



NEW ENGLAND

PIANO TEACHERS' Assoc., Inc.

March 2007

Dear Colleagues,

Those who were able to brave the bad weather on Monday, February 26 were richly rewarded for their effort, as composer/pianist/teacher **Yehudi Wyner** discussed issues of interpretation in thirteen of his compositions. **A. Ramon Rivera** had prepared students to present the pieces—all played with technical assuredness and great understanding of the pieces, giving Mr. Wyner a wonderful platform from which to illustrate shadings of meaning and interpretation which were yet possible. He helped us—and these students—discover ways to scout out, excavate, the composer's thoughts as encoded on the page. Not a masterclass, not a lecture, the morning was an illustrated exchange at a high and satisfying level.

On March 19, **Cathy Fuller**, familiar to us all as the Classical Music Producer and Host for WGBH 89.7, will speak of **“The Challenges and Rewards of Putting Pianists on the Radio”**. What a privilege to have such prominent Boston figures share their knowledge, passion and wisdom with us.

The October sale of music donated by Mildred Freiberg's family was so successful that we will hold a similar opportunity at the March 19 meeting. You are welcome to bring any **music** that is in usable condition, to make it **available for sale** before and after the meeting. Money collected will be added to the Scholarship Fund. Please note that you are responsible for any unsold music, as NEPTA does not have storage available for unsold music.

The series of fine NEPTA recitals continued through the month of February, with outstanding performances from many gifted students, evidence of fine and dedicated teaching. Many thanks to all the recital chairs and their committees who organized these outstanding events.

Junior Recital – **Veda Kogan**, chair; **Leah Frenkel** and **Tamara Medoyeva**, assistants; Three recitals, 48 students of 30 different teachers performed.

Intermediate I – **Shelley Reeves**, chair; **Linda Gatzke** and **Jane Winchell**, assistants; Three recitals, 41 students of 31 teachers performed.

Intermediate II – **Luba Pyatkovskaya**, chair; **Lyubov Shlain** and **Ludmila Bekker**, assistants; Three recitals, 36 students of 26 teachers performed.

Senior Recital – **Niva Fried**, chair; **Janet Ainsworth**, **Eleanor McLaughlin** and **Alice Wilkinson**, assistants; Three recitals.

The final three recitals will occur later in March: the **Ensemble Recital**, **Edwin Light**, chair, assisted by **Barbara Roth-Donaldson**; the **Adult Recital**, **Phoebe Yassa**, chair, assisted by **Jean Alderman**; and the combined **20th/21st Century** – **Miriam Gargarian**, chair, and **Composition and Jazz Recital**, **Ruth Shyu**, chair. We look forward to these rewarding and varied presentations.

NEPTA has been the beneficiary of generous gifts given by members, both to the general scholarship fund, and for specific awards as well. The **Nancy Oliva Award**, established by a great friend of NEPTA and President (1971-1973), is a non-competitive award to be given to four seventh grade performers who study in independent studios, in recognition of their musical efforts and as encouragement to them as they continue their studies. From

this group of seventh graders, who performed at the Intermediate Recitals on February 4, Linda Viera selected the following to receive the **2007 Nancy Oliva Awards**:

Clara Hong (Luba Pyatkovskaya)
Andrew Zhu (Mian Mian Shen)
Melissa Yuan (Margarita Gurevich)
Pauline Zheng (Wei Le)

This year, for the first time, a prize similar prize will be awarded for deserving eighth graders, thanks to the generosity of former president (1989-1991), **Wanda Paik. Janice Zanganjori** (with help from **Jane Winchell**) made the selections, and the following comments: "I truly enjoyed listening to these talented and gifted performers. It was a tough decision...The following 8th grade students were awarded the **Wanda Paik Awards** for their wonderful and mature performances at the intermediate Recitals on February 4."

