
The new mini Penguin

November 2009

New England Conservatory

Issue XVII

Beneath the Scaffolding

by Elizabeth Erenberg

About two years ago, President Tony Woodcock held a routine meeting with the New England Conservatory Board of Trustees. But at the start of this particular meeting, he did something unusual. He handed each trustee a hand-sized piece of jagged concrete. When asked why they were being given these crumbly rocks, President Woodcock replied, “You are holding pieces of Jordan Hall.”

Not long after presenting evidence that Jordan Hall was literally falling apart, the Board agreed that construction needed to be done. Major construction. About 20 million dollars worth, to be exact.

In order to acquire these funds, NEC went through the multi-step process of applying for a bond. In August of 2008, NEC was given the bond, and the ability to go forth with the project. To make it even more celebratory, ten days later, the market collapsed.

With the stroke of luck and the money needed, NEC began what is being called the “four minute mile” of renovating one of the most significant and historical concert halls in Boston, and doing additional restoration on the entire school. All this, mind you, was to be done in a six-month period, much of which was when the school would be fully occupied. President Obama’s stimulus package also gave \$25,000 to NEC for the project, and an additional \$10,000 was given in incentives from the national grid.

On May 17th, 2009 NEC’s commencement ceremonies were held. Starting the next day, and continuing through mid November of this year, there were 120-150 construction workers on site every day.

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The Driving Force Behind the BSO

A Conversation with the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Chauffeur, Vincenzo “Peppino” Natale

by Robert Cinnante

Perhaps my title is slightly misleading. There’s a disconnect between the dramatic headline and its subtitle. It’s a playful pun meant to grab your attention, and I guess it worked! But it’s also a valid characterization of one man’s nearly three decades of service to one of the world’s greatest orchestra’s.

I first met Vincenzo Natale, affectionately called Peppino, back in the summer of 2005 at Tanglewood. Our conversation vacillated between English and my inconsistent Italian. I came to Boston in 2007 and could not tell you how many times I must have walked by the Symphony Hall stage door, but it wasn’t until this past summer that Peppino and I became reacquainted, again at the BSO’s summer venue. In the hectic aftermath of a splendid concert evening we chatted in the crowded corridors of the Koussevitzky Music Shed. Out of our intriguing conversation I gave birth to the idea of an interview at a later date.

The later date came one evening in October. The warm summer had turned into a brisk autumn, and the BSO was back home at Symphony Hall. There was no concert that evening, which for Peppino meant a night off...sort of. After greeting me at the stage door, we made our way upstairs to his modest office. The walls display countless photos with renowned conductors and artists, amongst them one with Maestro James Levine, as well as colorful paintings of Peppino’s homeland. If you haven’t guessed it already, Peppino hails from the glorious nation of Italy, specifically Naples, or Napoli, as he insisted on correcting my Anglican translation.

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Graduate Opera Scenes, October 2009

Così fan Tutte by W.A. Mozart



Jesse Weiner

BISTRO 33

Helping to Reduce Carbon Footprint NEC's

Composting
is Back
Beginning
Nov. 2
* * * *

Free Soda!
Nov. 3rd – 6th

Purchase any
Lunch Entrée
and get a **free**
Fountain Beverage

*limit one per customer

Some Facts To Get You Thinking Sustainably:

- In 2006, it was estimated that paper cups made up 252 million pounds of garbage in landfills.
- In 2010, Americans are predicted to throw away 23 billion coffee cups creating 182 thousand tons of waste.
- The amount of used paper cups in 2006 accounted for 6.5 million trees being cut down.
- Every ton of paper recycled saves 17 trees!
- Recycle, recycle, and recycle! It takes around 450 years for a plastic bottle to degrade.
- Americans will buy an estimated 25 billion single-serving, plastic water bottles this year. 22 billion will end up in a landfill.
- By supporting the sustainability of our local community we are promoting food production methods that are healthy, do not harm the environment, are humane to animals, provide fair wages to farmers, and support farmers.

