

RPYO News of Note

Winter 2008

Spring Training

David Harman

I hope that you've had the good fortune to hear P. D. Q. Bach's hilarious version of the first movement of Beethoven's *Fifth*. It's the music of Ludwig that we all know and love. However, there's also a narration describing the progress of the music in the way a sportscaster would report a baseball game. If you have not heard it, it's worth a



Google for a major league giggle. Thinking about the idea of music and team sports is rather useful in some ways. They are natural human activities that share a great many aspects.

Both are usually group activities. If you're a member of a successful team, you've got several things going for you. You can play well with others and support everyone's intentions to do his or her best. You can perform specific difficult tasks successfully at a high level of accomplishment. You intend to offer your best efforts and have the expectation that your colleagues will contribute in the same spirit.

Sure, there are always variables involved in realizing our best intentions. You may have a string break or you might have a rotten cold, but your intentions can still be focused toward having the team succeed. That's part of being a dedicated member of a winning and successful group. It's fun when the team wins, but it's perhaps just as fulfilling when you know you've all done your best. The process of playing is more important than the final score.

It usually takes a long time and a lot of effort to develop a winning team. Traditions need to be developed, cultivated and celebrated. One great thing about a musical team such as ours is that we aren't competing against anyone else. You don't

hear of the Berlin Philharmonic taking on the New York Phil in a battle over Brahms. Critics may have opinions about which team is more successful at any one time, but there's no tabulated score, only a competition with ourselves to do the best job we can to bring the composer's intentions to life.

Our RPYO team has a long and successful tradition of performing great orchestra works to the very best of our ability. I've been privileged to be involved in some really remarkable musical team efforts during the past fifteen years. Some highlights that emerge are tour-related concerts. Our Bartók performance in Hungary, our Italian concert in Imola, the Hindemith performances in what was once East Germany, playing Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in London are all memories that I will cherish. Our orchestra this year has already accomplished some rather amazing things. Playing Shostakovich Five was a major event. *Scherehazade* with the RPO should be a high point of the season. Our mentor-coaches are essential to our success. It's so very special to play with a professional musical team!

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Ours is a tradition that requires constant renewal for continued success. Our team changes membership every season. People do eventually graduate! We generally lose about 25 to 30% of our team each May. Some players have been with us for as long as six seasons. What that means for us is that we are always in the process of reinventing our orchestra. We need to have the most promising “rookies” audition for membership each spring. Although we can’t accept everyone who auditions, we are certainly very eager and happy to have him or her audition. If they don’t happen to make the team the first time around, they may when they try again after more training.

This is why your support of our team is so important. We count on you to encourage your talented friends and acquaintances to audition for us. We certainly advertise our auditions, but it’s often encouragement from a current member that really makes a potential player take that courageous step to audition. I hope that you will do your best to consider who you feel would be a great team member. We’d love to have them audition for us in early April. You could give them an audition brochure or just have them contact Mrs. Basu at the RPO office and one will be sent to them.

For our musical fun to continue to flourish, we need wonderful “rookies” each season. Thanks for doing your part as a member of our team to scout out potential members.

With your help, our team will continue to be a great one in which everyone wins.—DH

RPYO open rehearsal on March 2

RPYO’s open rehearsal for potential new members is on March 2, 2008 at 2 pm at Apollo Middle School. See our web site www.rpyo.org to download an application form. Encourage your friends to audition!

Concert Preview: Russian Tales

Side-by-Side Concert with the RPO

Sunday, March 9, 2008 at 3:00 pm

Eastman Theatre

Conductor: David Harman

**Soloists: Rebecca Copek, Flute
Gregory Hammond, Trombone**

Mussorgsky, Night on Bald Mountain

Borne, Fantasy on “Carmen”

Bourgeois, Trombone Concerto, mvt. 3

Rimsky-Korsakov, Scheherazade

Stories in music could be the theme of this RPYO-RPO Side-by-Side Concert on March 9. Telling tales through symphonic music became increasingly popular in the later 19th century, especially among Russian composers. They used larger orchestras, found newly expressive uses for instruments, borrowed melodies and rhythms from folk traditions and “exotic” cultures, and discovered that audiences loved it all. Here was music that could transport listeners to fantastic worlds.

