

# The Whole Note

Newsletter of  
The Norwalk Youth Symphony

November, 2001



*Newsletter Staff*

Carolyn Phillips ..... Editor  
Computing Concepts ..... Graphics & Layout

## *From The Chairman*

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Norwalk Youth Symphony. We are a diverse group of volunteers from a geographic range that reflects NYS's student membership. We have, historically, been comprised primarily of parents of student musicians. Although this has worked well for NYS, parenthood of a NYS musician is not a requirement. We are attorneys, at-home mothers, nurses, investment advisors, business people, teachers, and a physical therapist. Some of us are musical, but most of us are not musicians. Some of us have avid and advanced musicians and others have beginning students. The thread, the only thread, that holds this group together is a passion for the Norwalk Youth Symphony and its welfare.

If you feel similarly about NYS we would welcome your energy and commitment. Don't be shy about making it known that you would like to be considered as a candidate for the Board. We are especially interested in people with backgrounds in finance, fund raising, public relations, legal affairs, corporate development. We have discussed inviting some high profile individuals to serve as honorary board members. If you know someone, or are someone, who might consider serving in this capacity please pass the name along through Carolyn Phillips. Giving us your name or the name of someone else does not commit anyone

to anything. It just gets the ball rolling so that when the Nominating Committee needs to fill vacancies a list of potential new members is available.

Board members typically serve for a 3-year term and can be and often are re-appointed if they are willing to continue. We try to maintain a balance of newcomers and old-timers to preserve institutional memory and have fresh perspectives. The Board meets monthly on a Saturday morning with Carolyn Phillips for the duration of the concert season. We talk and debate and learn from Carolyn and each other. The entire Board does not meet during July and August, but individuals and committees remain active. Even if you do not want to be a Board member there are always committees which would be glad of the expertise that is out there in NYS' support community. Those of us who have done this work for many years find it energizing and satisfying. Where else can you literally hear the growth and the increase in maturity of young people? There has never been a concert when a Board member hasn't verbalized what we all must feel, which is, "Phew, what a piece of good hard work that was!" We would be delighted to hear from some NYS supporters with energy and time to give to this very special enterprise.

— Nancy Griffin  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

## *Help Wanted — Summer 2002*

We are looking for two additional volunteers to join the Audition Committee – one to share the volunteer recruitment calls in August and another to train in the area of appointment scheduling. For the latter position a knowledge of Excel would be helpful, but we are willing to teach this program to you. Most of the work is done in August. This is a fun and challenging project that offers a great way to reach out to our membership.

Questions? Call **Elaine Asen (254-7196)** or **Gregory Payne (866-1361)**

## Auditions

The Audition Committee extends its appreciation to everyone who volunteered to help during audition week. There are always many details requiring attention, and the extra help is vital for the schedule to run smoothly. Some of you went to extraordinary lengths – working more than one shift, hiring sitters to cover home, enduring traffic jams, showing up despite colds or allergies. Thank you! The musicians as well as the conductors are grateful for your support and encouragement. Thanks to:

Sharon Schroeder

Lynn Skalka  
Ruth Lipsitz  
Arlene Thrope  
Don & Jean Black  
Sharon Pires  
Marcia Minehan  
Bernie Orenstein  
Jacqueline Juhasz  
Dorothy Domeika  
Maribeth Payne  
Donna Cole  
Jean Jacobson

Serena Jourdan  
Mary Ann Bradshaw  
John & Cynthia Bess  
Wanda & Rick Contolini  
Pam Kaufman  
Camille Garmirian  
Brian & Yuko Ike  
Karen Wagner  
Diane Parrish  
Barrie Meulmester  
Andrea DeFeo  
Jane Brennan  
Charles Morgan  
M'Liss Conetta

Alice Cooney  
Celeste Arvanitis  
Lisa Brailoff  
Lynden Magnoli  
JoAnn Chieffalo  
Sarah Watkins  
Valerie Szeto  
Grace Chiang  
John Harmon  
Anne Farrow  
Cheryl Sickler  
Patricia McCormick  
Norma Brown

## Book Library

We have added several new volumes to our book library so that it now contains 27 volumes. Included are composers' biographies (Schubert, Moussorgsky, Mendelssohn, Beethoven); books about music (*Talks with Great Composers* by Abell, *Words About Music* by Amis and Rose, *Exploring Classical Music* by Finn and *Critical Entertainments* by Rosen); novels with musical themes (*Longing* by Landis, *Valley of Decision* by Middletown, *The Devil in Music* by Ross and *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* by Carhart); and young adult fiction (*The Sandy Bottom Orchestra* by Keillor, *Play to the Angel* by Dahlberg and *The Mozart Season* by Wolff).

