

The Whole Note

Newsletter of
The Norwalk Youth Symphony

July, 2002



Chamber Music Program

In the spring of 2002, the NYS Board expanded a program that has been part of the Norwalk Youth Symphony since 1988. Known as the Small Ensembles Program, it offered orchestra members the opportunity to play in small groups with a variety of instruments. These small groups were available as emissaries from the NYS to play in the community for events where an orchestra would be too large. A parent initially ran the program.

As with any good idea, the number of students wishing to participate increased over the years, and the program grew. Participation was made available to students who were not members of any of the orchestras. As the number of musicians and groups increased, the program began to be administered in several different ways. In addition, the orchestras themselves were growing (both in the number of orchestras and the number of students in the orchestras), placing increased demands on the time and attention of the NYS Executive Director.

The Small Ensembles Program developed more focus during this period of expansion. Under professional coaching, groups began to emphasize established chamber music repertoire, as opposed to arrangements to suit whatever instrumentation presented itself. A grant from the Clinton B. Ford Fund of the Amateur Chamber Music Foundation gave the Small Ensembles Program the financial resources to attract high quality professionals to coach and remain with the program. All of the coaches from 2001-2002 will be returning to the program next season. In addition, the library has been steadily growing so that students can work with the standard chamber music repertoire.

Two big changes have been made for 2002-2003: the Small Ensembles Program has been renamed the Chamber Music Program, and there is now a paid part-time Program and Music Director who will concentrate solely on its activities. These changes will create more opportunities for students to be exposed to the medium of chamber music, both as performers and consumers. There will be two formal performances during the season, instead of just one. An alliance has been formed with the Lockwood-Matthews Mansion Museum, providing an additional forum for groups to perform. Also, some field trips will be planned to performances of chamber music at various locations in the New York City region. There will be a continuation of the very popular pizza parties from last year. It is a real privilege to be able to share with young people the joy, challenge, and sheer fun of this fast-growing area of music.

We look forward to many new members. If you are interested, please call Sharon Fugate at 203-938-9267.



—Sharon Fugate

Newsletter Staff

Carolyn Phillips Editor
Computing Concepts Graphics & Layout

You can learn to do just about anything. It takes practice, that's all.
— Anon

From The Chairman

We have had a busy year. Our orchestras have performed 3 times at the Norwalk Concert Hall; the Principal Orchestra performed at Carnegie Hall; our Small Ensembles performed numerous times for nursing home residents, wedding receptions and public events; the Concert Orchestra went to an open rehearsal of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; the Chamber Orchestras attended a concert called Cirque Eloize in New York City; and through our *Lessons in the Schools Program* we have provided 14 students with instrument lessons they otherwise could not have afforded.

Next year will be just as busy with the Principal and Concert Orchestras hopefully performing at Tanglewood. We also want to broaden our Chamber Music Program and expand the *Lessons in the Schools Program*. With this in mind, the Norwalk Youth Symphony Board of Directors is holding an all-day meeting this summer – usually a time when we do not meet - to discuss how effective we have been at fulfilling our mission and the things we can do to improve. Inevitably, discussions such as this these turn to questions of resources and funding, and these are matters that we want the parents and friends of the Norwalk Youth Symphony to understand and support. You will be hearing more about this as the season progresses.

Meanwhile, have a wonderful, if as it always seems a too short, summer. See you in September.

John Harmon
Chair, Board of Directors

Auditions

Summer seems only to have started, but the organizers of auditions – Elaine Asen, Greg Payne, Jeanne Stewart, Kathy Cihl and Carolyn Phillips – are already at work answering telephone calls, sending out applications, making preliminary schedules and organizing the material for the annual handbook.

Each child who was in the Norwalk Youth Symphony last year will automatically receive an audition appointment unless we are told otherwise. If you do NOT plan to return, please call! Spaces are at a premium, as we always have more applicants than we can accommodate.

