

# RPYO News of Note

Rochester Philharmonic **Youth** Orchestra

## A Terrific Beginning!

by Dr. David Harman



Dr. David Harman,  
Music Director of  
the RPYO

Our RPYO has gotten off to a really terrific start this year. Several factors have created this happy circumstance. Our players, our mentors and our support system of parents and dedicated volunteers have all worked hard to make things come together for what could be one of our best seasons yet. The retreat was especially good this year, both because of our concentrated work and the fine nourishment that we received—musically from the mentors, as well as meals from the kitchen!

### A diverse program

This season is filled with great musical possibilities and challenges. The first concert offers a diverse program of wonderful pieces that feature each part of our orchestra in special ways. Playing Britten's *Young Persons' Guide* is such a great way to show how all of our sections perform, both on their own and as part of the larger orchestra. Each section of the group has its own moment in the limelight, and I'm happy to

say that we're doing really well in meeting the challenges that come along with that. In addition to dealing with the multitude of notes that come from complex harmonies, clarifying intricate rhythms, and not rushing the tempo in the process, we're finding a wealth of musical expression that is just plain fun to explore.

### Preparation for later

The Beethoven *Symphony No. 1* offers us a chance to play with elegance and clarity. Working on articulation, intonation and accuracy of what seem to be straight-forward rhythms are all challenges that will build our group as a unified ensemble and will also prepare us for *The Firebird*, *The Three Cornered Hat* and *An American in Paris* that we'll play later in the season. Beethoven's youthful vigor is clearly a big part of what makes this piece such a pleasure to play. It's also great to have a season in which we can play his *First Symphony* and experience his *Ninth*, which the RPO played to open the renovated Eastman Theatre this year. (Our close association with the city's professional orchestra is such a tremendous asset for us! I invite you to go to as many RPO concerts as you can to hear our mentors in action.)

Having the gifted trumpeter and RPO member Wes Nance as our featured soloist is also a special treat. The Tartini offers a chance both to hear his great playing and also to showcase our string section.

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Our first concert also features our woodwind, brass and percussion sections in a youthful work by Mendelssohn. Composed at age sixteen, this *Overture* offers substantial technical challenges and musical rewards that foreshadow his mature symphonic works. It's great to hear these sections of the orchestra featured in another great piece that's also fun to play.

### Looking ahead

The rest of the season holds many musical joys for us, that will culminate in a tour. What a thrill it will be to share our musical efforts with audiences in Quebec and to perform with a youth orchestra in Montreal that shares our excitement about orchestral music!

*Vive la musique!*

Thanks for your dedication and tremendous efforts so far. The contributions of each player are coming together to make this year's orchestra really special. I'm looking forward to sharing many joyful musical experiences during this exciting season.

The RPYO  
reveals  
the inner  
workings of  
an orchestra

## RPYO Concert Preview: *Orchestral Variations*

by Susan Basu

**Sunday, November 15 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Hochstein Performance Hall**

**David Harman, Conductor**  
**Wesley Nance, Trumpet**  
**Julia Figueras, Narrator**

### Concert Program:

Dukas, *Fanfare to "La Péri"*

Beethoven, *Symphony No. 1*

Mendelssohn, *Overture for Winds*

Tartini *Concerto in D for Trumpet*

Wesley Nance, trumpet

Britten, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*

Julia Figueras, Narrator

### Deconstructing the orchestra

In its first concert of its 39<sup>th</sup> season, the RPYO reveals the inner workings of an orchestra as it displays the character of its various sections in separate pieces and then in the delightful, instructive, and sophisticated *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* by Benjamin Britten.

Our brass section, often given more of a supportive role in symphonic works, is the concert's star opener with one of the most popular brass fanfares in orchestral music. This fanfare was written by the French composer Paul Dukas in the early 1900s for his ballet, *La Péri*, about a Persian tale of a fallen angel who yearns to return to heaven.

