

RPYO News of Note

Winter 2005

Maureen Placilla, Editor

From the Podium

By Dr. David Harman



Awareness

An orchestra, especially a good orchestra such as ours, is a miraculous collection of people. I've got a good vantage point to observe just how magical and unusual our music making can be both in terms of the sound which is created and in terms of how this beauty is achieved through our physical efforts.

Consider some of what's necessary to make our orchestra function at its best:

Individual talent, development of that talent, and a very high level of skill on one's instrument.

Dedication by each person to really learning his or her part of the musical puzzle to the very best of one's ability so that each person's contribution can be made at its highest possible level.

Determination to contribute your best efforts even when other things seem to be working against your doing so. People may have tons of homework, social issues, personal stresses or maybe just don't happen to feel very well. Yet, on most Sundays and concert days we work together to achieve something beautiful because we love to and are able to do so.

Awareness. To contribute to the music making, we need to be both prepared and aware. Ideally, if each person knows his or her music really well, players can become aware of more than simply their own part. In fact, such a level of awareness is essential for an orchestra to play really well together. In addition to making music with your immediate neighbor (stand partner or entire section), really great ensemble players are aware of what the rest of the orchestra is doing. It's like chamber music on a grand scale. If the violins enter at a certain point, it's best to know what was going on just before that entrance, how their

section fits with what's coming on while their playing and where the musical thread goes when the violins end their phrase. All of that in addition to observing what the section leader and the conductor are doing to help shape and enhance the flow of the music through time.

The best players watch carefully. It's great for me to see how many of us are playing with the group as opposed to simply playing with their own individual part. I can see it not only in how they play but also often by making contact with players' eyes. That can be done well with peripheral vision as well as with a good straightforward glance.

Watch the RPO players in concert. They look up a lot, especially at critical moments in a piece when being together must be done through visual awareness even more than through musical perception. Being together means being aware together of both the musical environment and of our common musical goals for a piece.

Our joint concert offers a truly exciting opportunity to develop our awareness skills by working together with professionals and also with the RPO's music director. Feel free to ask them questions and enjoy the heightened experience which this event brings. The magic which can result from our collective awareness is something special both for us as an orchestra and for our audience. Thanks for making all of it possible through your hard work and talent!



In This Issue

Awareness.....	1
Concert Preview.....	2
Musical Mentors.....	3
The Art of Faking It	4
Alumni Notes	5
Mentoring at the Eagle Arts Academy.....	5
Standing Ovations go to	6
RPYO Alumnus Premiere	6

Concert Preview

Tone Poems and Legends

Side-by-Side Concert with the RPO

Sunday, March 6, 3:00 P.M.

Eastman Theatre

Supported by the Marc and Ann Iacona

Family Music Foundation

David Harman, Conductor, with

Christopher Seaman, Guest Conductor

Concerto Competition Winners:

Heather Taylor, Flute, and

Stephen Kim, Violin

Liszt, *Les Préludes*

Griffes, *Poem for Flute*

Vitali, *Chaconne for Violin*

Berlioz, *Roman Carnival Overture*

Stravinsky, *Firebird Suite*

If any musical form typified 19th century musical Romanticism, it was the tone, or symphonic, poem. In the mid-1800s, Franz Liszt was the first to create these one movement works inspired by an idea, a literary work, or even a place or a person. Audiences who might be cool towards more abstract music were immediately drawn to these musical pictures. They did not have to be able to follow a formal musical structure, such as the sonata-allegro form, in order to feel they could understand and enjoy the work. Often there was, in fact, no set structure beyond a main theme and its transformations. Sometimes composers helpfully even wrote down exactly what idea or landscape or personality they had in mind so that the listener could follow along with the music. If no description were given, the listener could just relax and flow along with the music, creating his or her own mental pictures.

With the major exception of Brahms, most of the great symphonic composers of the later 1800s composed tone poems: Smetana, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, and, above all, Richard Strauss. Even Stravinsky's early works were full of musical descriptions or stories. What is the *Rite of Spring* but a long tone poem about a pagan ritual set to stark, pulsating rhythms?

Liszt's *Les Préludes*, composed in 1848, has been called "the most popular symphonic poem ever written." Perhaps this is because its extra-musical theme is universal, the emotions we all experience:

love, misery, serenity, and courage.

Hector Berlioz did not use the label "tone poem" to describe his music, even though many of his works, like the *Symphonie fantastique* of 1830, were nothing if not highly descriptive dramatic tales set to music. Most of his overtures, however, match the definition of a "tone poem": music inspired by non-musical experiences, events, or works of art or literature

Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overture* was written to open the second act of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. The opera is not so well known today. But this overture remains a vivid musical illustration of that ancient and famed Mardi Gras celebration, the Carnival in Rome.