These volumes are on display during rehearsals and may be borrowed for three weeks by students and parents. All are very interesting and informative. Try one and see!



photos by Anthony Lowe

## *Lessons in the Schools*

The NYS's outreach program, *Lessons in the Schools*, started its second year of operation in September. Through this initiative, 15 deserving youngsters (selected on the basis of talent, responsibility and need) from Norwalk middle schools have the opportunity to take a 1/2 hour private music lesson from a professional teacher once a week at a minimal cost. Violin, viola and cello instruction is available. The instructors are Pedro Pinyol, violin; Adrien Mackiewicz, viola; and Todd Woodard, cello.

The purpose of this program is to bring the joys of music to these children and to help prepare them for membership in the Norwalk Youth Symphony. Our auditions are competitive, so each musician must have adequate training to gain admittance into the orchestras.

*Lessons in the Schools* takes place on Friday afternoons at West Rocks Middle School. Van transportation is available for those students who have no transportation of their own as is supervision for children who must wait for their lesson time. Support this year comes from the Darien United Way and Fleet Bank.



## *European Tour Cancellation*

When we first started planning for the Principal Orchestra's tour to Germany and the Czech Republic in the spring of 2001, the world situation was entirely different. The tragic events of September 11 in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania and their repercussions have made us all most uneasy about what may lie ahead. In the context of this uncertainty, the NYS Board has decided to cancel plans for this tour.

There are several reasons for this decision. First, of course, is security. While none of us can predict what things will be like in eight months, we can no longer make the same assumptions about the safety of an international trip. Second, the Board agrees that it would be unfair to ask for a financial commitment of this size in these uncertain economic times. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Board feels that continuing plans for a tour is inappropriate during a period of national mourning and apprehension.

The Board still believes in the value of a tour like this, and this spring will evaluate its feasibility for June-July of 2003.

## *Small Ensembles Program*

The Small Ensembles Program of the NYS is off to a wonderful start this year. To date, nine ensembles have been formed, on beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. The coaches who work with these groups are outstanding and include Jean-Rodolfe Bindschedler, Sharon Fugate, Helen Carter-Huybrechts, Asya Meshberg, Pedro Pinyol and Richard Wyton.

This program is open to all NYS members and to selected musicians who meet our audition guidelines. Its purpose is to allow young musicians to experience the unique enjoyment and satisfaction of playing chamber music with a small group of other players. Participants develop the finer skills of intonation, interpretation and listening. They also learn to exhibit responsibility and sensitivity to the needs of other players.

Many performance opportunities are open to the advanced groups, who are at present in the midst of a very busy season. They have played, or will play, in the following venues during this year:

- Healing Wall ceremony, Norwalk
- Church services in Norwalk and Wilton
- American Classical Orchestra children's concert
- Stamford Town Center
- Westport Creative Arts Festival
- Norwalk Rotary Club awards dinner
- Ludlowe Manor Senior Center
- Norwalk High School winter concert
- Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Heritage Park celebration
- Westport Rotary Club luncheon
- Norwalk High School senior prom
- Dedication of Thomas C. O'Connor Park, Norwalk
- Darien United Way meeting and Christmas shopping extravaganza
- Stepping Stones Museum for Children reception
- Norwalk Chamber of Commerce awards dinner
- Aldrich Museum for Contemporary Art fund-raiser
- Weddings, funerals, private parties

## Conductor's Corner

I would like to start out by saying how much I have enjoyed working with the NYS over the past few months. Not only is the quality of the orchestra high, but the enthusiasm is immense. It is difficult to put a lot of passion into Borodin, or to make Shostakovich's *Festive Overture* live up to its name at 9:15 AM on a Saturday morning, but I am impressed with what the kids usually bring to the table.