The entire RPYO strings, along with reduced winds and percussion, perform Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*. Built upon Mozart and Haydn's innovative symphonic forms, this very first of Beethoven's, composed in 1800, strongly hints at the revolutionary tendencies that would transform symphonic music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A tribute both to the orchestra's wind sections and to youthful brilliance, Mendelssohn's *Overture for Winds* (written when he was sixteen) brings our woodwinds, brass, and percussion into prominence as a lively and engaging chamber ensemble.

Tartini's *Concerto for Trumpet in D*, a Baroque-era work probably written originally for oboe, contrasts the bell-like brilliance of the solo trumpet with the softer, more sustained tones of the accompanying strings.

The final work on the concert program, Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* takes us even deeper into the make-up of an orchestra. The work was composed, in fact, for a film about the orchestra and how its different instruments add their distinctive musical colors and style of playing to the

orchestral entity as a whole. As a theme by Henry Purcell is passed around in a sequence of variations, Britten takes apart the orchestra section by section, giving each the spotlight for a few moments. After having made the rounds of the orchestra in a clever and delightful fashion, the theme is taken up by the entire ensemble in a rousing and joyous finale.

### Our guest artists

It is our great pleasure to have as guest performers in this concert, two well-known individuals from our musical community: Wesley Nance and Julia Figueras. Wesley Nance, our trumpet soloist, is a member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra's trumpet section and a faculty member in the Eastman School of Music's Community Music School. A familiar voice for many years on classical music radio broadcasts, WXXI's Music Director and *Backstage Pass* host (and *RPYO Mom*), Julia Figueras, frequently appears locally as a concert narrator.



RPO Principal Flute  
Rebecca Gilbert and  
her dog, Nala

## Meet Mentor & RPO Flutist Rebecca Gilbert

by Peter Iglinski

*Q: How long have you been a mentor for the RPYO? Why is it important to you?*

I have been the RPYO flute mentor since 1996 when I joined the RPO as Principal Flutist. Mentoring young orchestral musicians is absolutely the only way to pass on the very specialized art and skill of orchestral performance. There are so many layers of musical understanding and awareness that are required from an orchestral musician which can only be learned in the context of playing in the orchestra. We can practice the orchestral excerpts alone as solo parts, but they require the orchestral context. Hearing what the other instruments are playing while you

are playing your individual line changes everything about how you play it. The only way to learn how to listen to the entire orchestra while you are also listening to your own part is to practice this "double listening" with an orchestra. This is a very complex mental function and it is absolute key to being a great orchestral player. It is my privilege to mentor the wonderfully dedicated musicians of the RPYO who are striving for this kind of excellence.

*Q: Have you changed as a teacher and mentor over the years? How?*

I do think I have changed as a teacher/mentor over the years. When I was younger, I was more focused on technique in my teaching. These days, although technique is very important, I find myself working to inspire students to access their creative energies, not simply using the intellect to analyze fingerings, tongue position, breathing mechanisms, etc. These are all critical to excellence in musical performance, but they are not the ultimate goal. The music must have meaning, and the meaning is not in the dots on the printed page. The meaning is in the heart and soul of the composer and performer. We rarely have a chance to meet in person the composer of the music we perform, so it takes a good intuition and good instincts to bring to life the emotional message of the music.

*Q: What is your teaching philosophy?*

A good summary of my teaching philosophy might be the following: Perfection is not the goal. The music must be beautifully expressive of the emotional meaning imbedded in the piece by the composer. Practice so that your accuracy is 110 % and then, in performance, let go! The performance is freedom and playing with your whole heart open infusing your interpretation with the authenticity of your commitment to giving your audience the most vivid rendering of your emotional

Every good musician needs...a sound that is beautiful and compelling.

understanding of what the composer was/is feeling and saying.

