

# RPYO News of Note

Rochester Philharmonic **Youth** Orchestra

## Music In Your Future

*Dr. David Harman*



Dr. David Harman,  
Music Director of the  
RPYO

As a valued member of the RPYO, music of the Classical variety must be a significant part of who you are. In addition to the various parts of your life which involve family, friends, school and other social and recreational activities, somehow you find time to become accomplished on your instrument, practice and participate in our rehearsals and concerts. Making music as part of a select and highly-skilled orchestra must be important to you. If it wasn't, you'd spend your time doing something else! After conducting ensembles such as ours for more than thirty years, I continue to be inspired by the dedication, energy and talent that youth orchestra members display. Since developing and refining your musicianship must be a high priority for you, perhaps you are considering your future in music. You love it and probably can't imagine your life without making music. How will that joyful necessity fit into your future?

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While that's a rather straight-forward question, the answers can be complicated. You may be considering one or more of the following approaches:

***1) I will become an internationally famous solo artist.***

That's a great life if you succeed. What does it take to achieve that outcome as a Classical music "star"? In addition to being gifted musically and precocious, one probably needs exclusive and intensive training from a very early age. You'll need a world-class instrument. Good luck is also a necessity. There are some players who do make it, but the chances are, realistically, slim.

***2) I will major in music at a conservatory or fine music school and become a professional player even if I don't become a famous solo artist.***

Many of the members of our RPYO have done just that. Ward Stare, a former RPYO principal trombonist is one recent example. Ward graduated a year early from High School and attended Juilliard for a while, then, won the position of principal trombonist with the Chicago Lyric Opera. That's a wonderful job and one that players who have been in the business for many years covet. He also studied conducting at Aspen and is now associate conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. That's an amazing professional trajectory and very unusual. We also have former

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You can look forward to playing in orchestras for the rest of your life.

RPYO players who are members of The New York Philharmonic, The Chicago Symphony, The Rochester Philharmonic and several other professional orchestras. To become a member of a professional orchestra you'd need to win a highly competitive audition. For example, it's not unusual for there to be over two hundred violinists auditioning for one opening. The auditions, at least in the first round, are usually held behind a screen to insure anonymity. Once a person wins an audition, he/she joins the orchestra and plays for a season or two. If tenure is awarded by a panel of peers and the conductor, the musician remains with the group. Not all players achieve tenure status. Clearly, the path to becoming a member of a professional ensemble such as the RPO is a difficult one that also requires talent, hard work, a fine instrument and, again, some good luck. The situation is similar for professional chamber music players.

**3) I will become a music educator.**

This path provides more options for success for players interested in earning a stable living through using their interests in, and talent for, music. The challenges involve at least five years of higher education for elementary and secondary teaching and an earned doctorate for those wishing to teach at the college level. There are still good jobs available in education for music teachers, and the future seems fairly bright. When schools are well-supported in the community, music and the arts in general are usually funded adequately. If financial cutbacks are necessary, music is sometime restricted or, even eliminated since it is often not viewed as part of a required core curriculum. Also, it is one thing to love music. To be a successful teacher, one must also love to teach. If you find that you do have a talent for, and love of, both music and teaching, then perhaps music

education could be a good path for you.

**4) I know that I need to have music in my life and that I intend to become the best musician I can possibly be regardless of my chosen profession.**

This option is really available to everyone in our orchestra. I see many students and community members of the University of Rochester's River Campus Symphony Orchestra who delight in following this path to life-long musical enrichment. Just because you become a research scientist, a physician, a real estate agent, music teacher or a fine pastry chef, does not mean that you can't also be a fabulous performing musician! In fact, having musical performance as an avocation can remove some of the financial challenges that can surround a life as a professional musician.

Making music for the joy of it is probably why you are playing in the RPYO now. The good news is that you can look forward to playing in orchestras for the rest of your life. Enjoying both the music and the camaraderie of other like-minded people, regardless of what path you take to realizing those goals, ensures that music can certainly be an important part of your future!

