

Walden Notes



Fall 2008

Newsletter of the Walden Chamber Players

Christof Huebner, Artistic Director

From the Artistic Director



A Labor of Love

I frequently get asked how I can do all of the tasks required to keep Walden thriving all by myself. The simple answer is I can't and I don't, and it is high time that I introduce to you some of the outstanding people who work behind the scenes to make Walden the success it is.

Where to begin though? How about with June Colvin, our graphic designer extraordinaire? I can't count the times I am told just how beautiful our printed materials look and that they really stand out - and that is often what makes the difference in a sea of PR materials presenters get every day! Or what about Kris Gravina, our finance manager, who has been truly terrific in keeping WCP in fit financial shape and taken a big burden of my shoulders. She juggles taking care of her three young children and WCP's never-ending needs just beautifully.

Our board president for the last four years has been Jonathan Liebowitz, who has guided the Walden ship calmly and steadily and has patiently put up with my fickle and impetuous temperament. Let's hear it—Hail to the Chief!

Pansy Bloomfield is our resident "voice of reason", who

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Walden Records Music by Composer Augusta Read Thomas

Our new CD of works by Augusta Read Thomas, titled *Sun Threads* was recently released.

In January 2008 we convened for five snowy days of recording sessions in beautiful Sweeney Hall at Smith College in Northampton, MA. We recorded several works by Augusta that had never been previously documented commercially. We were delighted to have "Gusty" present and overseeing our sessions which proved invaluable in achieving a truly outstanding documentation of her beautiful music. Recording engineer Brian Peters, who remained calm no matter how many noisy snow plows we had to compete with, was a gem and contributed

greatly to the intense focus during the sessions. We are very proud of the result which sounds outstanding! Thanks go out to Smith College for the use of Sweeney Hall and its exquisite Hamburg Steinway.

The CD, titled *Sun Threads*, is available for download on i-tunes, Amazon.com, Walden's and the composer's website and can also be purchased in the ever-disappearing record stores. We hope you will take a listen!



Top photo: Augusta Read Thomas and engineer Brian Peters taking care of "quality control" during the recording sessions.

Above left: WCP violinist Joel Pitchon and pianist Jonathan Bass with Thomas.

Above right: Violinist Yehonathan Berick and violist Christof Huebner recording "Silent Moon" by Augusta Read Thomas.

Left: Happy faces all around - composer Augusta Read Thomas and the Walden Chamber Players at the conclusion of the recording sessions!

“Working with the WCP is truly one of the most exciting musical experiences our young players have been exposed to and everyone is supporting them. The anticipation and excitement surrounding this collaboration is everywhere!”

– Christine Gero, Orchestra Director,
Nyack High School

Chamber Music Institute at Nyack High School

Walden will be more active than ever with its outreach programs this season. One of the most exciting projects is our Chamber Music Institute at Nyack High School in Nyack, NY in the period September 16, 2008 to November 18, 2008.

Last season we spent one day with the music students at the school which has a very strong string program thanks to the tireless efforts of Christine Gero, orchestra director at the high school. We were very impressed with the commitment and dedication of the students who participate in several string orchestras of various levels.

Following the visit to the school we proposed the creation of a chamber music program

which was not in existence at that time since we thought that it would be an invaluable addition to an already very strong program. Thanks to a generous grant from Chamber Music America and additional funding from the Crowther Foundation and MusicWorks we are able to bring this dream to fruition.

Over the summer the students were matched up into eight different chamber music groups consisting of quintets, trios, quartets and duos and assigned the music to practice. Starting in September members of WCP will visit Nyack High School on eight different occasions to coach the student ensembles and prepare them for a performance concluding the residency on November 18th at the high school.

We will also take some of the student groups to perform outreach in several locations such as the Rockland Parent Child Center which has an arts therapy program for women recently released from prison and who are being reunited with their children. The goal of the residency in addition to teaching the students the instrumental and interpersonal skills that can only be acquired in a chamber music context is to nurture the spirit of “giving back” to the community by conducting outreach for underserved populations.

We are very much looking forward to the Chamber Music Institute at Nyack High School which is our most ambitious outreach project to date!

