

# The Whole Note

Newsletter of  
The Norwalk Youth Symphony

July, 2000



## Newsletter Staff

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

## From The Chairman

I was recently celebrating the end of the school year with some teachers I work with when they raised the topic of children's fragmented, highly structured days. My colleagues were concerned about the many commitments of their students and the ever-growing "to-do" lists of activities which chop up their days into discrete blocks of time and rob them of the fluidity of day-dreaming hours.

I listened as a parent. I listened because I heard the concern in their voices. I listened as someone who has recently assumed a leadership position in an organization that asks for a great deal of time from children and parents. And, lastly, I listened because I heard the conversation resonating with discussions that the Board of Directors of the Norwalk Youth Symphony has had over this past year.

As I write this in June, the whole world feels as if it is in transition. The school year has ended, our "children" have graduated to their next levels, and many of us have been listening to bold and lofty thoughts in graduation addresses. In the midst of all these passages, the Board of Directors has its unique transition as the "old" Board is bid a very fond farewell and the "new" Board meets together for the first time in June. Many of us do not know the others at this first meeting of the year. Introductions take place and the business of the group proceeds. We look back over this year's accomplishments and are assured that good work was done. Three strong concerts and a fourth very special Tanglewood program were presented. New musicians met each other in the fall and performed as well-rehearsed veterans in the spring. Outreach concerts were given by the Chamber Orchestras to communities which have no orchestral music programs. A benefit starring Jim Andrews and Friends was successful

in raising necessary funds. The year's activities were orchestrated by a gifted and generous Executive Director, Carolyn Phillips. The orchestras were conducted by three wise and steadfast teacher/conductors, who will return next season. Cadres of parents and other family members volunteered their time and skills and encouragement through all of these activities.

The Board anticipates another strong year in 2000-2001. Requests for audition slots come in at a fast pace. Inquiries and interest in the organization continue to increase. The Norwalk Youth Symphony is, in fact, a thriving, healthy organization.

Having cited some of the public successes, I must say that one of the most significant Board accomplishments over this past year happened in quieter arenas as the Board crafted a new mission statement. Articulating the NYS's mission compelled the Board to soul-search for clarity. It was tedious work. But, recalling my conversation with the teachers, I am heartened that this work was done. It gives me great hope that in the real-time life of a child, the NYS can be more than just another stimulating activity fragmenting a child's day. If we are guided by our vision as articulated in the mission statement, we have a chance to address the teachers' concerns. And, with the support of the broader NYS community - teachers, parents, financial sponsors - we have a chance to nurture whole and healthy children who cherish the musical opportunities that the NYS offers. Here's to the task at hand.

Nancy Griffin  
Chair of the Board of Directors

We may think of the negative as the score and the print as the performance.

—Ansel Adams—

## Conductor's Corner

By all accounts, the performance of the Norwalk Youth Symphony's Concert and Principal Orchestras in the Seiji Ozawa Concert Hall at Tanglewood in May was a rousing success. Not only did both groups rise to the challenge of performing on the stage of one of the world's most prominent concert venues, but the spirit of camaraderie and mutual support which emanated all around was inspiring.

I cannot stress enough the importance of these types of performances. After a season where we all work very diligently to produce three concerts of high artistic caliber, it is always rewarding to have the opportunity of returning to the repertoire for an additional performance. Not unexpectedly, both orchestras performed better at Tanglewood than at our regular concert at Norwalk Concert Hall a week earlier. An additional rehearsal, the knowledge of what may have gone amiss in our regular concert, and the inspiration of being on such a distinguished stage all contributed to a more relaxed and polished performance.

We don't tend to focus on one very important aspect of professional music-making that contributes to its excellence: repetition. Most professional groups, whether it's 'N Sync, the Boston Symphony or a soloist like Itzhak Perlman, polish a program and then perform it many times on tour. This takes the music to another level artistically, where comfort and familiarity offset technical concerns and make for an exciting and inspirational performance. (Of course, the flip side of this is that the professionals have to cope with not allowing their familiarity with a work to stifle their expression or permit them to go on "auto-pilot" and render a dull, though technically polished, rendition.)