**RPYO Concert Preview:  
*Russian Passion***

*Susan Basu*

**November 16 at 3:00 p.m.**

**The Performance Hall at Hochstein**

The RPYO's 38<sup>th</sup> season opens with a program of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian music that puts on full display what we love about that style: vigor and excitement, emotional intensity pushed to the limit, unabashed romanticism, lyrical beauty, and tragic pathos. In contrast to the

large Russian works to be played at this concert, the pieces by Sinding and Mozart show that musical intensity and drama can also be expressed on a smaller scale.

We are honored that the RPO's Associate Concertmaster, Wilfredo Degláns, will be joining us as our special guest artist. Mr. Degláns is a native of Puerto Rico and received his violin training at The Juilliard School of Music in New York City under the famed teachers Dorothy DeLay and Ivan Galamian. He has been the Associate Concertmaster of the RPO since 1977 and served as its Acting Concertmaster from 2001-2005. A committed teacher with a private violin studio, Mr. Degláns has been a longtime RPO Mentor of the RPYO and tremendously enjoys working with our student musicians.



Wilfredo Degláns,  
Associate Concertmaster  
of the RPO.

...the RPO's  
Wilfredo Degláns  
will be our special  
guest artist

The three Russian pieces on the program represent a brief history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian symphonic tradition. Glinka, known as the father of Russian musical nationalism, was inspired by Russian folk tales and tunes. Today he is best known for his opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, an adventurous Sleeping Beauty-like tale of an evil dwarf, a wise wizard, a captive princess and the brave suitor who rescues her.

The flashy overture is a musician's and audience's delight as it jumps right into a mood of unrestrained joyous celebration.

Borodin developed even further this fascination with Russian tales and traditional musical styles. "Prince Igor" is an opera about a medieval Russian prince defeated by Tatar tribesmen. The *Polovetzian Dances* is also a celebration, but this time a wilder one by fierce Mongol warriors victorious over a lamenting Russian people. Borodin had a gift for writing lovely tunes as well as whirling dance music, and you might recognize here a melody made

famous in another setting.

Mr. Degláns will introduce us to the exquisite *Suite for Violin and Orchestra* by a Norwegian composer, Christian Sinding, who was very popular in his country during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but not so well known in recent times. Subtitled "in the old style," this Bach-influenced, concerto-like work has long been a favorite of virtuoso violinists, including Heifitz and Perlman.

Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni" contains much that can be found in Russian music—yearning, passion, soaring lyricism, violence and tragedy. The *Overture*, performed by a chamber size orchestra with classical restraint, sets the ominous mood of the drama to follow.

Tchaikovsky, a musical successor to Glinka and Borodin, found his inspiration not only in themes from his homeland, but also in musical styles and stories from the West—from Vienna, Germany, and Italy. The tragic tale of Romeo and Juliet depicted in his *Fantasy Overture* seems to match perfectly Tchaikovsky's extraordinary gift of expressing the full range of human emotion through music.

## Ten Questions for Wilfredo Degláns, Associate Concertmaster of the RPO

*Peter Iglinski*

1. *How old were you when you started playing the violin, and why did you choose that instrument?*

Six years old. I was at a movie and fell in love with the sound of the violin and still am.

2. *How long have you been a mentor for the RPYO?*

Ever since they started the program. (I have no recollection as to when, but I have been there since the inception.)

3. *Why did you decide to become a mentor?*

I want to pass on the traditions that I learned from many great musicians that I have had the privilege of working with throughout my career.

4. *Who are your musical role models, and why?*

Pablo Casals, Jerzy Semkow, Fritz Kreisler - because they played/ conducted in the most humanly way.

5. *What's the difference between a good performance and a great one?*

A good performance is eventually forgotten, but a great one never.

6. *What's the key to helping a student get to the next skill level?*

Teaching them how to be their own teacher.

7. *Are you satisfied with the current state of music education in the schools?*

NOT AT ALL!!! They say they teach music but what they do teach is something that could hardly be called music appreciation.

8. *What music do you enjoy playing when you're not playing classical?*

I like many different kinds of music as long as it is done well. However I do not like rap, hip hop or country.