Night on Bald Mountain and Scheherazade

Rimsky-Korsakov was the Russian master of story telling through music. With his vast knowledge of orchestral instruments he could evoke a wide spectrum of emotions. His skill, developed as a writer of fifteen operas, in depicting characters and dramatic situations, created wordless scenes and narratives in music. It was through his orchestrations that many works of other Russian composers, especially Mussorgsky, reached a larger audience and are known today. The very popular Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* is now mainly enjoyed in Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestral version and much less so in the composer’s original piano edition. Without Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestration of *Night on Bald Mountain*, Mussorgsky’s original unpublished tone poem might have been forgotten altogether. That would have been a loss. It is hard to think of another orchestral work that has become so associated depicting musically the evil (*next page*)

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doings of malevolent spirits and that is now such an essential part of symphonic programming especially around Halloween time.

Scheherazade was completely Rimsky-Korsakov's own creation, a lyrical yet dramatic musical version of episodes from some tales of the *Arabian Nights*. In his younger years the composer had sailed with the Imperial Russian Navy to Muslim regions of the Russian empire. He returned filled with the sounds and sights of Islamic culture that gave new life to the Arabian tales he had known since childhood. These early experiences infused much of Rimsky-Korsakov's music, but never as completely as in the captivating *Scheherazade* and its beautiful and resourceful heroine.

Flute and Trombone Solos

This concert offers a special treat, a chance to hear a different version of a work performed already this season: Bizet's music for his opera *Carmen*. The RPYO performed in its November concert one of the two orchestral suites that were arranged from the opera. On the March concert we will hear an arrangement of music from *Carmen* for solo flute and orchestra, created by François Borne, a French flutist, contemporary of Bizet, and composer of works for flute. Borne apparently had a mission to display the flute as not only a beautiful instrument but one that can soar the heights of musical virtuosity. The popularity of his astonishing *Fantasy on "Carmen"* among flute soloists proves how much he succeeded

The fourth work on our Side-by-Side program is a contemporary concerto by Bourgeois for trombone and orchestra and another showstopper. The RPYO has been fortunate to have in recent years a number of top-notch trombonists who have demonstrated to us without a doubt what a versatile and expressive instrument the trombone is. To perform the Bourgeois Concerto, with its high highs and low lows and its breathlessly cascading runs, requires the most advanced technique and nerves of steel. And a bonus—listening to it is lots of fun! –SB

Introducing our soloists

Rebecca Copek joined the RPYO in 2005 as a 10th grader at Hilton High School. For years she has dreamed of becoming a professional flutist, especially since she started studying with Rebecca Gilbert, Principal Flute of the RPO. Performing a solo with the RPYO in Eastman Theatre, and



especially this particular solo, has been another treasured dream. She writes: "The *Carmen Fantasy* is a fantastic piece for a flutist to perform. Flutes are generally seen as soft, tame, charming instruments. My goal with this piece is to shatter those stereotypes. I want to prove that flutes can have an attitude! *Carmen* wouldn't have it any other way. In performing this piece I hope to encourage budding musicians and young flutists to be tenacious and aspire to reach their dreams."

Greg Hammond, a senior at Fairport High School, is in his second year in the RPYO. His older sister Jamie preceded him as a French Horn player in the orchestra. In addition to classical music, which he studies with Larry Poole and Mark Kellogg, Greg loves jazz and is lead trombone with the Eastman Youth Jazz



Orchestra. Greg has decided to become a music educator. "I want to be able to bring to future students the same joy of music that I received from my own teachers and to continue the tradition of creating excellent music in our schools." To do that Greg realizes that he has to attain a high level of performance that can truly inspire his students. Performing the demanding Bourgeois concerto is an important step in reaching that performance level as well as an opportunity to share with family, teachers, and friends all that he has been working on since he started the trombone in fourth grade. –SB

From the Top in Rochester!

Julia Figueras

The house was sold out, and the audience was lined up to get seats an hour before show time. *From the Top* had finally come to the Flower City, one of the first cities to carry the NPR radio show, and Rochesterians were clearly excited by the prospect. Even with announcements that *FTT* was sold out, people came armed with cash and the hope that, perhaps, they would be lucky enough to slip in anyway. Making the day even more exciting was the appearance of five Rochester musicians: pianist **Harvest Zhang** and the Compass Quartet—four members of our Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra: Violinists **William Cho** and **Kieran Hanlon**, violist **Michael Sabatka**, and cellist **Stephen Ryck**.



