



ROSSINI NOTES

VOL. 153 NO. 1 Newsletter of the Portland Rossini Club Fall, 2023

From Our President

Wow... what a wild world that we all live in. My heart continues to go out to our friends and colleagues in Lewiston. I don't travel often to Lewiston, however I was in Lewiston the night before the incident attending an astounding organ recital of Jamila Javadova-Spitzberg with friends at the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, about five minutes from Schemengees Bar and Grille and Sparetime Recreation Center. When I received news of the shootings, I was just dumbfounded and really reflected. I realized that the active shooter could have chosen any night, and the basilica *could* have been a target if he knew there was a concert. Or, what if the concert was held Wednesday night? These things are just unpredictable and I have to say that we're extremely lucky. I'm a huge believer in synchronicity and I believe something was looking out for us. My message that I hope you'll take into consideration is to really hug your loved ones tightly and to truly stop and smell the roses.

This wasn't how I'd imagine starting our 2023–2024 season. However, in this dark tunnel we *will* see the light at the end. The only way to get there is getting through this darkness together. Music will always lift and carry us over.

Continued on column 3

To All Members

CALL TO OUR FALL BUSINESS MEETING

Date: Sunday, November 26

- **Time: approx. 4:30 PM**
(following our program)
- **Place: Upper Parish Hall**
- **St. Luke's Cathedral**

BUSINESS AGENDA

Officer and Committee Reports

Form a Nominating Committee

(continued from column 1)

As we all know, there wasn't a September concert. Originally, I had planned to perform this concert with Opera in the Pines co-founder, Sable Strout. Due to scheduling issues, we had to reschedule this to December 31st, New Year's Eve at 3 PM. We will feature Aaren Rivard as well, who is also an Opera in the Pines co-founder. This concert will feature all Rossini music in dedication to Rossini and to the club. We normally don't hold December concerts, however this *special* event will be at Portland Conservatory of Music with a reception to follow. Please stay tuned for more details!

I'm calling a Fall Business Meeting, open to all members, after our November 26th concert. I highly encourage attendance. The more the merrier! I'm looking forward to seeing you at our next concert!

Your Rossini Club President,
Jonathan Prak

<https://www.rossiniclub.org>
jonathan.prak@maine.edu

From Our Program Chair

My job has been made easier this year by having booked three “ready-made” programs offered by outside organizations. “In a Soprano Hue” will be performed on Sunday afternoon, January 21, 2024 by Amethyst (Mary Sullivan contact). A piano recital, offered by University of Southern Maine students of Laura Kargul, will be held on Sunday afternoon, April 28, 2024. A special New Year’s Eve concert will be performed by Sable Strout and friends at the Portland Conservatory of Music on Sunday afternoon at 3 pm on December 31 (this was originally scheduled for September).

As far as performance slots for the remaining concert dates for the 2023-2024 season, they are filling up. The annual Richard Roberts Memorial Concert will be held on February 18. Pianists are encouraged to volunteer. The March 17 program is almost complete. We need performers for May 26, the final concert of the season. I have not scheduled any outdoor summer concerts (our COVID-era offering). If anyone would like to schedule one, please let me know.

We all miss Michael Rackliff, our former stage manager, who served the Club in that capacity for over 10 years. Christopher Staknys is being trained to take her place at upcoming concerts. As usual, Dale Ashby has been in his accustomed spot video recording concerts and we thank him for this service. We have not used our performance shells yet this season.

Hope to see everyone at the upcoming November 26th concert. Happy Thanksgiving!

Susanna Adams
Program Chair

From your Treasurer

♪ Just a note - It’s that time of year to pay annual dues to the Portland Rossini Club to support in-person concerts at St. Luke’s Cathedral for the 2023-2024 season.

There are four membership categories: Active, Privileged, Associate, and Subscriber. For Active [performing] Members, dues are \$50 per year. For Associate and Privileged Members, dues are \$40 per year. Dues for Subscribers [61 and under] are \$40 per year. Those 62 and older who wish to become Senior Subscribers pay \$30 per year.

Under the Bylaws, Article VIII, 5B, “Dues shall be paid no later than November 30.”

- You may pay your dues using PayPal at our website: <https://www.rossiniclub.org/dues-renewal/>
- By mail, make out your check, **payable to the Portland Rossini Club**, and send it to:

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

From our Piano Chair

I am pleased to report to the club that extensive maintenance work was performed this fall on our beloved Steinway Concert D piano. The work included regulation, voicing, and tuning. This extensive work is periodically necessary to bring the complex workings of the piano infrastructure up to Steinway performance standards. This keeps the piano sounding wonderful and consistently playable for both our member and guest pianists. The Rossini Club maintains a piano fund in reserve for just such purposes.

The work was done by master Steinway piano technician Mel Fletcher, who had also performed major work on this piano about fifteen years ago. He pronounced the piano to be in very fine condition!

Leah Neuchiller,
Piano Chair

From our Scholarship Chair

An *ad hoc* Scholarship Committee composed of Jonathan Prak, Sheila McGarr, Beth Harmon, Stephen Schiffman, Eleanor Lehmann, Torrey Gimpel, Ruth Matt, Susanna Adams, and Barbara Graustein met in March and April 2023 to clarify and simplify the procedures surrounding the scholarship competition. First, we established that it would be held bi-annually with increased award money. We also established another category of prize centered around the bequest of Marie Thomas, which would be for high school juniors or older who exhibit outstanding music potential.

