Bright New Beginnings

by Rob DeNunzio
Music Conservatory Director

Going into my sixth year at San Domenico, I am proud and excited to announce my newest role in the Music Conservatory is to oversee the management of our award-winning Virtuoso Program. In my tenure as the Music Conservatory Director, I’ve had the pleasure of cultivating the school’s music programs from Kindergarten through the 12th Grade, and am thrilled at the opportunity to take our school’s tour de force program for pre-professional classical string training to even greater heights and broader horizons. Even more exciting, I’ll have some new help as we move into the 33rd year of the Virtuoso Program.

Please join me in welcoming Ann Krinitsky to the role of directing the Virtuoso Program, conducting the Orchestra da Camera and coaching chamber music. Having recently completed her tenure of four years as Music Director of the Nova Vista Symphony, she has also held a number of other local positions, including Interim Director of Orchestras at Stanford University, Music Director of the Palo Alto Philharmonic, the Berkeley Youth and Community Women’s Orchestras, and many more. A frequent guest conductor with the Honolulu Symphony in recent seasons, she led community and educational concerts on Oahu as well as on tour to neighboring islands. In May 2009, she and renowned trumpet soloist Matthias Hofs performed with the Honolulu Symphony for a crowd of 40,000 at Ala Moana Beach Park as part of the Memorial Day Lantern Floating Ceremony. In addition, she has performed nationally as a violinist and is a published music transcriber, arranger and copyist. She is married to conductor and timpanist Stuart Chafetz and will now be dividing her time between California and New York.

She’s a thrilling addition to San Domenico who I know shares our passion for musical excellence, yet also offers a new and unique perspective on music that I think will benefit the Virtuoso Program immensely.

Also, I am proud to announce the addition of violin instructor Eugene Chuklov to our Virtuoso Program artist faculty. Eugene brings decades of performance and teaching experience as a member of the Arlekin String Quartet, affiliated with the chamber music program at San Francisco State University. A longtime El Sobrante resident, many know of Eugene’s prodigious skills as a string pedagogue via the successes of his studio and likewise understand why we’re so excited that he’ll be commuting across the bridge to work with our students.

It proves to be a thrilling time for the Virtuoso Program, and one that I hope to share with you all at our annual “Vivaldi at San Domenico” benefit concert on Sunday, October 17 at 3:00 p.m. Come join us to welcome all the new faces and help us kick off a new era!

Congratulations, Class of 2010!

Please join us in bidding a fond farewell to this year’s Virtuoso Program graduates, all of whom we expect to hear great things from as they take the leap to continue their music and academics at these institutions of higher learning:

Miranda Franklin-Wall - University of California, Irvine
Candace Lee - St. Mary’s College of California
Junghee Schwartz - Skidmore College
Iris Wang - University of California, Berkeley
Maggie Zeng - San Francisco Conservatory of Music
A Fond Farewell

My connection with the Virtuoso Program began quite unexpectedly, with a phone call from a woman asking me to come out to San Domenico to fill in for two rehearsals. Just two rehearsals.

That those two rehearsals turned into more than eleven years of my life—eleven wonderful, fruitful years—says much about the extraordinary nature of the Virtuoso Program, the students who excel in it, and the people who spend their time and resources nurturing it. I can honestly say that I have learned even more than I have taught, having had such an excellent ensemble to work with, and practice on. I knew a thing or two about the music when I came in, but I didn’t know how much I would come to love sharing that knowledge with students eager to learn.

Now I go on to a new and very different challenge, at a place where I am very much needed. Yet I shall be buoyed by the Virtuoso Program experience: the desire for excellence, the attention to detail, the passionate expression of a fine orchestra playing, as a listener once commented, “as if their very lives depended on it.” So in a sense, I am taking all of you with me—as a model for my new students to emulate—and I thank you for coming along. I look forward to returning to visit and work with the Orchestra da Camera again, and bring tales of the rainy Northwest. In the meantime, I shall follow the Virtuoso Program and its progress eagerly.

With Best Wishes,
George Thomson

Orchestra da Camera Takes Top Honors at National Orchestra Festival for Third Time

For the third time in as many attempts, the Virtuoso Program’s Orchestra da Camera took home trophies for both First Place High School String Orchestra and Festival Grand Champion at the American String Teachers’ Association’s National Orchestra Festival, wowing the judges with their interpretations of Respighi’s Ancient Airs and Dances and Barshai’s orchestral arrangement of Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 8, garnering scores of 97, 98, and 99 points out of a possible 100 from the panel.

Some notes from the adjudicator’s comment sheets:

“This group loves to make music and you are to be commended on applying many details and skills and making it sound easy.”

“I love how you shape sound, like a master sculptor.”

“The most satisfying repertoire of the festival!”

“Beautiful phrasing - absolutely lovely.”

“I loved hearing you!”

“BRAVO.”

One judge made it a point to close her commentary with a piece of advice that resonates particularly well at this time of the year as graduating students are transitioning to places where an intense, daily sisterhood of music training may be absent:

“Keep music alive for the rest of your lives, as individuals and as a group.”

San Domenico Virtuoso Program Faculty & Staff
Ann Krinitsky, Virtuoso Program Director
Eugene Chuklov, Violin Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Susan Bates, Viola Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Sergei Rabtchenko, Cello Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Miles Graber, Piano Accompanist
Rob DeNunzio, Music Conservatory Director
Teresa Notari, Administrative Assistant

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