If you know of someone who would like to try out, have him or her call the office at 203-866-4100. They can also log onto www.norwalkyouthsymphony.org, our website, for information. We are especially looking for players of the trombone, French horn and percussion.

We encourage students to prepare over

the summer so that they can rise to the challenge of giving a fine performance at the audition. The conductors want your audition to give them a picture of your best playing. Through the scale, solo and sight-reading, they will be able to determine your level of confidence, tone, technique and sense of musical expression. As the saying goes, "Practice, practice, practice!" and remember what Eckart Preu once stated: *"Now that you know the notes and the bowings and how to identify and master the technical difficulties, the fun part starts. What to do with the music? And THAT is the part I am interested in when I listen to auditions. WHAT do you do with those notes, phrases and dynamic markings? What do you want to tell me about the music? YOUR music? It is sad or happy? Is it a story with a development or a description of a scene? What scene? What I am looking for in an audition is music and a musician. It's as simple – and a difficult – as that."*



Audition Tips

- *Be prepared.* This is the single most important thing you can do. Plan ahead so that you will be sure to leave yourself enough time in which to practice.
- *Get a good night's sleep; eat properly; drink plenty of water.*
- *Think positively.* When you think about the audition, visualize yourself going into the room with confidence and hear yourself in your mind playing the best you can.
- *Wear comfortable clothes and practice when you have them on.* If a shirt doesn't fit properly, it may hinder you from using your bow properly.
- *Leave plenty of time.* Make sure you have directions to the audition location.
- *No one will ever accuse you of being musical or playing with too much interest.*
- *Keep breathing.* You can't audition if you faint.

Library

A generous grant from the Norwalk Kiwanis Club has allowed the expansion of the NYS book library. It now includes not only volumes, fictional and non-fictional, about music but also video recordings. New titles include:

Books

The Soloist – Mark Salzman. Salzman, a former NYS member, writes a novel that tells of an adolescent cello prodigy who lost his gift at the age of 18. Taking on an unprepossessing 9-year-old Korean student whose musicianship reminds him of his own past, his life takes a dramatic new direction.

Teaching Genius – Barbara Sand. This is the story of Dorothy DeLay, a legendary violin teacher at Juilliard.

Song of the Lark – Willa Cather. ... a beautiful and moving novel about a young woman from the mid-west who becomes an opera singer.

Videos

From Mao to Mozart – Isaac Stern's legendary trip to China.

Remembering Jacqueline du Pré – a fascinating biography of the tragic cellist who died too young.

Art of the Violin – contains all sorts of information about this instrument and its famous players.

Check out the Dallas Symphony's web site www.DSOKids.com for a neat game called "Beethoven's Baseball." The player chooses a team comprised of famous composers. As each comes up to bat, a ball is thrown with a question. Answer correctly, and you have a hit! The site also includes helpful information on music history, practicing, orchestras, etc.

Ramer Award

The Norwalk Youth Symphony is pleased to announce that Andrew Knebel of Norwalk was recently awarded its prestigious Ramer Award. This grant goes to a senior who is selected by peers based on the following criteria: attendance, leadership, preparation of music, accomplishments in the Norwalk Youth Symphony, positive attitude and commitment to the orchestra and to fellow players.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip 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, whose grant is to be used for scholarships.

Andrew, a violist, studies privately with Boris Deviatov, a member of the Lumina String Quartet. He graduated from Norwalk High School this past June. An outstanding musician both there and in the Norwalk Youth Symphony, where he held the principal viola seat and was a member of the Spectrum Quartet, Andrew will continue his musical studies at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford next year. He plans to pursue a double major in music performance and music education.