9. *How can parents best help their children with their musical studies?*

First, encourage them and remind them that they have to practice.

10. *When you're not playing music, how do you enjoy passing the time?*

I like to spend time with my family, even if it is hectic.

## Staking Out a Career in Music

*Chris Van Hof*

*Chris Van Hof is the Afternoon Host of WXXI Classical 91.5, and is the Professor of Low Brass at Nazareth College. He performs in his classical ensemble, The Emerald Brass Quintet, and his New Orleans-inspired trombone funk/rock band The Po'Boys Brass Band. He played principal trombone on the Eastman Wind Ensemble's fall 2008 CD release Manhattan Music, featuring the Canadian Brass, and is a substitute trombonist with the Rochester Philharmonic. He also manages his website, www.vanhofmusic.com. Chris earned a Master's Degree in Trombone Performance from the Eastman School of Music in 2008, in addition to earning the Arts Leadership Program's Certification, and a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and Trombone Performance from Western Michigan University in 2006. He lives with his wife, Andrea, and their dog and cat in Bloomfield.*

### An interesting path

The path to a career in music can be the most exciting, and at the same time, frightening experience a young person can follow. Compared to other fields of study, the end-outcome of years spent studying music is constantly in flux. With increasingly fewer jobs in professional orchestras, public and private school music programs being cut, and teaching at the college level requiring more and more often a terminal doctoral degree, musicians in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century must constantly be aware of different paths to long-term goals. The single most important thought to consider at the outset—and indeed the thought to continually remind oneself of—is to have a flexible but reasonable definition of personal success.

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## Summer Activities of RPYO Musicians

Thanks to RPYO Parent Pat Russell for compiling this list of the many interesting 2008 summer music activities of RPYO Musicians. If you wish to learn more about these programs, the best sources are those students who attended them. They would love to share their experiences.

NAME	SUMMER ACTIVITY
Mai Abe	Crane Youth Music Camp
Molly Bacon	Crane Youth Music Camp
Curtis Bloomer	Summer production of "Grease"
Brianne Borden	Traveled to Europe with American Music Abroad
Mathew DeCross	Pit orchestra for Pittsford Summer Enrichment Institute production of "Beauty and the Beast"
Hilary Garnish	Summer production of "Grease"
Christen Greer	Finger Lakes Chorale Orchestra and Meadowmount School of Music
Kate Gurnow	Scholarship winner for fiddle lessons with Bobby Hicks and Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival (youngest performer ever)
Jingwen Hu	Musician at several weddings
Erica Jacobs-Perkins	Taught 2 violin students
Connie Jiang	Fortissimo 4 X 4 and Master Class with Amelia piano Trio
Erica Klafehn	Violin camp at Kanack School
Sarah Kramer	Practical Harpist Seminar at Eastman
Cameron La Point	Summer School program at Stanford University
Serena Loftus	Summer production of "Grease"
Kim Lourette	Le Domaine Forget Music Program in Quebec
Eliza Minster	Signature Music Camp at Ithaca College and Pit Orchestras for Livonia Community players and for Batavia Youth Theater
Kevin Mizas	People to People Student Ambassador program
Dennis O'Keefe	Pit orchestra for JCC production of "West Side Story"
Jonathan Pereira	Jazz Studies Program at Eastman
Luke Perry	NYSSSA – Orchestral Studies
Marina Ramos	Hochstein Music Theater Workshop and Performance
Lillian Rosen	Port Milford Chamber Camp
Katherine Rudman	Summer Youth Theater w/ Batavia Players and Marching Band Camp
Steven Russell	Member of the orchestra for the US Scholar-Athlete/Scholar Artist Games and cast member for Penfield's YOHP production of Les Miserables
Karis Schneider	Music Horizons at Eastman, musician at several weddings, and Talent Show at St. John Meadows
Elizabeth Stella	Signature Music Camp
Ben Tiberio	Summer Eastman Jazz Camp, Hochstein Jazz Camp, and Rochester International Jazz Festival
Sarah Whalen-Cohen	Interlochen Advanced Bassoon Institute and Interlochen Arts Camp
Louisa Womack	Bowdoin International Music Festival
Ryan Yarmel	Jazz Camp
Howard Yeh	Hochstein Jazz Camp
Dimitri Yevstifeev	Luzerne Music Center
Emma Zeger	NYU Summer Brass Workshop, Crane Youth Music Camp, and Eastman Summer Trumpet Institute

