
The Penguin

December 2010

New England Conservatory

Issue XXVIII

Spring 2011 Promises Exciting Concerts!

by *Penguin Staff*

New England Conservatory has an exciting array of concerts lined up for the coming semester. Over the course of Spring 2011, there will be more than 200 concerts at NEC, and almost every single one is free. Here are a few of *The Penguin's* picks.

Ensembles in Residence

NEC has three resident ensembles—the Weilerstein Trio, the Boston Trio, and the Borromeo String Quartet—and all three are performing in the months ahead. On January 31, violinist Donald Weilerstein and pianist Vivian Weilerstein appear in recital at 8 in Jordan Hall. (Their daughter, cellist Alisa Weilerstein, is busy with a growing solo career.)

The Borromeo String Quartet continues its “Early Evenings” series at 6pm in Williams Hall on February 16, where they will discuss and perform Gunther Schuller’s Quartets Nos. 1 and 2. On February 23, they repeat the Schuller quartets in Jordan Hall at 8pm, where they will be joined by the winner of their NEC student competition. Later in the semester, the Boston Trio returns to Jordan Hall at 8pm on March 13.

Concert Series

NEC’s First Monday series returns to Jordan Hall on March 7, April 4, and May 2. Series director Laurence Lesser, faculty, and alumni perform in what are always some of the best chamber music concerts of the season.

The NEC Orchestras will present an incredible variety of music and join forces with Hugh Wolff, David Loebel, Paul Biss, Russell Sherman, Benjamin Zander, David Lockington, and others. Come support your classmates and colleagues, several of whom will also solo with the orchestras in the coming months.

There is an enormous number of student ensembles and productions. These include: the NEC orchestras, and the conductor-less chamber orchestra; the NEC choruses, operas, opera scenes, and vocal groups; the NEC Wind Ensemble and the Jordan Winds; the NEC Contemporary Ensemble, and Tuesday Night New Music; the NEC Jazz Orchestra, the NEC Jazz Composers Ensemble, and the Pierce Jazz Series; the Bach Ensemble, and more.

Concerts continued on page 2

Music Beyond Earth: A Reflection

by *Zach Preucil*

The holidays are a great time for reflection. Now, with the semester behind us, and four quiet weeks of rest and relaxation ahead (unless you’re going to the New York String Orchestra Seminar), we enter the time of year where we can distance ourselves from the busyness of daily life. As a new year approaches, and orange dusks turn into nights of moonlit snow, we at last have time to reflect on where we are in life—looking back to where we’ve come from, and looking ahead to where we dream to go.

Forty-two years ago on Christmas Eve, mankind witnessed the greatest reflection of all: itself. On December 21, 1968, the Apollo 8 spaceflight launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Although perhaps not as famous as the Apollo 11 moon landing, Apollo 8 was extremely significant in that it was the first spaceflight to leave the Earth’s orbit and enter the gravitational field of its neighboring celestial body. On December 24, as the module emerged from the dark side of the moon, its crew witnessed the earth rising over the lunar horizon. This event, the first ever seen by humans, was photographed extensively, and the serene image of the blue dawn was sent around the world. For the first time in human history, humanity could be represented in a single picture, and we were hit with the realization that we are in fact so small in the vast and boundless universe. The day after the picture was taken, the great modernist poet Archibald MacLeish wrote, “To see the Earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the Earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers who know now that they are truly brothers.”



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The Penguin's Definitive Holiday TV/Movie Guide 2010!

by Beth Blitzer

Every year at this time, the telly is chock full of Christmas cheer—movies, documentaries, and special episodes of your favorite shows. We at the Penguin have created our very own TV guide to make sure you don't miss out on all the great stuff airing this week!

NBC **Law & Order: NEC (Xmas Unit)** – Drama – *Wednesday, 9:00 p.m.*

When a Christmas gift shows up on the snowy steps of Jordan Hall with no identifying markings, it's up to NEC's crack investigator, Stan (self), to identify the recipient. But it appears someone in the Office of Student Services doesn't want Stan to figure it out, and that person will go to great lengths to keep Stan in the dark. Laurence Fishburne and David Caruso guest star.

