



ROSSINI NOTES

VOL. 143 NO. 2 The Newsletter of the Portland Rossini Club Winter 2014

From Our President

Ten years ago, who would have thought that we would have and maintain an active website? Have you checked it out recently? I recommend it <http://www.rossiniclub.org>.

This was set up by Christine Kissack and is now maintained by Eric Peppe. Using it, you can check out an upcoming program, peek at a flyer, look at recent newsletters, learn about our scholarships, or check out a bit of history. More important, it links us to people all over the world.

I have received some amazing letters from people who have found our website, and I want to mention two especially: Last July I received a note from Virginia Eskin:

“ Dear Elizabeth:

I am a pianist, who lived in Portland long ago- was married to the young Museum director, Don Hoopes, in 1960s -- we moved to Wash, D.C. and I have maintained many connections and friendship to musicians there, over the years. I knew Ocy Downs in fact- and she extended many courtesies to me-I was a young 20 year old! later I soloed with the Portland Sym., several times-under Fiedler, Gregorian, won their concerto competition once, and formed a relationship with the Portland String Quartet- we made many recordings together, Beach, Chadwick, Dvorak, etc. (went on music cruises!)

I write to ask if there is a chance I could offer a concert to the Rossini Club? I meant to do it with Ocy, but somehow the opportunity never came up.

Look forward to your response and hope we can work something out- perhaps a benefit recital, maybe in a home- or whatever you deem the most appropriate and helpful.”

We’ve “worked something out”, and I’m happy to say that she will perform a recital in April to benefit our Scholarship Fund. See more about this on page 3.

Another amazing letter I received was from former Gould Award winner
continued on page 2

Call to Our Winter Business Meeting

**Date: Sunday, February 9,
following our program**

Time: 4:45 PM

Place: Saint Luke’s Chapter Room

BUSINESS AGENDA

- Committee Reports
- Details of Eskin Scholarship Benefit Concert
- Expanding Scholarship eligibility?
- Discussion of Bylaws changes

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

Please bring a copy of your bylaws booklet with you.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Concert Manager, Michaelae Rackliff on the birth of baby boy, Zadkeil in November.

From our Program Chairs

We believe the programs are set for the remainder of the year:

February 9

See information on page 3

March 9

- *Carol Elowe*, piano
- *Norman Whiteside*, tenor, with *Robert Enman*, piano, and *Ruth Matt*, piano
- *Mary Johnston*, soprano, with *Richard Roberts*, piano
- *Robert Enman*, piano, with guest *Jon Poupore*, violin and guest *Stephen Schiffman*, clarinet

April 13

Special Benefit Concert featuring *Virginia Eskin*, pianist (see additional information on page 3)

May 18

- *Maggie Vishneau*, soprano, with *Lynn Lennox*, guest pianist
- Saint-Saens *Carnival of the Animals* with many of the Club's pianists, a guest pianist or two, *Barbara Graustein*, cello and perhaps some other guest instrumentalists. *Beth Harmon* will narrate, using the verses of Ogden Nash.

Susanna Adams,
susanna.adams@maine.rr.com,
and Richard Roberts,
robpiano@msn.com.
Program Chairs

The 2014 Rossini Club Scholarship Competitions

Portland Rossini Club's Annual Scholarship Competitions will take place Saturday, June seventh, 2014 beginning at 1:00 pm at Saint Luke's Cathedral. Three \$1,200 prizes will be awarded this year. Scholarship Chairperson, Roberta Page Barker, soon will be sending a reminder post card to applicable contacts in southern Maine directing interested candidates to our website where the application can be downloaded.

Our scholarship competitions are open to residents of Cumberland, York and Oxford counties* in the state of Maine. Applicants must be between the ages of 17 and 25 and be registered as music majors in the fall of 2014 at any accredited music school, college or university. (Previous first place winners of the scholarships may not apply.) A panel of judges will be assembled in the coming months and will include Rossini Club members as well as non-member area professionals. If you are interested in serving on the judges panel, please e-mail Roberta Page Barker at: jbarker1@maine.rr.com.

The *Emily K. Rand (now 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 *Lucia A. Wright Piano Scholarship* was established in 2001 as a bequest of a Member in good standing for 55 years. The recently established *Barbara C. Littlefield Vocal Scholarship* was created in memory of the club's longtime treasurer, vocalist, Barbara C. Littlefield.

*Eligible area may be expanded. See recommendation bottom page 4 under *Bylaw Changes and Considerations*.