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Do not ever  
be afraid to  
change  
course

It's been quite an interesting path that took me from being a freshman music education major to being a classical music radio host and playing in a funk band. Along the way, I have faced several challenges, possessed quite a healthy dose of self-doubt, but at the same time enjoyed myself immensely. In short, it is exciting but not easy—by any means—to be a musician for a living. It takes hard work, focus, an ability to be content with very little in terms of personal wealth and possessions, and of course, a desire to commit yourself to something you believe in: sharing music with others and enjoying yourself while at it.

#### **Strategies for success**

As you think about where you want to go with music—whether as a career or as an avocation—I'd like to share with you some strategies that helped me out as I waded through my studies to emerge on the other side.

First and foremost, set goals, both long and short-term. These can include easily measured abilities—for example, “I vow to be able to play the blues in all 12 keys by February,” or “I seek to start a chamber ensemble and have a recording by the time we graduate.” These goals can also encompass more vague concepts that I like to put into the “five-year plan” category—“in five years, I want to be teaching public school, and to be happy doing it.” Reasonable goal-setting is incredibly important to keep you focused through hours, weeks, and months of practicing, studying, and rehearsing.

Secondly, keep track of your goals and priorities and do not hesitate to make careful amendments or well-thought-out complete overhauls. Two years ago, my long-term goal was to get my Master's Degree, then work on a doctoral degree in order to have a full-time

college teaching job. But, as I moved up through WXXI, from intern to part-timer to full-time Afternoon Host, I realized that I could continue performing and teaching in ways that fulfilled my personal needs, and also make a living doing something I enjoyed quite a bit, even though I previously knew nothing about it. To put it bluntly, my five-year plan took a left turn when I had planned a right. Do not ever be afraid to change course if an opportunity that fits you and feeds your soul arises. 18 months ago, I had never even set foot in a radio station, and now it's radio that pays my bills.

Third, start thinking now about self-promotion and getting your product “out there.” It seems that every month, the software for designing a sleek, user-friendly website becomes more available, and more intuitive. MySpace is great for this, but let's be honest: you can design your own thing and make it much cooler. Get some quality recordings of you playing in many different settings: large ensemble, chamber music, soloist, jazz, secondary instruments. If you can, go beyond just audio and use video clips (just be sure that the sound quality is good!). Have some nice photos taken, with and without your instrument. In short, view yourself as a product, complete with images, videos, audio samples, and text. This sounds daunting, but can actually be a fun semester-long project. And getting it on the Internet in a professional-looking format is easier and easier.

And fourth, during your journey as an artist, abide by a few simple rules:

- Achieve technical proficiency on your instrument, and never stop seeking to improve that proficiency.
- Be comfortable playing music of all styles and genres, from rock to jazz to classical. And be sure you can play those styles convincingly. It is increas-

ingly impossible to earn a living as a musician in just one genre, and this trend will only increase. Therefore, it is up to you to seek out the education and skills that will enable you to be a convincing performer in *all* styles of music. By the way, this includes being able to improvise on your instrument!

- Never, ever think that you are better than the gig you are currently playing. Would your dentist not do his best oral surgery work just because he wasn't particularly fond of his patient?
- Actively seek out opportunities to teach and encourage younger musicians. Not only does teaching lessons pay, it will make you a better performer, and it will support the future generations of musicians. If you "don't like" to teach, consider a career that does not involve performing, because you must teach if you are a performer (and don't believe anyone who tells you otherwise!).
- Support your colleagues by going to their recitals and concerts. The stronger the community of musicians is, the more likely we all are to live happily as artists!
- Keep your mouth shut in rehearsal, even if you're bored or find the rehearsal to be hilarious.
- Help set up and tear down at every rehearsal and gig.
- Arriving fifteen minutes early is on time. Arriving at downbeat time is late. Arriving late is just a really bad idea.
- If someone plays well, tell him or her.
- If someone plays poorly, don't get down on him or her for missing something—mistakes happen to all of us!
- Have fun. Enjoy yourself. You are "playing" music.