We spend so much time gearing up for just one performance that we

rarely have the opportunity of exploring a work on a deeper level, to get past the rudiments of a piece of music and begin to delve into its inner workings. These additional performances, whether it's the Chamber Orchestras presenting one of their enlightening programs at an elementary school or the Principal Orchestra performing at Carnegie Hall, enable our young musicians to experience music on a more profound level and to reap the rewards of their hard work and commitment during our regular season.

It was also very gratifying to see the cooperation that everyone exhibited during our excursion to Lenox. Carolyn Phillips, with her usual efficiency, had seen to it that every detail was taken care of, but the support of the parents who served as chaperones, and particularly the positive and encouraging remarks from the members of both orchestras, made the experience more enjoyable and rewarding. More than at any other time during the season, one had the feeling that the Norwalk Youth Symphony was truly a team, dedicated to the advancement of ALL of its members. The loud ovations that greeted both ensembles displayed the pride and appreciation of the audience, not all of whom were friends and relatives!

After the Concert Orchestra had performed its segment of the program, revisiting our Beethoven *Fifth Symphony Finale* from an earlier concert along with the *West Side Story* medley and the *1812 Overture* arrangement we'd prepared for the final concert of the regular season, I headed out to the audience to listen to the Principal Orchestra. As I passed through the door to the Concert Hall, one of Tanglewood's own ushers, who has obviously heard a lot of excellent performances in the hall, recognized

me and smiled, saying, "that was great" At that moment, I felt considerable pride in the Concert Orchestra and its accomplishments this season.

Finally, for me personally, the experience of working so closely with my esteemed colleague, Eckart Preu, was enjoyable. During the regular season, Jim Andrews, Eckart and I all go about our business without a lot of interaction beyond the polite chit-chat that our occasional meetings in the Norwalk City Hall lobby bring. This concert helped to cement a mutual support system that can only help all the constituent orchestras of the Norwalk Youth Symphony.

Many thanks to all involved with this performance, and congratulations to all the musicians who made it a memorable day despite the dreary weather. Let's do everything possible to insure that these "extra" performances remain a tradition at the Norwalk Youth Symphony.

— Richard Brooks

I wish to thank all the members of the Chamber Orchestra for one of the best years ever in the history of the Norwalk Youth Symphony. I will never forget all of the laughs, hard work and dedication that resulted in making music come alive for all to enjoy. Remember to keep your chops up this summer and to be prepared for your audition in September (it will come fast!). Most importantly, remember to relax, have fun and enjoy life to its fullest!!

— Jim Andrews



NOTE: Eckart Preu is away in Europe and is therefore unable to contribute to this edition of *The Whole Note*.



*Tanglewood*

## Norwalk Youth Symphony

### *Mission Statement*

The purpose of the Norwalk Youth Symphony is to enrich the lives of young people within a musical community. We provide the finest possible training, practice and performance opportunities, enabling our students to learn, share and enjoy the power of music.

In partnership with parents, teachers and schools we:

provide exposure to diverse orchestral styles under the guidance of musical professionals;

identify and educate motivated students regardless of financial circumstance;

foster a sense of achievement and self-esteem through a developmental approach; and

promote self-discipline and teamwork through respect for artistic standards.

—April, 2000

A concert such as the recent one given at Tanglewood is seen from several different perspectives; that of the audience, the performer, the conductor, the volunteer, and the executive director. Richard Brooks has already given his view in his column in this newsletter. I thought I would add my viewpoint as well, by answering the question voiced by a parent as the buses were loading early Sunday morning. "What are we doing this for? Our children are so busy this time of year with other activities, and they just did a Norwalk Youth Symphony concert last week.

What's the point of taking a whole day to travel to Massachusetts to give the same program again?"

The answer to this question came, I think, when this same parent sat in the audience and heard her child play in that beautiful concert hall. The experience at Tanglewood opened new doors for our young players, exposing them to what performances in special places can offer, and broadening their musical experience. It is an indescribable, thrilling feeling to be on a stage like that of Seiji Ozawa Hall, where so many other

famous musicians have performed. Somehow, it makes one play better than he or she thought possible, and maybe, just maybe, to have a special musical experience, for there is something about music that can lift one, if only for a moment, to a higher level of being, out of the ordinary, to a place where it seems that everything is clear and understandable and beautiful. This doesn't always happen but when it does, it's incredible. Places such as Tanglewood often make it possible to have such an awakening, and it is for moments such as this that one goes through the humdrum of everyday musical activities, taking one step at a time through lessons, practicing, rehearsals, and so on. One of our students recently said that playing music gave her goosebumps. Another said that "when the music gets going it is like being swept up in a huge current. It's like flying, and without wings, I think it is the closest thing to it I will ever find." Both these youngsters were reacting to this unique feeling that music can create. In their statements lies the answer to why we went to Tanglewood.