When so many life-altering events are occurring right now, I have found myself questioning whether music is an important and necessary thing. Are we, as musicians, really contributing to society? Is being a musician as important as being a biochemist or a brain surgeon? To answer this question, I only have to look back to the famous examples of the past. During World War II in Russia, Shostakovich was writing music by candlelight in an apartment without heat while facing the constant threat of being seized in the middle of the night by Stalin's men. Stravinsky moved all over Europe and eventually to America in order to write music and survive in a free environment. Schoenberg also fled to America to avoid the wrath of Hitler. There are countless examples throughout history of musicians who felt that music was worth performing or writing, even at the most desperate of times.

Music makes us feel something, whether it be happiness, anger, sadness, or a distant memory. It provides us with an emotional outlet, something that is greatly needed at a time like this. It reflects life, yet also provides us with a bit of escapism. As musicians, we do a great service to bring those things to others. I for one feel very lucky to be a musician and to share music with people whom I hope feel the same.

-Tara Simoncic



It has been interesting to note in the past few weeks the integral role that music has played in the healing of our nation since the horrible terrorist attacks of September 11. From the performance at the Kennedy Center just a few days after the attack—featuring Leonard Slatkin conducting, amongst other pieces, the powerful finale of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection"*—to the many fund-raising events which have featured some of our biggest musical pop stars, music has been the art form we seem to be turning to the midst of our grief and sadness. Perhaps the comfort of familiar tunes and lyrics is reassuring as we confront this new, dangerous world. It was extremely moving to see the tear-filled eyes of audience members singing along with James Taylor to his old standard *Fire and Rain* at the Concert for New York. How interesting to see the ways in which many songs have taken on new, profound meaning since the events of September 11, and how much comfort they seem to offer us. It is also of some interest to note that this oppressive regime which we are now battling has banned ALL music. I teach a history and appreciation of music course at the Wooster School in Danbury, and as we recently were exploring the middle ages, I was struck by the similarities of the Taliban to the repressive role of the Roman Catholic church in the early "dark ages." At that time, the church leadership feared the power of music and maintained strict controls, limiting how music was created and used. But, unlike the evolution of the church which soon came to recognize that the emotional and spiritual force of music was in accordance with religion and could greatly enhance the process of worship, the Taliban, some 1500 years later, STILL fears music and bases its brutal control on limiting both education and artistic expression.

As a musician, I firmly believe in the spiritual healing power of our art form. As I leave the rehearsal hall each Saturday afternoon, I feel tired but refreshed, fatigued but enriched. I know that we often get side-tracked in our zeal to polish the best performance we can, but the magic of all these Norwalk Youth Symphony young people working together in the true spirit of community to improve themselves and make something of beauty is an experience we should all treasure. With all the ugliness and horror we see around us right now, music is a reminder that there is still beauty in the world, and sharing in the experience of artistic expression is something which heightens and elevates us as a species and makes our brief time here more meaningful.

-Richard Brooks

Welcome to all Chamber Orchestra musicians! I am very excited about starting this year with you and look forward to making wonderful music. Our first concert will be challenging but also rewarding.

Our recent retreat was an eye-opening experience for me. As we were learning to work together, it was interesting for me to watch children interact, communicate and listen to each other, which ties into orchestra playing. It is extremely important for every player to work together in an orchestra, to listen to the people around her and to understand that the group is a team in which no one person is more important than another. Seating is not relevant at this level of playing, and there is no competition. The NYS string sections are never arranged according to rank, but in the best interests of the musicians and the orchestra as a whole. Therefore, once you are accepted into the orchestra, you only have concentrate on playing your best.

-Jim Andrews

# Is There Orchestra after the Norwalk Youth Symphony?

A survey of last year's graduates produced the following information about their continued involvement with orchestras and about their college's music program. Most are willing to serve as contacts for those interesting in their school.