Bows and Arrows and Ives

by Miriam Piilonen

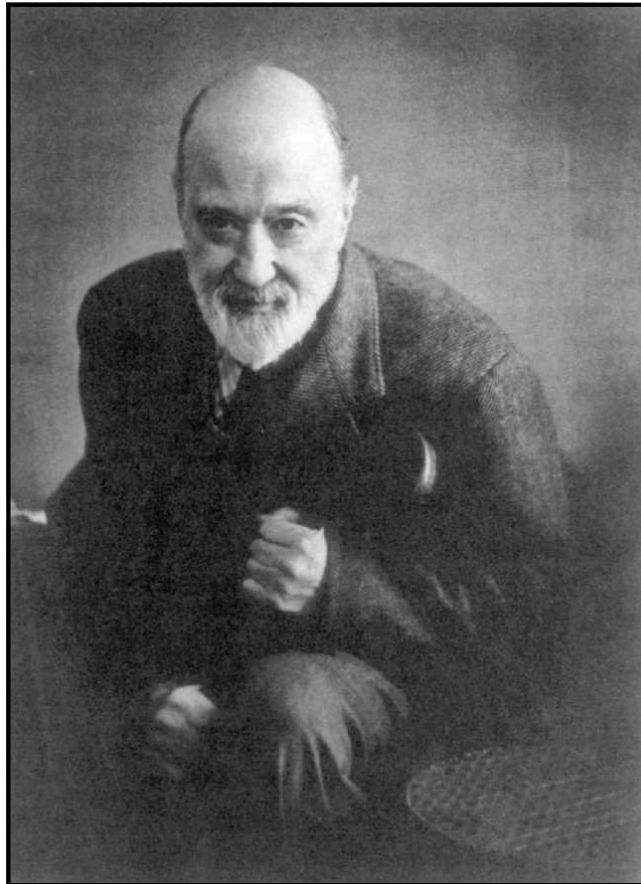
Picture a little girl with a blue satin ribbon tied in her hair, a bow atop her head like a crown representing beauty, youth, innocence, and simplicity. Imagine the background score that would accompany this image; the sound of beauty, timbre of youth, harmony of innocence, and rhythm of simplicity. Explaining something with music is nothing like explaining with words and though the two are part of the same intellectual instrument, the brain, they will never truly overlap.

The colossal disconnect between words and music contains three “bows”, two “arrows”, and one artist attempting to explain himself and his universe. The blue satin bow represents words - a language created by humans to connect with others and describe themselves and their surroundings.

The problem with the first bow is the stubborn quality of words whose consistent definitions exclude the fluidity of what they are attempting to describe:

the word “beauty” will never completely encircle its concept or satisfy the huge number of meanings contained within it. The second bow is the tool tangled in the strings of a violin, able to illustrate beauty in a way words fail and allowing the key notion that is missing from words: the opportunity for the listener to stamp their own definition upon the description. The last bow is a bend at the waist that rhymes with “now” and stands for idolatry, religion, and a unique human awareness and fear of death.

The three bows produce two arrows. The first is a weapon to express intense human emotion - rage, sadness, jealousy, lust, empathy, love, and everything else your brain can cook up. The other is an arrow always pointing forward symbolizing progress, desire, ambition, and a constant pursuit of immortality. While experiencing this mental maelstrom, it is natural to seek a way to understand it in any way possible, such as with words, music, or both.



The question is, can the two be successfully combined? I used to believe they could not and that setting any text to music, especially a text not written by the composer, destroyed the integrity of both. A musical interpretation of words may be too abstract, emphasize the wrong words, interrupt the linguistic flow intended by the poet, or misunderstand the text's theme entirely. Inflicting words on music steals its interpretive flexibility, reinstates the simplistic “human” element, and in harsher terms, dumbs it down.

