

# fanfare

News from the Catskill Symphony Orchestra

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## Cabaret's Coming; Here's How It Happens

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, as the Catskill Symphony Cabaret attracts concert enthusiasts, everything is ready for an enjoyable evening. The arrangements, however, begin more than a year in advance of the actual performance.

SUNY Oneonta's Dewar Arena is the only facility available to accommodate the required 88 tables and also provide adequate space for the orchestra members. Choice of the date is affected by college sports events, as well as requests by other community organizations for accommodations.

The core of every cabaret is the guest performer. As much as eighteen months in advance of the spring event, Maestro Charles Schneider and the Governing Board discuss musicians who might be available to perform. One of the considerations each year is to provide variety that will attract different music lovers, hence the appearance of soloists, musical combos, and different kinds of music including jazz, string band, musical comedy, as well as unusual offerings such as the performance of Howard Levy presenting his remarkable *Concerto for Diatonic Harmonica*.

Since the cabaret is a significant money raiser for the symphony, during the fall of the preceding year, candidates for the conductor competition are sought. Ideally, these individuals agree to start their campaigns during the holiday season, asking for support from relatives and friends whom they are most likely to meet at family gatherings.

Early in the new year, plans for selling tickets, making arrangements for table reservations, food, flowers, decorations are discussed and coordinated. Campaign

managers and "bag people" to help make collections during the intermission of the program are also solicited. Because of the peculiar acoustics and sports use of the Dewar Arena, it is necessary to hire professionals to provide the sound system and lighting.

According to Deb Wolfanger, the Symphony Manager, "The Cabaret could absolutely not happen without the wonderful work of all our volunteers!!!" For the last three years, the Hartwick College men's lacrosse team has provided their services in moving tables and chairs, changing the arena from an enormous basketball court to a special cabaret setting. Members of the Administrative Council, past and present, as well as other Symphony supporters arrive to help with the actual table setting, distributing tablecloths, napkins, and place settings to match the reservations. Table numbers, programs, and pledge forms are also provided.

The actual set-up starts Friday afternoon when the heavy work is accomplished. On Saturday morning, final touches are provided, with flower centerpieces, helium filled balloons, and final table decorations. Often, if there has been a dinner elsewhere on campus on Friday night, there are more tables to be set up to complete the arrangements. These arrangements must not interfere with Symphony rehearsals.

Finally, a faithful cadre of Symphony supporters arrives to provide ushering service, making sure that patrons are seated to correspond with the reservations they have made. Once the musicians are in place and have tuned their instruments, the lights go down, and another Catskill Symphony Cabaret begins.

Virginia Pence



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The mission of the Catskill Symphony Orchestra is to entertain, educate, and inspire audiences of all ages by presenting a professional ensemble of the highest quality performing the full range of symphonic literature. The Orchestra also seeks to broaden the availability and appreciation of symphonic music in Oneonta and surrounding communities and to provide a challenging environment for talented regional musicians.

### The Governing Board

The governance of the CSO resides in the Governing Board which oversees the general and financial management of the CSO.

Dr. Marie Wiles, Co-Chair  
 Martha Forgiano, Co-Chair  
 Thomas Beattie, Vice Chair  
 Sarah Patterson, Treasurer  
 Virginia Marr, Secretary

Francis Borrego	David Diener
Robert Brose	Thomas Hughson
Wendy Brown	Sasha Matson
Keith Bundy	Dr. Bertine McKenna
Dr. Timothy Campbell	Virginia Pence
Karyl Clemens	Leonard Pudelka
	Beth Steele

Honorary: Warren Francis, Michael MacDowell,  
 James Piscitelli, Senator James Seward

Charles Schneider, Music Director and Conductor  
 Deborah Wolfanger, Manager

### The Administrative Council

Virginia Pence, President  
 Dr. Rudy Schuster, Vice President  
 Dorothy Scott Fielder, Secretary

Robert Consigli	Currie Marr
Elna George	Dick Miller
Cynthia Goertemoeller	Virginia Miner
Cathy Grygiel	Prudence Stelling
Corinne Hahn	Molly Swain
Jon Haigh	Pamela Wightman

## Governing Board News

Under the enthusiastic leadership of Martha Forgiano, the CSO's Governing Board has met regularly throughout the fall and winter to assure prudent management of the Orchestra's affairs and to move the organization forward on several fronts. Highlights include the following.