This fall, I sought three professional judges (who would be available on Saturday, June 8, 2024) in the three award categories: vocal, piano, and instrumental. I am happy to report that we have a full panel of judges in place: Robert Russell, vocal; James Parakilis, piano; and Rohan Smith, instrumental. They will act as a panel for all contestants; the judge with “expertise” will be the lead judge in his scholarship category.

My next task is to contact Maine teachers statewide (more within driving distance of Portland) to see whether they have students who might wish to compete. That will take me all winter and early spring. Please, if you know a talented high school student who might wish to compete (seniors need to be accepted in an accredited college program, but they do not have to be majoring in music), please direct them to the Rossini Club website rossiniclub.org for applications and procedures.

The competition will be held at St. Luke’s on Saturday, June 8 (morning and early afternoon). I will need volunteers to direct students to various locations within the building, and to help with logistics (parking, etc.). Please contact me at saviolabow@maine.rr.com if you are interested and available.

Susanna Adams
Scholarship Chair

OUR OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023-2024

President:	Jonathan Prak jonathan.prak@maine.edu
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2023-24
Rossini Club
Concert Schedule
Cathedral of St. Luke,
Portland, ME
3:00 pm

October 29
November 26
December 31 at PCM*
January 21
February 18
March 17
April 28
May 26

*Portland Conservatory
Of Music

Comments or Thoughts or Something to Share?

Please email to *Rossini Notes* editor,
Beth Harmon,
bethharmon2@gmail.com

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

Jazmin DeRice, mezzo soprano: Returning member, Jazmin DeRice attended school for Vocal Performance at USM and Mannes School of Music. Currently, she teaches voice lessons and takes care of creatures as a large animal veterinary assistant.

John Ross, flute: Flutist John Ross is an accomplished soloist, educator, chamber musician, and orchestral performer. He is on the faculty and administration of the Portland Conservatory of Music in Maine. He also teaches and performs in the summers for Sparrow Music Camp in High Springs, FL and the Taneycomo Festival Orchestra in Branson, MO. He has also taught on the faculty of the FSU Summer Music Camps and Music for the Sake of Music (MFSOM) in Green Bay, WI. Dr. Ross has been principal flute of the orchestra for MFSOM, the Italian-American Opera Festival Orchestra (CA), the Charleston Chamber Orchestra (WV), and has also performed with the Topeka Symphony, the Muncie Symphony, Tallahassee Symphony, and the Charleston Light Opera Guild. He has appeared as soloist with the WVSU Wind Ensemble, the FSU Symphonic Band, and the orchestra of MFSOM. He has been a featured soloist with the WVSU and Cottey College Wind Ensembles, the Florida State University Symphonic Band, the orchestra of Music for the Sake of Music, and the Butler Philharmonic Orchestra in Hamilton, OH. His flute ensemble Silver Lining Flutes toured around Costa Rica in Spring 2017, performing and giving masterclasses as part of the Promising Artists of the 21st Century series. His folk trios, Cuttin' Bracken and Rakish Ramblers, have performed throughout northern Florida, including multiple performances at the Florida Folk Festival in White Springs, FL. Dr. Ross attended West Virginia University, Ball State University, and Florida State University, studying with Joyce Catalfano, Thomas Godfrey, Francesca Arnone, Mihoko Watanabe, and Eva Amsler. He is also pursuing a certification in body mapping through the Association for Body Mapping Education, studying with Amy Likar.

Ryan Slocum, piano, organ: Ryan began studying piano with Ashley Tardif when he was 12, and soon began playing at his home church. He began playing regularly for church services when he was 14 at the Poland Community Church. When he was a senior at Pine Tree Academy in Freeport, he began studying organ with Doris Krueger. Ryan is a senior in the fall at the University of Southern Maine, where he is working toward a Bachelors in Organ Performance, studying organ with Justin Murphy-Mancini. Ryan participated in the 2021 Kotschmar Memorial Trust Scholarship competition, where he was one of the recipients of the scholarship. During the summer of 2021, he performed multiple times with Mark Thallander, former organist of Crystal Cathedral, for concerts and church services. He was one of six organists featured on the organ program *Pipedreams Live*. He is currently the organist at several area churches. In his free time, Ryan likes to arrange / compose music, play chess, and learn how to do new things.

Christopher Staknys, piano: Pianist and composer Christopher Staknys is a graduate of The Juilliard School (2018) with a degree in solo piano performance. Allan Kozinn, former music critic for the *New York Times*, praised his playing for its "dexterity and dramatic phrase shaping". He has appeared as both performer and composer in cities such as New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Paris and Salzburg. He has participated in several contemporary ensembles including *AXIOM* and the *New Juilliard Ensemble*, performing at venues such as Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall. Christopher has won numerous competitions, including first prize at the Steinway Society of Massachusetts Piano Competition and the Rivers School Concerto Competition. Artists he has studied with include; Sergei Babayan, Robert Levin and Peter Serkin. He has also appeared on NPR's *From The Top* radio show. In 2021 he was selected as a Marcus Institute Fellow pianist for the Vocal Arts department at Juilliard. He has also been vocal coach and pianist for Opera Maine and the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory. Christopher has played for numerous operas and musicals including *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Into the Woods*. For three summers he taught piano and electronic music at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Alaska to children and young adults ranging from elementary to high school. He currently serves as music director for First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Kennebunk, Maine. His interests include languages, (Lithuanian, French, Italian, German, Ancient Greek) and reading.