The "legend" in our concert title is the Russian folktale about a golden bird that helps a son of the Czar rescue a beloved princess from a monster king. Stravinsky was a young composer and a recent student of Rimsky-Korsakov when he was invited in 1910 to write a score for a ballet based on this story. The exotic staging of the ballet and the vivid, energetic music brought Stravinsky immediate fame as a composer of international stature, a position he kept throughout his long life.

We are proud to present at this concert the two winners of our Fall Concerto Competition: Heather Taylor, a senior at Fairport High School, and Stephen Kim, a junior at Pittsford Mendon High School. Heather, a flute student of RPO musician Joanna Bassett, will perform a contemporary tone poem for flute and orchestra by the American composer Charles Griffes. Stephen, a violin student of Eastman School of Music professor Mikhail Kopelman, will perform an orchestral version of the beloved *Chaconne* by the Italian Baroque composer Tommaso Vitali.

The RPYO feels privileged to welcome RPO Music Director Christopher Seaman to this concert as guest conductor for Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overture*.



Musical Mentors

by Susan Basu

My Webster's Dictionary defines a "mentor" as "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher." Not so long ago, the term was not part of our regular vocabulary the way it is today. True, younger people have always looked to those who are older or more experienced for advice and guidance. Now we know how very important such relationships are not just for young people to grow and flourish, but also for all of us at certain periods of our lives.

Mentoring and music seem made for each other. Students can learn many subjects on their own or in formal classroom settings. But studying music or an instrument is a special kind of learning that requires personal relationships. Notes can be deciphered, melodies fingered, or rhythms tapped. But music is far more than the notes, melodies, or rhythms indicated on a page. It is a form of expression that communicates feelings, ideas, and impressions. It is a language so subtle that it is best taught one-on-one because its essence lies in its nuances. Learning music also requires a trusting, caring atmosphere where mistakes are accepted as part of growth and where teacher and student respect one another as individuals and as musicians.

In the best music teaching, instrument lessons inevitably merge with lessons about life. Dedicated teachers and coaches become cherished mentors with an impact on their students' lives far beyond the weekly lessons.

Our RPO Mentors

We think of the annual Side-by-Side concert with the RPO as a celebration of musical mentorship that has far-reaching effects off-stage. We are so grateful that the RPO's musicians welcome this opportunity to sit next to RPYO students in a rehearsal and concert and to share by example and words their musical knowledge and understanding.

By just being there they are teaching our students what it is to be an ensemble musician: to listen and follow attentively, to be prepared, to be sensitive to one's colleagues, to play beautifully in all circumstances, to communicate richly without words, to share a communal joy in music making. Our students carry the memories and the lessons of these occasions with them long after they leave the RPYO.

Several among the RPO's musicians get a particular satisfaction from this concert. Their own students may be playing next to them on the Eastman stage.

Perhaps they have led RPYO sectionals and can now enjoy the results of helping our students master difficult

musical passages. They may have sat on RPYO audition panels and helped select some of our new members. Or they may have coached RPYO musicians in chamber groups or heard them in solo competitions. They know many of these students well and take great pleasure in their growth. And the music they make together in Eastman Theatre shows this.

RPYO Alumni as Teacher-Mentors

We get such a delight when we learn of RPYO alumni who have become teacher-mentors of our current members. Several RPYO alumni now teach our students in area high school music programs. There are at least two RPYO alumni in the RPO who have RPYO musicians as private students. One current RPYO member takes lessons with a RPYO bass player who graduated only relatively recently. A couple of others had their early lessons on violin and cello with former RPYO musicians who continue as friends and mentors. Another will study in a summer program with a former RPYO concertmaster who is successfully building a chamber music career. An RPYO violist of a few seasons ago is offering a chamber music master class this summer in Canandaigua for area students, including RPYO members.

When students and teachers have played in the same orchestra, learned from the same teachers, coaches, and conductors, this connection translates into more responsive teaching and learning.

RPYO Students as Mentors

It's not age that's important in being a mentor. It's the willingness to share knowledge, to make an effort to encourage a less experienced learner, and to give something of oneself in a way that can help another person develop.

Four RPYO musicians are learning this first hand by going once or twice each week to the Eagle Arts Academy at the Church of Love Faith Center in Rochester. A violinist has discovered that she can help a clarinetist even though she knows close to nothing about that instrument. She and the others encourage and motivate Academy students by simply being there, sharing what they do know, and showing how much they love music and want to help others.

They are also learning one of the great truths of mentorship: the giving is at least as rewarding as the getting.



