

RPYO News of Note

Rochester Philharmonic **Youth** Orchestra

An Opportunity to Share Your Love of Music

by Dr. David Harman



Dr. David Harman,
Music Director of the
RPYO

Our annual joint concert with the RPO is just around the corner! It's the only concert of its kind in the Rochester area that combines a professional orchestra with dedicated young musicians in both rehearsal and performance of really great and challenging orchestral repertoire. That's part of why this special event continues to be a highlight of every season. We get to interact on the stage of the world-renowned Eastman Theatre with one of the country's great professional orchestras. In addition to our dedicated mentors, the whole RPO core orchestra will be there to make music with us and to respond to questions you may have both about the music we're performing and also about the profession of orchestra playing in general. Ever wonder what it's like to be a professional orchestra musician? Here's your chance to ask! The RPO players often tell me that our joint concert proves to be one of their favorite

concerts of the whole season because they get to interact with you and share your enthusiasm for making music together. Plus, the combined sound of our two orchestras is always amazing!

The Eastman is an ideal setting

That's another reason to look forward to this really special event: The Eastman Theatre is a very large performance space. With over 150 musicians on stage, the hall really comes alive when we pool our musical energies. This year's program of Berlioz should be ideal for shaking the rafters and generating Goosebumps for us and for the audience. *Roman Carnival* has great solo sections and tricky but rewarding passages for everyone in the group. Although time does not permit us to perform the entire *Symphonie fantastique*, we will certainly savor the highlights. The elegant style of the Waltz seems especially fitting for the grandeur of the Eastman Theatre and the last two movements display timbres and color combinations that confirm Berlioz as one of music's greatest orchestrators. In fact, he wrote an important book about instrumentation. His *Treatise on Instrumentation* remains a standard reference work to this day. It will be a thrill to have his music come alive with the collaboration of professional players in a beautiful and supportive acoustical environment. That's an event worth celebrating and also worth sharing with your friends and family.

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Friends...can
constitute the
important
cornerstone
of our
audience.

Just as the RPO looks forward to sharing the process with us, we should be really proactive in sharing this very special time with those we care about. Of course our families will be supportive and present if they can be, but there's also a group of people you know who should not be overlooked.

This concert offers a perfect opportunity for you to share your love of orchestral music with your friends.

Since you're a dedicated musician, chances are that you have friends who also like music. Even if they don't perform themselves, they can constitute the important cornerstone of our audience. The Eastman Theatre is HUGE. Even with half of the 3000 seats filled, the beautiful space can look sparsely populated from the stage. It would be great to have the problem of having a sold-out house. If everyone brought twenty guests, we could pack the place. That's not an insurmountable task if you invite your family, friends and your school orchestra, band and chorus to come.

An excellent concert for prospects

You should also mention to anyone who is considering auditioning for our RPYO that this is an ideal concert for him or her to attend. They will get to hear the RPYO perform on our own, enjoy the performances of superb soloists from our orchestra and experience the thrilling combined sound of the RPO and the RPYO. Plus, audience seating is unassigned for the concert so your friends can sit anywhere in the Eastman Theatre, except on stage with you, of course!

Our orchestra depends on you to share your love of music each Sunday when we get together. To keep our group strong we also depend upon everyone to share the excitement with other like-minded young musicians who are musically advanced and interested in

serious musical fun.

If they don't hear us, they may never consider auditioning. Wouldn't that be a shame? You can help them and our orchestra by sharing this exciting concert experience with them. Be a friend; bring a friend.

RPYO Concert Preview: *The Fantastic French*

by Susan Basu

**Side-by-Side Concert with the RPO
Sunday, March 15, 2009 in the Eastman
Theatre**

Performed by the RPYO:

Bottesini, *Concerto for Double Bass No. 2, mvt. 1* R. Strauss, *Concerto for Horn No. 1, mvt. 3*

Saint-Saëns, *Concerto for Violin No. 3, mvt. 1*

Bizet, *L'Arlésienne Suite, No. 2*

**Performed by the RPYO and the RPO:
Berlioz, *Roman Carnival Overture***

Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique, mvts. 2,4 & 5*

One of the fine pleasures David Harman and I enjoy after all this time of being with the RPYO is experiencing anew, with different musicians and soloists, music the RPYO has performed in other years, with other students.

