



ROSSINI NOTES

VOL. 142 NO. 1 The Newsletter of the Portland Rossini Club September, 2012

From Our President

Former Rossini Winner Wins Major Competition!

That was the subject heading of the first email I received in late June from Abigail Levis, a former Gould Award and Rand Scholarship winner from Kennebunkport and South Portland, who was named *2012 Debut Artist of the Year* by the Joy in Singing Foundation. With the encouragement of her sponsors, she was asking for our help in presenting a hometown concert.

Members of the Board and I agreed that this was certainly in line with our purpose as set forth in our bylaws: *"The purpose of this organization shall be to provide live performances, to encourage young musicians, and to create educational opportunities."*

Then the question arose as to how, when, and where to schedule her concert! Amazingly enough, the various people who had planned to perform in our regular October program all cancelled! Not only was she available, but that date is only four days after her New York debut at Merkin Concert Hall in the Kaufman Center! We had our answer: She will sing for us, performing her debut program on October 14.

This is an opportunity not to be missed! I'll see you there!

Beth Harmon
President, Portland Rossini Club

Call to Our Fall Business Meeting

**Date: Sunday, October 14,
following our program**

Time: 4:45 PM

**Place: Saint Luke's Chapter
Room**

BUSINESS AGENDA

- Election of Nominating Committee
- Committee Reports

Please let Beth Harmon (829-3393) know if you have additional items to place on the agenda.

From Our Program Chair

There are a few openings left in our schedule:

- January 13: 2 slots
- February 10: 3 slots
- April 21: 1 slot (no more than 10 minutes)
- May 12: 1 slots (no more than 10 minutes)

Each slot is presumed to be 15 minutes. Longer or shorter offerings will be accepted upon advanced notice.

Please contact me at: 797-8318 robpiano@msn.com as soon as possible!

Six weeks before each concert (some of us need to prepare) I will fill the spaces by begging our veterans to make a second appearance - or I will use guests.

Collaborative performers who are not slated to perform are encouraged to contact solo performers for joint efforts.

Solo performers who have encouraged their collaborative colleagues to join are encouraged to contact them to participate.

For those of you who were concerned by Eric Peppe's sudden absence from the September 16 concert: he was in Auburn when his car died. Being good concert goers, all of us had silenced our electronic devices, preventing him from contacting us.

Eric will appear at a later concert, once he is again mobile.

Richard Roberts,
Program Chair



Abigail Levis, Lyric Mezzo Soprano
Biography

Named "Debut Artist of the Year" by the Joy in Singing Foundation, lyric mezzo-soprano Abigail Levis is emerging as one of the most exciting young singers of today. The Boston Musical Intelligencer praised her for her "dramatic style" and "high level of technical ability" in her performance in *Israel in Egypt* with the Handel and Haydn Society in Symphony Hall. She is currently a member of the Vocal Arts program at the Bard College Conservatory where she studies with Edith Bers and Dawn Upshaw.

A native of Portland, Maine, Ms. Levis realized her love of performing at the age of 11 when a family friend invited her to sing Patsy Cline's "Crazy" at the Scarborough (Maine) Fair. She began her formal vocal studies at the age of 15 in Kennebunk, Maine, with Ms Jean Strazdas. She won Portland Rossini Club's Gould Award, for musically gifted high school juniors in 2004, and Rossini Club's Rand Scholarship in 2006. She holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. During her student years she won several other prestigious scholarships. As a Young Artist she has performed with The Crested Butte Music Festival, Opera New Jersey, The Austrian American Mozart Academy, and Songfest.

As a professional singer, Ms. Levis has appeared as a soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra, Ars Lyrica Houston, and the New York Opera Exchange in addition to the Handel and Haydn Society. She is also the winner of several competitions, including the 2012 Joy in Singing Competition, the 2010 University of Houston Concerto Competition, the 2010 National Orpheus Vocal Competition, the 2011 Five Towns Music Competition in Long Island, and the 2011 Young Texas Artist competition. Her success at the latter was noted in the Conroe Courier:

"...mezzo-soprano, Abigail Levis... was rewarded for her authoritative and full-voiced mastery of Mozart's "Parto.[Parto]" Wearing a glamorous gown of shimmering gold and gray, she also brought considerable comic flair to an amusing and sassy performance of... "What a Movie," from Leonard Bernstein's one-act opera, Trouble in Tahiti.

Be sure to attend our program October 14 to hear this amazing talent.

This Year's Scholarship Winners



Amanda Raymond,
 Lucia Wright
 Piano Scholarship

Lauren Yokabaskas
 Barbara Littlefield
 Vocal Scholarship

Nicholas Brown
 Emily K. Rand
 Instrumental Scholarship

Our annual Scholarship Competition draws university bound musicians who live in Cumberland, Oxford and York counties, are between the ages of 17 and 25 and who also are registered as music majors in the fall of 2012 at any accredited music school, college, or university. This year, on Saturday, June 9, six talented young musicians from southern Maine (a clarinetist, a pianist and four sopranos) competed for three \$1,000 prizes. The judge's panel named three winners in three categories, piano, instrumental and voice that stem from three endowments of former Rossini Club members.