Harvest and the Compass Quartet already had a long week behind them when the “On Air” light was illuminated. They were at the WXXI studios at 5 AM for an appearance on Channel 13’s early morning show, had spoken to several local newspapers, and the Compass Quartet had performed for, and spoken to, children at city schools #15 and #33. And show day was equally long. Dress rehearsal began at 10 AM for a full run-through of the broadcast. This included every element, from the artist interviews and comedy bits, to performances by all of the musicians. Each of the pieces was recorded in dress rehearsal (with pick-ups, if necessary) for back-ups in case anything went wrong during the actual taping of

the show. As anyone who’s attended a concert can tell you, one bad cough can ruin the whole moment.

And we were off. A funny opening, a stern warning about turning electronic equipment OFF (apparently unheeded by someone in the audience, as it turned out), and an audience sing-along of Beethoven’s 5th set the tone for what was a wonderful, warm, and witty afternoon celebrating music-making by teenagers. Harvest took on Stravinsky, and then talked about muscle memory in his performances; the Compass Quartet (who had the honor of closing the show) debated driving techniques and then breezed through Haydn. Each performer was charming, and all played like pros. Kieran Hanlon won the \$10,000 Jack Cook Kent Scholarship, and was gently chided by his compatriots for “driving like an old lady,” a charge he labeled as “preposterous” in dress rehearsal. Less than 90 minutes later, it was over—with nary an errant audience sneeze.

From there, it was a brisk walk through the campus in a bitter breeze to the post-show reception, when all of the participants were applauded once again, with remarks by *FTT* host Christopher O’Riley and others, congratulating an extraordinary group of young musicians. RPO Music Director Christopher Seaman and RPO CEO Charlie Owens could be seen in the crowd, offering their pats on the back, too. There were smiles all around, lots of photos, and the sense of pride that comes from a job well done.

Somewhere, in the middle of taping earlier that day, the presenter announced that *FTT* was sponsored by the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and by WXXI. This collaboration was a leap of faith by both organizations, with a very happy ending. Bringing a national radio show to town is an expensive and intricate process, and the RPYO and WXXI managed to pull it all together without a hitch. We should all be proud, not just of our wonderful musicians who were all so gracious and such wonderful ambassadors, but of our organization for having the vision to be part of this event.

From the Top broadcasts on WXXI (91.5 FM)

- 3/10/08 at 1:00 pm Backstage Pass
- 3/14/08 at 6:00 pm Backstage Pass rebroadcast
- 3/16/08 at 5:00 pm From the Top

An Interview with Christopher O’Riley

Peter Iglinski

Q. As host of From the Top, what have you learned about musically gifted kids over the years?

A. The thing that binds them together, in my own experience, is their common love of what they do; the inspiration that made them demand from their parents the chance to excel at something that in most cases took their folks completely by surprise. Whether it was seeing Itzhak Perlman on Sesame Street, admiring the flute in the orchestra as the ultimate fashion accessory, or seeing a Liszt Etude performance as the ultimate expression of athletic grace and concentrative virtuosity, the kids all have a fire in them that comes from their innate drive. It’s not a striving that calls them; it’s a necessity, like breathing.

Q. What differentiates a good or competent performer from one who is exceptional?

A. I find it’s usually a sense that the performer is completely immersed and possessed by what they are doing, and that their preparation, their consciousness of perfection and dexterity are sloughed off in the moment of performance, making it an occasion for the undeniable suspension of disbelief that envelops and transforms the audience, instantaneously and transcendently.

Q. What don’t most people understand about young people who excel at music?

A. The hardest thing that other kids don’t understand is the time and solitude that precede and prepare the moment of performance. Music, in and of itself, is presented in our society as a

commodity, so novelty is paramount in the musical market place. What would drive kids to play music hundreds of years old? Why not be the next Britney clone? The arcane aspect of classical music, not only the literature but the behavioral trappings attendant upon the concert-going experience, are sources of puzzlement and ultimately alienation. But that all fades in the face of live performance, when one is presented with the sense of awe and palpable accomplishment when in the presence of unalloyed passion, precision and joy.

Q. Do you have tips for developing talent in kids?

A. I think the more one is in the midst of music, performance, recordings, radio, TV, the better the chances are that kids will develop their talent wholeheartedly. When piano lessons and such are a ghettoized and isolated activity, kids don’t get the sense of what they’re doing as part of a greater community, a big world of constant rediscovery and excellence involving oneself in everyone sharing in the glow of musical expression.

Q. What was your most significant musical influence as a youth?

A. Probably seeing Van Cliburn play at Ravinia Festival when I was very young. He seemed to me a hero, simultaneously applauded and exhaled and yet set apart, a true idol.

Q. What are the common mistakes parents and young people make in music education?

A. Parents who live through their children’s efforts lose sight of the drive that should come from the child’s sense of accomplishment itself. Kids are sometimes to blame for making more of a competitive activity out of something that should be perpetual and non-reward oriented.

