly different at first glance. For example, the simple concept of a binary operation is clearly evident in music (*sound or silence; rhythm; beat; pulse; counting*) science (*computer code, communication technology*) and mathematics (*the base system*). Even more intriguing is the fact that intervals are expressed the same way in all three disciplines: distance, rest, space, time, and the quantizing of time and data. The chart goes on to relate ideas that many 'musicians' would throw their hands up at, such as symmetry, periodicity, wave theory, and recursion to name a few. While the scope of this article is much too small to describe everything else included in the seminar, we ran the gamut of musical and physical history, discussing everything from Pythagoras' discoveries of Music in nature, to Kepler's Harmony of the Spheres, to theories of Quantum Physics and the essence of sound itself.

In short, at the conclusion of the event, Mr. Melillo was honored with a lengthy standing ovation, and everyone in attendance agreed that he should become a Teacher at Hampton. Discussions have already arisen about the possibility of a Music Composition degree program (*in collaboration with Hampton's current Composer-In-Residence, Dr. Harvey Stokes*) that could attract many more students to the Music Department, and make Hampton only the second HBCU with such a program (*Howard University is the other*). We hope to have Stephen Melillo back on campus again soon, but until then, please visit his incredible website: www.stormworld.com, and as Steve would say, "Godspeed!"