Sharon Fugate (far right) with members of the Chamber Music Program (left to right) Annie Wang, Jennifer Shinall, Kristiana Holt

Scholarships

The Norwalk Youth Symphony is proud to announce that 22 musicians (8% of its membership) were awarded financial grants to cover tuition, season tickets and private lessons in the amount of \$18,000. The effect of this kind of support is incalculable, but one graduating recipient expressed her feelings as follows:

I would humbly like to thank the entire NYS Committee for making my years in this organization such an influential and important part of my life, especially since my family's financial status would have otherwise prohibited me from partaking in such a great orchestra. I love playing the violin, and with no orchestra in my school of community, the NYS has inspired me to take action in my own town and host a strings festival of our own. There are just not enough words to thank all those who made the NYS be an everlasting impression on my life, but nevertheless, I thank you again.

Conductor's Corner

When I was asked to write an article about performing at Carnegie Hall for the last edition of the *Whole Note*, I thought, "Jeez, what on earth will I write?" I hadn't the foggiest idea what it would feel like to perform there. I knew that it would, quite probably, be an extremely exciting experience, but I couldn't really write about how it would feel. So, I chose to write about the history of the hall, which is quite amazing and very interesting, but doesn't really give any insight into what it is like to perform there. Now I know...

I arrived at Carnegie about an hour before our afternoon rehearsal began. I hung out backstage and browsed through many of the old pictures of performers who had been there in the past. I went to the "Maestro Suite," which housed photos of Leonard Bernstein and other famous conductors. The "Maestro Suite," by the way, is the coolest room on earth. It had a shower in the bathroom, a baby grand piano, and a changing room. I couldn't stop thinking that Leonard Bernstein had used that toilet, played that piano, and, well, you get the picture. I was growing more in awe of the hall by the minute. But the excitement really hit me when the buses arrived and I saw the expressions on everyone's faces as they entered the stage. The air was thick with energy.

As soon as we started playing, it became apparent that we were... not in Norwalk anymore. Acoustically, the sound was very different than what we were used to, the stage was huge, and we were facing an enormous hall with tons of seats and several balconies. I don't know about anyone else, but I was making every attempt to keep my adrenaline under control.

To make a long story shorter than it could be, I will skip to the concert. There was a great deal of nervous energy during our first piece, Shostakovich's "Festive Overture," and that is the sort of piece that already sounds a bit nervous, even when an orchestra has nerves of steel. But that is understandable, and it did go well. The Elgar, however, was a different story. There was still a lot of excess energy,

but it soon died down, and the music came out as wonderfully as it did the night of the performance in Norwalk. I could give you my thoughts on the performance, but instead I will tell you about the opinions of my sometimes brutally honest family and friends. Practically everyone had the same opinion, from the musicians who usually offer too much constructive criticism, to the non-musicians who usually think everything sounds "great."

The comments that I heard most often were that the orchestra had an amazingly rich sound, at times sounded like a professional orchestra, and played with tremendous passion - not made up passion, but the kind that is in the moment and pulls the audience into the performance. Most people said that it seemed like the orchestra really enjoyed making music, that the performers were obviously putting everything into it, and that those elements made the performance very real. It didn't seem over-rehearsed and it didn't seem under-rehearsed. It had a raw, yet refined quality. I received countless e-mails and phone calls on the subject. People wanted to talk about it. The orchestra members made people listen and captivated an audience with their performance. They inspired people to feel something. Bravo to all of you for making the music the most important element in your performance. I am constantly urging you to always do something with the music; whatever it is, just do something. Well, you really did something!

I also wanted to say that I was very impressed with the performances of all of the ensembles at the Spring Concert. They were really fantastic!

See you all in August!

— Tara

As a music educator, I've grown to view summer as both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because we all need the rejuvenation of getting away from the rehearsal and concert routines that we adhere to the rest of the year. A curse because we all tend to slack off and relax so much that our musical skills grow dull and our techniques atrophy. There are many fine summer music programs that seek to reinforce skills

during the vacation months, and I encourage you to try to take advantage of some of them. Even a week or two of something musical will help to counter the effects of an entire summer off.

