Living, breathing music

by Rob DeNunzio
Director or Music Conservatory and Music Programs

In the tranquil silence of the summer months, it is almost hard to believe just how vibrantly clamorous these halls had been in the months leading up to graduation. It serves as a gentle reminder of the central tenet of our existence; in this age of instant, ubiquitous musical sound, the Conservatory stands as a place where, through practice and determination, students breathe life into music by taking it off of the page and into the world. The tightrope-walking experience of communicating a composer’s musical vision while imbuing it with a performer’s personal interpretation and insight—all done in real time, with no room for error, before a rapt audience—is what makes live music in the concert hall such an enduring pillar of culture in our society.

And while a classical music student most commonly works to unravel the machinations of composers from bygone history, Virtuoso Program students this year had the distinct pleasure of working with a contemporary composer on a piece he had composed specifically for them, bringing another level of “life” to the music they were studying. Concluding the year with the study of Mark Winges’ exuberant “Zig-Zag Flim-Flam”, the students demonstrated they were up for the unique rhythmic and melodic challenges of Winges’ funky, syncopated score, no doubt inspired by the knowledge that their performance of the work would be its world premiere. There’s no doubt that by stretching their musical experience to include the study not only of classical masterworks but also new, unknown, and uncharted territories will serve these students well as the next generation of string musicians keeping the traditions of live concert performance alive.

As irrefutable evidence that the Virtuoso Program has a profound, lasting impact on the lives of its graduates, I recently received an email from a recent grad who said, “I’ve kept up my music throughout college and always played chamber music and took lessons. SD really did give me an incredible foundation and a lifelong yearning to continue playing, and I will be forever grateful for that.” I hope to see you in our concert hall this coming year to join me in applauding the hard work and honed talents of our students, and to get a glimpse of the future of live music and the young women who will ensure it endures.

Congratulations, class of 2012!

Head of School Dr. David Behrs wishes graduates Clo Martin, Jacqueline Rees-Mikula, Hanna Kim, Caitlin Gowdy, and Brett Simpson all the best on their adventures beyond San Domenico.

Save the Date!

“Vivaldi at San Domenico”

Sunday, October 21, 3:00 pm

Celebrating 35 years of exceptional string music education, this year’s annual fall concert honors the nearly 1,500 people whose support over the past three and a half decades has made our program the unparalleled success that it is today.

In addition, mark your calendars for our other fall semester recitals so that you can enjoy opportunities to hear Virtuoso Program musicians perform as chamber ensembles and soloists as well:

November 14, 7:00 p.m.—Virtuoso Program Fall Solo Recital
December 10, 7:00 p.m.—Virtuoso Program Fall Chamber Music Recital
Ending the Year on a “Zig-Zag Flim-Flam”!

Our final orchestra concert of the year not only featured the world premiere of Mark Winges’ composition for the Orchestra da Camera, but also the appearance of a special guest string orchestra consisting of violin and cello students from our Primary School Orchestra and instrumental music classes. Led by director Amanda Craver, the students from our 3rd, 4th and 5th grades performed Richard Meyer’s “Sahara Crossing”, evocative of the shifting sands and curious modes of eastern Africa, while flanked by the Virtuoso Program orchestra.

This was followed by an impassioned performance of Sarasate’s “Carmen Fantasy” by concertmistress Caitlin Gowdy ’12, the same piece that earned her top honors at this year’s Marin Music Chest competition. Less than a week prior, Caitlin also had the opportunity to share her talents as one of the “Brightest & Best” at St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church in San Francisco, in part thanks to a recommendation made by Mark Winges due to his experience with these deeply musical students.

Completing the program with Moszkowski’s lively and intricate “Prelude and Fugue”, the year came to a memorable, somewhat tearful end as we bid our graduating seniors a fond farewell before going on to continue their studies in some of the finest institutions in the country. We’ll look forward to relaying stories of these alumnae as they explore the world and share their talents with new audiences and new colleagues!

Composer Mark Winges visited San Domenico to personally coach the Orchestra da Camera in performing the work he had composed for our ensemble, thanks in part to Subito, the quick advancement grant program of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Composers Forum.

Caitlin Gowdy ’12 will be attending Stanford in the fall.

Our students say Thank You!

At the end of each year, students reflect on their experiences in the Virtuoso Program and have the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of the donors who have made their education possible.

“This program has allowed me to grow as a musician more than I could have imagined. All too often, music programs are ignored, and are the first programs to get cut from a lack of money. We are lucky here to be able to expand our abilities, and it’s all because of you!” - Julia

"Thank you so much for your generous contribution! The Virtuoso Program has completely changed my life and helped orient me towards music. It has helped define who I am, and it’s all thanks to you!" - Caitlin

"I can’t describe in words how amazing my years in the Virtuoso Program have been. I’ve been learning and improving beyond measure in music. This experience will be unforgettable throughout my lifetime." - Joyce

“VP offers a unique and rigorous experience in music; beyond outweighing the music education I would have had anywhere else, VP prepared me for college and a professional music career. I owe so much to this program and to the generous people like you who keep it strong. ‘Thank you’ simply is not enough.” - Jacqueline

Follow us on Facebook! If you enjoy these types of updates about our students, alumnae, and faculty, you should become a fan of the San Domenico Music Conservatory and Virtuoso Program for even more up-to-date announcements, photos, videos, and more: www.facebook.com/musicatsandomenico

San Domenico Virtuoso Program Faculty & Staff

Ann Krinitsky, Virtuoso Program Director
Eugene Chuklov, Violin Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Sergei Ribatchenko, Cello Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Miles Graber, Piano Accompanist
Rob DeNunzio, Director of Music Conservatory and Music Programs
Teresa Notari, Administrative Assistant

San Domenico School 1500 Butterfield Rd. San Anselmo, CA 94960 (415) 258-1921 music@sandomenico.org