Q. Has the music environment changed much for kids in the last decade or two?

A. There’s more material available on the Internet. Kids now have much wider access to the recorded history, audio and video, of musical performance than at any time in history.

Kudos and applause!!

Sarah Kramer, RPYO harpist, participated in a scholarship audition through the Nazareth College Community Music Program on January 20. She was awarded second place in the advanced category for her performance on flute and received funding toward tuition for her flute lessons with Ms. Oris-Heikkila at Nazareth.

Two RPYO musicians were selected winners of the Penfield Symphony Orchestra's **Jo Amish 2008 Young Artist Competition: Andrew Hawk**, piano and horn, a senior from Livonia and **Gregory Hammond**, trombone, a senior from Fairport. Andrew and Greg both performed on the PSO's concert on February 11.

Three RPYO students were chosen as winners of its second Concerto Competition of the 2007-2008 season and will perform on its May 18 concert at Roberts Wesleyan College: **Kimberly Lourette**, string bass, and an 11th grader at Fairport High School, **Andrew Hawk**, piano and horn, a senior from Livonia High School, and **Kieran Hanlon**, violin, a senior from Canandaigua Academy.

Rosie Curren, a 9th grader from Penfield High School, has been selected concertmaster of the Senior High All-Country Orchestra. **Audrey Wu**, also a 9th grader at Minerva DeLand High School in Fairport, will be sitting next to Rosie as second chair.

The *Democrat and Chronicle* in February featured another musical side of RPYO violinist **Kate Lee** of Webster in its Our Towns section. Kate is the lead singer and fiddler in the No Strings Attached band that had 30 performances last summer and is already booked for 20 gigs this coming summer. Kate, who has two CDs out, performed in Nashville last fall. Her band has another RPYO connection: the banjo player **Mike Cloonan** from Fairport had two violinist daughters in the RPYO, **Katie**, Fairport '99, and **Meghan**, Fairport '06.

The WROC spotlight fell on **Greg Hammond**, trombone, from Fairport, this past January. Greg was a winner of the WROC Scholastic Arts Spotlight Award program that features area students who have shown outstanding accomplishments in both scholarship and the arts. Early this year, **William Cho**, violin, from Brighton, and **Kieran Hanlon**, also violin, from Canandaigua, were featured recipients of the award.

The Scholastic Arts Spotlight Award was created to recognize outstanding high school senior musicians, artists, actors and dancers in the Rochester area. Twenty students are selected per year. Each spot runs for two weeks after an initial in-depth airing, usually on the 5 and 11 o'clock news. All of the award recipients will be honored at a reception where they will receive an award sculpted in the form of the four represented arts. To view any Scholastic Arts Spotlight Award Recipients on line go to www.rochesterhomepage.net.

2007 NYSSMA Conference All-State participants

William Cho, Violin and concertmaster of the Symphony Orchestra
Curtis Bloomer, Clarinet
Jack Chang, Clarinet
Rebecca Copek, Chorus
Ginny Dodge, Oboe
Greg Hammond, Trombone
Kieran Hanlon, Violin
Andrew Hawk, French Horn
Evan Henry, Trumpet
Mariah Holt, French Horn
Ariadna Kryazheva, Violin
Michael Landgren, Bassoon
Kim Lourette, String Bass
Eliza Minster, Trumpet
D'Arcy Placilla, Cello
Angela Ryck, Violin
Stephen Ryck, Cello
Michael Sabatka, Viola
Cassie Zhang, Violin

Compass Quartet Perform in Area-wide Venues

Four members of the RPYO, **Will Cho, Kieran Hanlon, Mike Sabatka** and **Stephen Ryck**, also known as the *Compass Quartet*, have performed in several venues this season. They played for the Viahealth of Wayne County Foundation Gala event on November 17th, for the Rochester Area Community Foundation on December 10th and for the Chatterbox Club on January 15th. In the past they have performed at City Hall for the RACF Dinner with Mayor Duffy, and the Chamber Music Society Rochester's 30th Anniversary Season Closing Concert. In October they played for a Renaissance-themed wedding in full madrigal garb! *Compass Quartet* is a scholarship ensemble at the Hochstein School of Music and Dance coached by RPO violinist Pattie Sunwoo.