'Will Tanya, armed with her magical viola, be able to save Christmas?'

NEW **AMC** **33-1/2 G**—Comedy/Action – *Friday, 1:35 p.m.*

He may be everyone's favorite mild-mannered neighborhood crooner, but Karaoke Guy (Denzel Washington) also works the night shift as everyone's favorite jolly ol' Saint Nick! When a big project comes up at work just days before Christmas, will Karaoke Guy be able to deliver presents to all while also delivering an outstanding karaoke presentation to some of his biggest clients (the Borromeo Quartet)?

★ **ABC** **A Christmas Carol Goes Pops!** – Family – *Sunday, 4:30 p.m.*

Replacing Mayor Menino in 2045, Mean old Mayor Grundle (Danny DeVito) rules Boston with an iron "humbug." On Christmas Eve, in a fit of rage, he outlaws Christmas carols in the whole city of Boston. That night, he is visited by the three ghosts of Boston Pops past (Arthur Fiedler), present (Keith Lockhart), and future (Ben Zander). Can the ghosts convince Mr. Grundle to change his ways before it's too late?

OXY **Christmas in St. Botolph** – Romance – *Saturday, 8:17 p.m.*

On a normal Friday in the computer lab, Jennifer (Sarah Jessica Parker) comes in looking to arrange Christmas carols for her string quartet. When she encounters problems with Finale, she asks for help from computer lab employee, Justin (Michael Cera). That afternoon, she leaves with the finished arrangements—and with Justin's heart! But he doesn't enjoy Christmastime, and is an adamant Sibelius user. With the clock ticking down to winter break, will he learn to love Christmas... and will she learn to love him?

ARTS **Waiting for Panera** – Art Film – *all week marathon*

The Royal Tampa Academy of Dramatic Tricks stages this cutting-edge version of the absurdist classic. We join two students, Dean (Liam Neeson) and George (Mike Myers), as they sit patiently outside Panera, waiting. As Christmas shoppers pass by, they wait. As the snow falls, they wait. As construction seems to never end, they wait.....

NEW **MSNBC** **8 Crazy Nights of Music** – Comedy – *Thursday, 7:03pm*

Directed by Adam Sandler, this made-for-TV musical follows the members of NEC's Hillel group as they go about their normal Hanukkah rituals: lighting candles, spinning the dreidel, and so on. Follow these Members of the Tribe through their madcap adventures as they strive to appropriately celebrate their week-long holiday while neither failing solfège nor missing any of the 5 concerts happening each night.

NEW **HBO** **Sopranos** – Reality – *Monday, 2:30 a.m.*

Attempting to cash in on the success of their now-concluded show of the same name, HBO presents *Sopranos*, a new reality show that follows the lives of 16 aspiring opera stars. In the Christmas episode, host Florence Foster Jenkins gives the divaettes their biggest challenge yet, provoking some truly nasty cat fights. Who will prevail, earning the chance to be a soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, and who will be resigned to the choir loft for good?

★ **NICK** **A Very Joyous Kalmanovitchmas** – Family – *Tuesday, 7:42 a.m.*

In this claymation classic, Tanya (self) is one of the most diligent elves in Santa's workshop. Secretly, she has a different dream—to play the viola and bring Christmas cheer to all—but the other elves tease her for it. So what will happen when, one Christmas Eve, the Abominable Snowman steals all the Christmas cheer?! Will Tanya, armed with her magical viola, be able to save Christmas?



Beth Blitzer is a second-year undergraduate student in theoretical macrophysics. The Penguin strives to keep the column free of factual accuracy. If you notice any truthful statements, please send an e-mail to Beth.Blitzer@gmail.com.



