

# Notes

the newsletter of

## The National Orchestral Association

### SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE NOA

This year marks the National Orchestral Association's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Its proud tradition of supporting America's classical musicians, composers and conductors is a testament to the tireless work of our volunteers and the generous support we receive from donors around the country. Founded during the Great Depression, the NOA has a profound respect for efficiently utilizing its resources to enable artistic achievement of the very highest quality. These challenging economic times remind us that institutional longevity is enabled by the careful stewardship of economic resources. The NOA continually searches for new ways to nurture American talent and bring classical music to wider audiences throughout the country.

In the current economic environment, it is more important than ever for organizations to demonstrate their worthiness of support. By resisting the many temptations to grow overhead or add unnecessary staff, the NOA has been able to maintain the quality of its programs by leveraging the dynamic commitment of its many volunteers. We encourage this spirit of thrift in all of the organizations we support.

At this time of year, when we give thanks for so many things, the NOA would like to acknowledge the hard work of our tireless volunteers and the extraordinary generosity of our many donors. Your support is the lifeblood of the NOA, and we are fortunate indeed to have so many people who care about perpetuating the NOA's mission.

Throughout its history, the NOA has been a leader in creating opportunities out of obstacles. Despite a weak economy, the NOA is reaching wider audiences by supporting organizations that present low-priced concerts. We are grateful to all of you who make our work possible and share our vision for the future. Thank you so much for your support.

*Matthew J. Trachtenberg*  
President

### NOA CELEBRATES ITS PROUD HISTORY

For eighty years, the National Orchestral Association has enjoyed a unique place in the American classical music scene. Its early mission was to train American classical musicians in orchestral technique and repertoire, at a time when American orchestras were comprised almost entirely of European-trained musicians. With the establishment of the NOA under its founding conductor, Leon Barzin, American musicians began to assume their rightful positions in American symphony orchestras.



Maestro Leon Barzin with the  
National Orchestral Association Orchestra at Carnegie Hall

In addition to training orchestral musicians, Barzin and his protégés raised the bar on the training of conductors, many of whom have gone on to distinguished international careers. Barzin continued his affiliation with the NOA until his passing at age 98. The Association has also nurtured the careers of American classical composers, by featuring their work in numerous concerts on radio and at various performing venues including Carnegie Hall. The NOA's new orchestral music competition during the 1990s provided performances of many new American classical compositions. Reaching concertgoers with moderately-priced concerts has always been an important objective of the NOA, and is reflected in many current initiatives with smaller performing organizations that provide intimate classical music experiences.

Throughout its history, the NOA has been a proving ground for great artistic collaborations. An NOA concert at Carnegie Hall in 1945 entitled "Adventure in Ballet" featured the work of a young George Balanchine, who, with Barzin and Lincoln Kirstein, would soon thereafter form the New York City Ballet. The NOA's live radio concerts would serve as a model for classical music broadcasts, wherein pre-performance and intermission features would involve discussions with the artists. Long before musical outreach was popularized, Barzin and the NOA were visiting schools in economically-challenged areas, providing youngsters with exposure to classical music.

A documentary entitled "Leon Barzin and the National Orchestral Association," chronicling the rich history of the NOA, including rare footage of Barzin and the NOA orchestra, is available for a contribution of \$100 as a special thank you gift. Unlike many organizations, the NOA does not solicit or accept government funding of any kind, and depends entirely upon the generosity of private contributions to sustain its work in support of American classical musicians and composers. The NOA appreciates the continuing commitment of our donors and volunteers, who make all of this great work possible.

## CONCERTS IN THE HEIGHTS

Bringing classical music to underserved communities is an important initiative for the NOA, and no organization does it better than Concerts in the Heights. This organization is continuing its extraordinary program of classical music concerts performed exclusively in the Washington Heights community of New York City. The company, founded by violinist Monica Bauchwitz, presents monthly chamber music concerts designed to expose neighborhood residents to quality music they might not otherwise have access to, helping to develop new audiences for the art form. Programs range from classical repertoire to contemporary works by living composers. They are interactive, with discussions and opportunities for questions before the concerts, followed by informal post-concert receptions open to all attendees. Each program in the ten month series is offered twice: a daytime educational performance for local schoolchildren (ages 9-13), as well as senior citizens, and an evening performance for the larger community. Upcoming concerts will feature works by a diverse range of classical music composers and performances that run through June 8, 2011. For more information about the current 10 month season for 2010/2011, and upcoming programs, repertoire, as well as the organization's music education project for middle-school students, please visit [www.concertsintheheights.org](http://www.concertsintheheights.org).