The summer concert season is always exciting, and I find I can manage to get to more live performances during the vacation months when my time isn't so tightly allocated. Close to home we have the wonderful program at Tanglewood in Lenox, Massachusetts, featuring world-class performers and some of the biggest names in classical music along with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Even closer, in Katonah, New York, is the Caramoor Music Festival featuring concerts by the Orchestra of St. Luke's and other notable performers. And of course there are many other opportunities to hear great music, often outdoors and sometimes even free, so treat yourself to a concert or two. You'll learn something and perhaps even be inspired.

I'm always encouraging young musicians to be "sponges" and soak up all the music they possibly can. Attending professional performances helps to train the brain in a way that practicing an instrument simply doesn't. It can aid in developing an aesthetic understanding of music, which will ultimately help all of your own performing.

So try to enjoy your summer vacation and utilize the time to rest and relax. But also try to experience things which are difficult during the rest of the year, and don't forget—those auditions for Norwalk Youth Symphony come up fast at the end of August!

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone again in a few weeks. Have fun!

— Richard Brooks

Thanks to all of the members of the Chamber Orchestras for a really great year.

I will never forget your work and dedication that resulted in making music come alive for all to enjoy. Wasn't that "1812 Overture" something?! Remember to keep your chops up this summer. Take time out to relax and play, but also save some for practicing. Your audition will come up fast!

— Jim Andrews



Instruments

The NYS is most grateful to several luthiers, individuals and organizations that have recently enabled it to expand its collection of loan instruments

Thanks to a generous grant from the **United Way of Norwalk and Wilton**, the NYS recently purchased a fine German violin that will be loaned without cost to talented scholarship students. It is also restoring a Czech violin that is on permanent loan to the organization, which will be used in the same way. Both instruments are excellent and carry an appraisal value of \$4,000 each. Imagine the difference it makes to a young musician when he plays on one of these violins instead of on an instrument bought in a pawnshop!

Atelier Constantin Popescu has graciously donated several exceptional violins and violas to recent NYS Silent Auctions. One is currently being used by a talented Lessons in the Schools student who needed an upgrade desperately if she was to continue to progress in her lessons.

The **Westport Music Center** stands ready to loan any child in the *Lessons in the Schools Program* a proper instrument. This year, they provided a much-needed cello to a student who did not have an instrument she could take home regularly. Thanks to our program and the cello loan, she now has the tools to decipher and interpret music on her own.

Carnegie Hall

On a brilliant day in May, 77 members of the Principal Orchestra, eight chaperones and I set out for the music mecca known to millions – Carnegie Hall. We all had a wonderful time! As one young lady related, “it was one of the most amazing and unbelievable events of my whole life!” I am always amused by the rather blasé attitude of our worldly-wise musicians in the days preceding this event and how this changes in the moment that they actually walk out onto Carnegie Hall’s stage. All of a sudden, this concert becomes a VERY BIG DEAL.

The day’s events included the dress rehearsal, an opportunity to wander about New York City for a few hours with a chaperone and a delicious, gourmet dinner catered by Lyn’s Café. It culminated in the performance of the *Festive Overture* by Shostakovich and Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*, which received a standing ovation.

This is not an easy event to produce. The details are legion, running from

The **estate of Ruth Ross**, a longtime local resident and lover of music, recently gave to the NYS a violin that belonged to her husband. We are very grateful for this gift. As its transferal to our organization has not yet taken place, we have no user for it as yet.