Memories come flowing back

There is always a special and memorable freshness our musicians give to music they have learned in the RPYO for the first time. That is what makes each concert so exciting and rewarding. For us there is also the gratifying sense of continuity, of watching great music discovered as if newly created by each group of young musicians. The music, like a Proustian madeleine, brings to mind the faces of earlier RPYO members, their personalities and styles of playing. We recall some special places

The Side-
by-Side
concert
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where we previously played the same works. Above all, we remember students' expressions of pride and joy after successfully tackling difficult symphonic works or walking off stage with arms filled with flowers after the daunting challenge of performing as soloists.

This Side-by-Side concert is one of those times that will bring memories flowing back. Nearly each piece on the program is one we have played before with different students filling seats in the orchestra.

There is only one exception, and even that is a matter of a different movement of the same work. **Cody Halquist** from Brockport will play the 3rd movement from **Richard Strauss' Concerto No. 1 for Horn**. **Pamela Kiesling**, from Spencerport, in 1997, and **Carlie Kilgore**, from Webster, in 2001, both performed the first movement of this concerto. Cody will be the first during this era of the RPYO to share with us the 3rd movement of this delightful work that Strauss wrote when he was only eighteen but already so confident and mature as a composer.

Two RPYO bassists have performed works by Bottesini. **Ed Paulsen** from Webster played his *Elegy for Double Bass* in 1998. That same 1997-1998 season **Tom McGary** played the first movement from **Bottesini's Double Bass Concerto No. 2** that **Louisa Womack** will play on March 15.

Bass soloists are fairly rare, but we have been extremely fortunate to have had two exceptional bass players in consecutive years: **Kim Lourette** from Fairport last year and now **Louisa**, who lives in Penfield.

It is not surprising that the solo **Christen Greer**, a Penfield resident, will perform has been a favorite of other RPYO violinists. You will understand why when you hear the vibrant first movement of **Saint-Saëns' Violin**

Concerto No. 3, music worthy of the brilliant Spanish violinist Pablo Sarasate, for whom it was composed. During Dr. Harman's very first season in Rochester, 1993-1994, **Amanda Brown** from Fairport played the same movement. Somewhat remarkably (because it is so popular), it was not performed again until last May by **Canandaigua's Kieran Hanlon**.

The spotlight on Bizet and Berlioz

The big symphonic works selected by David Harman for this concert, works by Bizet and Berlioz, shine the spotlight on French composers who sometimes seem overshadowed by their heavyweight Germanic and Russian colleagues. But what delights they have to offer!

If Bizet had not died at the tragically young age of thirty-seven, he surely would have been famous for much more than his blockbuster opera *Carmen*. Written originally as incidental pieces for a play, the *L'Arlésienne* music is lighter fare than his tragic opera. Yet it is dancelike and charming and full of life and engaging rhythm. This is only the second time the RPYO has played it during Dr. Harman's tenure with the RPYO. The first was, appropriately enough, in 2001 when the RPYO made its tour to France. What wonderful memories we hold of performing it to full audiences and enthusiastic appreciation in Beaugency's exquisite (if chilly) Romanesque church and Paris's beautifully lit Église St. Merry!

The "fantastic" in the heading "The Fantastic French" could be applied to Berlioz all by himself—and not just for the title of his amazing revolutionary symphony. His *Roman Carnival Overture* (previously performed by the RPYO in March 2005) came more than a decade after his *Symphonie Fantastique*. In it we still find the trademark Berlioz intensity, passionate

themes and frenzied moods of the earlier work.

It is hard now to believe that the huge, imaginative, heart-on-sleeve *Symphonie fantastique* was written in 1830, only three years after Beethoven's death and by a rather unevenly trained musician. He had the nerve to write a work for an orchestra at least double the size of Beethoven's, the unrestrained egotism to tell through music the story of his frustrated love and demented fantasies, and the inventiveness to create new musical expressions to match his personal passions. He was the founder of musical Romanticism in France and the consciously chosen model for many of the greatest European composers of the later 19th century.

School 19 has
expanded its
string
program.