*Q: Tell us about your most influential mentor when you were a student.*

My most influential mentor was Jeanne Baxtresser, who was Principal Flutist of the New York Philharmonic when I studied with her. I went to several of her masterclasses and finally asked her to coach me and help me to win an orchestral audition. Ms. Baxtresser took me as a student apprentice-style. I went to live with her for several weeks at a time and worked for her as her personal assistant in exchange for lessons. She was preparing a manuscript for a book and a CD on the subject of orchestral auditions. It was an incredible time of profound growth in my professional development. Her artistry, wisdom, and generosity has been a constant model for me in my own teaching/mentoring.

*Q: What attracted you to the flute?*

The sound. I fell in love with the brilliance immediately, but after playing for about a year, I heard a recital by Jean-Pierre Rampal and realized the incredible depth of nuance and color that he achieved. It almost sounded to me like the human voice. I continue to be fascinated by the artistry of great singers and try to emulate them in the sound of my flute.

*Q: Are there ways in which you're still trying to improve as a performer?*

Yes. Performing is an endless process of delving deeper and deeper into your creative soul/spirit. Every performance is another opportunity to take another step toward realizing the ultimate freedom of totally connecting with the composer's intentions. This sounds very metaphysical, and I guess it is. It becomes a kind of meditation. Technique is not the way, but letting go of expectations and being completely in the moment of the collaboration of the musicians you are performing with. This takes courage and surrender. It is

the life-work of every professional performer.

*Q: What convinced you to become a professional musician?*

Well, for me, winning my first orchestral job as Principal Flute. I decided in graduate school that I wanted to be an orchestral flutist. And realizing that it was an incredibly competitive field, gave myself the comfort of "Plan B" if it didn't work out. Plan B was to go back to school and become a psychologist. When I won my first job, then the ball was rolling. But it wasn't a done deal yet. My first job was only part time and I had to do A LOT of freelancing to make ends meet. After a few years, I won my second job as Principal Flute of the Charleston (SC) Symphony. It was a dream come true and after my second year there, I decided I could abandon my Plan B. I was hooked!

*Q: What do you listen for when you audition musicians—professional and non-professional?*

Professional or non-professional, it is pretty much the same. First, the sound. Is it attractive, does it sound free and open, are there weaknesses in any particular area? What every good musician needs above all else is a sound that is beautiful and compelling. Interesting that you can judge that within a few seconds of an audition. Sometimes players are nervous, and they might make mistakes in the first few phrases of an audition. That doesn't matter, but what the nerves do to the sound does!

Second, rhythm. Especially in an orchestral audition, rhythm is a deal-breaker. Every great musician has good inner sense of pulse and this is absolutely critical for ensemble playing. So, unless you will be playing solo, unaccompanied music exclusively, you must demonstrate your sensitivity and control with your tempos and rhythmic execution.

I am also  
excited to  
have a  
growing  
studio

Finally, musical expression. What is the player saying besides what the printed notes are telling them? Is there an imagination? Is there meaning? This is very important and can be difficult to teach or develop in a student. It falls under the category of instincts and intuition.

*Q: From where did your love of music come from?*

I am not sure. Maybe from listening to my grandmother sing and play piano. She wasn't a great singer or pianist, but when she sang and played, I felt her heart open and become joyful. Next, came singing in a church choir when I was girl. I have a secret fantasy of being an opera diva—love the powerful feeling of creating a beautiful sound with your own physical body.

*Q: What musical forms, besides classical, do you enjoy listening to?*

I especially love opera. The drama, and the incredible beauty of the human voice. And really great popular female vocalists like Ella Fitzgerald, Barbra Streisand, Sarah McLoughlin, India Arie, Eva Cassidy, Cassandra Wilson, Nora Jones and k.d. lang.

## Starting a Career in Music

by Liz Spector

Variety's the very spice of life,  
that gives it all its flavor.