Will Bristol (Naydene Bowder)
Carl Lian (Wei Le)
Hannah Kim (Clara Slater)
Benjamin Hui (Maya Gurevich)

Congratulations to these fine students and their teachers. Many thanks to those who have made these awards possible, and to those who gave their time to make the selections.

An **anonymous donor** has made a **generous contribution to the A. Ramon Riviera award for Contemporary Music**, for which we are very grateful. These generous donations are reminders of the important role teachers play in the lives of their students. Everyone is encouraged to consider making a donation, in any amount, to reward the worthy students we teach.

We all look forward to the Teachers Exchange, scheduled for Monday, April 9, 9:30 am at the Wellesley Public Library. Edwin Light and friends will present **An Intimate Visit with the Bach Family through the Anna Magdalena Notebook**. Probably the best window on the personal lives of Sebastian's family members are the notebooks created for his son and his second wife. By examining the contents of the Anna Magdalena Notebook of 1725 we will gain insights into the personalities and musical abilities of Sebastian, Anna, and Emanuel especially. The Notebook's content served as a resource for home instruction and for home concerts. Besides the personal look at the family, we will perform and discuss selections from the Notebook with special reference to articulation, dynamics, tempo, varied reprises, and visual cues from dance videos. Performers will include **Joseph DiMarino**/harpsichord, **Michelle Kelley**/harpsichord and piano, **Peter Clark**/harpsichord, **Martha Warren**/soprano, **Rebecca Carroll**/viola da gamba, and **Edwin Light**/emcee and harpsichord/piano. We will have our own Bach home concert!

Please be sure to notify **Michelle Coolidge Kelley** directly of any **changes in your e-mail address**.
conmoto@comcast.net

A reminder: Members who wish to be listed in the Membership Directory must **pay their dues by May 31st**. Please use the renewal form enclosed to keep an active listing.

Sincerely,



Barbara Jones
President

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS and RECITALS/CONCERTS

Michelle Coolidge Kelley will present an all-Schumann concert, performing the Abegg Variations, Op. 1, Intermezzi, Op. 4, and Fantasy, Op. 17 on Saturday, March 24, 7 pm at M. Steinert and Sons, Boston. The concert is free and open to the public.

Margaret Cheng Tuttle will present a program of chamber music at Middlesex Community College on Sunday, March 18 at 3:00 pm with violinist Annegret Klaua and cellist Jing Li. Their program will include works by Schnittke, Beethoven, Martinu and Shostakovich. The concert is free and open to the public.

Gisela Krause and her husband, **David Beyer**, have made a CD of four-hand piano music entitled "Keyboard for Two." It includes music by Corigliano, Debussy, Mozart, Schmitt and Marti Epstein. The proceedings from the CD will go to the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter. It is available by calling 617-868-7793.

Diane Goolkasian Rahbee will be holding monthly seminars for performing pianists and teachers with emphasis on exploring contemporary music. Participants will be asked to work on new music, either of their own choice or assigned, for each class. The aim is to encourage more pianists to explore new literature and find hidden treasures by doing so. This can only enrich us all as musicians. If you are interested in attending and participating in these seminars, please call Diane evenings at 617-489-1848. Classes will be held at her home in Belmont at 45 Common Street.

NEPTA January 29, 2007 Maria Clodes

Performing Schumann, with Special Emphasis on the Characters of Florestan and Eusebius

Ms. Clodes began her talk with with some biographical information about Robert Schumann. Schumann was born in 1810 to a well-to-do family. His father was a physician, an intellectual, with a well-stocked library. Schumann could read in latin by the time he was fifteen, and he was fascinated with German literature. His parents often took him to the theater. When he was sixteen his sister hanged herself and he discovered her body. This experience had a profound effect on the young Schumann. Throughout his life he was consumed with a fear of death. He refused to attend his sister's funeral.