It's a massive work—so massive that we can perform only part of it on this concert; Dr. Harman has led the RPYO in it only once before. This was exactly ten years ago, in March 1999. It is a once-in-a-decade symphony because of its immense musical challenges.

Its innumerable rewards make it all the more special for us all.

RPYO's Partnership with School 19

by Patty Yarmel

We are excited to report that our partnership with School 19 is growing and thriving. Our small ensemble monthly concerts began in September with three of our RPYO string players, Kate Gurnow, Louisa Womack and Ryan Yarmel, and RPYO parent, Patty Yarmel. During this first concert, the RPYO musicians introduced elementary students to a range of basic musical concepts through interactive listening and movement exercises. It was thrilling to see the entire third grade up on their feet "conducting" our musicians.

www.rpyo.org

An enthusiastic reception

The entire string family, including the harp, has been represented in these concerts. A variety of musical styles including classical, fiddle and improvisation have been featured. The concerts have been extremely well received and the youngsters at School 19 have been a superior audience filled with curiosity and enthusiasm. Many RPYO members have given their time to be a part of these monthly concerts and have surely benefited as much as the youngsters at School 19. The next concert date is scheduled for Thursday March 26th. Additional concert dates are available for May and June. Please contact Patty Yarmel or Bonnie Kramer if you are interested in performing.

Interest grows among third graders

In addition to the concert series, School 19 has expanded its string program to include all interested third graders. This past October, 18 new third graders began studying the violin. They have proven to be an eager, devoted and motivated group of students. After only a month of lessons, the students gave a standing room only holiday concert to an enthusiastic audience of teachers, family and friends. The string players at School 19 are currently working very hard to prepare for the RPYO's March 15th side-by-side concert where they will be performing during the intermission.

To augment regular school lessons, two of our RPYO members, Rosie Curren and Louisa Womack, are serving as weekly mentors during an after-school program at School 19. The program runs from 3:30 to 4:45 pm Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Additional mentors are welcome on either or both days. All student participation in the concert series or mentoring program can be counted for high school community service hours.

School 19 is a unique school which

values music, and truly understands the positive benefits of studying an instrument. Next year the string program will be expanded to include the incoming class of third graders (40 students in all). Many of them have already expressed a desire to play the violin. If anyone has or knows of violins which are currently not in use, we will surely be in need of additional small violins ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ size).

Stayed tuned for further updates. Please address questions to Patty Yarmel or Bonnie Kramer.

A Talk with Jahja Ling, Conductor and Youth Orchestra Supporter

*Edited by Julia Figueras &
Peter Iglinski*

Jahja Ling is Music Director of the San Diego Symphony, a position he assumed in 2004. He founded both the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra.

Q: Why are youth orchestras important?

A: That's one of the ways we can expose classical music to young people. Sometimes people don't just want to be passive participants. By playing in the youth orchestra, young people can actively participate in creating classical music. So I think it's important that kids participate. Not everyone becomes a professional musician. Some of them become professional management or members of the board; some become donors. Anything that would be very helpful in terms of the continuation of the classical music in this country is important. I feel that in our country, in America now, young people are less and less interested in even hearing classical music.



Jahja Ling,
Music Director of the
San Diego Symphony

Q: Why is classical music so important?

A: When you hear classical music, when you understand classical music, there's a certain thing about the depth, the profoundness of the feeling that you don't find sometimes in other musical art forms.

Q: Not everyone in a youth orchestra wants a career in music...

A: And I think that it's important that you don't force people...

Q: But if you see a talent that good, but the person wants to do something else, classical music still has value to that person.

A: Absolutely. That will always have an impact. I don't know how many letters I got from members of the youth orchestras both in San Francisco and Cleveland after they left the youth orchestra saying the experience in the youth orchestra was the most important aspect of "my life"—not just musical life, but "my life."

Q: What got you involved in youth orchestras?

A: One of the most important aspects in my career...I went to Tanglewood and there I met Leonard Bernstein who became my mentor in conducting. And he inspired with how much time he spent with young people. He conducted the student orchestra; he worked with conductors one-on-one. He really loved working with young people. Why would he spend time with the kids? Because he believed that he could pass on the tradition or what he had to share with the young people. That's why I feel like when I got my first job as a professional musician, they offered me the chance to create a youth orchestra. I took it right away. I felt like it was a bonus to me to have a youth orchestra in San Francisco.