The Art of Faking It and Other Such Memories

by Sandra Halleran

My years in the RPYO were very influential in my life. From the trepidation of my audition in Spring of 1992 to my final concert in May of 1995, RPYO played a very meaningful role in my high school years and has continued to influence my thoughts about orchestral performance. I remember being very uncertain if I would “get in” when I took my audition; would I be talented enough? Was I ready to be a member of such an incredible orchestra? The committee thought that I was ready and they accepted me. I attended my first retreat with a broken foot, and had to be very careful to keep my cast dry, as it rained for two days straight! The sun only came out as we were all packing our bags and saying good-bye until the next Sunday. From that point on, my Sundays were devoted to RPYO. I treasured every rehearsal. Dr. Harman’s incredible passion for music and his determination to convey the meaning of it all to us were unending and contagious. RPYO taught me about teamwork; it taught me that seriously practicing your orchestra music is essential to getting the most out of every rehearsal and performance; it taught me about loving music and loving the preparation and performance of orchestral music.

The memories I treasure the most from my experiences with RPYO involve the sectional rehearsals and concerts. I especially remember one sectional with Stefan Reuss. We were working on *Capriccio Italien* by Tchaikovsky. There is a plethora of notes in that piece and we were definitely having some trouble playing every one. Stefan worked with us for quite a while on fingerings and bowings and then he said, “Perhaps I should teach you about the art of faking!” And he did! He explained that the art of faking (not playing quite all of the notes but sounding as if you are) is very subtle and should only be used after all attempts to play every note have failed. In my career, there have definitely been some instances where the art of faking has come in very handy; every time I fake something, I think of that sectional! Luckily now, however, I can play all the notes in *Capriccio Italien*!

I also vividly remember one concert we performed while on tour in England in the Spring of 1995, my senior year of high school. We performed Elgar’s *Enigma Variations* in the beautiful Arundel Cathedral. This cathedral was straight out of my dreams with beautiful stained glass windows, stone pillars and an enormously boomy sound. It was an unbelievable performance. I remember crying, with the rest of the orchestra and the audience, after the incredibly beautiful movement called ‘Nimrod.’ I thought about how much I was going to miss RPYO after my season was finished. I was heading off to college at The Eastman School of Music in the Fall and

this would be my last season with the orchestra. What was I possibly going to do with my Sunday afternoons now?

I, of course, found plenty to do on Sundays over the next seven years as I continued my musical education at Eastman, Rice University, and Eastman again for my Master’s Degree. I fulfilled my life-long dream of performing with the RPO. I was honored to spend two years performing with them on their Philharmonic’s Series through the Orchestral Studies Diploma Program at Eastman. After completing my Master’s Degree I went on to perform as principle cello of the Wheeling Symphony in West Virginia and then spent two years performing with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida. Currently, I am doing some post-graduate work in Music Education at Nazareth College. I also teach cello lessons in the Rochester area. Several of my former students have become members of the RPYO. I also regularly free-lance with my chamber ensemble, The Marini String Ensemble. I still keep in touch with some old colleagues from RPYO and we enjoy getting together to reminisce about old times.

When I think back to my years with the RPYO I remember how much fun I had. I remember the great friends I made and all of the experiences that led me to the decision to become a professional musician. My advice to young, aspiring musicians is to get as much musical experience as you can. Learn from everything you do. Practice hard and try everything. Study at the best schools and with the best teachers you can. Get involved in teaching and chamber music, as those experiences will be invaluable to your musical and financial success in the future. Take your work seriously, but also enjoy what you do. Being a musician is much too difficult a career path if you do not really love it. If you cannot imagine your life without music, then go for it! I cannot imagine my life without music, and without RPYO I might never have discovered my passion.



Alumni Notes

RPYO Violist returns to share his music with his former school district

Ed Klorman graduated from Brighton High School and the RPYO in 2000 and went on to Juilliard to study viola. Looking for a way to pay for the costs of a recital he hoped to give in Rochester, he applied to a local foundation for a grant to offer a music residency in his former school district.

Ed received the grant, and over a three-week period in May 2002, he spent 25 hours performing for over 700 students in Brighton's four schools. He gave four recitals, led three viola sectional rehearsals, performed a solo with a school orchestra, taught group lessons to viola students, and spent three days with first- and second-graders in an aesthetic education program designed to help young children learn to become active listeners.

It was an ambitious project, and at first, Ed worried how he might be received: "How would the high school students react to me," he wondered to himself. "Just two years ago, I sat alongside many of them in our school orchestra. What right did I have to stand in the front of the room, leading them in a rehearsal?"

The worries evaporated as Ed saw the students' interest and enthusiasm, and as he adjusted his teaching expectations to match their needs. Helping a student become more aware of his or her posture or intonation was more effective, he realized, than merely correcting mistakes and moving on.