-William Cowper

I graduated from high school and the RPYO in 2005, then went on to study oboe performance at the Eastman School of Music. I graduated from Eastman in May 2009 and embarked on my life as a professional musician. Over the past few years, I have discovered that variety is, in fact, the spice of life. I play in the Harrisburg Symphony, substitute with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the Syracuse Symphony, free-lance in Rochester, teach oboe at SUNY Geneseo,

teach privately, teach a reed-making class, concertize with my woodwind quintet, the Arabesque Winds, and work part-time at the Strong National Museum of Play.

Since 2006, my sophomore year in college, I have been playing English horn in the Harrisburg Symphony. This year, I am acting Principal Oboe, as well as the occasional English horn player. I feel so lucky to be a part of this wonderful orchestra. Stuart Malina, our fantastic conductor, chooses great repertoire, the musicians play at a very high level, and the audiences are supportive. The Harrisburg Symphony is a regional orchestra, and has fewer concerts than a full-time orchestra, so I travel to Harrisburg once a month for a long weekend to play in four rehearsals and two concerts. This past May, I was lucky enough to be chosen for the oboe teaching position at SUNY Geneseo. I am currently teaching five talented and motivated non-music majors, playing principal oboe in their orchestra, and playing in the faculty woodwind quintet. I hope to begin coaching a woodwind quintet next semester, as well.

### A growing studio

I am also excited to have a growing studio of private students. I currently teach five students from Pittsford, so twice a week I drive to my parents' house in Pittsford to teach. I also teach a reed-making class once a week, and am having a lot of fun (no bloody fingers yet!). It is incredibly rewarding to teach students who are interested in the craft of reed-making, and after only five classes, all of my students have made reeds they can play on! I am hoping to have another 10-session class in the spring, and maybe even next year.

### Performance

Chamber music is another important part of my career as a professional musician. I love chamber music because the setting is generally more intimate,

and because it tends to produce a stronger connection between the performers and the audience than an orchestral performance.

I am the oboist in the Arabesque Winds, a woodwind quintet formed at Eastman in 2005. As a member of this group I get to experience the exciting world of professional chamber music: traveling, competing, concertizing, and planning outreach events in the community. In 2008, we won the International Chamber Music Ensemble Competition and were given the opportunity to play in Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. We were the recipients of the Harvard Musical Association's Arthur W. Foote Prize, and were invited to perform in Boston. In 2009, we traveled to France and Italy to compete in two international competitions. We were semi-finalists in the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Premio Vittorio Gui competition in Florence, and won second prize at the Henri Tomasi International Woodwind Quintet Competition in Marseilles, France, where we also won the Lucien Guerinel Prize for best interpretation of Guerinel's piece commissioned for the competition. In 2009, we won the Coleman Saunderson Prize for Woodwinds and Brass at the Coleman Competition in Pasadena, California. Finally, last May we were chosen to represent Eastman at the Kennedy Center's "Conservatory Project." We have also served as ensemble-in-residence at public schools in Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Washington, at the 2008 Festival Internacional Chihuahua in Mexico, and at the 2009 Atlantic Music Festival in Waterville, ME.

#### **The right part-time job**

After planning my schedule for this year, I ended up having a good deal of free time in the morning, so I decided to look for a part-time job. Being a musician, it was necessary to find an employer who would let me choose my

hours, and take time off to rehearse, perform, and travel. I didn't think such a job existed until I applied to the Strong National Museum of Play. I was hired in September as a Guest Relations Host and have been working there ever since. They have their hosts choose their hours a month in advance, and are extremely lenient if you need to take a few days off at a time. It is a wonderful work environment, with friendly co-workers and managers, great guests, and exciting exhibits. The museum's mission is explore play as the most important way to learn, and their creative and interactive exhibits definitely demonstrate this idea. I love working with kids in creative environments, so this part-time job is turning out to be a perfect fit.

In order to build a career as a professional musician, it is necessary to seek and love variety. For me, a combination of orchestral playing, teaching, playing chamber music, and working in various other creative environments has led to a fulfilling and exciting life.