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Q: *What have you learned from learned from youth in all your years working with them?*

A: Kids, they can do simple things, they can do some things spontaneously...

Q: *What's the best way for parents to nurture their children?*

A: First of all, all the parents shouldn't think all their children are Yo-Yo Ma or Itzhak Perlman or Leonard Bernstein. Everybody has their own place in the profession. Never think you always have a genius. Of course, you need to encourage them, and let them develop naturally—like my parents did with me. I was very, very grateful, because I was never forced. You don't have to always be number one to be successful.

Q: *What is the Music Director's challenge with youth orchestras?*

A: In youth orchestras, there's a lot of turnover. Some years, there's great talent together; some years they're short of talent. So, it comes and goes. Sometime you have a great year, sometime you have a less than great year. The thing is not just the result. The thing is how you built and how you inspired, how you nurtured these people. You know, I have seen so many people that going through youth orchestra that they say they changed their life, and then they work in the office now and then they still write me.

Q: *The economy is not doing too well right now. Are you concerned about the fate of the arts, and youth orchestras in particular?*

A: Absolutely. That's why we need to have people like philanthropic foundations that really keep supporting the youth orchestras. Not because these people have the money to support the youth orchestra, but people that have committed to youth orchestras have the vision. Companies come and go—even the biggest companies. And they gave money to the arts, and that's really

paramount. But no longer. You need to find foundations that have a certain kind of mission in terms of kids so they keep supporting them. I'm very concerned, very much so. The first thing that happens in a dire economic situation is to cut back on the arts, especially for the young people because people think it does not matter. Kids will still live if they don't hear the classical music, but they lose something in their lives.

Interlochen Arts Camp

by Sarah Whalen-Cohen

I have gone to Interlochen Center for the Arts for the past two summers: in 2007, I attended the Advanced Bassoon Institute and in 2008 I went to both the Advanced Bassoon Institute and the Arts Camp.

The Advanced Bassoon Institute is a week-long workshop with Eric Stomberg, the bassoon teacher at Interlochen's boarding school and the University of Kansas, George Sakakeeny, the bassoon professor at Oberlin Conservatory, and a third prominent bassoon teacher. This "mini-camp" is organized into master classes so that all of the attendees (usually about 25 or 30 high school students) have a chance to play. Reed-making classes are interspersed throughout the week. Ok, I must admit that this is only going to be of interest to bassoonists, but concurrently—this takes place the week before the Arts Camp begins—there are institutes for horn, trombone, and trumpet.

Something for everyone

Interlochen Arts Camp has courses for anything one could ask. On the musical front, there are programs for orchestra, wind ensemble, chorus/operetta, jazz, piano and composition, just to name a few. For those who don't want to spend

six weeks in music ensembles, there are programs for dance, visual arts, creative writing and theater. The camp is also split into divisions for high school, intermediate and junior, depending on the camper's age. Now, six weeks may seem like an insanely long time, but the weeks fly by, with performances every night (the bands and orchestras perform different repertoire every weekend) and 2500 other talented people with whom you can hang out.

A better artist

Interlochen is a breeding ground for great artists—with rehearsals every day and plenty of places to practice, you can't help but improve. For a month and a half, you get to experience one of the best summers of your life—trust me, it will be—and you will undoubtedly come out a much better musician, painter, writer, dancer, actor... It's the best of both worlds—both fun *and* rewarding!

We need to establish ongoing fundraising efforts.

RPYO Looks at Alternatives to Tour

*by Mary Ellen Womack,
Bonnie Kramer & Susan Basu*

The parent committee of the RPYO has been meeting to establish a new group of interested parents to work on what we are, for now, calling "Special Events". This group is working to define events and put forward ideas to organize and fund these events. So far we have looked at ideas.

New York and Montreal Considered

One option is a trip to New York City the third weekend in May 2010 to share a concert with the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. This would mean boarding buses Thursday afternoon. There would be sightseeing during the day on Friday, with the rehearsal taking place that evening. The concert would be held

Saturday in Carnegie Hall and the group would return on Sunday.