The Emily K. Rand 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 Emily K. Rand Instrumental Scholarship was awarded to clarinetist, Nicholas Brown of Portland. Nick attends Boston University as a Woodwind Performance Major.

The Lucia A. Wright Piano Scholarship was established in 2001 as a bequest of pianist, Lucia A. Wright, a member in good standing for fifty-five years. The Lucia A. Wright Piano Scholarship was awarded to pianist, Amanda Raymond of North Waterboro. Amanda attends the University of Southern Maine as a Piano Performance Major.

The newly established Barbara C. Littlefield Vocal Scholarship was created in memory of the club's longtime treasurer, vocalist, Barbara C. Littlefield. The Barbara C. Littlefield Vocal Scholarship was awarded to soprano, Lauren Yokabaskas of Cape Elizabeth who took second place last year in our 2011 competition. Lauren is a vocal performance major at SUNY Purchase College.

Thank you to all who served on the panel of judges: Portland Rossini Club members Beth Harmon, Cynthia Henriques, Richard Roberts, Judy Coleman and Norm Whiteside as well as three non-member, area professional musicians, pianist, Annie Antonacos, vocalist, Kathleen Grammer and clarinetist, Beth Weimann. Thanks also to Beth Harmon for mentoring help and to new member, Nina Oatley, who was a huge help on competition day.

Christine Kissack,
 Scholarship Chair

YOUR DUES ARE DUE!!

From the Treasurer:

It's that time of year again to pay annual dues to the Portland Rossini Club. There are four membership categories: Active, Privileged, Associate, and Subscriber. For Active Members, dues are \$40 per year. For Associate and Privileged Members, dues are \$30 per year. A Subscriber is defined as "Any person who pays an annual fee shall be entitled to free admission to all Program meetings. They would have no voting privileges and may not hold office." Dues for Subscribers are \$30 per year. Those 62 and older who wish to become Subscribers pay \$20 per year.

Under the Bylaws, Article VIII, 5B, "Dues shall be paid no later than November 30." Please mail your check made out to the Portland Rossini Club to:

Sheila McGarr
Treasurer, Portland Rossini Club
148 Hennessey Drive
Portland, ME 04103-2037

Scholarship Accounts Consolidated

Thanks to our Finance Committee, headed by Treasurer, Sheila McGarr and assisted by Ruth Matt, Assistant Treasurer, Susanna Adams, and Outgoing Treasurer Norm Whiteside for consolidating our assorted different scholarship funds into one Scholarship account to be administered by Fore River Financial.

In the Event of Snow

In the event that snow forces the cancellation of a program, Richard Roberts will make the decision by noon the day of the concert, and our three local TV stations, WCSH, WGME, and WMTW will be notified.

In Memoriam

Jeanette Anderson, Soprano

**Marjorie Ann Young,
Associate Member**

Kudos

Congratulations to our Concert Manager, now Michaele Rackliff, who married over the summer. A USM music student, she is student teaching this semester, so you will often see her husband, Andrew, who is carrying out her managerial duties.

Please email or write your editor Beth Harmon if you have Kudos or sympathy to share

SAVE THESE 2012-13 DATES

Rossini Business Meeting Dates

- **October 14** at St. Luke's following our program
- **February 10** at St. Luke's following our program
- **May 21** Potluck Annual Meeting at Barbara Graustein's

Rossini Program Dates for our 2012-13 Season

September 16
October 14
November 11
January 13
February 10
March 10
April 21
May 12

Richard Roberts Piano Benefit June
16

All are Sundays at 3:00 pm at

A Musician's Philosophy

Carol Downs passed on this poem written by her friend, Emilie Stehli, who wrote poetry and performed as a pianist.

To live life fully
I would try:
To know its harmonic structure,
To find the theme within it,
To sing with its melody,
To accept the discipline of its rhythm,
To be flexible in its ritards or rubatos,
To adjust to its dynamics, its diminuendos or crescendos,
To cope with its counterpoint,
To share the anguish or abandon or tenderness of its folk music,
To sense the sweep and majesty of its symphonies,
As soloist or accompanist, to blend with the strings, the winds
or percussions,
To hear the infinite overtones,
 And most of all
To test each cadence with the inner ear.

Emilie Greenough Stehli

OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRS of the PORTLAND ROSSINI CLUB 2012 - 2013

President: Elizabeth Harmon

First Vice-President: Richard Roberts

Second Vice-President: Christine Kissack

Recording Secretary: Virginia Stelk

Treasurer: Sheila McGarr

Assistant Treasurer: Susanna Adams

Piano Chair: Richard Roberts

Candidate Chair: Barbara Graustein

Communications Committee Chair: Sheila McGarr

Social Chair: Judy Coleman