

GREEN MOUNTAIN YOUTH SYMPHONY
"the music is just the beginning . . ."

NOTES FROM GMYS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 MARCH 22, 2008

MUSINGS FROM THE MAESTRO BY ROBERT BLAIS

Happy Spring, everyone! I like snow a lot, but am kind of looking forward to resting my shoveling muscles. Have you ever tried conducting for five hours after shoveling for two? It isn't pretty...

So, with spring comes music, and lots of it.

The Chamber Orchestra is doing a fantastic outreach day that I fondly call it "the day we take over Montpelier Schools". They will visit Union Elementary School, breaking up into small groups and going to classrooms, then playing a concert in the wonderful auditorium. Then, we'll go to the Main Street Middle School and play the same concert with the addition of Sky

Baumgardner and Peter Cressy's famous duo piece from last year's camp.

The Paine Mountain Arts Council has invited the Senior Orchestra to play a repeat performance of their Barre Opera House program in Northfield on April 27; a real honor, and not to be missed. They will play Beethoven's exciting Coriolanus Overture, and then will feature cellist Andrew Hodgdon in the Haydn C Major Cello Concerto. Andrew sounds really terrific, and it is amazing what he can do on the cello. The second half of the concert will be music from movies and musicals: Titanic, West Side Story, Wicked, and a really fantas-

tic arrangement of music from video games.

I think the most exciting thing coming up is our Day Camp for young musicians at the Chamber and Repertory Orchestra levels. I know we will have a great time and I'm really looking forward to it. [See article on page 3.] People do not need to be a member of GMYS to participate, so tell all your friends that they are welcome to join us. And, of course, we are still having our hugely successful Senior Orchestra Camp.

Thanks again for loaning us your kids on Saturday mornings. I can't tell you how much fun I have!

PERLEY'S PERSPECTIVE BY PAUL PERLEY



Photo by Craig Line

It is Saturday morning and Melissa and I are treated to a snow-suited group of young musicians, often with parents

in tow, carefully unpacking their instruments and bringing them to us for tuning.

Rossini's William Tell Overture Finale is usually the first thing on the menu, followed by The Emperor Waltz, a theme from the movie series "Pirates of the Caribbean", and for the first time a fourth piece: "Hopak" which is fast, folksy, and popular with

everyone.

This semester is a very special one for the Repertory Orchestra. Each year the Montpelier Chamber Orchestra does their Project Outreach program, which takes MCOS musicians into an elementary school for an all-day hands on program with music students there *continued on page 3*

SPRING 2008 CONCERT:
Sunday, April 13

Robert Blais, *Artistic Director*
Paul Perley, *Conductor*
Andrew Hodgdon, *cello*

Program Includes:

Haydn: *C Major Cello Concerto*
Beethoven: *Coriolanus Overture*
Suite from *Westside Story*,
Titanic, *Wicked*, and *Video*
Game Suite

2:00pm

Barre Opera House
Tickets: \$5 suggested
donation, students free

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HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU

This spring, many of our musicians will be graduating from high school. We are truly grateful to them for all their hard work and contributions to the orchestra. We will most certainly miss them! We thought our readers might be interested to hear about the graduating musicians' views on life with GMYS. *Photos by Craig Line.*

Shane Abrams, tuba, is in his first year with GMYS. Next fall, he'll be attending college to major in secondary education.

He plans to continue his music throughout college and the rest of his life. He says, "Though I've only participated in GMYS for this short period, I'll miss the quality and devotion of my fellow musicians." Shane says "the best advice for any young musician is to stay positive about music: learning the intricacies of your instrument and musicality in general should be challenging, but fun, not just a hassle or inconvenience."

Hannah Blackmer, tuba, is in her third year with GMYS. She also plays for Vermont

Youth Philharmonia and Vermont Youth Orchestra, giving her a combined rehearsal schedule of around 7 hours on the weekends! After graduation, Hannah plans to pursue a degree in environmental studies with, hopefully, some ex-

cellent musical ensemble opportunities.