- *New Board Members.* In February, we welcomed two new Board members who bring a wealth of executive experience to the CSO. Dr. Leonard Pudelka, retired Hartwick professor of History and former chair of the department, has also worked with the Executive Service Corp and served on the Board of the Greater Oneonta Historical Society. Beth Steele, companion of Hartwick College president Margaret Drugovich, brings to our community many years of experience in the marketing and development fields. She serves as well as Senior Development Consultant for the New York State Historical Association (NYSHA) and Farmers' Museum. The addition of Len and Beth brings the Board total to 18, just two short of the maximum allowed by the By-Laws. The CSO is in good hands.
  - *A Successful Audit.* Gruver, Zweifel and Scott have completed their audit of the last fiscal year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) and have certified our compliance with sound accounting practices. In addition, we ended the year slightly in the black. These achievements are largely due to the hard, careful work of Treasurer David Diener and Finance Committee Chair Virginia Marr.
  - *Marketing.* The Board is working to increase awareness of the CSO and attendance at concerts, knowing that those who hear the orchestra once are likely to return. We are particularly keen on enhancing electronic marketing—by revamping the website and by developing an
- (continued on page 3)*

## Deborah Wolfanger

Symphony Manager, Deborah Funfgeld Wolfanger grew up in Hicksville, NY. She began her work with the Catskill Symphony Orchestra in 1990, bringing both organizational skills and administrative talent to the position.

Deborah came upstate in 1976 to attend the State University of New York at Oneonta. She earned a BA in English and an MS in Education. After completing her initial degree, she worked for ten years at SUNY Oneonta first in the Admissions Department and later in Career Development, and Residence Life.

As the CSO manager she performs a wide variety of jobs. Deb serves as secretary to the Governing Board and provides guidance and inspiration for the Administrative Council. She supervises arrangements for concerts, oversees symphony publications and mailings, makes reservations for space for rehearsals and concerts, and coordinates the plans for the cabaret. In a very practical way, she is the glue that holds the organization together.

She has always enjoyed music. Her grandmother played piano and organ, and Deb sang in church and school choirs while living on Long Island. Deborah has one sister and five brothers. Her older brother, Greg, is the Music Director and Conductor of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Pa. Bill, her husband, is director of Student Services for the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District. The Wolfangers have four children, Jon, Brenden, Matthew, and Lindsay.

Those who work with her, whether paid musicians or volunteers, are grateful for her services. Deb efficiently meets challenges and anticipates needs before they arise. Her valuable attention to details provides the foundation that keeps the Catskill Symphony Orchestra running smoothly.

Virginia Pence

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## Board News *(continued from page 1)*

email distribution list. The list will allow us, for example, to remind patrons of upcoming concerts and announce special events. It will also save money otherwise spent on postage.

- *The 2009-10 Season.* With Board approval, Maestro Schneider has mapped out the 2009-10 season with a series of four exciting concerts in Oneonta and a special, commemorative concert in Cooperstown. Highlights are award-winning pianist Andrew Russo performing the Khatchaturian Piano Concerto in the fall, and the return of Jay Ungar and Molly Mason for Cabaret 2010. The August 28, 2009 concert at the Otesaga celebrates the tenth year of Baroque chamber orchestra concerts in Cooperstown, thanks to the vision of Bunny Hamilton. For this event, we will field a larger chamber orchestra needed for performances of Handel's Water and Fireworks Music.

Subscribers will have the option of including the Cooperstown concert in their series.

