

Sustaining Notes

The Newsletter for Symphonie Jeunesse Youth Orchestra for Strings

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SJO News

SJO continues to plan for the future when precautions from the pandemic will allow us to meet again in person. For now, we hope to remain in touch with our families and friends, plus some new students who are still awaiting their SJO auditions! Our newsletters are available on our website, symphoniejeunesse.org.

A special birthday wish this month to Andrew Bautista, who celebrates on September 7.

Vivo Vocabulary

sul ~ "on the"

sul ponticello ~ on a stringed instrument, the bow played at the bridge so as to bring out the higher harmonics, producing a "nasal" sound.

sul tasto ~ bow used over the bottom of the fingerboard so as to produce a soft, thin tone.

flautando ~ (Italian) flute-like sound on a bowed stringed instrument made by pulling the bow rapidly just above the end of the fingerboard.

col legno battuto ~ (Italian) "with the wood being hit". To strike the strings with the stick of the bow.

Mrs. T.'s Listening List

"Polonaise in E flat minor opus 26 No. 2"

by Frederick Chopin

(Mar. 1, 1810 ~ Oct. 17, 1849)

Introduction to:

Ms. Marsha Mabrey

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1949, Ms. Mabrey, an African-American musician and conductor, began her study of violin in the 4th grade in Ann Arbor, Michigan. By the time she entered 7th grade, she wanted to become an orchestra conductor. She majored in violin and viola at the University of Michigan where she received her bachelor's and master's degrees. She finished her coursework for a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in orchestral conducting at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. She has served as conductor, assistant conductor, and guest conductor of such orchestras as Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonietta Frankfurt in Germany, Oregon Symphony, Savannah Symphony, Women's Philharmonic of San Francisco, and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In 1996, she became the first African-American woman music director and conductor of the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra. Mabrey met her life partner, a social worker and psychotherapist in 1976 and they married in 2013.

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Accent On

Mr. Michael Tacchia,
SJO Executive Director

In reading the biographies of great composers, what fascinates me more than the successes or failures of great musicians is their respective journeys from childhood into musical discovery.

My formal training on the piano began locally in Fontana at age twelve. I was devoted to my teacher, Marie Benedict, who gave selflessly of her time and was a tremendous inspiration. When a sophomore at San Geronio High School at age fourteen I had a history class with a teacher named Elka Ellison that changed my life. During a history test she put on a record (there were only records played on turntables at this time) of polonaises (Polish dances) for piano by Frederick Chopin. When I heard the opening strains of what I later learned was the Polonaise in E flat minor opus 26 No. 2, my feeling for music took a deeply spiritual turn that determined my musical future.

At this time one could not go online to download a score. By foregoing my weekly purchase of comic books, I saved enough money to buy the printed music of the complete Polonaises of Chopin including the above mentioned piece. Though it was light years beyond my technical ability at that time, I was driven to learn it. This was the breakthrough that led me to pursue a life of music.

It is my hope that SJO members will find some of the same inspiration that fed my soul in listening to this polonaise. And I hope that more adventures in musical discovery will follow in future issues of our newsletter.

Coda

Symphonie Jeunesse first performed "Andante Festivo" by Jean Sibelius, (last newsletter's listening) in Season 2, 2009-2010. A poem was written for our performance by a local artist/poet and lawyer, Mr. Michael Arnold, which he Read at the concert preceding the performance.