*The clarinet section of the Concert Orchestra enjoying themselves before the Tanglewood concert.*

— by Carolyn Phillips

## *Auditions* — August 31 through September 7

It's never too soon to think about auditions, even though the summer has barely started. It will be over all too soon! Don't put your instrument away; plan to practice a bit each day so as not to lose your skills. If you are going to a vacation home, take your violin or oboe or trumpet with you. If you plan to stay home for most of your holiday, take some lessons. You will have more time to practice and to enjoy your music and won't panic when audition time comes around.

All NYS members will receive a letter scheduling them for an audition appointment in early August. Please! if you do not intend to reaudition, let us know as soon as possible by calling Elaine Asen at 254-7196. Because of the number of requests for auditions, we have instituted a new audition application procedure. New musicians wishing to try out for the NYS in the fall should call the office at 203/866-4100 and request that this application form be sent to them.

The audition committee will be looking for parent volunteers to work in two-hour shifts as runners and helpers during audition week. Please call Grace Chiang at 227-1853 if you can be of assistance. This is a good way to volunteer at the NYS and to learn more about our organization at the same time.

### *Ramer Award*

The Ramer Memorial Award is given each year to a deserving NYS senior. This musician is chosen by fellow players on the basis of attendance, leadership, preparation and commitment. Mr. and Mrs. Ramer were teachers and long-time residents of Norwalk who were quietly involved with many activities that contributed to the quality of life in their town. At their death, their estate was left to several local organizations, including the Norwalk Youth Symphony. Our grant is to be used for scholarships.

This year's recipient is **Shannon Brown**, flutist, from Greenwich. Shannon was elected a Presidential Scholar and received several scholarships at the end of the year, including the Linda Hoening Memorial Scholarship and the Monique Dalan Memorial Scholarship as well as awards from the Kiwanis Club of Greenwich, the Greenwich Scholarship Association and the PTA Council of Greenwich. She will be attending Fairfield University next year, where she will major in mathematics and minor in music.



*Shannon Brown, winner of the Ramer Award (left), Eckart Preu,  
Hannah Hyun, winner of the Concerto Competition (right)*

### *Books with Musical Themes*

(these are adult books)

Kate Ross - *The Devil in Music*  
Willa Cather - *Song of the Lark*  
Frank Conroy - *Body and Soul*  
Doris Mortman - *Wild Rose*  
Mark Salzman - *The Soloist*

### *Concerto Competition*

Every other year, the Norwalk Youth Symphony sponsors a Concerto Competition, which is open to all members of the Principal Orchestra. The winner is selected through an audition process in which the judges are the NYS conductors. The award this year went to **Hannah Hyun**, a cellist from Danbury. The prize was a performance at the May concert, when Hannah performed David Popper's *Hungarian Rhapsody, Op. 68* with the orchestra. Hannah, who has been a member of our organization for eleven years, graduated this year. During her high school years, she also performed with the Danbury High School Orchestra and the Danbury Community Orchestra and was selected to participate in the Connecticut Music Educator's Association Western Regional Music Festival Orchestra and the All-State Festival Orchestra from 1997 to 2000. Currently a student of Lois Errante, Hannah has also studied with Judith Smith and Marcia Wiley. She plans to attend the University of California at Berkeley next fall.