## **Gigging & Freelancing Primer**

*The first in a three-part series for RPYO members and alumni.\**

Gigging is an effective way to get paid to perform. On one level, gigging can simply help to pay the bills, but when done well, it can significantly supplement your income. (It's a great way to earn income for college.)

Gigging or freelancing is not for everyone. It can be a challenging, demanding, and under-appreciated business; but it can also be a satisfying one if you are committed to your success as a freelance musician. Gigging involves interacting with customers who will be paying you for your services with regard to their specific requirements. Paying customers have the right to ex-



Oboist Liz Spector

Gigging or  
freelancing  
is not for  
everyone.

Work with  
the client  
and be  
flexible

pect your best service, just as you have the right to be duly compensated for that service.

### **Expectations and suitability**

Typically, musicians are paid on a contract or hourly basis. The music may be background (such as at a cocktail party), inclusive (such as at a wedding), or the featured entertainment. In other words, from the clients' perspective, the music may be part of a wider experience for their guests or it may *be* the occasion. Be sure you understand the parameters of what clients expect so that you are fully prepared for all eventualities.

Be flexible when working for clients who are not musicians. But also know what types of gigs are suitable for your experience and interests. Think about your repertoire. Be sure it suits the sorts of gigs you are looking to play; different events require different approaches and skills, and don't take gigs that are not suitable for you. And be sure to have enough repertoire. Invest time in learning new music so that you can widen your opportunities.

### **Be professional**

Professionalism in everything that you do is the key to successful freelancing. From your first contact with potential clients, your chances of securing gigs and keeping clients happy will depend on your attitude about your presentation and interaction. Return and respond to all inquiries promptly, and send any requested materials in a timely fashion. Even think about your phone manner.

If you need to meet with a potential client before contracting the gig, dress professionally and bring your marketing materials (such as your business card and a brochure). Find out in advanced if you are to bring your instrument with you in case the client would like to hear you perform. Be prepared

to play samples from any piece on your repertoire list. Work with the client and be flexible and sensitive about his or her knowledge of music (or lack thereof). Have repertoire suggestions ready to talk about, if necessary. Be courteous, listen to the client's needs and wishes, maintain good eye contact, and use a good handshake!

### **Do your homework**

Once the client has hired you for the gig, start to plan ahead for its success. To ensure that you will be on time, get good directions to the gig, arrange for reliable transportation, and get detailed information about parking. (Even factor in enough time for getting lost!) Plan for enough time to set up, warm up, and meet the client so that you are ready to go well in advance of the scheduled start time. If you end up arriving late, it will be your fault – end of story.

Make sure your attire will be appropriate for the event, and err on the side of being too formal if you are unsure.

Be sure to bring extra music, including sheet music. If you will be part of an ensemble, organize the music in clearly labeled 3-ring binders in good condition and with the music in the same order and easily accessible.

### **Equipment checklist**

If you will have a lot of equipment, make a checklist: instruments, music stands, clips (in case of breezes), clip-on lights (for evening or indoor performances), extension cords, plug adaptors, amps, and microphones. And remember emergency items: an extra set of strings, reeds, valve oil, mutes, duct tape and scissors (for securing electrical wires), and a stool (in case the seating at the gig is not appropriate).

At the gig, *play your best! You never know who is going to be there – other*

*musicians, a hotel manager, or guests who may book you for their next social event. You can't afford not to give 110%.*

After the gig, be sure to personally thank the client, host, or guest of honor. This is not only a matter of professional courtesy, but it is also good business practice. (And follow up later with a thank-you letter; even if doing so doesn't get you another gig from this same client, there may be a chance he or she will recommend you to someone else.) Be sure to leave your business card, and if you played with other musicians whom you met for the first time, give *them* your card too.