The music he presented at all levels was sophisticated: Bach, Telemann, Mozart, and Hindemith. He talked about the music before performing, guiding the young listeners through some of its complexities, and was impressed by their thoughtful questions and responses. "Why did I like the Hindemith even though it's so hard to listen to?" one child asked.

Sharing his experiences with fellow Juilliard students in The Juilliard Journal Online, Ed wrote: "This residency was by far the most rewarding musical experience I have ever had. It is one thing for young musicians to worry about diminishing audiences for classical music. But it is another to actively cultivate future audiences through quality arts education. The residency provided me the extraordinary opportunity to share wonderful music with the most receptive audience I've ever seen."

Mentoring at the Eagle Arts Academy

Katherine Mann

RPYO musicians Jack Chang, clarinet, Whitney Clair, trombone, Katherine Mann, violin, and Elizabeth Wu, violin, have all volunteered to work this year with music students at the Eagle Arts Academy. They coach students individually or in ensembles. Each RPYO Arts Academy Mentor believes that he or she is making a difference with the students, feels very much appreciated, and, perhaps most important, is having an enjoyable time.

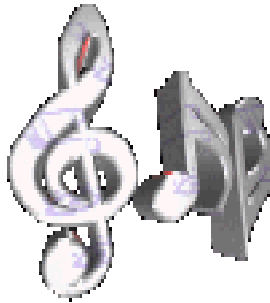
Katherine shared this about her experience:

It is so interesting watching how the minds of young students work! Many of them pick up pretty complex theory for their age (5th, 6th grades), such as reading music in different clefs and learning which sharps/flats go in what keys. On the other hand, a lot got confused about whether a note was on the downbeat or upbeat because they thought that the direction the line of a note was pointing stood for either "up" or "down!" I found out that we take a lot of the knowledge we have about music for granted!

No matter whom I work with, even if I know NOTHING about their instrument (which happens a lot, because the number of mentors are limited) he or she is always SO appreciative and happy to be getting help from older kids. I worked with a girl the other day who played the Bb clarinet. I have had literally NO experience with her instrument, but we worked on rhythms, and I transposed some of the notes she was having trouble with and played them on my violin so that she could hear what they were supposed to sound like. I walked into the session doubting that we would accomplish much, we worked with no problem for a half hour!

I wish that more kids participated in the program, because the conductor, Mr. Sykes, is a great teacher and so much fun. Actually, everyone (the adults AND the kids) there is so warm, friendly, and just a lot of fun to be around! I feel like the kids who do come benefit a lot from it. Attendance can tend to waver a bit, which is unfortunate, but I feel like more kids would come if they knew what a great opportunity it was.

All in all, this is a great experience that I feel privileged to have. I myself am learning so much from teaching! It's really testing what I know, which is great! If anyone thinks that they might be interested in musical education someday, this is an awesome opportunity to test it out!



Standing Ovations go to . . .

Binghamton Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition

Henry Heaton, Cello, First place

Geneseo Friends of Music Young Artists Music Competition Winners

Liz Spector, Winds, First place

Emily Grissing and Aaron Yarmel, Strings, Second place (shared)

Hochstein School of Music Concerto Competition Winner

Glenna Curran, Cello, First place

Penfield Symphony Jo Amish Concerto Competition Winners

Aaron Yarmel, Violin, First place:

Emily Grissing, Cello, Second place

Whitney Clair, Trombone, Third place

Congratulations to all who participated in any competition, whether or not a prize was won. You show spirit and determination and a willingness to 'go out on a limb' simply by participating. There is every reason for you to have pride in your accomplishment.

RPYO Alumnus Premiere

Hiroyuki Sakurai, RPYO trumpet player 2003-2004, currently an Eastman School composition major, had his "Sonata for Violin and Piano," the first-ever winner of Chamber Music Rochester's Young Composer's Competition, premiered at the Memorial Art Gallery on December 12, 2004 by RPO violinist Shannon Nance and Eastman School faculty member Elinor Freer. RPYO violinist Misako Sakurai is Mr. Sakurai's sister.



Tell your young musician friends and family members that auditions for the 2005-2006 RPYO season will be held from April 29 to May 8. Members for all sections are needed.

Please be sure to submit all **ticket money** and **unsold tickets** to Deven Hearne no later than noon on March 6th.

Susan Basu is looking for parent rehearsal assistants who could help with rehearsal room (and some concerts) "set-ups" and "take-downs." This could involve either coming to rehearsals to help out or organizing student teams for this purpose.

Also needed is someone to fill the position of **RPYO Librarian**, to pencil in bowings and organize music folders. Please see Susan for more information.