- *The Economy.* I have saved the worst for last. Like nearly every profit and nonprofit organization, the CSO is experiencing the effects of the deep recession. Donations from foundations, businesses and individuals are down, and we expect the trend to continue. We will probably run a deficit for the current fiscal year, and we have eliminated the Holiday Concert for 2009. We are also looking for new sources of review. *In the meantime, it is more important than ever for subscribers to maintain and if possible increase donations so that the CSO can sustain the remarkable progress it has made during recent years.*

Thomas Beattie  
Vice Chair

## Charles W. England

It is with deep sorrow that we acknowledge the death of Catskill Symphony’s former tuba player, Charles England. Chuck was born, raised and attended schools in northwestern Illinois, and earned his first college degree in music education, majoring in tuba and minoring in voice.

He spent a three year tour of duty in “Pershing’s Own,” the United States Army Band, in Washington, DC., after which he earned a Master’s Degree in Performance and Pedagogy at Yale University.

Chuck came to Oneonta in 1974, to become a member of the Catskill Conservatory and Catskill Brass Quintet. He worked for 22 years as a Lecturer in Music and served as Director of the Hamilton College Brass Choir. He also served as an Adjunct Professor of Music at Hartwick College and was principal tubaist with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic Symphony and Glimmerglass Opera Orchestra, along with his participation in the Catskill Symphony.

He taught music at the Delaware Academy in Delhi, and elementary instrumental music at Center Street and Greater Plains schools in Oneonta. While in college, he performed with the University of Illinois Concert Band, and the Augustana College (Rock Island, Illinois) Choir. In addition to those groups mentioned above, he performed at the Aspen Music Festival, with the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band, the New Jersey Symphony, and the Chatauqua Symphony.

A friend from Rochester, NY, left the following message on *TubeNet*:

“Chuck was such a wonderful player and person. I really enjoyed the few times that we got to play together and just talk. He was so passionate about everything that he did. The tuba world has truly lost a great person, and a great player. May there be peace and support for all who are hurting from his passing.”

Chuck is survived by his wife, Janet England, his son Eli, and his daughter Valerie.

Virginia Pence



## Despite Recession Christmas Wrap 2008 Successful

Ten days before Christmas the Administrative Council of the Catskill Symphony Orchestra maintains a Christmas wrapping booth at the Oneonta Southside Mall. Due to the recession, we anticipated reduced activity and indeed the first day was the slowest ever. What surprised everyone, the last day was the busiest ever. In fact, 38% of the profit was received on December 24<sup>th</sup> making a very successful seasonal total of \$2,283. On that bustling day, one person brought four 50 gallon plastic bags, filled with gifts to be wrapped. Fortunately all the gifts within a bag went to one person and luckily names and bows were not required for each package. The donation of that grateful client was substantial.

During the past decade (1999-2008) we estimate that the Christmas Wrap Project has raised more than \$15,000 for the Orchestra. Moreover, this activity in the Mall at Christmas time announces to the community that Oneonta has a fine Symphony playing great music throughout the year. During the decade, there have been 127 gift wrapping volunteers, and 24 people have volunteered for all ten years. As a token of our gratitude, a free ticket to the “Hans Wilk Memorial Concert” on May 4<sup>th</sup>, and letters of appreciation have been sent to these faithful workers naming them to our “Honor Roll.” Success of the project is dependent on the space and services provided by the Southside Mall, to the many volunteers (73 this year), and to the patrons.

Currie Marr

## CSO Wins Second NEA Grant

You are hearing it first in *fanfare*. Yes, the CSO has won its second-ever grant from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). The 2009 award is our second “fast-track” grant for \$10,000, the first in support of our 2008 Cabaret Concert featuring harmonica master Howard Levy. This second award supports the opening concert of the 2009-10 season, with pianist Andrew Russo as guest-artist. We were one of only 14 orchestras nationwide to receive a fast-track for 2009, all of whom were awarded \$10,000.

The NEA is especially interested in funding high-quality concerts that provide access to underserved populations, defined by limitations due to geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. We qualify as underserved because wages in our area are below the national average (by about 25%) and because our rural location limits access to the wide range of cultural events available in urban areas. In essence, the NEA award subsidizes ticket prices while helping also with concert expenses, which are considerable. The Russo concert, for example, will cost \$55,220.

