



From the Artistic Director



Giving Back

When we first weighed the idea of outreach presentations at the Hampshire County House of Corrections the question arose why we would want to do so instead of going into a school, for example. Of course, Walden regularly does quite a bit of work in schools - this season is taking us into schools in Nyack, NY; Nantucket, MA; and San Antonio, TX; for example.

One of Walden's goals is to serve as a resource to the community and we constantly try to find new ways to do so whether this takes the form of conducting a Young Artist Competition, working in a prison or initiating a series of concert/conversations in a retirement community. It has always struck me as somewhat limited and, dare I say, self-serving to just perform concerts.

An ensemble such as Walden has so much more potential to

☛ *continued page 3*

Walden Goes to Jail!

Expanding our concept of outreach we recently presented two concert/lectures at the Hampshire County House of Corrections in Northampton, Massachusetts. These events took place in conjunction with concerts at Smith College, also in Northampton, and at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, in which we premiered "Scat", a work we commissioned by the renowned composer Augusta Read Thomas. This commission had been made possible through the generous support of the Argosy Foundation and 20th Century Unlimited.

The project with the prison was of a type with which Augusta was already familiar. Years ago, when teaching at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., she made several visits to the nearby Albion Correctional Facility, a women's prison. "I

was talking about contemporary women composers," she says. "This is not a subject people would know a lot about. But I remember the incredible eagerness - they wanted to talk and listen and learn. Here they are sitting in a prison, but you play them some music and it ignites that same spark we all have." She thought that the jazz element in "Scat" might make the piece accessible to the broader audience at Hampshire.

Augusta joined us for our second presentation at the prison. The inmates were some of the most attentive and inquisitive audience members we have ever encountered. And attending the concert was a privilege inmates had to earn.

It was a particularly rewarding experience for the musicians as well. We all know how quickly a wrong decision

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"It takes a true artist to enthusiastically share their vocation and passion with another; but an even greater human being to do so within the confines of a correctional facility."

- Roger, inmate
Hampshire County
House of Corrections

"Some day these prisoners might be our neighbors again. So it makes sense to educate, enlighten, and expose them to interesting and thought-provoking—maybe even attitude-changing?—ideas."

- Christof Huebner,
Walden Chamber Players



Walden cellist Ashima Scripp and Walden artistic director and violist Christof Huebner discuss "Scat" with Hampshire County inmates.

Our First Commercial CD!

We are eagerly anticipating our recording sessions in January 2008 at Smith College's exquisite Sweeney Hall. We will be recording the as of yet undocumented chamber music of Augusta Read Thomas. Thanks to a grant from the Copland Foundation and the generous support of many of our supporters we are able to record this cd which we plan to release in the spring of 2008 on the Gasparo label.

We are excited to be able to dedicate this cd entirely to the music of Augusta with whom the Walden Chamber Players has had a close artistic association for several years now and who has become a dear friend of the ensemble.

JAIL—continued

in each of our lives can result in circumstances such as some of these inmates have found themselves, and for which they now pay the price.

Patrick Cahillane, the prison's Deputy Superintendent also remarked on the importance of such experiences for prisoners.

"Historically, across this country, 98 percent of individuals who are incarcerated come back to the community," he says. "So if this gives them some connection to the community at large, it helps." The inmates saw that "music, and the hours of practice that go with it, is the musicians job, it is work," Cahillane says. And "to get anywhere in this life, you have to put in your hard work and pay your dues."

The performance was also a reflection of Walden's belief that music, and art in general, has a positive message to convey.

To read more about this project, visit our website, www.waldenchamberplayers.org and click on "News"

Outreach & Education

Newton Concert

Wow! We were absolutely blown away by the enthusiastic response and full-force attendance at the occasion of our first concert at the Newton Cultural Center on November 2, 2007! The vibes were great, people loved the music and seeing 17-year-old violinist Chloe O'Connell, the winner of our Newton Young Artist Competition perform with us during the concert. The staff at the Cultural Center was just super to work with in preparation for the concert. Special thanks go out to the Massachusetts Cultural

Council as administered by the Newton Cultural Council who partially funded the event, as well

as to Johnson Strings of Newton, our very generous corporate sponsor!