From our Piano Committee Chair

The Club's "other" Steinway concert grand, rented to the Portland Conservatory of Music, has been moved from Woodfords Church's Memorial Hall to the church Sanctuary.

Save the Date!

Our Annual Meeting will take place **Tuesday, May 20**. As has become our tradition, it will be a potluck dinner at Barbara Graustein's home in Falmouth.

President's letter continued from page 1

(1960), John Geller. See more about that on page 4!

Following our February program, we will conduct our Winter business meeting. All Members (Active, Privileged, Honorary, and Associate) are urged to attend. If you have questions or agenda items, please let me know. My email is charmon2@maine.rr.com, and my phone is 829-3393.

Beth Harmon
President, Portland Rossini Club

Comment From Member, Ruth Matt

I joined the club in 2011 and I assumed that performers and guest performers would stay for an entire concert to hear other musicians play (other time commitments or nerves prior to performing are legitimate excuses). Also, that performer members should try to attend concerts other than their own. I am not sure that all members know this or were given this expectation, or forgot. The Portland Rossini Club is a "Club" and one can only demonstrate belonging to the "club" by attending concerts to support one another and to promote the playing of live classical music.

Save the Date

On the afternoon of Saturday, April 12, Virginia Eskin will present a Master Class at Woodfords Chapel.

OUR OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2013 - 2014

President: Elizabeth Harmon

First Vice-Presidents: Richard Roberts and Susanna Adams

Second Vice-President: Roberta Barker

Recording Secretary: Virginia Stelk

Treasurer: Sheila McGarr

Assistant Treasurer: Lulette Saul

Piano Chair: Richard Roberts

Candidate Chair: Barbara Graustein

Communications Committee Chair: Sheila McGarr

Social Chair: Judy Coleman

Historian: Virginia Stelk

Special Guest Performer April 13 to benefit our Scholarship Program

We are very fortunate to have Virginia Eskin, Pianist, as a very special guest performer on April 13.

She was a Portland resident many years ago and she now resides in Boston. She has often performed with our own Portland String Quartet.

From her website: “**Virginia Eskin** is a classical pianist with a large and varied repertoire. She has championed and recorded music written by American composers (Edward MacDowell, Arthur Foote, George Chadwick, George Gershwin and many others); women composers such as Amy Beach, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Louise Talma, Marion Bauer, and Vítězslava Kaprálová; and music written by composers who perished during the Holocaust. Virginia has also gained a reputation as a ragtime specialist and has found and recorded neglected works by American women. She created the “Ragtime Project” consisting of four CDs on the KOCH label and has appeared at the annual Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, Missouri.

“Her lectures appeal to all age groups, and especially to older people who love music and learning. She has given pre-concert lectures for Boston’s Celebrity Series and, for several years, has given a series of lectures at Boston University’s Evergreen Series, where she has a large and devoted following.

“She was a regular guest on “**A Note to You**” on WGBH-Boston public radio and succeeded Roland Nadeau as host of that program. She has appeared as a guest on national radio and television, including the CBS “Sunday Morning” television program. More recently, she created and hosted “First Ladies of Music,” winner of the Clarion Award award in 2007. These one hour programs, produced by WFMT, Chicago, have been heard over 100 public radio stations around the world.”

Please be sure to invite your friends to attend.

About our Scholarship Program

As noted on page 2, this year, we are again offering, for our Scholarship competition, \$1200 apiece for each category. Historically, in some cases the entire amount in each category goes to one winner, and sometimes it is divided among first and second place winners, at the judges’ discretion. We have been dismayed that there has been less competition for this prize than we expect, and some have said that the amount is not enough to justify the expenditure of time, effort, and, in many cases, money (to pay an accompanist, etc.) for students who need tens of thousands of dollars per year to attend a good music school.

The money we offer for scholarships is our income from investments placed in our scholarship funds over the years (now consolidated into one fund and divided among our three awards). The Board feels that Virginia Eskin’s offer of a Benefit Concert is timely and has the potential to increase our capital substantially. At our Winter Business Meeting, we will discuss how we may best encourage generous donations. Ideas will be much appreciated.

Members and Subscribers will not be required to pay extra as this is a regularly scheduled program. However, all will be encouraged to donate generously and be reminded that we are a 501C3 organization, and thus can offer a receipt for donations, which are tax-deductible. The general public will be expected to pay a premium for this concert (perhaps \$25 each).

Virginia Eskin has offered to raffle off one of her CD’s.

On April 12, Ms Eskin will offer a Master Class, which will take place at Woodfords Church in the Chapel. We could offer attendance at this this as a premium for a generous donation.