...music has  
been a catalyst  
for my personal  
growth.

Try not to take yourself too seriously. Being a great player and great professional will get you called for a gig. Being a great coworker and colleague will get you called back next time.

### **Make it a priority**

If you want to make a living in music, remember to make music your first priority. Then be open to all the different ways to express your passion for music. This can be through performing, composing, teaching, writing about, talking about, promoting, recording, raising money for, organizing, administering, or even just supporting the music you love. There are so many options when it comes to keeping music as an integral part of your life—whether as your career or your pastime. As long as you keep your eyes and ears open along your own journey, you may just find yourself on a musical path that's completely different than the one you mapped out—but nonetheless just as satisfying.

## **Harmony**

*Sarah Kramer*

I've always believed that music is a universal concept, and that it is so deeply ingrained in us we hardly notice it. We even use musical words like rhythm to describe our daily lives. However, in my life, music has become so much more than background noise; music has been a catalyst for my personal growth.

When I decided to audition for the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I never realized how profoundly the experience would alter my life and world view.

### **Growing with the RPYO**

The first orchestra rehearsal was one of the most intimidating moments of my life. The whole time I sat there like a

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language

deer in the headlights, watching the senior-dominated group leave me in the dust, but that humbling experience only made me more determined to succeed. I was going to learn the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra if I had to take it apart bit by bit and play it slowly every day. So that's what I did; I played it over and over again, by myself and with a recording, until I mastered it. As my understanding and appreciation of the piece grew and as the concert approached, I realized how much this challenge affected me; I was now confident in my abilities as a harpist and orchestra member. The first concert went off as smooth as silk.

Another concert came and went, and I became increasingly comfortable with my position in the RPYO. I met a lot of people with similar interests and was able to play well enough with the orchestra to actually enjoy the wonderful music we were making. Remarkably, I felt like I was part of something bigger, part of a community. I had never been involved in sports, so this was the first time I had really been part of a team. I loved that feeling, and have been hooked on orchestra ever since.

My experience with the RPYO has also broadened my perspective on the world. The April of my first year with the orchestra, we toured Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. This was my first trip to the continent, and I went expecting Eiffel Towers and London Bridges. We did see some spectacular architecture, but many things differed from my preconceived notions. Central Europe still hasn't recovered from World War II. Much of it has been rebuilt, but so much was lost. In Krakow, the Jewish population had decreased from tens of thousands to a few hundred people, and the old stone buildings and cemeteries seemed remarkably empty. Poverty was all around us in the countryside, and people lived in dilapidated towns

with houses the size of my living room, caring for chickens and vegetable gardens just to make ends meet. No aspect of life was unaffected; inflation was incredible, and even the rented instruments seemed weary. Despite their financial hardships, however, the culture remained vital. People expressed such great appreciation for music, and truly respected our art. Time and again their enthusiasm made me think; how can they care so much for music when they have so little, and how can Americans not care when they have so much? I have since often wondered how we manage to live without such passion for the arts.

My outlook on global politics has been changed forever. I believe there is so much we can accomplish if we can come together to solve problems harmoniously. Music is the only universal language; it brings out the raw, human emotions that can connect us all. And yet, it still has the power to help each of us grow and to define us as individuals. Nothing else can bring us together, yet maintain our identities in such an amazing way.

## Kudos

### Non-Classical

WXXI-TV's *OnStage* airs the performance of Kate Lee, aka Kate Gurnow, and her band No Strings Attached, on Sunday evening, November 30 at 7pm. The show can also be heard on WRUR-FM (88.5) Thursday, November 27 at 6pm and Saturday, November 29 at 3pm.

### Non-Musical

Ryan Yarmel was awarded the Golden Pen by the Democrat & Chronicle this past summer for his letter to the editor, entitled, *The actual story is in the numbers*.