

FOUNDATION TIES

Dr. Michael Buckles, assistant professor • Recipient, Henry C. Alexander Endowed Professorship in Music • Recipient, JPMorgan Chase Endowed Professorship in Music



PROFESSORSHIP IN ACTION

Celebrating Accomplishments

The concert halls aren't beating on Dr. Michael Buckles' door just yet, but he's beating on theirs.

Buckles, an accomplished violinist with music degrees from Tulane, Louisiana State University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, has served as his own manager, agent and performer for the past three years as he seeks to make the most of the Henry C. Alexander and JPMorgan Chase endowed professorships that he received from the McNeese Foundation. The professorships have funded performance tours across the South as Buckles strives to make his violin heard.

"Until you have name recognition, you have to find venues that are interested in listening to you play. If you are invited to play, you have to have your own money for travel and expenses. It's not easy, but it has to be done. Performances provide name recognition and money provides for the initial performances," Buckles said.

Performances have included concert and recital halls in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Tennessee and Texas. He has fall recitals planned at Texas Christian and Loyola universities and this summer he cut a recording at the University of Virginia for Innova, the music label of the American Composers Forum.

"I can't place a monetary value on the endowed professorships because I'm still seeing the fruits of those awards. I have received calls based on my recent performances and I would not have been able to make those performances without the professorships," Buckles said.

Although he has thrown much of his energy toward his performance career, Buckles maintains that his role as an educator is just as important as concerts and recital halls. Buckles has developed string programs in both the New Orleans and Lake Charles areas and has served as director of the Lake Charles area youth orchestra. He also serves in a variety of

administrative roles, which include the past string chair of the Louisiana Music Teacher's Association, the orchestra division chair of the Louisiana Music Educator's Association and president of the Louisiana Chapter of the American String Teacher's Association.

His interest in contemporary music led to the creation of the McNeese Center for Contemporary Violin Studies, which allows living composers across the country to submit their works for review in monthly reading sessions. Buckles' recording project utilizes the electric violin, a vital element to electric strings in modern music.

"The seeds of many of my current successes came from those initial awards," Buckles said. "I was happy to see that the University honored faculty this way. When you have a moment to stop, reflect and celebrate accomplishment with your colleagues and friends, it's definitely special."