My opinion changed after being properly introduced to Charles Ives and his vocal songs. His brilliant combination of literal and figurative musical interpretations of words restore the adaptability of which I previously spoke. A rhythmic representation of a stumbling walk leans directly on a harmonic abstraction, such as the play between F# and Gb minor keys in “Scenes From My Childhood.” In “The Children's Hour” I imagine a suspension of time that is so perfectly executed, I would almost call it “verbatim.”

In Ives' piece “Memories,” he writes two equally literal sections, the first a buoyant, energetic jaunt that shouts “going to the opera house!” and shocks you to attention, followed by a heart-wrenching slow elegy. The first time I heard this piece, I laughed and cried within seconds of each other, I shocked myself. It was this that made me realize why Ives is such a remarkable composer of words and music: he preserves the concreteness of words that humans rely on while opening them to the indeterminate quality of music. This gives the complete portrait a composer and audience craves, the “definite” complimented by the listeners' personal interpretation projected onto the piece.

Miriam Piilonen is a senior composition major. Send comments and questions about this article to Miriam.Piilonen@necmusic.edu



**WISHING YOU a
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**



CD Review: Bob Dylan's - Christmas in the Heart

by Neal Markowski

What do Bruce Springsteen, Paul McCartney, Tom Petty, U2, and the Smashing Pumpkins all have in common? They all have released songs on various artists Christmas albums such

as "Now That's What I Call Christmas!" or the wonderful "A Very Special Christmas" series. A lot of these songs might have also been released in stand-alone single editions (for anyone that wants to remember the days where you could buy the new McCartney 7" for less than \$2), but no one in their right mind ever released a FULL ALBUM of Christmas songs. I mean, could you imagine U2 attempting to squash through "Up on the Housetop" in their late 80s/uber-American phase? No! What if the Smashing Pumpkins put together a "rockin' medley of "Jingle Bells" and "Silent Night," while simultaneously ripping off Led Zeppelin and the Jesus and Mary Chain? That just wouldn't work. At least not for a full album.

Bob Dylan has released an entire album of Christmas classics and a few originals the week before Halloween.

I can't exactly figure out what was going through Mr. Zimmerman's head while doing production on this album, but whatever it was, Dylan needs to stop doing it. Throughout the whole recording, he sounds like Tom Waits with a garbage disposal for vocal chords. While you might find this interesting, I can guarantee you that it isn't. Honestly, it's really hard to hear Dylan singing like this. While his currently shot voice sounded fine even on the last album ("Together Through Life"), here, it's painful to listen to. Listening to Dylan trying to rip through these standards, one might think that these winter pastime sing-a-longs would have extremely difficult melodies and that he suffered a vocal blowout before each track.

The album also suffers from major problems within the band. For the first time since "Knocked Out Loaded" (folks might know this as the one with the infamous "Maybe Someday," featuring gospel singers, out-of-time drums, and a bassist who liked playing indiscriminate offbeat accents during ran-

dom intervals), Dylan sounds horribly out of sync with his band on most of these tracks. Another tip of the hat towards the awful "Knocked Out Loaded" comes in the form of "Christmas Island", a Christmas song with a Hawaiian flair that just doesn't sound very good.

But I think the biggest problem is the fact that all of these arrangements sound pretty much like any other Christmas album featuring Cookie Monster on lead vocals. I mean, I would assume Dylan is a clever guy, he put out that album "Shot of Love"! He has to have a sense of humor! Instead, all we get is a bunch of generic sounding backing tracks with Dylan attempting to sing Christmas carols over them.

Maybe this would be nicer to take in various sittings, much as radio stations play Christmas music by different artists beginning the day

after Thanksgiving. But it fails as an album, making releases like the Chipmunks Christmas album, Jingle Cats, any Bing Crosby compilation, and the two songs off the "Peel Sessions Box Set" by The Fall appear to be holiday masterpieces.

OVERALL RATING – Certainly wouldn't bring this to my next holiday party, but I might enjoy hearing one song every couple of weeks.