**Michael Bertkau** - [mcbert@wm.edu](mailto:mcbert@wm.edu) (College of William and Mary)

I am playing in the symphony at William and Mary. I was extremely well prepared. The symphony here is incredible. The repertoire is difficult, but a high quality of music is produced.

**Jessica Brennan** - [jib118@psu.edu](mailto:jib118@psu.edu) (Penn State University)

I am playing in a small orchestra that is really for non-music majors and people who are beginning their string studies. The orchestra has kept me involved in music and provided the only balance for a strictly science and math curriculum. NYS has definitely prepared me for a higher level of playing.

**Patricia Buttke** - [pbuttke@oberlin.edu](mailto:pbuttke@oberlin.edu) (Oberlin College)

I am playing in the Community Winds Ensemble. I chose Oberlin because I thought I could keep up better with my clarinet playing here better than at a state school. NYS prepared me to play in an ensemble setting, and I don't feel overwhelmed with the pieces here at college.

**Andrea Catalano** - [acatala@LearnLink.Emory.Edu](mailto:acatala@LearnLink.Emory.Edu) (Emory University)

I am not currently involved, but in January I will be in the orchestra. I wanted somewhere I could participate musically, but not have to major in music and also a school that would allow me to be flexible in my participation.

**Elizabeth Eckersdorff** - (University of Connecticut)

I am playing in the concert band. Music is not my major but I still wanted to make sure I could participate in the music program, which I can. NYS prepared me very well along with my other ensembles from high school. U Conn has a great music program.

**Jeff Kittel** - [jakittel@amherst.edu](mailto:jakittel@amherst.edu) (Amherst College)

I am participating in orchestra and in concert choir. College orchestra is more challenging. NYS prepared me for the experience of being in a serious orchestra with high expectations of its performers. The orchestra is non-competitive, i.e. they don't turn anyone away, but the quality is very good since usually only the stronger players are willing to take up the time commitment. The school music major is a liberal arts version, so there is no possibility of majoring in performance.

**Seth Low-Tufo** - [slowtufo@wesleyan.edu](mailto:slowtufo@wesleyan.edu) (Wesleyan University)

I play in the University Orchestra. NYS prepared me very well for a higher level of orchestra. Because Eckart demanded near professional discipline and attention to detail, I feel that I am well prepared to contribute in my current orchestra. Membership in the NYS allows students the opportunity to attain a better placement in the section. For example, as a freshman, I am the section leader for the second violins, the same position which I held in NYS.

**Molly Sharlach** - [05mrs@williams.edu](mailto:05mrs@williams.edu) (Williams College)

I am playing in one piece in the Student Symphony because there are so many clarinetists who want to participate. I wanted a school where I could easily participate in ensembles in a challenging but noncompetitive atmosphere. College ensembles are a lot more "serious" and demanding than NYS, but I do feel that NYS has given me a good foundation. There are some wonderful faculty members in the music department, and the course selections and performance opportunities are strong for a small liberal arts college. P.S. I love Williams!

**Grace Loew** - [Grace\\_Lowe@brown.edu](mailto:Grace_Lowe@brown.edu) (Brown University)

I'm playing in orchestra and I am taking private lessons. I would recommend my college to someone who wants to continue playing but is not entirely serious about commitment. There is a good mix of players in the orchestra but it is not hardcore serious. In the cello section, our principal player is majoring in music, but our last chair person hasn't had much experience and is just doing orchestra for fun.

**Eleonore Roesch** - [eroesch@wellesley.edu](mailto:eroesch@wellesley.edu) (Wellesley College)

I am in the college orchestra and in a chamber group. I feel very prepared for my college orchestra participation. The pieces we play are technically easier than those I played in NYS. My ability to sight-read, blend and follow the conductor were all greatly enhanced through NYS participation. Students in the Principal Orchestra should not have a difficult time getting into the Wellesley orchestra

**Catherine Smith** - [catherine.j.smith@yale.edu](mailto:catherine.j.smith@yale.edu) (Yale University)

I'm taking lessons from a grad student and playing in a chamber orchestra - the JE Chamber Players. The Yale Symphony Orchestra (in which I am NOT playing) is a very serious, VERY good orchestra.