Album Review: KANYE WEST—MY BEAUTIFUL DARK TWISTED FANTASY

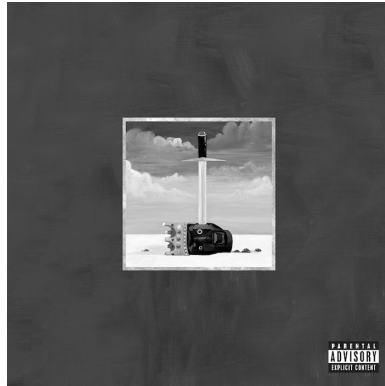
by Neal Markowski

Children, parents, aunts, uncles and more, gather 'round as your favorite NEC/Penguin Record Reviewer sits you down and waxes poetic on this new release from Kanye West.

Kanye has picked a pretty bad time to release an album here. You see, I knew that whenever it came out, I just HAD to review it for the Penguin. I mean, this is KANYE WEST—someone that the potential reader (you) knows and cares about! However, the day I was finally able to listen to it, Leslie Nielsen died, and all I really wanted to listen to was *Band on the Run* by Wings. I mean, all day I had jams such as "Bluebird" and "Let Me Roll It" stuck in my head as I hung Christmas lights and packed a suitcase to come back to Boston. But due to my love for YOU, the potential reader, I sucked it up, held off on listening to Wings, and gave this album a proper listen through. And what do I think?

Well, it's Kanye West, and because of that, I knew going into it that I probably would not like it that much. Don't get me wrong here, I've certainly tried to give his albums a fair shot. (I even found a handful of pleasurable moments in *808s and Heartbreak*.) But what was I to expect here? More of the same? Breaking new ground? *Hip, creative* sampling a-la Girl Talk (whose new album, and every album, is terrible)? Really? Well, instead of giving us a return to form to his early "I got my jaw wired shut be-do-be-be-bow" songs and album titles that relate to the college experience (yes, I'm still waiting for *Financial Aid* or *Bursar's Office*), he decided that he wanted to be taken seriously by giving us 68 minutes of the same garbage we've all heard before. Sure, he's sampling that "indie-rock thing" Bon Iver (who I've never heard) and heck, even The RZA is on this thing! But it's still typical Kanye.

Granted, some of the actual music here is fine in some cases. However, some tracks are just inexcusably terrible. "Blame Game" has a piano part that sounds like it was lifted from the soundtrack of *The Room*; "Hell of a Life" starts promising, with that distorted little riff thing, but once West comes in with that beat, it just gets crushed underneath random sound effects and some fast piano playing. "Runaway" is a



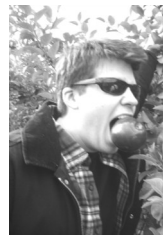
song that DOES NOT have to be 9 minutes long to get its point across. Sure, we can "have a toast for the scumbags," but can we not have a toast for whoever allowed West to tack on 3 minutes of him mumbling into a distortion pedal? And "All of the Lights?" Really? C'mon Kanye! Why are we sampling marching bands now? Congrats! I don't know if this was your goal, but you just wrote a new theme for Monday Night Football!

In a more positive light, "Devil in a New Dress" is actually quite enjoyable. It might be because it samples Smokey Robinson, but heck, decent sampling (which Girl Talk can't seem to do) could get me to like almost anything! Hey, I even liked that one M.I.A. song! And "Power" is also enjoyable, but once again, I think this is due to the samples. I mean, c'mon, King Crimson?! What's next, Yes? Maybe sampling some ELP? Because the kids love it when you reference *Tarkus*...

As for Kanye's voice, it is what it is: occasionally processed, but not as much autotune as the last one, which is always good. I guess what it comes down to is that, if you're a Kanye fan, you'll like this album, much the way Springsteen and McCartney fans will like their latest offerings. However, to say that this is an album worth a 10.0 from Pitchfork and 5 stars from Rolling Stone is just a bit too generous for my liking.

OVERALL RATING: Half of a piñata head.

KEY TRACKS: "Power," "Devil in a New Dress"



Neal Markowski is a sophomore composition major. Send comments and questions about this article to Neal.Markowski@necmusic.edu. Visit his blog at <http://recordreviewandtacosalon.blogspot.com>.

