



ROSSINI NOTES

VOL. 146 NO. 2 Newsletter of the Portland Rossini Club Winter, 2017

From Our President

Greetings as we are plunged into the heart of winter! While the world is on the brink of many changes, we in the world of Rossini are still committed to offering beauty through music! And by the time we reach the February concert, we will be half way through the 146th season of our organization! We have already had four superb and varied concerts, and the remainder of the season will produce the same fine music.

While the business part of our organization can be our least favorite, we still need to keep the wheels turning. Our winter meeting will take place after the February concert, and I hope you will put this in your calendars, or notify me that you cannot attend. Please peruse the Rossini Notes when you receive them. Let me know if you have an item for the business meeting so I can include it in the agenda.

Looking forward to seeing all of you soon!

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CALL TO OUR WINTER BUSINESS MEETING

- **Date: Sunday, February 19**
- **Time: approx. 4:30 PM**
(following our program/
reception)
- **Place: Chapter Room, St. Luke's
Cathedral**

BUSINESS AGENDA

- Officer and Committee reports

Rossini Club Concert Schedule

3:00 pm
at St. Luke's Cathedral

February 19

March 26

April 30

May 21

Check out our website.
Find us at
www.rossiniclub.org

Check out our
Facebook Page!
"Like" it!
Ask your friends to "like" it.

From Our Program Chair

Greetings, friends:

Somehow, spring is right around the corner and we are now looking at the final few concerts of the season. As always, even in these remaining concerts there is a tremendous variety of performers and of repertoire.

For this edition of Rossini Notes I'd like to draw your attention to the program on March 26th. Prizewinning pianist Diane Walsh, who has concertized all over the globe (most recently with our own Portland Symphony Orchestra) will be playing Beethoven's *Sonata no. 30 in E major*. This is one of Beethoven's later sonatas, characterized by its original approach to sonata form and also by its smaller and more intimate character.

Also on the program is Cesar Franck's *Sonata for violin and piano in A major*, performed by Alexander Romanul on violin and Angela Olszta on piano. Mr. Romanul has been a successful soloist since the age of twelve, and since then has performed widely. He won numerous prizes as a soloist and chamber musician. Pianist Angela Olszta has performed with the Rossini Club on several occasions, both in a collaborative capacity and as a soloist. She has much experience working with artists of all stripes, amongst whom I happily number myself - and so I can say from personal experience that she is a uniquely gifted and sensitive artist.

Continued on page 2

Volunteers Needed!

The Nominating Committee of the Portland Rossini Club is seeking volunteers to fill two positions for the 2017-2018 season: President and 1st Vice-President for Programs. We hope members who have not served the Club in any official capacity before will consider becoming an officer.

President: duties include chairing 3 membership meetings annually: Fall (October), Winter (February) and Annual (May); several Executive Board meetings. The President also appoints committee chairs and is an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.

1st Vice-President for Programs: duties include planning eight public concerts per year [September through May, with no concert in December]. Also schedules tuning of the Steinway piano before each concert and attends Board and Membership meetings.

If you are interested in either of these offices, please contact Sheila McGarr, Chair of the Nominating Committee by April 1 at smcgarr1@maine.rr.com

Editor's Note: I count it a privilege to have served in both of the above capacities. I now invite YOU to carry on the leadership of our unique and historic music organization.

KUDOS

to Rossini Club member, Diane Walsh, for her performance with PSO on Sunday, January 15. Of her performance as soloist with Chopin's *Concerto #2*, reviewer Allan Kozinn stated, in our January 17 *Portland Press Herald*, that her "reading ... had a buoyant, singing quality," and that she "gave a dazzling performance of the Liszt-Paganini *La Campanella* as an encore." She will perform Beethoven's *Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109* for our March program.

Continued from page 1

Finally on this program is Mary Johnston, soprano. With a bright, beautiful voice that fills St. Luke's (if you can believe it) and a good sense of drama, her performances are always top notch. With her on piano, is Mark Braun. Whether he is collaborating or performing as a soloist, Mark is one of the most thoughtful, thorough musicians I have met. They will perform two arias, one from Gian Carlo Menotti's opera *The Old Maid and the Thief*, and the other from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. I'm very much looking forward to this concert, and I hope you will put it on your calendars and join me there.

Lulette Saul,
Program Chair

Healing Wishes

to Nicole Trifaro, who is dealing with health issues, and to Ginny Stelk as she recovers from elbow surgery.

Welcome, New Performing Members

Scott Eaton, piano, of Kennebunk, started studying piano with Kim Karchenese of Cape Neddick, at age 5, and continued through high school, where he accompanied the choruses and musicals. While studying electrical engineering at Northeastern University he became more interested in classical music and started taking lessons with Valentina Lass through New England Conservatory's Continuing Education program. He now lives in Portland, and works as an engineer in Yarmouth.

More New Members

Shaunna Lucas, soprano: A native of Albany, New York, new Rossini Club member, Shaunna Lucas was one of five sopranos accepted in her class at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. At CCM she sang in the studio of Thomas Baresel. Shaunna decided to pursue another degree program and after obtaining her BA in Psychology from the University of Cincinnati, she went on to work in the Assisted Living industry, specializing in Alzheimer's and Dementia. After a long hiatus, and many geographical locations, she returns to art here in Maine! She has studied with USM's Ellen Chickering and also with Boston's Dana Varga, DMA. She is actively pursuing both regional and national singing opportunities and looks forward to collaborating with local artists.