Help us continue our outreach efforts.

We hope you agree that Walden makes an important contribution to the civic, educational, and social life of the communities that we perform and teach in. Your support is vital for us to be able to continue our outreach programs in schools and to bring our acclaimed performances to audiences throughout the country. Please consider making a donation.

Contributions can be sent to:
Walden Chamber Players
P.O. Box 382
Arlington, MA 02476

All contributions are tax-deductible. And don't forget to check with your employer to see if they will match your gift. Thank you!

Walden plays Texas Hold'em!

At least Texas, and more specifically San Antonio, has truly got a hold of Walden's affections following our concert and outreach presentations at Trinity University last season. The whole affair was such a success for all involved that we decided to explore a more in-depth relationship between the University and the Walden Chamber Players. We were absolutely delighted with the facilities of the music-department, the eagerness of the students to absorb what we had to offer and the enthusiasm of Carl Leafstadt (Chair and Associate Professor of the Department of Music), a real visionary and the organizer of our visit to the University. Did we mention San Antonio's lovely river walk and the best raspberry

margaritas anywhere?

One of the goals of the residency is to help nurture a budding chamber music department at Trinity. We will also assist the University with recruitment by performing outreach in San Antonio area high schools. In addition, Walden hopes to serve as a conduit for students of Trinity University who might be interested in attending summer festivals in the Northeast since many members of WCP are on the faculty of some of the most prominent festivals in the area.

We are very excited about this promising relationship between Trinity University and the Walden Chamber Players. How about we raise a glass of raspberry margarita to this exciting new partnership?

“With the WCP, Trinity is embarking on its first-ever ensemble-in-residence program. We now have a three-pronged chamber music initiative that should dramatically alter the landscape of our department. The students are very excited.

– Carl Leafstadt,
Chair and Associate Professor,
Music Department, Trinity University

Walden Chamber Players 2008/09 Season

SEPTEMBER

September 25, 2008 @ 7 pm
September 28, 2008 @ 1 pm
Nantucket Historical Association
Nantucket, MA

OCTOBER

October 4, 2008 @ 7:30 pm
Trinity University, San Antonio, TX

October 26, 2008 @ 4 pm
GraceMusic, Nyack, NY

October 29, 2008 @ 8 pm
Austrian Cultural Forum, New York City

For complete concert details,
visit our website,
www.waldenchamberplayers.org.

NOVEMBER

November 7, 2008 @ 7:30 pm
Newton Cultural Center
Newton, MA

November 14, 2008 @ 8 pm
St. Paul's Church, Brookline, MA

November 15, 2008 @ 8 pm
Smith College, Northampton, MA

November 16, 2008 @ 3 pm
Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute
Williamstown, MA

FEBRUARY

February 22, 2009 @ 4 pm
Old Ship Church Candlelight Concerts
Hingham, MA

February 24, 2009 @ 7:30 pm
The Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh, PA

February 27, 2009 @ 7:30 pm
Washington & Jefferson College Arts Series
Washington, PA

APRIL

April 4, 2009 @
Trinity University, San Antonio, TX

April 25, 2009 @ 8 pm
Friends of Chamber Music of Troy
Troy, NY

Spring 2009
Austrian Cultural Forum,
New York City

New Music!

The Walden Chamber Players recently received grants from the Argosy Foundation and 20th Century Unlimited to continue its commissioning program. Following on the heels of last years commission of *Scat* by esteemed composer Augusta Read Thomas (featured on Walden's new CD *Sun Threads*) we now look forward to a new work by composer Alvin Singleton for bassoon, horn, string trio and piano. Mr. Singleton has been the composer-in-residence with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and

the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. He has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis of the City of Darmstadt, Germany, among many other honors and awards. His works have been performed by the symphony orchestras of Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, as well as the Kronos Quartet, the London Sinfonietta and the Asko Ensemble of Amsterdam, just to name a few. The premiere of Alvin Singleton's composition for the Walden Chamber Players is scheduled for the fall of 2009.