Please come to our meeting February 9 and share your ideas with us.

On Sunday, February 9, Rossini Club Celebrates the Centennial of Benjamin Britten, featuring:

Elizabeth Harmon, soprano, and Richard Roberts, piano
performing a group of art songs and folk songs

Guest George Eisenhauer, tenor, with Mark Braun, piano and Seth Blank, horn
performing *Canticle III*

Hugh Judge, cello
performing Second Suite, Op. 80: *Declamato et Fuga*

Guests Heather Gallagher, mezzo-soprano and Derek Herzer, piano
performing *Cabaret Songs*

Bylaws Changes and Considerations

Our Board is continuing to recommend a few changes to our bylaws, to be discussed at our winter Business Meeting and voted at our Annual Meeting:

A further clarification of a proposal for Collaborative Membership

- The board recommends that we clarify the process for accepting people for collaborative membership: *A potential candidate for Collaborative Membership, who has indicated an interest in becoming an Active Collaborative member, may be invited, at the discretion of the Board, to Active membership after two performances with a Member of the Club. This would be Article III, section 1C.*

Other items to consider (the first two tabled at our Fall meeting)

- In recent years, the offices of Parliamentarian or Bylaws Chair have not been filled. The Executive Board, at our June meeting discussed this, and agreed that neither role is necessary at this time. They unanimously agreed that we should propose that these be omitted from the Article VIII (Appointed Officers), section 2 and 3 of the bylaws.
- The Board also suggests, in Article V, Section 1, that we eliminate “second week of October” and “no later than January 31”, and instead call for a *Fall Business Meeting* and a *Midyear Business Meeting*, without specific deadlines, as well as the Annual meeting.
- Treasurer Sheila McGarr suggests a change to our Budget vote: “Past practice has the annual budget voted on at the October business meeting, which is halfway through the fiscal year that covers the period May-April. I recommend voting on the budget at the Annual Meeting instead.” Article IX, Section 4 Budget: “*At least two weeks prior to the first business meeting, the finance Committee shall circulate a proposed budget. At the first business meeting, that budget shall be considered and then submitted for approval by two-thirds of the Members present*” Proposed change: “*At least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, the Finance committee shall circulate a proposed budget. At the Annual Meeting, that budget shall be considered and then submitted for approval by two-thirds of the Members present.*”
- The Board recommends that we consider expanding eligibility for our scholarships beyond residents of Cumberland, York and Oxford counties to residents of the entire state of Maine. We recommend that it be expanded this year, on a trial basis, and that we vote on a change in bylaws at our fall meeting.

Letter from a Former Gould Award* winner

September 29, 2013

Dear Elizabeth,

I am delighted, just today, to discover that the Portland Rossini Club has a proper web site!

I am a native of Portland, and was a winner of the Gould Award in 1960. I believe Richard Roberts was one of the judges for my audition! Our trip to New York City was absolutely wonderful, and remains a very happy and vivid memory. Shortly after the award, I was invited to join the Portland Symphony as a French horn player, as my teacher, Arthur Stevens, was principal horn and was a founding/charter member of the PSO. After high school, I received a full scholarship to New England Conservatory as a horn major, graduated and did two years of graduate work in musicology, but failed to get my degree (I was a terrible student). Many years later I ended up as a "caller" for the titles system at the Metropolitan Opera ("Met Titles") where I remain after 18 years, so you can imagine how many times while at the Met I have looked back at my first experience there so many years ago, thanks to the Gould Award.

I have never attended a Rossini Club concert, but I hope to do so one day.

*With cordial regards,
John Geller
Haworth, NJ*

Mr. Geller and I have exchanged emails and spoken by telephone, culminating in a very generous offer which includes the possibility of again offering an award for musical high school Juniors, similar to the former Gould Award. We will share details in the April Rossini Notes.

Mr. Geller, now an Associate Member, will attend our May program and our Annual Meeting May 20.

Beth Harmon

***Gould Award (1949-2009):** A musical competition for High School Juniors in the Portland area. Four winners and one or two chaperones would travel to New York to spend two nights in a Midtown Hotel and take a backstage tour of the Metropolitan Opera, attend at least one Metropolitan Opera production, and attend a New York Philharmonic or ballet or other concert, depending on availability. This was funded entirely by Cape Elizabeth resident, Ralph T. Gould and administered by Portland Rossini Club.

We welcome submissions for our newsletter, including poems, memories, concerns, or anything else you want to share with our membership. (subject to editor's approval) The next newsletter deadline is April 16. Send your submission to Beth at charmon2@maine.rr.com.