Kudos (sports division)

Three members of RPYO missed sectionals so that they could compete in the 2008 Empire State Games in Lake Placid, NY on the weekend of Feb. 22-23rd. Congratulations to **Luke Perry** who competed in Biathlon (2 bronze medals), skate skiing (14th), and classic Nordic skiing (8th); **Paul Phelan** who competed in skate skiing (9th) and classic Nordic skiing (7th); and **David Reuss** who competed in the Nordic skiing competition.

Our musicians reflect on music and performing

It is from the words of RPYO musicians that we can really understand the profound effect that music can have on young people who give themselves fully to it. Many thanks to those students who shared their most personal feelings and experiences with us.

- “Music is not my hobby. Ever since the third grade, music has been my passion. This past summer I was chosen after an audition to perform at an honors recital. The experience was surreal. However, it wasn't until I later learned that I had moved one of my best friends to tears that I realized how powerful my playing is to a listener. It is this feeling that will drive me to success as a musician and as an individual.”
- “Most musicians know the impact of harmony and melody on everyday life. Numerous soloists have been interviewed, noting the universal appeal of music. Music can touch lives that can't otherwise be reached. A simple theme from an orchestral masterpiece can bind people over the boundaries of language and cultural differences. In performing with groups from other countries, I have been exposed to the lasting similarities between all people who appreciate music... The way I can express my dreams and fears through music is something I would not imagine possible in any other field.”
- “With the years I have been realizing more and more what music means to be, and by now I know that it is my oxygen, and not a step in my life can I take without it.”
- “As I have been exposed to more and more playing opportunities, I've started to realize that the true musician's inspiration comes from within. I no longer play for anyone's approval, but instead I play because it makes me happy and because when I play, my spirit soars. It is about the music, not the player, about conveying that universal emotion so everyone can feel it as you do.”

From our Eastman Intern

Erika Lange is our RPYO Intern and a Masters Student in Trombone Performance at the Eastman School of Music

It hardly seems possible that it's been six months since I first began my job as intern for the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. My time with the group has taught me quite a bit about the dedication and hard work that it takes to run an orchestra. I've been inspired by the enthusiasm of both orchestra members and parents alike, and I am constantly amazed at the commitment of those who lead and run the organization. Many of my fellow trombonists at the Eastman School of Music are products of the RPYO, and I can say with certainty that this group gave them a leg up as beginning musicians in our competitive field. In my few short months here, I've been given opportunities that will aid me in a life as a musician and teacher. It's always refreshing to know that my work behind the scenes, from basic organization to sending out concert information to schools and teachers all over western New York, has a real effect on the actual concerts. I was never a member of a youth orchestra myself, but my experiences with the RPYO have given me the chance to be a part of that exciting world and to be inspired by the young musicians who are the future of music.

Snack committee update

Sondra Monachino and Kathy Whalen, Co-Chairs



Parents, thank you for the snacks—just a reminder to send in food when it's your turn. You will receive a post card in the mail a week in advance.

A very special and huge thank you to **Mickie Minster** for providing and serving delicious treats to our RPO mentors. THANK YOU, THANK YOU AND THANK YOU!!!

Found Item: I have a very nice plastic container which was left after one of the sectionals. If this is yours, please let Sondra or Kathy know. We will gladly return your container.

RPYO Alumni News

The RPYO Link to the New York Philharmonic

As you follow the travels of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra on its historic visit to North Korea, you can feel a special RPYO connection: Three RPYO alumni are playing right now with this great orchestra. **Vivek Kamath**, a Fairport High School 1992 graduate, was an RPYO concertmaster who later shifted from violin to viola, and has been part of the NY Philharmonic's viola section since 1997. **Lisa Albrecht**, RPYO 1982 and a trombonist from Phelps, played with the San Antonio Symphony for many years. This fall she started a new position as Assistant Principal Trombone with the NY Philharmonic. **Guy Piddington**, Fairport High School '97, has had positions with the Syracuse Symphony and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York and has filled in with the Rochester Philharmonic. Recently he became first runner-up for a trumpet position with the NY Philharmonic. Though he did not get the full-time job, he is now playing with them during its concert tour to China and North Korea. Look for these RPYO alums when the live North Korean concert appears on television.

And take a special look for our own RPO Mentor clarinetist **Robert DiLutis** who is also joining the NY Philharmonic for the duration of this tour. Rochester can be tremendously proud!

Geneva concert information

The concert on March 16th is at the Smith Opera House in Geneva. Tickets are \$6 for adults and free for students. Directions and other information will be forthcoming.

Check out our RPYO web site!

Go to www.rpyo.org for forms, calendar information, and photos of events such as the fall retreat and recent tours.