Says Eleanor Eisenmenger, Executive Director of 20th Century Unlimited: "Why do I commission? Because I like to make things happen musically, and I always hope to come up with a piece that people will like to hear, and one that will travel. I like to work with the Walden Chamber Players because I then know that the commissioned works will have good, expert exposure."

The focus of this commissioning program is

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- Eleanor Eisenmenger, Executive Director,
20th Century Unlimited

the creation of new music for unorthodox combinations of instruments, mirroring Walden's own eclectic make-up and ability to present works that mix and match a wide array of instrumental combinations, a hallmark of the Walden Chamber Players.

We are thrilled to be able to initiate the creation of new music by some of the most talented composers of today. Our many thanks go to the Argosy Foundation and 20th Century Unlimited for their very generous support which makes these commissions possible.

Artistic Director continued —

will not shy away from asking the tough questions and who has an impressive pedigree in the music business, due to her own career and family connections. She can always be counted on to throw a glam reception after a concert no matter where and when!

Serge Roy, trusty clerk of the board of directors and resident genius scientist who writes the most succinct minutes I have ever encountered and who has been such a tireless supporter of Walden. Serge can always be relied on to do whatever needs to be done. And, yes, he does make some of the very best Paella you will find anywhere!

Then there is Judy Wodynski, our board-member—on temporary leave—whose infectious enthusiasm for Walden has truly been inspiring. Judy, who lives on Nantucket would literally travel anywhere to attend a board-meeting—by sea, air and car, if needed. She has been a tireless advocate for Walden on Nantucket and an invaluable organizer of our concerts and outreach programs on the island. We can't wait to have her back on the "team"!

Walden is very fortunate to have these outstanding individuals give so generously of their talents and time. On a more personal note I feel truly blessed to count each of them as my friend.

So, as you can see by the time we walk out on stage to play a concert or to present an outreach event quite a few people have given selflessly of their time, energy, resources and dedication to WCP in order to make this happen. What is left for me to do you ask? Let's just say I am a mere figurehead.....

Christof Huebner

Photo: Charles Barry



Walden Chamber Players will be premiering a new commissioned work by composer Alvin Singleton (above), supported by grants from the Argosy Foundation and 20th Century Unlimited.

News

Congratulations to Walden cellist, **Ashima Scripp** and her husband Robert Bloomfield, on their recent marriage. As we speak they are on their honeymoon in the Canadian Rockies surviving on roots and berries . . .

And three hearty cheers to pianist **Jonathan Bass**, recently appointed chair of the piano department of the Boston Conservatory.

Contact Us!

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

Check out our new blog

at <http://waldennotes.blogspot.com>

The Walden Chamber Players is the Ensemble-in-Residence at the Massachusetts Academy of Math & Science, Worcester, MA, and the visiting ensemble-in-residence at Trinity University in San Antonio, TX.

The Walden Quiz

Last issue's question was: "What was the name of the Romantic composer whose first symphony is sometimes referred to as Beethoven's tenth and where was he born?" The answer: Johannes Brahms, born in Hamburg, Germany on May 7th, 1833.

Here is our new quiz question:

Throughout his life Johannes Brahms had a rather conflicted attitude toward women. Most famous, of course, is his friendship with Clara Schumann, wife of the composer Robert Schumann who was a close friend of Brahms. But there was also another woman that Brahms got very close to only to suddenly withdraw. Perhaps out of guilt he later paid tribute to this woman in one of his most famous chamber music works. Which work is it and exactly how did he do it? Answer correctly and receive a copy of our new CD "Sun Threads"!

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.)

And the Winner is . . .

Robert Chen, a 16 year old cellist from Newton, was the winner of our second annual Walden Chamber Players Young Artist Competition which was held in May 2008. Robert, a very gifted young musician is currently a student at Phillips Academy Andover in Andover, MA.

We look forward to featuring him in performances of the string quintet by Franz Schubert in a public concert at the Newton Cultural Center on November 7, 2008 and at Lasell Village, a local retirement community, on November 8th. He will also be receiving a \$ 500 prize, sponsored by Johnson String Instrument of Newton. Congratulations, Robert!



The Walden Chamber Players

Tatiana Dimitriades - 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

Walden
Chamber Players

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