**Abigail Wattley** - [Abigail.G.Wattley@williams.edu](mailto:Abigail.G.Wattley@williams.edu)  
Williams College

College is wonderful! Currently I am not involved in the college orchestra. They hold second orchestra auditions in January, which I plan to go for. NYS definitely prepared me for college music. I was able to place out of basic music theory, never having taken a formal course just because of my strong music background that NYS contributed to. I am going to take a course spring semester called "Women and Music". ...

*Today I will give all that I can because  
I cannot give anything less. — Anonymous*

## On Music

To me, one of the most wonderful things about music is its ability to bring me to a higher level of being, out of the ordinary, to a place where everything is clear and understandable and beautiful. This doesn't always happen when I listen to a piece, but when it does it's as if the shutters have been opened and a whole new world is opened to me. I have recently been struck with how many others have had this experience. They relate it in words as follows:

*And people fall silent, listening to the playing of the Gypsies, and a different mood overtakes them, a mood of wonder and yearning...and all they wish for is the continuation of the altered kind of melody which, after all the laughter and feasting, allows their hearts to leap up so that they almost feel they are no longer at a party but somewhere else, somewhere that transcends time and place, somewhere they have always longed to be and have never found themselves until now.*

Rose Tremain

## Rules For Practicing

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) was an Italian composer and piano virtuoso who compiled the following set of rules for practicing in 1898:

1. Practice the passage with the most difficult fingering; when you have mastered that, then play it with the easiest.
2. If a passage offers some particular technical difficulty, go through all similar passages you can remember in other places; in this way you will bring system into the kind of playing in question.
3. Always join technical practice with the study of the interpretation; the difficulty often does not lie in the notes, but in the dynamic shading prescribed.

*Come, follow me into the realm of music. Here is the iron fence which separates the earthly from the eternal. Have you undone the fetters and thrown them away? Now come. It is not as it was before when we stepped into a strange country; we soon learned to know everything there and nothing surprised us any longer. Here there is no end to the astonishments, and yet from the beginning we feel it is homelike..*

Ferruccio Busoni

*Music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable.*

Leonard Bernstein

*Music is a sublime art precisely because, unable to imitate reality, it rises above ordinary nature into an ideal world, and with celestial harmony moves the earthly passions.*

Gioacchino Rossini

*Music is the most romantic of all the arts — one might almost say, the only genuinely romantic one — for its sole subject is the infinite. Music discloses to man an unknown realm, a world in which he leaves behind all definite feelings to surrender himself to an inexpressible longing.*

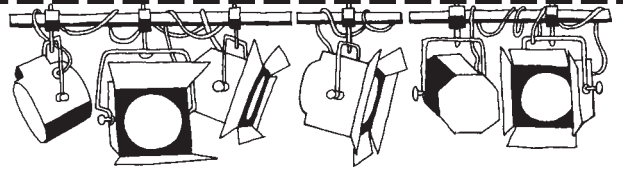
E.T.A. Hoffman

Life for many of us in America has now evolved into a series of challenges to compete. We are bombarded with this doctrine at school...Music contests have been a part of secondary education almost from the beginning...Students are missing out on the musical facets of their ensemble experience because of the competitive nature of musical contests...By stipulating that only "the best" can attain the highest rating, we manufacture a situation where everyone is competing against each other for those few choice scores instead of taking each student and dealing in an individual way with that student's technique, phrasing, intonation, and interpretation.

— Rodney Mill

4. Never be carried away by temperament, for that dissipates strength, and where it occurs there will always be a blemish, like a dirty spot which can never be washed out of a material.
5. Don't set your mind on overcoming the difficulties in pieces which have been unsuccessful because you have previously practiced them badly; it is generally a useless task. But if meanwhile you have quite changed your way of playing, then begin the study of the old piece from the beginning, as if you did not know it.
6. Study everything as if there were nothing more difficult; try to interpret studies for the young from the standpoint of the virtuoso; you will be astonished to find how difficult it is to play this.
7. Attend to your technical apparatus so that you are prepared and armed for every possible event; then, when you study a new piece, you can turn all your power to the intellectual content; you will not be held up by the technical problems.
8. Never play carelessly, even when there is nobody listening, or the occasion seems unimportant.
9. Never leave a passage which has been unsuccessful without repeating it; if you cannot do it in the presence of others, then do it subsequently.
10. If possible, allow no day to pass without touching your instrument.