(Next issue: How to network, find gigs, and promote yourself)

*\*Adapted with permission from "Successful Gigging and Freelancing" by Dr. Adrian Daly, Office of Careers and Professional Development, Institute for Music Leadership at the Eastman School of Music.*

<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/gig>

## Kudos

**Victor Wang** (flute) and **Matthew De-Cross** (percussion) were accepted into the National High School Honors Orchestra. They will perform at the American String Teachers Association National Conference in Santa Clara, California next February.

**Kate Lee Gurnow** (violin) received a commission for a song for the Granting Dreams Foundation and performed it in Nashville last month

**Victor Wang** (flute) was runner-up in the Instrumental Category of the 10th Annual Empire State High School Competitions held at Eastman.

**Leela Chockalingam** (violin) made it as a semi-finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Competition.

**Melissa Mashner** was the winner in the High School Category at the 2009 Rochester Flute Association Competition.

**Emma Taccardi** (oboe) was accepted as an intern for the Careers in Marine Science seminar at the Woods Hole

## Reminder

The RPO offers RPYO musicians two complimentary tickets to Philharmonics concerts. Students should request tickets from the RPYO Manager about a week prior to each concert.

Upcoming concerts include:

November 19 & 21	Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto
January 21 & 23	Handel & Haydn

## Summer Musical Activities of RPYO Musicians

RPYO Musicians are busy with many activities during the summer from having jobs, working in university labs, taking classes, camp counseling, sports and outdoors activities, volunteer work, and travels with family. We like to tell you about the musical activities some of them had so that RPYO families can become familiar with the many wonderful summer music programs open to young musicians.

<b>Mae Abe</b> (Clarinet)	Crane Youth Music, Crane School of Music, Potsdam NY Pittsford Middle School Summer Musical Pit Orchestra
<b>Molly Bacon</b> (Oboe)	Crane Youth Music, Crane School of Music, Potsdam NY
<b>Tommy Conners</b> (Bassoon)	Music Horizons at the Eastman School of Music
<b>Matt DeCross</b> (Percussion)	Summer musical pit orchestra
<b>Nadine Dyskant-Miller</b> (Flute)	Performing at traditional music festivals. Ashokan Center Fiddle and Dance Camps
<b>Hilary Garnish</b> (Violin)	Performed in "A Chorus Line"
<b>Clare Grieve</b> (Violin)	Music at Port Milford, Ontario, Canada
<b>Kate Lee Gurnow</b> (Violin)	Performed with her band "No Strings Attached" at the George Eastman House and on tour in the Northeast
<b>Cody Halquist</b> (Horn)	MPulse Summer Horn Camp, University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance
<b>Rachel Haynes</b> (Viola)	Nazareth College String Camp
<b>Daphne Kanack-Pickens</b> (Violin)	Kanack Music School Music and Fiddle Camps
<b>Janna Karatas</b> (Violin)	NYSSSA School of Orchestral Studies, Saratoga NY
<b>Erica Klafehn</b> (Viola)	Kanack Music School Music and Fiddle Camps
<b>Joshua Meyer</b> (Trumpet)	Csehy Summer School of Music, Houghton College, Houghton NY
<b>Andy Narotsky</b> (Double Bass)	Summer musical pit orchestra
<b>D.J. O'Keefe</b> (Percussion)	NYSSSA School of Orchestral Studies, Saratoga NY
<b>Lillian Rosen</b> (Cello)	Music at Port Milford, Ontario, Canada
<b>Elizabeth Schmitt</b> (Oboe)	MPulse Summer Horn Camp, University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance
<b>Lizzie Stewart</b> (Violin)	String Jam Camp, Hochstein School of Music and Dance
<b>Hassler Thurston</b> (Viola)	Greenwood Music Camp, in the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts Kanack School Chamber Music and Fiddle Camps
<b>Louisa Womack</b> (Double Bass)	Society of Bassists Convention. Perlman Music Program