## *Congratulations to the Following NYS Graduates*

Amanda Ameer, harp, New Canaan - Dartmouth College  
Shannon Brown, flute, Greenwich - Fairfield University  
Neil Davidson, tuba, Redding - George Washington University  
Aaron Epstein, bass, Norwalk - New York University  
Allison Forbes, cello, Fairfield - Dartmouth College  
Maya Fukuda, violin, Westport - New York University  
Catherine Goldenheim, clarinet, Wilton - Harvard College  
Kathryn Heidemann, oboe, Wilton - Colby College  
Andrew Hsieh, violin, Ridgefield - Oberlin College  
Hannah Hyun, cello, Danbury - University of California at Berkeley  
Anupama Kurra, violin, Wilton - Barnard College  
Timothy Mackenzie, trumpet, Greenwich - Princeton University  
Caitlin May, viola, Norwalk - George Washington University  
Katherine Minehan, violin, Westport - Colgate University  
Nomita Ramchandani, French horn, Wilton - Wesleyan University  
Benjamin Robinson, trumpet, Monroe - University of Connecticut  
Audrey Yu, violin, Westport - Columbia College

## *Small Ensembles*

The Small Ensembles Program ended the year on a high note (no pun intended!) as eleven groups performed before the final concert on May 14. Some were outside on the plaza as the audience approached the hall; others were in the lobby; and still more were heard on the stage as those seated awaited the first orchestra's appearance. All sounded wonderful and were a credit to themselves and to their coaches.

While the flute ensemble did not play on the 14th, they performed each month during the season at a nursing/retirement home in the area and in May at St. Stephen's Church in Ridgefield.

Sincere thanks go to our coaches, who were: Asya Meshberg, Vladimir Margovsky, Boris Deviatov, Katherine Greene, Darwin Shen, Jean-Rodolphe Bindschedler, Richard Wyton, Sharon



Wilton High School was listed among the best 100 communities for music education in America in a recent survey conducted by the American Music Conference (AMC), the National Association for Music Education (MENC), the Music Teacher's National Association (MTNA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

Fugate, Melissa Mackey and substitutes Marty Meade, Joseph Russo and Carolyn Phillips.

This program was made possible this year by the Amateur Chamber Music Players and the Clinton B. Ford Fund of its ACMP Foundation, an organization that promotes chamber music activities for amateur musicians, and by a grant from the Westport Rotary Club.

Music is not about what happens to people but about their states of mind and heart when it is happening.

— Anonymous

## *Recruitment*

We are looking for players of the following instruments for next season:

### **CONCERT ORCHESTRA**

trombone  
tuba  
oboe  
bassoon  
percussion

### **PRINCIPAL ORCHESTRA**

trumpet  
trombone  
tuba  
oboe  
bassoon  
percussion

If you know of anyone who plays one of these instruments who might be interested in joining the NYS, please have him/her call the office at 203-866-4100. They will be glad they did!



*Attend a*

*Summer Concert*

There are lots to choose from, at outdoor facilities such as Caramoor, Tanglewood and the classical series at the Levitt Pavilion, or indoors at the South Shore music series and other such local venues. Check your local newspapers for dates, times and locations.

## *New Music Book*

There is a strong connection between the Norwalk Youth Symphony and a new book on music for kids that came out this spring: *The Young Musician's Survival Guide*, by Amy Nathan. A few years ago, several of NYS's older members filled out questionnaires for the author as part of the research for this book. These students were among more than 150 top teen musicians from around the country who jotted down strategies they had picked up over the years that made their practicing less of a chore and their performing more of a joy. Tips from teen contributors are featured prominently in the book, which aims to help youngsters who are just starting out in music. One former NYS member, violinist Alyssa Lacouture, is quoted directly, and a current member, cellist Ashley Jordan, can be seen in several of the photos. Another key contributor is parent Maribeth Payne, music editor at Oxford University Press, who nurtured the book carefully from the idea stage through publication.

Besides tips from teens, the book also features suggestions from 19 professional musicians, including Wynton Marsalis, Paula Robison, James Galway, Joshua Bell, Gil Shaham, and members of the Eroica Trio, who remember back to their youth and tell how they coped with practicing and performing hassles then and how they deal with some of the same issues today. Their often humorous remarks illustrate clearly that all musicians - professionals as well as beginners - deal with the same dilemmas.

### *Excerpts from the Book — Practice Tricks to Try*

"Play a hard passage in different rhythms so your fingers become used to playing it in different ways," says Alan, a cellist. Claire takes a tricky oboe passage and plays it as if it were written in "triplets or dotted quarter notes or I make up my own rhythm." This is one of several ways of changing a passage around to make it easier to learn. How can practicing it WRONG help you to play it RIGHT? Flute teacher Vanessa Breault Mulvey explains, "It's a way to make yourself pay attention to the note pattern. It kind of pounds the pattern into your head. You still do the same notes, but by playing them in different rhythms, you challenge yourself to really learn those notes, like a game..."