KEY TRACKS –

Do You Hear What I Hear?
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Must Be Santa



Neal Markowski is a freshman composition major. Send comments and questions about this article to neal.markowski@necmusic.edu To read more reviews by Neal or to make requests for more reviews visit recordreviewandtacosalon.blogspot.com



Eating

by Julia Partyka

Eat to your stomach's desire.

Autumn is a season for reasons. Reasons for eating that is. The chill in the air and the changing leaf colors makes everyone even more hungry than usual I suppose. It's all those red and yellow pigments. When fall comes around, the candy corns starts popping up (just take a look at the candy cafeteria box), the pumpkin pie smell is wafting in the air, and cranberry sauce is everywhere. I am sure that the entire NEC population gets delicious cravings for some of these delicacies but does not always have a quick way to access them. Well here are a few very easy and quick recipes for your taste buds. ENJOY!

Pumpkin Pie Dip

Ingredients

- 1 package of cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ½ cup of sour cream
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon of ground ginger

Directions

Take a large bowl and beat the sugar and cream cheese until smooth. Then add the sour cream, cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice and ginger until completely blended. Then serve with cookie of your choosing (I recommend ginger snaps!)

Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients

- 2¼ pounds sweet potatoes (about 3 large), peeled and cubed
- 3 egg whites, beaten
- 3 Tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- *Topping:
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅓ cup dried apricots, chopped
- ⅓ cup dried cherries, chopped

Directions

Place sweet potatoes in a Dutch oven and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15 20 minutes or until tender. Drain and place in a large bowl; mash. Cool slightly. Stir in the egg whites, syrup and vanilla.

Transfer to an 8 inch square baking dish coated with cooking spray. Combine the pecans, brown sugar, butter and cinnamon; sprinkle over the top.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with apricots and cherries. Bake 5 7 minutes longer or until a thermometer reads 160° and the fruits are heated through.

Vegan Autumn Stew

Ingredients

- 1½ cups water or vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound (about 4 cups) kabocha squash or any winter squash
- 1 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes
- 1½ teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen corn

Directions

Heat ½ cup water and soy sauce in a large pot, then add the onion, bell pepper, and garlic and cook over medium heat until the onion is translucent and most of the water evaporates. Cut the squash in half and remove its seeds, then peel and cut it into ½ inch cubes. Add squash cubes to the onion mixture, along with the chopped tomatoes, remaining 1 cup water, oregano, chili powder, cumin, and pepper. Cover and simmer until the squash is just tender when pierced with a fork, or about 20 minutes, then add the kidney beans with their liquid and the corn. Cook 5 minutes longer.

Apple Caramel Bake

Ingredients

- ¾ cup flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1½ cups apples, peeled and chopped
- ½ cups slivered almonds
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup margarine
- ¾ cup boiling water
- ½ cup soy milk

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease an 8"x 8" glass baking dish. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, apples, and almonds. Set aside. In a small saucepan over low heat, combine the brown sugar, margarine, and boiling water. Stir until the butter is melted. Add the soy milk to the flour mixture. Stir well then spread into the prepared baking dish. Pour the sugar topping over the batter and bake for 40 minutes.

ENJOY EATING!!



Julia Partyka is a freshman voice performance major. Send comments and questions about this article to Julia.Partyka@necmusic.edu More recipes like this can be found on tasteofhome.com and chooseveg.com.

BSO *Continued from page 1*

RC: Tell me about your immigration, your experiences coming to America, and how you found your way to the BSO?

PN: I was so happy to come to America because to me America was really the land of opportunity. Then I found a job at Symphony Hall, which I love, because I always liked opera and classical music. I've been working twenty-eight years, driving all these famous conductors and artists. They're all wonderful; they're all different nationalities, different languages, from Maestro Levine to Maestro John Williams, Maestro Keith Lockhart, Maestro John Oliver, and Maestro Ozawa. They're just nice people!

RC: Do you travel with the BSO when they go on tour?

PN: I don't travel with the BSO. I go to Tanglewood during the summer, I go to New York, but I usually don't travel with the BSO because I have a family. But this job is so wonderful because you get to travel all over the world even though you are in Boston because you get some people from Russia, some from France, some from Ireland, so you get a taste of the culture.