After his father died a few years later his foster mother arranged for young Robert to go to law school. He did not like law school and rarely attended classes, although his mother did not realize this fact. While in law school he contracted syphilis. The treatment he underwent for the disease was apparently poisonous, leading to the theory that this treatment was the cause of his later psychiatric problems.

Also, while enrolled in law school, he began studying the piano with Friedrich Wieck at the age of nineteen. Wieck was the father of Clara Wieck. Enough said. During the next several years he turned out one masterpiece for the piano after another, Opus 1 to Opus 24. Then he turned his attention to works for voice and piano during the year 1840. Most of his remarkable songs and song cycles were composed during this one year.

His famous attempts to create a device to strengthen and control the fourth finger of his right hand took place in 1832. Unfortunately for him--but fortunately for us--he crippled his right hand, causing him to abandon his concertizing and concentrate his attention on composing.

He married Clara Wieck when she was eighteen over her father's objections. She went to court to obtain her freedom to marry. During the next twelve years she gave birth to nine children--and still maintained an active concert career.

Schumann was a member of a group of musicians who met nightly to talk about music, specifically about the state of music in Germany. These discussions led to the founding of a new newspaper focussing on these matters, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Schumann became the editor of the newspaper, a position he held for about ten years. He was a proponent of German music--as opposed to the "melodious" Italian music. Besides commentary on the state of German music he wrote many reviews of performances and new music. Two famous comments from this time--about Chopin: "Hats off--a genius;" and about Brahms; He was "born knowing everything."

Schumann allied himself with Brahms in the more conservative wing of German music of the time, in contrast with the "music of the future" wing led by Liszt and Wagner. Two significant composers following the Schumann-Brahms school were Bartok and Dohnanyi.

At this point, Ms. Clodes addressed the piano music of Schumann. She started with an observation that Schumann's music requires a whimsical approach. Each performance must become a new re-creation of the piece being played. At the same time, she observed that you can't learn how to be whimsical. Schumann's music often presents performance difficulties that are not immediately apparent on first examination. Some of these pieces that appear technically accessible prove to be otherwise when you start to play them. One such difficulty that she mentioned is the problem of managing the thumb in scale passages.

Two different personalities are represented in the music: the vigorous and dynamic Florestan and the more dreamy and meditative Eusebius. Some have said that these characteristics represented two sides of Schumann's personality. Many of his early piano works were actually collections of short pieces. "Carnaval," op. 6, entitles two pieces with these names, as well two other names from the old *Commedia del Arte*, Pierrot and Harlequin.

Most of Schumann's best known and most played piano works were composed in his earlier years. Was this because the later works were weaker? Ms. Clodes left the issue open, but she did comment negatively on the revisions that he made in later years on earlier works. In her words: "I hate them!" She recommends the early Breitkopf & Hertel edition edited by Clara Schumann and Brahms. These editions can be found in the old Kalmus editions. One interesting comment: Metronome indications appear in Clara's edition; Brahms comment on them: "To hell with the metronome marks!" We must understand that metronome indications refer **only** to the moment where they are found and are suggestions only.

Ms. Clodes emphasized the need for understanding the composer's tempo marks and other directions. Since Schumann, the nationalist, used German terms in his music rather than the more common Italian terms, we must know the meanings of these German terms in playing works of Schumann--and in playing the music of other composers who use German terms. Tempo marks and other performance indication define the "essence" of the pieces. She also recommends Henle editions which incorporate the earlier versions of these pieces. Clara was the editor of both versions. She emphasized again that metronome indications reflect the moment where they appear only.

In espousing the need for a singing sound in playing Schumann, Ms. Clodes referred to the idea that we must hear the Mozart operas to understand his piano music. She went on to prescribe precise march-like rhythms along with clear articulation and transparency of tone along with a "profound" legato and deep tenderness. We must grasp the personalities of the characters portrayed (see above.) "Open yourself to the feelings of the moment." "The score doesn't speak. The performer must bring the music of the score to life."

Respectfully submitted,
Allen Giles, Recording Secretary