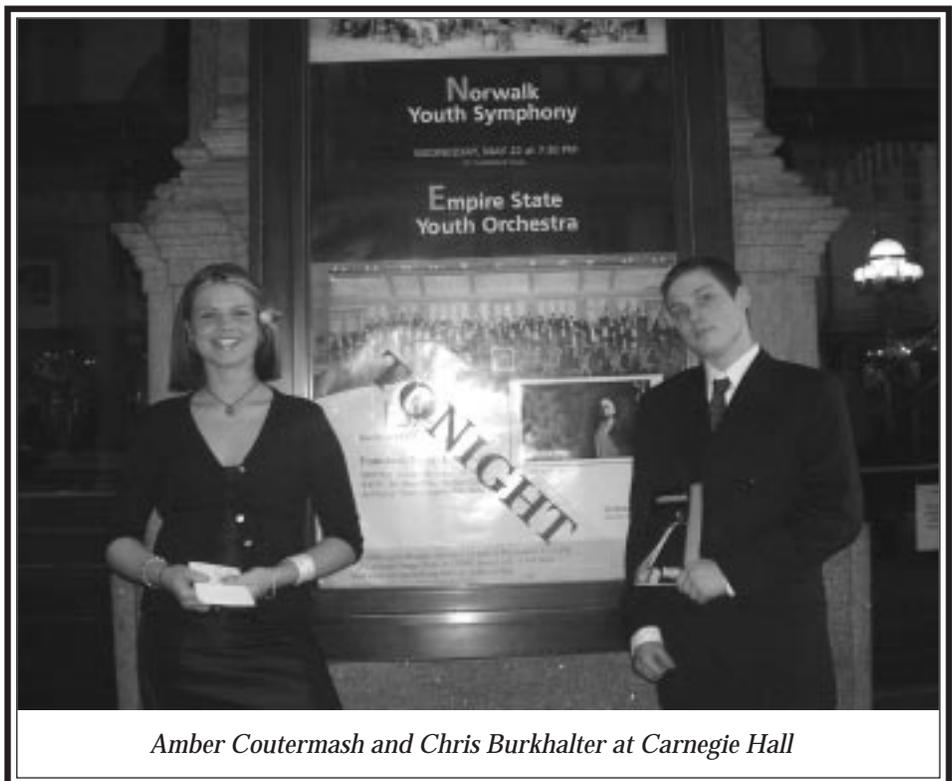
Last, **Merit Music** of New Canaan has provided us with a piccolo.

Virtuoso

The definition of a virtuoso is one who is extremely good at what he does. Generally, the term is applied to musicians, those who come out on the stage and awe the audience with the speed of their playing. Did you know that in such circumstances the performer is often playing 15-20 notes per second, or 1000 notes per minute?! Nothing else in human experience comes close to matching this feat. And, if a finger comes down just a TINY bit off where it should be the effect of the piece can be ruined.

Virtuosi are not just speed machines, however. While all musicians learn to play fast, these individuals reveal in their performances a deep understanding of music, and their playing is beautiful.

Paraphrased from a talk on NPR’s Morning Edition by Miles Hoffman.



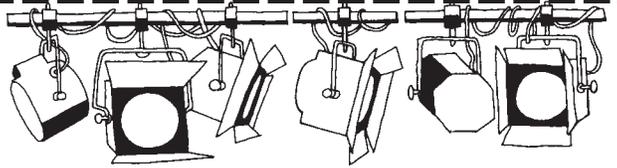
Amber Coutermash and Chris Burkhalter at Carnegie Hall

stage charts to the number of sandwiches to be ordered to writing program notes. However, it is one of the most worthwhile things that the Norwalk

Youth Symphony does. We should be incredibly proud of our orchestra and the professional job they did. The music was simply beautiful!

Spotlight on Teachers

Pedro Piñol



PEDRO PIÑOL, violin, works with the Norwalk Youth Symphony as a small ensembles coach and as a teacher in the *Lessons in the Schools Program*. He also gives private lessons. A native of Cuba, Pedro holds master of music degrees from both Yale and the Eastman School of Music. He has been a member

of the Norwalk Symphony, assistant concertmaster of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra and concertmaster of the Orquesta Sinfonica de Valencia in Venezuela and has extensive teaching experience both here and in South America.

Pedro is a great asset to our organization. He stands always ready to help in any way he can. For example, recently he translated the *Lessons in the Schools* application into Spanish and accompanied all of his students at that program's recital to give them reassurance and support. We are delighted to have him as a part of the Norwalk Youth Symphony.

Where Are They Now?

Recently, a letter and questionnaire was mailed out to 650 NYS alums asking for information about their current life and their involvement with music after NYS.