RC: What is your official title with the BSO?

PN: Chauffeur and Valet. Basically I'm the music director's chauffeur and butler. Also, all the other conductor, artists, and soloists. It's a really nice job.

RC: Do you ever develop a rapport with any of these people?

PN: Oh yeah, many conductors they come back and say hello again. Like this week I just picked up [Rafael] Frühbeck de Burgos, and he's so happy to see me, it's a familiar face. We talk about soccer, he's a fan of Real Madrid, I'm a fan of AC Milan. All these artists that come to Symphony Hall, they are all wonderful. But I still keep my post. I do a good job because I still know how to keep my distance. Even if they are my friend I still treat them like they are the maestro.

RC: Along the same lines, maybe you can talk a little about your work ethic.

PN: I never miss days. I go along with whatever schedule the conductor or soloist has. If they are busy, I am busy. It is very unusual hours, but I love it.

RC: I'm sure you have a lot of stories you could share from throughout your career. What are some memorable moments, either comical or disastrous, maybe just one that sticks out?

PN: I don't know which story, just sometimes a lot of people look for autographs, so we have to organize a different way to go because it's not that they don't want to give them, there are just too many people. There's no really funny story, it's just the job that's really funny.

RC: I can see you love your job and that you're very devoted. But if you could do any other job, even for just one day, what would it be?

PN: I can't think about any other better place to be. If I wasn't here I can't think of what I would do.

RC: In past conversations we've talked about music. How has working for one of the world's greatest orchestra's enriched your own love of music?

PN: Working for the Boston Symphony has made my knowledge of music richer. When Boston Symphony plays it is like singers, it is like a voice. It's so wonderful, and I've been here 28 years so I'm very proud. It's really a good place to be.



Robert Cinnante is a junior voice performance major

Send comments and questions about this article to Robert.Cinnante@necmusic.edu

Scaffolding Continued from page 1

Ever wonder how many windows there are here? About 500, which makes up approximately 20% of the school's façade. Each of them was replaced for better insulation and increased sound-proofing. The roof of Jordan Hall was replaced into what is called a "white roof" or "cool roof," including 3.5 inches of insulation and is completely leak free and energy efficient.

Michael Ryan, the Director of Operations and Facilities, has worked closely with President Woodcock throughout the entire project. He is, according to the President, the "absolute star" of the job. "This is such a historic project for NEC," Ryan said. The president and the Board of Trustees "made it a priority to preserve what we have here for faculty and students."

Brian Wolfe, the Assistant Project Manager, has worked closely under Michael Ryan. Of the many challenges that come with overseeing all the workers on the site every day, he said that the biggest challenge was having the buildings be fully occupied, and "trying not to interfere with, or hinder in any way the learning process."

Jordan Hall is considered a National Historic Landmark, a status which brings a whole other set of challenges and standards to



meet. "Working over Jordan Hall gives you a certain perspective on what you're doing," Wolfe said. "You obviously don't want to leave a hole in the roof. You have to be extra careful."

In addition to replacing the roof on Jordan Hall, the façade was restored significantly. There were stone repairs, restoration and replacement of terra cotta, cornice (decorative clay structures), and marble replacement. As you walk into the lobby of Jordan Hall, you should take notice of the marble. It was shipped here from Italy.

On the Residence Hall, there were select masonry and stucco repairs and in fall of 2008 the roof was replaced. On the roof of St. Botolph, there will be solar panels installed. Botolph also received masonry restoration, painting of the existing cornice, replacing of the balconies, small roofs, and other detail-oriented work.

All the work done is "green" and will reduce energy and heat costs.

Over the summer, when there were construction workers on scaffolding around the dormitory, it could often become awkward if there were the occasional set of blinds left open.

There was a Code of Conduct for the construction workers when on site to avoid any kind of inappropriate behavior such as cursing, smoking, and dress code violations. "Construction individuals are known not to have the best vocabulary," Ryan said.