Leah-Marie Desroches, flute, is in her third year with GMYS. Next year, she plans to go to UVM and major in music edu-

cation. We asked her if she plans to keep playing, and she said, "Definitely. Music is a major part of my life and is now what I plan to focus the rest of my life on." Leah is enthusiastic about GMYS, saying, "I don't think there is any one thing I'll miss the most. I love basically everything about it. Just being with the people who make this experience so much fun is something I will definitely miss a lot." To younger orchestra members she says, "Work hard, always do your best, and enjoy the time you have in GMYS as much as you can, because it will be over before you know it."

Andrew Hodgdon, cello, has played with the orchestra for four years. He plans to go to Keene State College in

Keene, NH to major in film and video production and hopes to play with the Keene State orchestra. Andrew says, "I will miss the people and mostly the conductor. I have been Bob's student for a few years now and I have loved every minute of it. Having him as the conductor was so much fun and I will miss him and the orchestra dearly. If I were to give a speech to the younger members of the orchestra, I would say keep at it even when the times get rough. If it seems like the world is falling in around you stay strong, keep your chin up, and most of all have fun."



Jenny Law, flute, joined the GMYS her freshmen year of high school four years ago. She plans to go to college to get a certificate to practice counseling. Will you keep playing music in the future? Well of course!! Not as a professional, but just to have fun. What she'll miss most about GMYS is "getting together with a group of kids, and putting notes together to make music." Her words of wisdom for the younger orchestra members are, "Practice! Don't let Bob intimidate you!"

Benjamin Muller, violin, played in GMYS three years ago and now has returned for the last semester of his senior year.

Next year, he plans to major in Music Performance at a conservatory. What will he miss most about GMYS? "I guess it would have to be the conductor. He's fun and chill, and yet he always explains what he wants, which is not an easy task as a conductor." He adds, "And finally a bit of advice for all the younger ones: Never completely rely on your stand partner, which I know a lot of people do. You should be confident enough with the music so that if your stand partner doesn't show up or gets lost in the music you can continue on your own."

Ryan Shaefer, oboe, has been playing with GMYS for four years. Next year, he plans to attend college and major in musical theatre and hopes to continue to play in an orchestra. When asked what he will miss most about GMYS, Ryan says, "Undoubtedly the free-wheeling nature of Bob and the orchestra. It's nice to be able to do something you enjoy and still have a good time doing it. GMYS offers a more relaxed environment."



GMYS SUMMER CAMPS. . . Where *the music is just the beginning!*



On the final day of the GMYS Summer Music Camp last year, 29 exhausted and inspired young musicians performed a concert in Bentley Auditorium at Johnson State College. It included performances by eight different chamber ensembles as well as full orchestra. And it was thrilling. The concert brought to life GMYS's original concept

enjoyment these young musicians felt playing music together.

GMYS is once again offering its highly popular **residential music camp** for intermediate and advanced musicians. The camp will take place at Johnson State College, July 13-19.

In response to tremendous interest, we are happy to announce our first-ever **summer day camp** for beginner and intermediate young musicians. The camp will take place in downtown Montpelier, July 28-August 1, 9am-3pm daily.

Participants at both camps will work privately with professional musicians, play chamber music, study eurhythmics, and rehearse as a full orchestra.

Space is limited, so apply soon! Students must audition in order to be accepted into the program. For more information and to download an application, visit our website: www.gmys-vt.org, or contact Sarah Madru, orchestra manager, at (802) 454-0188 or sarah@gmys-vt.org.

LAST YEAR'S CAMPERS ANSWER THE QUESTION: *WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF CAMP AND WHY?*

- All the people. They were amazing.
- The talent show. Everyone had a great time.
- Everything! It was so much fun.
- Chamber Music. It is completely different from anything I get to do normally.
- I can't decide on one. This camp is awesome.

PERLEY'S PERSPECTIVE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and culminates with performances, conducted by MCOS and VYO music director Troy Peters, in an all-school assembly and later in the evening with the

entire Montpelier Chamber Orchestra. This year, at the instigation of school coordinator Ruth Einstein, the program (which will take place March 31 at Berlin Elementary School) will include string students and choruses from the entire area and will have as its core group our very own Repertory Orchestra. The performances by the combined musicians will include three of our pieces.