It is our intent to post updates from alumni in this column as well as on our web site. If you have anything to tell us about a grad, you can e-mail it to nwkysym@optonline.net and we will be sure to include it.

In April of 2002, former conductor **Eckart Preu** and **Michael Bertkau (1996-2001)** held a mini Norwalk Youth Symphony reunion when Eckart arrived in Williamsburg, VA to conduct a rehearsal of the William and Mary Symphony College Orchestra. Eckart is enjoying life in Richmond, VA, although he claims that there is "no Carolyn" to keep things organized down there. Michael says that the members of the WMSO were delighted with Eckart's conducting, German accent and singing! Michael toured Sicily and Rome with the William and Mary Orchestra in May.

Joey Walko-Robinson (1993) writes that she majored in music and performance at college and currently teaches strings in the Newtown Public School System.

Ingrid Overgard (1981-1984) writes that she gave up her viola at age 16. However, she remembers the pleasure of being in an orchestra surrounded by so many good musicians. "What a great experience it was for me to be part of the youth orchestra. It gave me a taste and an appreciation I otherwise would not have. I am happy that the Norwalk Youth Symphony is still alive and well." Ingrid now lives in San Francisco.

Barbara Corcillo (1970-1978) is a professional cellist residing in N. Miami Beach, FL. She writes, "Mr. John Huwiler was one of the best teachers/conductors I studied with. I learned so much from him!!!...I am sure that NYS offered me one of the best youth symphony experiences available in this country. NYS was a very important part of my musical training, and contributed to my decision to continue in music as a career. Thank you!!!"

I have been told that a young would-be composer wrote to Mozart, asking advice as to how to compose a symphony. Mozart responded that a symphony was a complex and demanding musical form and that it would be better to start with something simpler. The young man protested, "But Herr Mozart, you wrote symphonies when you were younger than I am now."

Mozart replied, "*I never asked how.*"

— Isaac Asimov

Interview

with Jana Bertkau,

Development Coordinator

Are you a native of this area?

No, I was born in DC and raised overseas in Pakistan, Kuwait and Singapore for most of my teenage years. Presently, my home is in Wilton, where I have lived for 13 years.

What is your educational background?

I received a BA in anthropology from the University of Washington (Seattle) and a MA and PhD in Linguistics from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. My specialization was in first and second language acquisition. I speak Czech, German and French.

Do you have any musical abilities?

I play the piano and am also a member of my church's bell choir.

What is your previous employment record?

After receiving our graduate degrees, my husband Richard and I joined the Peace Corps and worked in Liberia, West Africa for two years. I was a linguist for the Ministry of Education analyzing two languages and developing a writing system for one. After that, Richard joined Citibank and his assignments took us to the Middle East,

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Norwalk Youth Symphony

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2002-2003

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Contributions

The NYS acknowledges with thanks contributions from the following foundations, corporations and civic organizations that were received this past season:

Amateur Chamber Music Players Foundation
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Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

— Anon

We also acknowledge those local companies who took program ads out this season. Please try to patronize them and thank them for this support.

Last, we extend our thanks to all of the individuals who contributed to the NYS through its 100% Participation Campaign. Through their generosity, the organization was able to raise over \$44,000 in individual gifts, a new high!

Interview with Jana Bertkau *(continued from page 6)*

California and now the New York Area. During that time I taught English as a second language in language institutes and junior colleges. Mostly, I spent my time being a mom and volunteer.

What made you think of joining the work force again?

I was interested in working again after my last child left for college. I had always thought that the NYS was a great organization because I had served on its board and my son had been a member for six years. I had seen first-hand the benefits that participation in a youth orchestra gives to young people even if they are not necessarily "music majors." I was particularly interested in the organization's outreach programs. So, when a part-time job was created, I immediately applied. It has proven to be as rewarding and stimulating as I expected.

From the Executive Director

I recently read an article in which a reporter was describing the activities of very talented and motivated musicians. In the process of expounding on this subject, he made the comment that these musicians are the ones who keep the "golden oldies" alive.