Walden members and Chloe O'Connell relax after the performance. Left to right: violinist Tatitana Dimitriadis; competition winner Chloe O'Connell; Walden artistic director Christof Huebner; and cellist Ashima Scripp

Member Profile

New face in the strings

Violinist Joel Pitchon recently joined the Walden Chamber Players and already has made a profound impact on the ensemble due to his superb playing, deep love of chamber music and great intellect. Joel had been performing with us for several years as a guest artist and we are delighted to have him finally as a regular member of the ensemble. Here are Joel's thoughts on joining Walden.

A musician whose greatest love lies in chamber music must seek out players with whom he is compatible. Without finding these players life can be very lonely and concerts unfulfilling. I've been in many chamber ensembles—most often they devolve into something akin to dysfunctional families.

There was the string quartet where the other violinist only looked at his music in concerts, unable to look up to give or take a cue; he could not interact with the other players. Then there was the pianist who knew everything about everything. A violist in a group I was in, cared only about



Joel Pitchon

what he considered to be the "viola solo"; he was incapable of thinking about the whole sound of the group. The Walden players are different. Every player cares first and foremost about the music and each musician is a wonderful chamber music player. Walden is my lucky find.

A Season of "Firsts"

This season has us presenting no less than five world premieres by American composers! In addition to "Scat" by Augusta Read Thomas already mentioned (see article on page 1) we also premiered a lovely string-trio movement by the young composer Julia Scott Carey. Julia holds a lot of promise and we look forward to performing some more of her music next season.

In April & May 2008 we will be premiering new works by Larry Wallach, Alice Spatz and Sheila Silver. All three composers wrote compositions for oboe, harp and string trio which we are very excited about since this combination perfectly fits our eclectic mix of instruments.

We have found the process of working with contemporary composers in creating these new works very stimulating and rewarding.

Planning Underway for Next Season

Planning has begun on some very exciting projects for the 2008/2009 season.

We hope to expand our presence in Newton to two concerts at the Newton Cultural Center, in addition to outreach in the local high schools and Lasell Village, an active retirement community on the campus of Lasell College. We will also conduct again the Newton Young Artist Competition, in order to select a talented young musician to perform with us in a public concert at the Cultural Center (see page 2).

Despite performing all over the United States, Walden has long sought a "musical home" and we think that our recent success in Newton holds promise for the future.

We are very excited about finally presenting concerts to our home-town crowd and all

the wonderful opportunities it presents for working in the community, as well as being able to present concert programming just the way we like to. Of course, there is also the sweet "perk" of a very short commute home after the concert!

The ensemble is also exploring the idea of a year-long Walden Chamber Players Institute at Nyack High School in Nyack, NY. This past September we presented a pilot residency at the school in collaboration with MusicWorks who presented us in a concert in Nyack. The high school has an excellent and very active orchestra program and our aim would be to enrich the experience for the students by adding an in-depth chamber music program to the offerings at the school. We hope to be able to fund this program through

various grants, in addition to funding from MusicWorks and the Crowther Foundation, our community partner in this endeavor.

Walden will be returning to the Austrian Cultural Forum (ACF) in New York City for two concerts in late October 2008. The ACF has a charming hall and a fiercely dedicated concert audience. The programs will consist of music by contemporary Austrian and American composers.

We hope to be able to expand our successful and exciting pilot program at the Hampshire County House of Corrections into a year-long curriculum in the near future, combining music, literature and visual art (see article page 1).

Of course, there is much more to come!

The Walden Quiz

Last issue's question was: "Which Italian composer created, in effect, the genre of opera by putting prose and music on an equal footing and combining the two? What is the name of the opera in which he did so and where was it premiered?" The answer: Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, premiered at the ducal palace in Mantua, Italy, on February 24, 1607.