But we would get nowhere with the NEA without the high-quality programming we provide. Crucial to the judges are a recording of CSO performances, the reputation of the soloist, the qualifications of the conductor, and evidence that an organization can carry out the program fully and responsibly. We apparently qualify on all fronts.

The judges must have been especially impressed by the program itself. Classically trained at Juilliard and in Leipzig, Andrew Russo specializes in modern music and in 2006 was nominated for a Grammy award. He is artist-in-residence at LeMoyne College in Syracuse, where he oversees a concert series and conducts outreach programs in the schools. With the CSO, he will play Aram Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto, in a first-time CSO offering. Khachaturian is best known for two ballets, *Spartacus* and *Gayane*, and especially for “Sabre Dance,” which comes from the final act of *Gayane*. But he has also written extensively in other genres.

Also on the program are Bernstein’s rollicking Overture to “Candide” and a new work, Edward Marcus’ First Symphony (2004). Marcus is an up-and-coming composer who adroitly arranged Klezmer classics for Robin Seletsky’s dynamic solo clarinet performance at the 2007 Holiday Concert. His First Symphony was premiered by the Utica Symphony Orchestra to roars of “Bravo” and a standing ovation.

In addition, Mr. Russo will provide an enrichment program for elementary students in three public schools, where he will demonstrate the versatility of the piano, explain the nature of a concerto, and introduce students to the Armenian folk themes in the Khatchaturian Concerto. At this writing, the Stamford, Sidney and Worcester school districts are the lucky recipients.

Emboldened by the two NEA grants, we have just submitted an application for a higher level of award via NEA’s “Access to Artistic Excellence” program. Grants in this category can be higher (up to \$150,000), but the competition is keener. We are asking for \$24,000 in support of the opening concert of the 2010 (that’s right, 2010!) season. Keep your fingers crossed and stay tuned.

Thomas Beattie

### Pre-Concert Dessert Benefit

May 2 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
La Café, Morris Hall, SUCO

Come join us for sumptuous desserts and an informed talk and demonstration of the evening’s performance.

Maestro Charles Schneider gives insightful comments about the music while playing passages from the upcoming concert.

Call the Symphony Office  
(436-2670) or look for  
reservation forms at the  
April 4 concert.

## CSO Bus Trips to Saratoga Springs

The Administrative Council of the Catskill Symphony sponsors the immensely popular August bus trips to the Performing Arts Center in Saratoga Springs to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Charles Dutoit, and a featured soloist. Yo-Yo Ma played Dvorak's *Cello Concerto* in 2006, Itzhak Perlman performed *Mozart's Violin Concert No.5* in 2007, and Emanuel Ax played *Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2* in 2008. For an afternoon of fun you may choose to attend the races at the Saratoga Flat Track (entrance fee not included) or spend free time in Congress Park and visit the nearby museums (fees not included).

The trip's package, for \$105 per person, includes transportation, a gourmet buffet dinner, and tickets to an outstanding evening concert. For this event, the bus leaves the Oneonta Eastern Bus Parking lot at 8:30 a.m., picks up additional passengers in Worcester at 9:00 a.m., and returns to Oneonta about 12:00 midnight. The buffet is held in The Hall of Springs with its crystal chandeliers and grand marble columns that greet you with the opulence of the 1930's. Glen Sanders Mansion brings its history of award winning cuisine to the sumptuous food served.

After an afternoon of fun and a delectable buffet, the anticipated main event is the Philadelphia Orchestra and soloist. The Financial Times states that the Philadelphia orchestra is, "... *unquestionably one of the world's greats - its sound is incomparably thick and sweet, like luxurious syrup, with rich string tone, weighty brass and booming timpani.*" When you combine this great orchestra with a world-renowned soloist, you have a great occasion for music lovers.

This summer's SPAC schedule is not available yet, but the Catskill Symphony Orchestra anticipates sponsoring another great trip in August 2009. Look for reservation forms with event details in the programs of the Cabaret, April 4, and the Hans Wilk Memorial Concert, May 4.

Currie Marr