I disagree. I think the members of the Norwalk Youth Symphony are the wave of music's future. As they graduate and go on to other things, our members will always make music a part of their lives. Alumni tell me constantly that they play their instruments for fun, in ensembles, in community orchestras. Some are professionals in the field of music, either as performers, teachers or administrators. These are the people who buy classical CDs, attend concerts, enroll their children for private music lessons, push for music education in their children's schools and support their local youth orchestras. Our graduates keep music alive in so many ways!

Performing music on the highest level is a goal reached by very few musicians. It doesn't always matter that you have the talent; you must be in the right place at the right time and know the right people. Of those children attending a high-powered music program, very, very few will become successful professional musicians. Many will "burn out" and discard their instruments forever. Others will develop physical ailments and strains that make performing impossible. Still more will rebel against their rigorous schedule that demands practicing for hours and hours each day. Their focus is on a very narrow aspect of music that,

What do you do for the Norwalk Youth Symphony?

I work in three areas. Primarily I am involved with development and grant writing. I also provide administrative support for *Lessons in the Schools Program* Interview and help out Carolyn, the Executive Director, when needed.

What other activities are in your life?

I am very involved with the Wilton Congregational Church and am its General Chairman. Like to play tennis and to travel. I have three children who are in their 20's and I try to keep up with them and their activities. Richard and I have been married for thirty years.

What is the most enjoyable part of your job?

There is something different every day and I am learning something new all the time in terms of computer technology, organization, music, administration, outreach and grant writing. I love the creative aspect of my job as we develop new projects and improve those already in place.

Concert Dates for Next Year

Saturday, November 23, 2002 - 8:00 PM

Sunday, February 9, 2003 - 3:00 PM

Sunday, May 11, 2003 - 3:00 PM

while important, isolates them from the overreaching power that music has on the lay musician and his life. Not for them is the sense of belonging that comes with performing in an orchestra. Their lives are devoted performing to the neglect of anything else. I recently looked at Midori's fingers and realized that there were permanent grooves dug into the tip each because of her constant playing!

I suppose what I'm really trying to say is that our musicians come out of our program fairly well rounded in music. They can play an extensive repertoire, have listened to many concerts performed by others and perhaps have been a member of one of our chamber music ensembles, where they learned the value of teamwork and responsibility. They have worked under several excellent conductors, each of whom has imparted to them his or her knowledge of music. All in all, music has become an integral part of their lives. I think this is great! What an enriching and important experience we provide. Aren't you all proud of our members, even if they did play basketball this summer instead of practicing?

—Carolyn Phillips

Lessons in the Schools

Lessons in the Schools is an outreach program of the Norwalk Youth Symphony that provides low-cost private music lessons to Norwalk middle school students who otherwise could not afford them. The program this year was made possible through the generous support of the Darien United Way, Newman's Own and Fleet Bank.

The second year of this initiative ended with an informal recital on May 14th at the intimate setting of St. Paul's on the Green Church in Norwalk at which 14 students showed off their improved technique on violin, viola and cello. A reception for the students, their teachers, family and friends followed. This was a delightful event. It was impressive to see the progress all of these youngsters had made since September not only on their instrument but also in their personal lives as well. One teacher commented on this saying:

See box



For the first few months, X did not have a cello to take home regularly, and so was unable to practice and little progress was made. (Upon hearing this, the Westport Music Center generously lent one free of charge.) In addition, because X started playing cello year later than her peers, much music foundation work was skipped – even basic note reading suffered and she tended to rely on her ears. We spent much time filling in those gaps in her cello foundation. X now has the tools to decipher and interpret music on her own.

The Sonnet

*What is a sonnet? 'Tis a pearly shell that murmurs
of the far-off murmuring sea;
A precious jewel carved most curiously;
It is a little picture painted well.*

—Richard Watson Gilder

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Newsletter of The Norwalk Youth Symphony
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