Growing Gains

by Rob DeNunzio
Director of Music & Digital Arts

With the largest enrollment in recent history, the energy around the program this year has been electric. As an audition-only ensemble, we take care to only admit students we are confident have not only the musical ability, work ethos, and passion for elevating their artistic selves, but also are prepared to commit their time to such an intensive education. And over the past couple years, we have been thrilled to see an increase in students who fit the VP profile. The result is a wide variety of potential chamber ensembles, a flexible pool of available musicians who can easily assemble to perform at “gigs” as needed, and an orchestra that can deliver a huge dynamic range of tone and sound production. It’s truly a joy for audiences, and the students themselves, to experience.

And with guest coachings and masterclasses with Tom Stone of the Cypress String Quartet, cellist Zuill Bailey (more about that on the back), and San Francisco Conservatory of Music string instructor Andrew Luchansky, opportunities for our students to learn from a wide variety of world-class string pedagogues, whether about chamber music, preparing solo repertoire, or approaching the college application process, we are thrilled to be able to serve all these young musicians with a broad range of educational experiences to help them grow their whole musical selves.

So as we prepare in earnest for our next big orchestra concert on March 12, you can be sure that our students will be busy, spending much of their spare time finding opportunities to share their music with new audiences, all the while honing their craft and learning the ropes for what could be a lifetime musical career. Please enjoy reading what our students have been up to and be sure to put our concert dates on your calendar so that you can come hear what all the excitement is about!

Save the date!

Please join us on Sunday, March 12, 2017 for our Winter Orchestra Concert featuring the Virtuoso Program Orchestra da Camera

With a program featuring Edvard Grieg’s Holberg Suite, Josef Suk’s Serenade for Strings, and more, our students are already deep in preparations and will be working hard through this winter in anticipation of sharing their music with you in the New Year. This matinee concert is a joy for the entire family and showcases our students in their largest signature ensemble.

The concert begins at 3:00 p.m. and will be followed by a light reception with the musicians. Make sure you’re on our mailing list so that you receive an official invitation as the day of this special event gets closer!

Follow us on Facebook! Enjoy these types of updates about our students, alumnae, and faculty? 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

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Our opening orchestra concert is a tradition 39 years in the making, one in which we strive to connect the past to the present, between current students and alumnae, our history of guest artists, and our community of family and friends. This year’s concert was no different.

As the Virtuoso Program was originally modeled somewhat after the music program Antonio Vivaldi oversaw at the Ospedale della Pietà, we have honored that with this annual concert of string orchestra and choral music, performed by our Orchestra da Camera and San Domenico Singers. In addition to Vivaldi’s Cello Concerto in G major as performed by Jessamyn Fry ’17, the audience was treated to works by Telemann, Handel, Arensky, and the Finale from Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 59, No. 3, which we last performed when we appeared as guests on NPR’s “From the Top”. In preparation for the Beethoven, the students rehearsed it not only in sectionals and orchestra, but also in chamber groups (one on a part, requiring great responsibility, accountability, independence, and listening skills) and in octets (two on a part) for orchestra quizzes. We consider this multi-faceted approach a great strength of our program.

A special treat at this year’s event was the introduction of our inaugural Faith Y. France Endowed Scholar, made possible by the supreme generosity of our program’s founder. Faith was present to enjoy the concert and meet Zen Williams ’20, our principal bassist, who will hold that title while attending San Domenico. Zen also plays with the Young People’s Symphony Orchestra and Oakland Youth Orchestra, and has his sights on auditioning for the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. He says, “This scholarship means a lot to me. It means an opportunity to grow, and share my passion for music while getting a good education.”

Bringing so much music together so early in the school year is no easy task, but our current group of students—the most we’ve had enrolled in the program in many years—was more than up to the task, having dived into the material even before their retreat in August, and the inspiration of getting to work with additional coaches like Tom Stone before the concert turned that hard work into true artistry.

VP Founding Director Faith Y. France meets her first endowed scholar Zen Williams ’20, alongside Sr. Gervaise Valpey, O.P.

In conjunction with the Marin Symphony, we were honored to host renowned cellist Zuill Bailey for a masterclass in Bettye Poetz Ferguson Hall. Mr. Bailey spent the afternoon working with San Domenico cello students as well as additional students and their instructors from the community. This is the second time we have had the pleasure of Mr. Bailey as our guest, and always enjoy his musical insights. One student especially appreciated how Mr. Bailey’s advice transcends the cello and is equally applicable to any instrumentalist. Our ability to host such masterclasses here is largely due to the students’ high level of musical commitment. We anticipate many similar events over the course of the school year.

San Domenico Virtuoso Program Faculty & Staff
Ann Krinitsky, Virtuoso Program Director
Eugene Chukhlov, Violin Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Randolph Fromme, Cello Teacher
Aenea Keyes, Chamber Music Coach
Elizabeth Prior, Viola Teacher
Sergei Riabtchenko, Cello Teacher and Chamber Music Coach
Miles Graber, Piano Accompanist
Rob DeNunzio, Director of Music & Digital Arts
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