## Spotlight on Teachers



**FRANZ RYERSON** has been teaching 'cello for 33 years and says that she still loves it as much as when she began. Currently the orchestral teacher for Weston Middle School, where she has five orchestras and lots of enthusiastic students, Franz also teaches the 'cello privately, plays with a trio and a string

quartet, attends chamber music camps for adults in the summer and takes music courses when possible. In the past, she has performed with the Ridgefield and Bridgeport Symphonies.

Franz holds a bachelor's degree in music education and a master's degree in elementary education. As a child, she

played chamber music with her family, attended summer music camp and participated in All State and All New England orchestras. She also studied at the Housatonic Valley Music School in Cornwall, CT, where she had many performance opportunities. It was there that she received her foundation studies in music.

## Where Are They Now?

**ERIN KACENGA** (oboe, 1987), has been appointed assistant artistic administrator at the National Symphony Orchestra. Prior to this, she was a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's artistic department.

**KATE DILLINGHAM** ('cello, 1987), attended Rutgers University and graduated summa cum laude. Since then she has been pursuing a career as a professional cellist and has appeared as a featured soloist with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra as well as the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. Ms. Dillingham has also commissioned and premiered numerous works of contemporary composers. Her newly released CD of two of Haydn's cello concertos is beautiful!

**CHARLOTTE WHITMAN** (cello, 1997) is in her final year at Oberlin. She is working towards a bachelor's degree in music education and is applying to graduate schools with a possible interest in performing. In this her final year, Charlotte is student teaching. In previous years she played with the school orchestra, with a quartet and with a contemporary music ensemble.

*The pleasure of your company is requested.....*

The NYS Benefit Committee will sponsor  
a Silent Auction  
at the Sunday, February 10, 2002 Concert

Do you have something you could contribute?  
Vacation homes, sweater, scarf, luggage, chocolates,  
sports memorabilia, floral arrangement, toys, crystal,  
leather goods, games, concert tickets, jewelry,  
electronic equipment, gift certificates for restaurants,  
hotel accommodations, day spas, hair salons  
Creative ideas welcome!

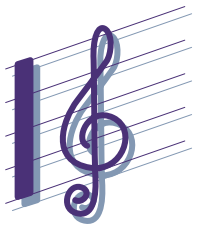
For more information, please contact Donna Gale 203-438-3467

## Scholarships

The Norwalk Youth Symphony is pleased to announce that it has awarded thus far this season over \$14,000 in tuition, ticket obligation and private lesson scholarships to 7% of its membership.

The recipients of the NYS Memorial Scholarships are Andrew Knebel, a violist from Norwalk and a senior at Norwalk High School and Eric Pidluski, a violinist from Fairfield and a sophomore at Fairfield High School.

The Memorial Scholarship Fund was created some years ago to honor those who served the NYS and those who loved music. Gifts have been given in honor of Edward R. Ambrose, Claudia Blew, Fanny Bodner, Ruth Bodner, Steve and Sandra Burdin, Emily Clawson, Elliott Cooper, Thomas Dickey, Sarah Dillon, Marilyn Fitch, Henry Frederick, Margaret Gardner, Ida Guberman, John Hardy, Bernard Jaffe, Jeremy Johnson, Anita Krentzman, Lulu Pilsen and Laura S. Pollack.



## *Schedule of Upcoming Events*

### **CONCERTS (Norwalk Concert Hall)**

Sunday, January 27, 2002 — 3:00 PM — Small Ensembles Recital

Sunday, February 10, 2002 – 3:00 PM — Winter Concert

Sunday, May 12, 2002 – 3:00 PM — Spring Concert

### **CONCERT (at Carnegie Hall, NYC)**

Wednesday, May 22, 2002 – 7:30 PM

*This will be our response to violence: to make music more intensely,  
more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.*

*The Whole Note*  
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P.O. Box 73, Norwalk, CT 06856-0073



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