Concerts continued from page 1

There are more than a hundred smaller groups playing string, piano, wind, and brass chamber music. Look for honors ensembles' recitals in Jordan Hall, chamber music galas, and other events showcasing dozens of student collaborations at the highest level.

Special Treats - Here are a few special performances this Spring:
January 25, 8 PM. Keller Room

Esteemed musicologist Lewis Lockwood will give a lecture on the Beethoven violin sonatas in the Keller Room, in collaboration the studio of Miriam Fried. Members of the studio will perform all ten Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano in **Williams Hall at 8 PM, on February 1, 2, and 3.**

February 4 and 11, 8 PM. Jordan Hall

NEC celebrates the bicentennial anniversary of Liszt's birth with two concerts in Jordan Hall, involving every piano major, under the direction of Bruce Brubaker.

April 19, 8 PM. Jordan Hall:

The NEC Wind Ensemble and Jordan Winds join forces. Directors Charles Peltz and William Drury share the podium for this joint event, whose program includes Debussy's *Homage à Rameau* and Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1947 version).

March 28, 7:30 PM. Jordan Hall

President Emeritus Laurence Lesser plays all six Bach cello suites.

Pierce Jazz Series: More than a dozen performances are coming up. For information on this series, or any performance, learn more online at necmusic.edu/concerts-events.

There are dozens of events that deserve a place in this column; regrettably there isn't room to mention them all. These performances—student and faculty recitals, masterclasses, guest performances in Jordan Hall, and more—are detailed on the NEC website. Don't forget to check out the great music Boston also offers beyond our grounds! Here's to an exciting and fulfilling semester!

The classical music world is not all that different than the luminous blue ball the Apollo 8 astronauts witnessed that fateful Christmas Eve. The world at that time was an utter mess; war, racism, and fear lurked beneath the opaline atmosphere that reflected into space. And so it is with the classical music world today. We hear rumors that we are a dying breed. As the interest of the general public has shifted to the music of popular culture, our field becomes increasingly more competitive, and the ugly head of politics rears beneath the translucent atmosphere encapsulating us. Yet amazingly, we are custodians of an art that represents what is so beautiful about the world, and that fact alone surpasses those things that plague it. We are a group of people of different tongues, backgrounds, and beliefs; yet, we are all ultimately working towards the same unique goal: to bring music to life. However, the process of doing this is so complicated that the majority of the time it eclipses its purpose. At a high-level conservatory like NEC, we are so focused on individual practice and improvement, class work, getting performance opportunities, and standing out amongst competition that we scarcely have a moment to remember our common aim. But music is something much more powerful than all of that—something that is one of the most wonderful and mysterious things known to this world.

Yet, incredibly enough, music stretches *beyond* this world. A well-known example of this is the so-called “golden ratio,” 1.618, which is calculated through the Fibonacci mathematical sequence. This ratio appears in the orbital periods of every planet in the solar system, ratios of different parts of the human body, the entire human genome—and amazingly, the harmonic sequences in a scale. How incredible is it that the musical pitches we produce daily are governed by the same mathematical principal found in the orbits of the planets and human DNA!

However, this very essence of music is not the only form in which it is represented beyond our planet. Nearly a decade after Apollo 8, in 1977, NASA launched the Voyager Spacecraft probes which took the very first photographs and videos of the planets in our solar system. On each probe, there was placed a golden record, which contained sounds and images intended to represent earth, including pieces by Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart. The idea behind the records was that they would reveal our world to extraterrestrial beings, should any life exist in the unfathomable abyss of the stars. Handwritten across both records were the words, “*To the makers of music – all worlds, all times.*”

Nobody knows if there is other life in the universe. Unfortunately, this is an area that is rather mocked in popular cul-

‘How mind-boggling is it to think that, were the golden records to be found someday, the same sounds of Mozart heard in Jordan Hall could be heard on a distant star?’

ture. The word “alien” bears connotations of “little green men,” Roswell, and science fiction. But rarely do people ever stop to consider that if there is indeed other life, somewhere in the trillions of galaxies that we are only just beginning to discover, do they have music? How mind-boggling it is to think that, were the golden records to be found someday, the same sounds of Mozart heard in Jordan Hall could be heard on a distant star?