Mathew Nichols, cellist:

A versatile and multifaceted musician, Mathew Nichols avidly performs both new music and the standard repertoire. He has premiered works by composers Kyle Grimm, Jonathan Schmieding, and Michael Albaine, among others. Mathew is equally at home performing with orchestras or chamber groups of varied instrumentations. In addition to his performing career, Mathew maintains an active teaching schedule. Mathew received his BM degree in cello performance from the University of Connecticut, studying with Katie Schlaikjer and Michael Nicolas. He received his MM degree in cello performance from the University of Hartford, where he studied with Mihai Tetel and Andrew Mark.

In Memoriam

Doris "Dory" Earls
2/7/1928 – 12/20/2016
Joined Rossini Club in 1951

Story behind the making of the Richard Roberts Memorial CDs

Contributed by Ruth Matt

Rossini Club member Dale Ashby met Richard Roberts in 1971 after one of his recitals at Moulton Theater on the campus of Westbrook College (now the University of New England). Richard was a highly respected professor and Dale was a music student at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham. Richard agreed to teach Dale only if he could start lessons from scratch. Practice meant four hours a day, six days a week with lessons twice weekly for three years. Over the years the two became friends and Dale built a modest audio recording studio for him in his home. The two would record various pieces over and over until they were to Richard's satisfaction, but none of these were ever released to the public. The pair produced more than a dozen CDs over decades.

Having stopped lessons after 13 years at age 18, I asked Richard if he would take me on and I ended up studying with Richard for three years. During this time he shared several of these CDs with me for teaching and listening purposes. I was floored by the quality, particularly of the Bach *Partita in B flat*.

At his memorial gathering, Dale and Ruth met for the first time and decided that they would like to honor Richard and put together a small collection from his recordings. The first CD compilation, produced in September 2016, contained live concert recordings at St. Luke's on the Club's Steinway. In January 2017, the studio set of 2 discs was produced. Between decisions of which music to use and problems of older technology, these CDs took some time to produce to the quality we desired. Most of the best recordings were from the last decade.

All three discs are available at concerts this winter. In addition they are for sale on the website, www.rossiniclub.org and even downloadable thanks to our web expert, Chip Vayenas, member Danielle's brother. If you like to BUY LOCAL, this is a great way to do it. The CDs make nice gifts too. The proceeds are going to the Rossini Club Piano Fund, which would have pleased Richard.

A Real Winner!

I was so very proud of one of our very special Rossini Scholarship winners when I attended this year's PSO Magic of Christmas concert.

Some of you may remember that we once coordinated a competition for local high school Juniors called the Gould Award. This was conceived of and paid for by Cape Elizabeth resident Ralph T. Gould. The prize for the four winners* was a trip to New York City to spend two nights in a Midtown hotel, attend the Metropolitan Opera, including a backstage tour, and attend another classical concert - usually the New York Philharmonic (when they were in town) and perhaps a Broadway show. Our own pianist member, Ocy Downs, chaperoned more than twenty of these trips, and I was privileged to be a chaperone for more than ten of these trips. Other members also came as co-chaperones, including Cecile DeRoche-Cain and Barbara Graustein. Ralph Gould left us the funds to continue offering the competition until our 60th Anniversary trip, when the funds ran out in 2009.

One of our 1996 Gould Award winners, Elizabeth Marshall, was the featured soloist in PSO's Magic of Christmas concert. She sang beautifully, graciously performing multiple concerts for a packed house. In 2001, she won the vocal division of the Rand Scholarship Competition*. Since then, Elizabeth has won other more prestigious prizes, but I like to think that we started her on that path with our Gould Award competition. She currently serves as Artist Faculty in Voice at the University of Southern Maine.

Beth Harmon

*This was before we divided the scholarship into three separate entities.

OUR OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2016 - 2017

President:	Cecile DeRoche-Cain
First Vice-President:	Lurette Saul
Second Vice-President:	Elizabeth Harmon
Recording Secretary:	Susanna Adams
Treasurer:	Sheila McGarr
Assistant Treasurer:	Virginia Stelk
Piano Chair:	Scott Eaton
Candidate Chair:	Barbara Graustein
Communications Chair:	Sheila McGarr
Social Chair:	Susanna Adams

Our Scholarship Competition

Our 2017 Scholarship Competition will take place Saturday afternoon, June 3, at St. Luke's Cathedral at 12:30 pm. I am pleased to say that, thanks to the continued generosity of our donors (including many of you), we will again be able to raise the amount we can award - this time to **\$2100 per category**.

We offer scholarships in three different categories:

The Barbara C. Littlefield Vocal Scholarship Fund was created in memory of the Club's longtime treasurer, vocalist, Barbara C. Littlefield.

The Lucia A. Wright Piano Scholarship Fund was established in 2001 as a bequest of pianist, Lucia A. Wright, a member in good standing for fifty-five years.

The Emily K. Rand Instrumental Scholarship Fund was established in 1932 in memory of the Portland Rossini Club's third president, a vocalist, who presided in a distinguished manner for 25 years.

The judges for this competition come from our membership, as well as from Greater Portland's wider musical community. I will be approaching members about helping with judging in the spring.

From our bylaws:

Those eligible for scholarships shall be any residents of the State of Maine aged seventeen or older who are planning further musical study at an accredited music school, college, or university.

If you know of anyone in this category, please call this scholarship competition to their attention. They can find information and applications on our website www.rossiniclub.org.

Beth Harmon, Scholarship Chair