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CME Director Sharing Musical Skills in Virtual Concert

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CME Director Sharing Musical Skills in Virtual Concert

Ryan Miller to appear in Leadership Mississippi 'Conquering COVID Through Music'

JUNE 26, 2020 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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Ryan Miller, associate director for external operations at the Haley Barbour Center for Manufacturing Excellence, is set to perform July 2 during the 'Conquering COVID Through Music' virtual concert. Submitted photo

Editor's note: The Mississippi Economic Council has postponed this event. A new day/time has not been announced.

OXFORD, Miss. – A University of Mississippi staff member whose guitar and vocal talents have made him popular on social media is among four Leadership Mississippi alumni performing in a virtual concert set for Thursday (July 2).

Ryan Miller, associate director for external operations at the university's Haley Barbour Center for Manufacturing Excellence, will share his musical skills during "Conquering COVID Through Music." The free event, which begins at 5 p.m., is presented by the Mississippi Economic Council's Leadership Mississippi program.

To view the concert, go to <https://msnec.com/conquering-covid-through-music/>.

"I am a songwriter at heart who loves to write and sing the songs rolling around in my head," said Miller, who graduated from Leadership Mississippi in 2017. "My plan is to play many of those songs and maybe some others."

"I will be performing alone during this program. It will consist of me, my guitar, some wrong notes, some right notes and a whole lot of heart."

Miller came to Oxford in 1997 on a music scholarship. He sang with the Ole Miss Concert Singers, the Ole Miss Jazz Ensemble and Blue 10 Harmony, the latter a group he helped form while attending UM. He also sang the national anthem at ball games.

"I love music and believe in its communicative power," Miller said. "As humans, we gravitate to music to help us process all sorts of things during different periods of our lives. That fact is fascinating to me, and I love thinking through how music is such a gift for those reasons and many more."

After completing his bachelor's degree, Miller worked in the Office of Admissions before enrolling in the School of Law in 2005. He graduated and passed the bar exam in 2008. However, he never worked as an attorney and went to work for the Center for Manufacturing Excellence 12 years ago.

Other Leadership Mississippi alumni slated to perform are Barbie Bassett, meteorologist at WLBT-TV in Jackson; retired Lt. Col. Frederick E. Vernado; and Carmen Walters, president of Tougaloo College.

"At a time when concerts and other sizable public events are being postponed and canceled in the best interest of public health, we have decided to create a virtual platform to give our alumni the opportunity to share their talent," said Courtne Mack, one of the hosts for the concert.

"We believe that music can have a powerful and positive impact in everyone's life, and we want positive memories like these to override negative ones."

Miller said his fervent desire is that people simply find joy in the event.

"Maybe the songs sung will take their minds off of hard things, scary things," he said. "Maybe something I sing will take someone's mind off the harsh realities of living in a chaotic time just for a few minutes. Music can do that. It continues to do that for me."

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