The Voyager probes are still tracked, having now exited our solar system, and will not reach the nearest star for 40,000 years. Yet, I have experienced music beyond earth without ever having to leave Boston. I have attended many moving concerts in my two and a half years at NEC, but the one that touched me the most was the memorial concert for Marylou Speaker Churchill on April 4th, 2010. I never had the honor of meeting Mrs. Churchill, but as I listened to the fantastic talents of her students, and the kind words of reflection spoken by those who knew her (including Yo-Yo Ma), I felt as if I had come to know her spirit through the musical and personal influence reflected in those she touched. At the very end of the program, the lights were dimmed in Jordan Hall, and a recording was played of Mrs. Churchill performing the last movement of “Quartet for the End of Time”—a long, emotionally intense violin solo. The music enraptured its listeners as we all sat spellbound in the darkness, while a melodic voice from a different time united us as one. Marylou Churchill was no longer on this earth. But her music continued to touch the audience in a way that perhaps no live performance ever could.

The power of music is perhaps a power that knows no equal. It is one that transcends time, space, and life, and one that peoples of all nations, and maybe even worlds, can experience in the same way. Therefore, as musicians, we bear the responsibility of bringing this awesome power into the world. So, this holiday season, let’s put aside our differences, and not worry about who’s better than whom, or who won what, or who’s going where. Instead, let us reflect on the glorious gift of music that we all possess, and how we can work together to use that gift for good, riding together on that bright blue ball in the darkness.



Zachary Preucil is a junior cello performance major. Send comments and questions about this article to Zachary.Preucil@necmusic.edu.

Entrepreneurial Musicianship

NEC NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

Calling NEC Entrepreneurs! Do you have an idea for a great new project or venture? Do you need seed money to get it off the ground? Apply for an Entrepreneurial Student Grant. All NEC students are eligible! The spring application deadline is Monday, January 31, 2011. For more information, visit www.necmusic.edu/entrepreneurship, contact Eva Heinstein (617-585-1112, eva.heinstein@necmusic.edu), or stop by SB106.

Urban Magick (continued from November Issue)

A short story by Wesley Chu

The fat man roars and the thin man is knocked off his feet, sent sprawling onto the unforgivingly hard road from a sudden explosion of scorching air. The ventilation machine gurgles and rumbles, its cavernous, serpent-like mouth guided by the whirling arms of the fat man, and blasts another, fiercer burst of searing hot air at his opponent. The thin man rolls out of the way as the wave strikes the asphalt, instantly transforming it into hot tar; the fat man hollers and prepares for another blow. The thin man scrambles to his feet, brandishing his umbrella, and with a click it springs open. The blast of air collides with the yawning shell and snorts, pawing at the ground with mist-like hooves, and taking on the shape of an enraged bull. It bellows, its maw like an open furnace, and with horns of steam it tosses the umbrella away, which collapses impotently as it is torn from its master's grip. However, the thin man gestures in anticipation, and a manhole beneath the transparent monster flings open. A geyser erupts from the gap, shattering and trapping the fumes of the artificial creature while the thin man flails his arms like a mad conductor; the hedgerows behind the fat man creep to life and skulk quietly around him. In an instant, they bind his arms like snakes around prey. When the sewer fountain ceases, the thin man laughs and strides forward, but the fat man gestures angrily with his unrestrained head, and a nearby streetlamp screams a bolt of blazing light at his adversary. Again the thin man is forced to evade the attack; meanwhile, the streetlamp turns its burning gaze toward the animated hedgerows that shrink away in pain.