## MUSIC OF THE SPHERES SOCIETY

The NOA is pleased to continue its support for the Music of the Spheres Society. This extraordinary organization was founded in 2001 by its artistic director Stephanie Chase and Ann Ellsworth. The mission of the Society is to "promote classical music through innovative chamber music concerts and pre-concert lectures which illuminate music's historical, philosophical and scientific foundations, in order to give greater context for music to the average audience member." The Society's performing artists are comprised of seasoned soloists and chamber musicians. Ms. Chase is a world-renowned violinist herself and has managed to attract many other soloists to lend their talents to an intimate series of moderately-priced performances. NOA director David Levitman noted that "the concerts exemplify the highest quality of musicianship and permit audiences to experience great music on intimate terms." Mr. Levitman recalled one of the concerts which included a post-concert discussion with Ms. Chase. Mr. Levitman stated that the ability to ask questions provided an interesting context for the preceding music, and that the series of concerts and lectures help feed both mind and spirit, creating an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity combined with sublime musical expression.

The Music of the Spheres most recent concert held on November 5th was entitled "Trilogies," featuring piano trios of Mozart and Beethoven, as well as the rarely heard 1921 piano trio by Rebecca Clarke. On March 11, 2011, the Society will present an evening entitled "The World of César Franck," featuring Franck's Piano Quintet, as well as works by Reicha, Fauré, Chausson, and Ysaÿe. NOA Executive Director Eric Kuttner noted that NOA founding conductor Leon Barzin studied with Ysaÿe on both violin and viola, while Ysaÿe was music director of the Cincinnati Symphony. The Society's final offering for the current season entitled "Café Music" will be held on April 29, 2011. The Society's website is [www.musicofthespheres.org](http://www.musicofthespheres.org).

## MIRACLE ON 125<sup>TH</sup> STREET

Opus 118 Harlem School of Music has been transforming the lives of students and their families through access to quality music education, while fostering teacher development and introducing musical performances to new audiences. For nearly two decades, this miracle on 125<sup>th</sup> Street has nurtured the talent of students from ages two to adult in the Harlem area, by helping them reach their full potential as musicians and strong individuals. Most of the students come from economically-challenged backgrounds and would otherwise have little or no access to music instruction. Opus 118's Chairman of the Board, Nathaniel Sutton, is leading the school's efforts to provide in-school, after-school, and community music programs for students in Harlem and throughout the city. As a widely-known former senior banking executive and Chairman of the worldwide executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles, Mr. Sutton has gathered support from a wide range of business, community and artistic leaders. Mr. Sutton believes that "music training for children sets the stage for a lifetime of learning, self-discipline and joy. I know how important music is in my life. It makes me more creative, provides relaxation and entertainment, and has been a common ground through which to meet interesting people from all walks of life, all over the world. It will be no less important in the lives of Opus 118's students." NOA President Matthew Trachtenberg stated that Opus 118 is an extraordinary resource for young people that is worthy of enthusiastic support. For more information about this fine organization, please visit the website at [www.opus118.org](http://www.opus118.org).

## FLORIDA STATE PRAISES NOA PROGRAM

The NOA was pleased to underwrite a conductor training residency at the College of Music of Florida State University, sponsoring a visit by world-renowned conductor, Professor Jacques Voois, who provided FSU students with insights into the techniques of focal point conducting. In addition to hands-on training, Professor Voois prepared a booklet on the pioneers, practitioners and protocols of focal point conducting. Dr. Alexander Jiménez, Associate Professor of Conducting and Director of Orchestral Activities, praised the NOA initiative, stating that organizations that "contribute generous financial support, provide the means for our students and faculty to excel, advancing our reputation as one of the nation's top public graduate research institutions." Dr. Jiménez noted that "Jacque Voois's visit to our campus was simply wonderful. As the leading proponent of the teaching methodologies of the late Leon Barzin, Dr. Voois brought us many wonderful ideas," and "worked beautifully with our conducting students." The NOA's previous conducting workshop was co-sponsored by the Conductors Guild and held at West Chester University College of Visual and Performing Arts. NOA Director Debra Greenfield observed that "Barzin's legendary technique exemplifies a comprehensive approach to the challenges inherent in orchestral conducting." The NOA is delighted to have had the opportunity to partner with such distinguished organizations as Florida State University, the Conductors Guild, and West Chester University. In these challenging economic times, the NOA is seeking to find opportunities to fill gaps in musical educational programs. The conducting seminars are aimed at filling these gaps by providing specialized training not always available in the standard musical curricula. NOA director Grace Vance noted that there is simply no substitute for training by an actual Barzin protégé, and that the Board is committed to making specialized orchestral training available whenever possible. NOA director Reka Souwapawong praised the conducting initiative as a dynamic means of enhancing the technique of American conductors.