"Play the rhythm on a single note at first," suggests Sarah, who does this with trumpet music. This is another change-it-around-to-learn-it strategy. It helps you focus on just one thing, in this case the rhythm, without worrying about the notes. Then try the opposite: do the correct notes, but play them as whole notes without the rhythm. Then, put notes and rhythm together. Allison, a flutist, uses another change-it-around trick: "I use different articulations (staccato or legato) and then I play it the normal way."

"I sing a passage before I play it," observes James, a trumpeter.

"On string instruments, watch your fingers to see where they land, to help make sure every note is in tune," suggests Sary. Other string tricks: pluck the notes; practice just the shirts; "shadow bow" the passage (bowing it in the air); or bow on an open string. "I play a hard cello passage on piano to hear what it sounds like," reports Wendy.

"Use colored pencils to mark note names or flats and sharps if you keep making the same mistakes," recommends Renee, a piano student. Don't be shy about writing on your own music, if you own it. (If not, make your marks easy to erase.)

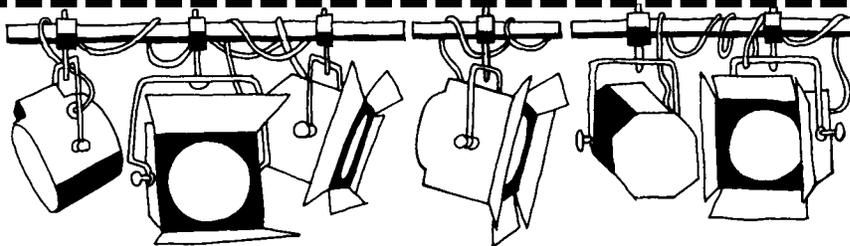
*The Young Musician's Survival Guide* by Amy Nathan is published by Oxford University Press. It is available in paperback for \$9.95 at bookstores or can be ordered by calling Oxford University Press at 1-800-451-7556.

### *Tips on dealing with Performance Anxiety*

Prepare extremely well. Know your music so well you could play it in your sleep. Then set aside some time when you can sit without interruption and go through the performance in your mind. Imagine your recital from when you first walk in and bow to the last note of the last piece. Imagine it going flawlessly - picture and hear in your mind yourself playing it without a single mistake. This way, you program yourself to do well. If you expect to do well, you will. We are built for success; if our mental image is failure, we succeed at it.

Consider why you get nervous. Take some time and take this apart. Often, our nervousness comes from fear of others' opinions. If this is your case, go through varying scenarios relating to people before the performance. Once the fear of people is controlled, stage fright can be managed.

## Spotlight on Teachers



**OLAV VAN HEZEWIJK** arrived in New Haven from his native Holland in 1982 to pursue his master's degree at Yale. The summer of his graduation, he took the bronze medal in the prestigious Gillet International Double Reed Competition which was held in Graz, Austria that year. He has since established himself as one of the premier oboists and oboe teachers in the state, placing students at the Curtis

Institute of Music, the University of Michigan, Temple University and Yale. He is the principal oboe of the New Haven Symphony and assistant principal oboe and solo English horn of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony. During the summer he is part of the renowned Colorado Music Festival in Boulder, Colorado.

Olav has his studio in the New Haven area and is a teacher of the more

refined "Philadelphia School." Several of the Norwalk Youth Symphony's oboists are his students. He also acts upon occasion as sectional coach for the orchestras' wind sections. Olav is recognized throughout the country as a master reed maker, and has had professional oboists knock on his door for lessons in reed making.

## Thanks To Our Sponsors

The Norwalk Youth Symphony thanks the following Businesses, Civic Organizations, Corporations and Foundations for their support this past season:

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**CORRECTION:** The last edition of the Whole Note stated in the "Where Are They Now?" column that Andrew Wilmott teaches at the Westport School of Music, In fact, he is at the Westport Music Center.

## 2000-2001 NYS

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# *Next Year's Concert Schedule*

## Norwalk Concert Hall

Saturday, November 18, 2000 - 8:00 PM

Sunday, February 11, 2001 - 3:00 PM

Sunday, May 13, 2001 - 3:00 PM



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