Now the other streetlights were rousing from their slumber and glare maliciously at the thin man. Leaping like an acrobat, he pounces through the interlocking death-beams to retrieve his umbrella before the fat man can stop him. He dives, rolls, and snatches the object. Deftly he strikes at the dirt where an urban tree grows, and the tree shakes its leaves off. In a storm of brilliant green, orange, and red, the autumnal army intercepts the killing rays of light; some whip off to cover the lights at their sources, while others chase the already escaping fat man.

The concrete beneath the thin man's swift pursuit moans and cracks, and the street under his feet stretches like ancient bones coming to life again. No matter how fast he runs, the fat man's stride outstrips his own while the ground rolls around in a paradoxical cycle, trapping him, preventing him from moving forward. Still, the leaves fly forward, but are then crushed against the glass of the nearby supermarket; like wings, the windows yawn open to defend the fat man's getaway. The strain of running as well as maintaining the magic takes their toll; beady drops of exertion rolls from his brow, and he clenches a sweat-stained hand on his precious hat as he forces the last of his power into the ground. Far behind him, the thin man watches helplessly as the concrete around his feet shrivels into a whirling vortex, drawing him into the endless sewers below. The briefest hope of escape necessitated returning to a form of mist, which would be possible only if he could find some element to work with. In a desperate bid for freedom he allowed the raging bull of steam that had assailed him to reform itself, and bid it approach him again...

The fat man spirits himself far away before allowing himself a reprieve from running, convinced he had won. His hat, to his relief, is still clutched firmly in his hand—but what is that in the other hand? The wrinkled strains of the fake beard he tore from his opponent's face. He snorts and casts it away, and did not notice how, upon striking the soft dirt of a nearby garden, it bursts into a cloud of shining vapor out from which the thin man steps. Before the fat man can react, the nearby marketplace explodes in a frenzy of flying produce. He is unable to defend himself as he is pelted with a hail of raining fruits and vegetables, and finally succumbs to unconsciousness as a flying watermelon 'gently' meets his head.

The thin man kneels and, with the hook of his umbrella, retrieves the hat from the fat man's relaxing grip. Under his stern stare the illusion dissolves away until he stares at his true prize: a large bathroom mirror in which a reflection-demon screams silently at him. He casts the mirror into the folds of his umbrella where it disappears, and conjures a humiliatingly fluffy pillow under the head of the now snoring fat man. Victorious, he vanishes again in a gust of leaves and moonlight.



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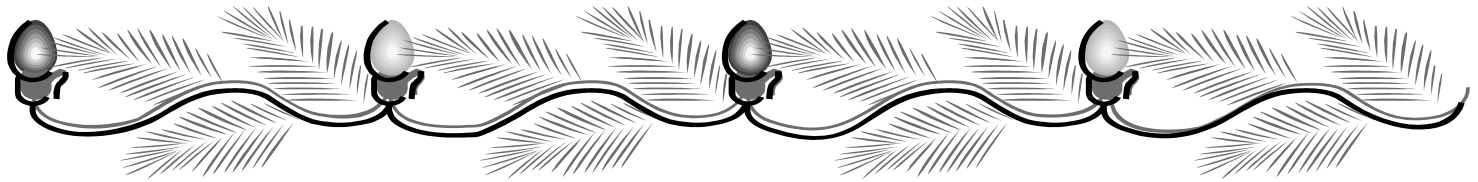
Middle

A poem by Julia Partyka

Something about the sunlight, tells me it's going to be alright.
Walking down the street greeting every face with a smile.
The rush of the city makes it seem like we all merge into one painting,
seamlessly becoming a motion picture.
Pictures are worth a thousand words, but in truth, you can't put a number on thought.
Knowledge is infinite, just as when the sunlight hits the newly, reawakened mother we call earth.
She breathes with the motion of the trees and the dance of her people. There is no beginning or end, just an ever
lasting middle, the belly.
Every movement is connected. Dance is natural, GROOVE.
The sun tells me everything will be alright, I smile and continue my jive.



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Want to see your name here?



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Drop us a line at
thepenguin@necmusic.edu!***



***The Penguin Staff wishes
you all a
happy and restful holiday
break!***