Women Mentoring Women

by Rob DeNunzio
Music Conservatory Director

When people ask me what’s unique about Virtuoso Program students, I’m never at a loss for words, given how singularly exceptional they are. They’re all passionate music students who apply themselves with discipline and love to their instruments, they’re high-reaching high schoolers with their sights set on finding a home in one of the country’s best universities or conservatories, and beyond all that, they’re all young women.

This last attribute – the single sex educational component of our program – is one that we’re particularly focused on this year, for despite the great gains female musicians have made in the classical arena, there exists a lack of role models to show our students the limitless avenues their current studies can forge. This “sisterhood” in the Virtuoso Program cannot be overlooked as one of the keys to our success, allowing for a healthy mix of competition and collaboration in an atmosphere that’s distinctly more familial than the other youth orchestras in which our students perform.

Our visit from Maestra Falletta was the perfect way to kick off a year dedicated to women in music, a theme we’re excited to make the focus of our next orchestra concert. I urge you to save the date for Sunday, February 6 for the Orchestra da Camera’s inaugural “Women in Music” concert, an afternoon where we’ll be celebrating the talents of female composers and performers, with some special guests to be announced in the very near future.

Following this concert, we will play host to an extraordinary female string quartet for a masterclass in March. The award-winning Cavani Quartet has been in residence at the Cleveland Institute of Music since 1988, and are nationally recognized as pioneers in arts-in-education. Sought after by schools and communities for their ability to inspire the love of chamber music in people of all ages, we’re delighted to have the Cavani Quartet at San Domenico to provide their unique insights with our Virtuoso Program students.

This proves to be an exciting year for the program, and I hope that we’ll be sharing that excitement with you at a concert soon. Keep your eyes peeled for details on our February concert over the next month.

In a fitting tribute to a year where the program is recommitting itself to the goal of preparing young women to succeed in the world of classical music, we had the distinct honor of welcoming JoAnn Falletta, music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony for an unforgettable masterclass with the Orchestra da Camera.

Of her time on stage with the orchestra, Ms. Falletta wrote, “I had such a beautiful experience with the young women at San Domenico—What a special place with such extraordinary faculty.” Junior Caitlin Gowdy also commented on the visit: “She was really inspiring, and I feel like I learned a lot from her. I love how she described her job as a conductor as ‘creating an environment for excellence’.”
“Vivaldi” 2010—Its 34th Year!

The Orchestra da Camera’s first concert under the baton of our new music director Ann Krinitsky was an amazing success, with a near-capacity audience cheering on the performers in the 300-seat Bettye Poetz Ferguson Hall. In his recent letter to the San Domenico community, Head of Schools Dr. David Behrs reflected on his inaugural “Vivaldi” experience. “The orchestra did an exquisite job bringing the music to life, particularly the soloists Caitlin Gowdy ’12, Allie Simpson ’11, and Nina Pak ’11. It was a true joy to share this afternoon of amazing music with such an impressive crowd, as it was to mingle at the post-concert reception and get to meet so many of the supporters who have made possible this high caliber of music training at our school."

Besides tackling a challenging set of orchestral works by Vivaldi, Britten and Bartók, the students of the Virtuoso Program also highlighted the work of their chamber music groups on stage as well, in a preview of sorts to the repertoire that they’ll be performing on the chamber music concert on December 6th. “I was delighted to finally get a chance to share the joy that these young women bring to making music with our friends in such a celebratory atmosphere,” remarked Ann.

Don’t miss these upcoming Virtuoso Program events! All are free to the public and are performed in San Domenico’s Bettye Poetz Ferguson Hall.

- Fall Chamber Music Concert—December 6 at 7pm
- “Women in Music” Concert—February 6 at 3pm
- Winter Solo Recital—March 3 at 7pm
- Spring Chamber Music Concert—May 8 at 7pm
- Junior & Senior Recital—May 16 at 7pm
- Freshman & Sophomore Recital—May 23 at 7pm
- Final Orchestra Concert—May 27 at 7pm

Announcing the Virginia Giannini Hammerness ’50 Virtuoso Program Scholarship Fund

Virginia Giannini Hammerness, class of 1950, created this fund in 2010 to benefit a Virtuoso Program student. Because of her appreciation of the dedication and talent of the Virtuoso Program students, Virginia established this named endowment fund with the intention that revenue generated will provide scholarship support to a high school student during her four years at San Domenico. We’ll be announcing the first recipient in fall of 2011.

Alum Updates

Michi Aceret ’98 has been busy working with the New Century Chamber Orchestra’s educational outreach program, and performing regularly with the all-women Quartet Rouge, playing somewhat untraditional string quartet music (think everything from Radiohead to Amy Winehouse) all around the Bay Area and beyond. Anne Rainwater ’02 recently graduated with her masters in contemporary piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music, and is currently teaching at a new piano studio in Riverdale, NY, is actively gigging around the city and has founded a new music piano-percussion duo with a fellow MSM colleague. They are seeking out commissions and have already had several pieces written for them. In the spring, they’ll be performing on a Contemporary Music Festival in Baton Rouge, LA. Emilia Burlingham ’06 is preparing her senior recital at New England Conservatory and hopes to continue her music studies in Germany next year, where she fell in love with the vibrancy of their classical music culture in her recent experiences in summer programs there. And lastly, Satomi Hofmann ’90 got married in September—with a Virtuoso Program string quartet providing music at the ceremony!

Alums: Keep us in the loop! Please let us know what’s new with you so we can post it in the next issue of Overtures: music@sandomenico.org

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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 Rabitchenko, Cello Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Miles Graber, Piano Accompanist
Rob DeNunzio, Music Conservatory Director
Teresa Notari, Administrative Assistant

San Domenico School 1500 Butterfield Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960 415.258.1921 music@sandomenico.org