Here is our new quiz question:

When a certain romantic composer finally published his first symphony, after several aborted attempts due to self-censure, some people referred to it as "Beethoven's Tenth". Who was that romantic composer and what was his place of birth?

If you think you know the answer email us at info@waldenchamberplayers.org. The winner will receive one of our cds!

(The answer will be in our next newsletter.)

Artistic Director continued —

do work that benefits a broader spectrum of our community whether they are young people or prisoners. After all, some of these prisoners might very well be our neighbours again some day.

I think that the days of expecting the audience to just show up for a concert are a thing of the past. How often do we lament the decline of classical music - and how often does this result in programming that ends up lacking in artistic integrity, in order to "cast the net" further?

We believe that one important way of staying relevant is to go out into the community, to think outside the box of what we perceive as a normal concert venue and to let people know that we are excited and eager to meet them in their "comfort-zone".

It is my belief that if we are willing to listen to people and share our gift with them then, hopefully, people will continue to listen to us.

Christof Huebner

Contact Us!

For more information about the Walden Chamber Players, contact us at 866/393-2927 or visit us at www.waldenchamberplayers.org.

Upcoming Concerts

February 5, 2008 @ 7:30 pm

Trinity University
San Antonio, TX

April 2-4, 2008

Mass. Academy of Math & Science
Worcester, MA
— Residency —

April 12, 2008 @ 8 pm

Bard College at Simon's Rock
Great Barrington, MA

April 14, 2008 @ 7:30 pm

deBlasiis Chamber Music
Concert Series
Glens Falls, NY

April 25, 2008 @ 8 pm

Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington, DC

May 11, 2008 @ 3 pm

Clark Art Institute
Williamstown, MA

May 18, 2008 @ 3 pm

Chamber Music Society of
Bethlehem
Bethlehem, PA

For details, visit our website:
waldenchamberplayers.org

News

Comings and goings

Larry Wolf (double-bass) and **Richard Sebring** (french horn), two founding members of Walden recently decided it was time to move on and tackle new artistic challenges in their lives. We were very sad to see them go but after giving 11 years of their wonderful talents to the group we understood their need to trim their very busy schedules. We wish them all the best for the future!

Looking forward, we were thrilled when bassist extraordinaire



Donald Palma

players performing today and having his "voice" be part of the ensemble will make a profound impact on the sound of the ensemble.

Don Palma accepted our invitation to join the Walden Chamber Players. Don is one of the finest bass

We are currently in the process of identifying suitable candidates to fill our french horn position.

New Board Member

Pansy Bloomfield has joined Walden's board of directors. Daughter, sister, and mother of musicians, Pansy is herself an amateur pianist, guitarist, and cellist. She brings extensive arts management experience to Walden having served as a volunteer executive director for the North East Youth Symphony Orchestra and the New Hampshire Symphony Orchestra in addition to serving on the boards of numerous other civic and arts organizations. She is also a budding bow maker, making bows of alternate woods in support of the movement to preserve current pernambuco forests. Her bows are in use by her children and students.



Pansy Bloomfield

The Walden Chamber Players

Tatiana Dimitriadis - violin
Joel Pitchon - violin
Alexander Velinzon - violin
Irina Muresanu - violin
Christof Huebner - viola
Ashima Scripp - cello
Donald Palma - bass
Marianne Gedigian - flute
Laura Ahlbeck - oboe
Thomas Martin - clarinet
Richard Ranti - bassoon
Jonathan Bass - piano

The Walden Chamber Players Board of Artistic Advisors

Imogen Cooper
Federico Cortese
Branford Marsalis
Stephen Paulus
Paul Polivnick
Jutta Schedl
Augusta Read Thomas

The Walden Chamber Players are the Artists-in-Residence at the Massachusetts Academy of Math & Science, Worcester, MA

Walden
Chamber Players

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