We are also looking at a possible trip to Montreal & Quebec over Spring Break 2010. We have contacted a youth orchestra in Montreal to determine whether they would be interested in a joint concert. We continue to seek possible venues in Quebec. We have RPYO alumni working in Montreal, which raises possibilities.

Transportation and accommodations for both trips would probably be handled by *1st Educational Tours*. Many students have had trips arranged for your school groups through this company. They offer reasonable prices, interesting tours and are both cooperative, and pleasant to work with.

These two ideas are "either/or" proposals; we will not be doing both.

Money-raising ideas

With these possibilities in mind, we need to establish ongoing fundraising efforts to build the student accounts and the general Tour Fund. The first of these efforts will be a pancake breakfast at Applebee's in Pittsford Plaza on May 31st. Please watch for more information and sign-up sheets for this event. This is a very good fundraiser as we will make \$4 of every \$5 ticket we sell in advance. This is a major change in the type of fundraising we usually do, so we encourage you to support the event.

Next, we are considering raffling ipod (s) at the May concert at Roberts Wesleyan. This is similar to the first raffle we had at our concert at Hochstein in November.

In September we will be selling flower bulbs. Selling bulbs has been a simple and well received effort in the past, so we feel we should do this again. We would sell the flowers from late September through the third week of

October in order to offer a delivery date of the second week of November for planting.

The first aid kits were a hit. We would like to sell them again in time for Christmas gift-giving.

We are attempting to schedule a February 2010 second date at Applebee's. This date is not finalized as yet.

There are other ideas being forwarded. If you have any input, please, this is the time to speak up as we plan ahead for next year and beyond.

Parent involvement needed

While no decisions have been made as yet about special events for next year we are looking for parents to step forward with ideas and the commitment to implement them. We will have opportunities, this year, as well as next year, for parents who would like to take over the duties of: Treasurer, PAC Chairman, Snack committee, and "Special Events. Bonnie and I, as well as Kathy Wahlen and Kevin Ryck, are approaching graduation from the orchestra: two this year and two next year. We need to begin the process of turning duties over to younger families so that transitions are smooth and ongoing activities consistent.

We would like to thank those parents who answered our email call for attendance at a meeting of the fledgling Special Events committee this past February. It was a diverse group of "old salts" and "newbies". Many great thoughts and ideas were shared. This is the kind of dialogue and support that helps an organization flourish. It is also very important for us to know what is on your mind. We strongly urge you to attend these meetings whenever possible. Please check your email for announcements of time, date, and subject.

We are
looking for
parents to
step forward.

Kudos

Christen Greer (violin) won 1st place for strings in the David Hochstein Recital Competition.

Kate Lee Gurnow (violin) was chosen by the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Severino Center to receive the Future Women Leaders Award.

Kate Lee was also a winner of the University of Rochester's Scholars Essay Contest. She receives a scholarship for a week-long program on Case Studies in Science, Biological Research.

Nick Amering (bass), Joel Carini (trumpet), Ben Tiberio (clarinet), and Emma Zeger (trumpet) are all members of the Eastman Youth Jazz Orchestra that received first Place in the Big Band category of the Charles Mingus Competition held in New York City.

Penfield Symphony Orchestra's Jo Amish Concerto Competition: 1st place to Christen Greer (violin) and 3rd place to Sarah Kramer (harp).

RPYO Spring Concerto Competition Winners: Katherine Floriano (violin) and Sarah Kramer, (harp). Katherine and Sarah will perform at the RPYO's May 10th concert at Roberts Wesleyan College.

The RPO's Search for a Star Competition had four winners from the RPYO: Christen Greer (violin), Kate Gurnow (vocal), Sarah Kramer (harp), and Louisa Womack (double bass). Christen, Kate, Sarah and Louisa will join the five other finalists in performance with the RPO on Sunday afternoon, May 31st in the Eastman Theatre.

Louisa Womack (double bass) was one of two winners of the Finger Lakes Symphony Young Artist Competition.

Rosie Curran (violin) was selected Concertmaster of the 2009 All-County Orchestra.