Rehearsal begins and we work on negotiating the tricky lines of William Tell without help from Melissa's piano. "Can we do that faster," I ask. The grins are wide and confident. "Yeaaaah." As various section solos begin to come together in the "Emperor," Melissa and I look up at what has become a nearly five year tradition: our "alumni," now in the Chamber Orchestra, are on break and they wave at us from outside the door. We continue. They all like "Pirates" and it's going pretty well. Having rehearsed the 3 pieces likely for the Project Outreach Concert, Hopak is dessert. With the MCOS coming up, it gets the least attention and most requests for more time.

Another Saturday rehearsal hour flies by. Instructions for next week are given, snowsuits for kids and instruments alike are re-donned, the midi-keyboards – always popular after rehearsals – are turned off and goodbyes are said. Performance time will shortly be here, the semester will be done and many of these musicians will be waving at us through the door next year. Seasons, like rehearsals, end all too quickly.

BEETHOVEN BRAIN TEASER

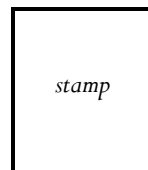
1. What composer said of the young Beethoven, "Watch out for him. He's going to make a noise in the world!"
2. What did Beethoven cite as the reason for inserting trills at the end of many of his piano compositions?
3. How many movements does his Pastoral Symphony have?
4. In what ways did the Pastoral Symphony foreshadow Berlioz' *Symphonic Fantastique*?
5. How many operas did Beethoven write?
6. How many children did Beethoven have?
7. What 1950's and 1960's network news broadcast ended with the opening of the 2nd movement of Beethoven's Ninth?
8. To whom was his Symphony #3 originally dedicated?
9. Beethoven wrote his greatest works in spite of which physical handicap?



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AUDITIONS

MAY 3 & MAY 17

For orchestra placement &
 summer music camp acceptance

Call/Email to schedule yours

JOIN US FOR OUR SPRING CONCERT
Featuring all 3 GMYS Orchestras
 Sunday, April 13, 2008
 2:00pm at the Barre Opera House
 Tickets: \$5 suggested donation; students free

BOB'S PRACTICE IDEAS

I've noticed during sectionals that the biggest problem that people have is their difficulty in finding strategies for practice. As we become better musicians, it is more important than ever to figure out ways to practice more efficiently. It isn't always helpful to just play from the beginning of a piece to the end without thinking; in fact, it can make us worse! So, in this little column I will give you a few ways to practice that I hope will be helpful.

The most important thing to do in practice is to use your brain. It is crucially important to know what you are trying to learn, and what the problem is. Once you do that, it is a matter of figuring out how

you can teach yourself most quickly. Below I will state a problem and then suggest several possible approaches to improvement. It can seem sort of silly, at times, because good practice isn't always rocket science. It can be pretty obvious.

Q: "I am having trouble playing this part fast enough?"

A: Can you play it slowly, and in tune? Start there. Use a tuner. Play it an octave down. Really hear it. It is fine at this step to play really, really, really slowly. Use a metronome so you understand the rhythm, too.

Repeat until it is very, very easy.

Then, slightly speed up. Use a

metronome. At some point you will either be able to play it at tempo (you do know what your goal is, yes?), or you will get stuck.

What to do if you get stuck? You should break it down further. So, play fast groups of two notes. Once you can do that, play the adjacent two. Once there, four notes should be organized in all possibilities. Slowly work your way to measures, and finally the whole passage. This should work with just about anything. It requires patience, and lots and lots of repetition, but once you get good at this you don't have as much trouble with fast stuff. And when you do, you know how to approach it. Success!!

ANSWERS TO QUIZ:

1. Mozart
2. "I do it to embarrass those Viennese pianists, some of whom are my sworn enemies!"
3. Five
4. For the first time, Beethoven provided descriptions for each of the movements; also, he gave musical representation to such things in nature as a babbling brook, birds and a thunderstorm!
5. One: Fidelio
6. None; he was a lifelong bachelor.
7. NBC Nightly News with Chet Huntley and David Brinkley.
8. Napoleon Bonaparte.
9. He began to lose his hearing while in his 20's. By the time he composed his 9th Symphony, he was so profoundly deaf that he could not hear a single note.