What made this project successful, Ryan said, were the architects of Wessling Associates and Tishman Construction. The construction team is the best he has worked with in his career. There are many things about this project that go underappreciated by students and faculty who, despite the occasional drilling, go about life as normal.

The challenge of maintaining normal life for students, faculty, and staff all throughout the construction was notable. "I lost sleep over it at night," Ryan said. "It hasn't been easy. A lot of dust, a lot of noise. The patience shown by the NEC community has been tremendous." At one point, there was drilling above President Woodcock's office for about two weeks. "It was like being in some sort of First World War movie," he said. "It was just incredible."

As the project nears a close, it is about \$2 million under budget and ahead of schedule – two things that are extremely rare for a project of this size. Additionally, no one has been injured in any way, a tremendous feat for four buildings and so many workers. "To this day we have not even a hangnail," President Woodcock said, knocking on wood.

As the work comes to a close, Tishman Construction and NEC have become like family, according to the President, demonstrated by Tishman being a sponsor for NEC's 40th Anniversary of Jazz. Once the finished product is unveiled, there will be a very noticeable difference from the crumbling building it began with two years ago.

"You don't see a lot when you're inside those rooms practicing," Ryan said. But once the scaffolding comes down, it will be "pretty exciting."



Elizabeth Erenberg is a first year graduate flute performance major.
Send comments and questions about this article to Elizabeth.Erenberg@necmusic.edu

Letter From the Editor

Hi everyone!

It's amazing how fast the semester seems to have gone by! Three issues in and we are still running with so many people still standing by The Penguin, a support I hope will last for many years to come.

As you may have noticed, we have a new format for our newspaper. In order to continue its existence, The Penguin will now be printed in this new "mini" format. It is both a more cost-effective route and more manageable decision considering it will now be printed at NEC's very own copy center. Naturally, there will be changes given the new size constraints and layout, but in the long run we hope they will be for the best.

We at The Penguin would like to hear what you have to say about this new "mini" version of our paper. Please send us your reply at: thepenguin@necmusic.edu.

As always, I continue to encourage faculty, staff and students to contribute to this paper. The Penguin relies on your input, and we are so grateful for those of you who have continued to support it.

Thanks so much, and I hope all of you have a relaxing, much-deserved Thanksgiving break.

Best,

*Anne
Editor of The Penguin*



Please send questions and comments to anne.gregory@necmusic.edu

Tears and Rain

by Xi Zhang

Clouds floating in fog

Fog flowing in clouds

Tears shedding in rain

Rain falling with tears

云中有雾

雾中有云

雨中有泪

泪中有雨



Happening in November:

Morning **Coffee** Mondays @ 8:30am theSAC
 Thursday Nights Free **Yoga** @ 6:30 SBG14
 Last Thursdays **Movie Night** @ 7:30 Lounge
 moved to Nov. 19

Graduate Student & 21+ **Wine Tasting** Nov. 13 6-8pm

Looking ahead:

We're planning a major **food celebration** for December --- we'll be sharing all types of home cooking with one another. Do you miss your mom's cooking? Do you miss your country? Do like to cook? We need you! Get those recipes out!



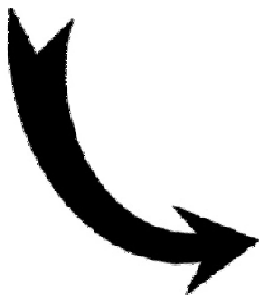
Stop by or e-mail thesac@necmusic.edu to learn more.

NEC CAREER SERVICES CENTER

Teaching Music in Higher Ed
 Tuesday Nov. 3 @ 6-7:30 pm
 Keller Room

Writing Admissions & Scholarship Essays
 Thursday Nov. 12 @ 6-7:30 pm
 St. Botolph Room 315

Want to see your name here?



**Write for
 The Penguin!**

Send us a line at
thepenguin@necmusic.edu.

Meetings are every Thursday at 7:30 pm in NEC's Bistro 33.

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