

The Penguin

September 2011

New England Conservatory

Issue XXXV

Welcome Back from NEC President Tony Woodcock

Dear NEC students,

It's great to have you all back at NEC. The summer months are really so very different without students but now with the clamor of voices and music, NEC is getting its soul back. So I wanted to bring you up to speed with various developments here in recent months, as it's been a busy time.

Student Achievements

Over the summer, our musicians have been honored all over the world for their artistry.

Narek Hakhnazaryan, who completed NEC's prestigious Artist Diploma program in May as a student of **Laurence Lesser**, received the Gold Medal in cello at the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Violinists **JeHye Lee '08 M.M.**, '10 G.D. a student of

Miriam Fried, and **Nigel Armstrong '07 Prep**, who studied with **Donald Weilerstein**, took third and fourth prizes in their instrument. Instead of awarding a first prize in violin, the jury divided second prize among two contestants. In addition to the €20,000 Gold Medal award, Hakhnazaryan also received the Audience Prize. At the conclusion of the second round of competition, he was honored by the jury for "Best chamber concerto performance" as well.

Joshua Weilerstein, who graduated in May from the first class in our newly reorganized orchestral conducting program under Hugh Wolff, was selected to be one of two assistant conductors at the New York Philharmonic. He takes up his position this fall and will be working closely with Music Director Alan Gilbert and various guest conductors. And 15-year old Prep pianist **George Li** (student of Wha Kyung Byun), not only played at the White House for President Barack Obama and German Prime Minister Angela Merkel, but was also one of two young pianists honored with a 2012 Gilmore Young Artist Award.

NEC's Mahler Season

This fall, NEC will be joining in the worldwide commemoration of Gustav Mahler, who died 100 years ago and left behind a musical legacy that is still influencing our artistic lives. With the cultural diversity that makes NEC unique, our Mahler season will be something



extraordinary. Not only will we be performing Mahler symphonies, vocal music and chamber music, but we will be examining it from many different lenses. Consider the *Adagietto* of the Mahler *Fifth Symphony*—performed with improvisational tropes by Jason Moran, one of our several MacArthur “Genius” Grant winners. Or think of Mahler themes used as the foundation for jazz explorations and elaborations. Then there's the world of Mahler's arrangements of other composers' music, and the music of his contemporaries as influenced by him. Of particular interest will be our recreation of the first version of the *First Symphony*, premiered in Budapest in 1889. We'll be using a score and instrumental parts prepared by Kristo Kondacki '13 from a microfilm of the manuscript. Kristo has been laboring on this project all summer and he reports that listeners will be fascinated by music that is very different from what we are accustomed to hearing. The work was not even titled *Symphony No. 1* but *Symphonic Poem in Two Parts*.

Other Musical Highlights

Stephen Lord, Artistic Director of Opera Studies, will conduct his first main stage production with us in April. Jazz pianist Jason Moran will bring *In My Mind*, his multi-media recreation of Thelonious Monk's legendary 1959 Town Hall performance to Jordan Hall. The NEC Piano Department, chaired by Bruce Brubaker, will celebrate the 100th birthday of composer John Cage, with performances of his piano music—including the notorious 4'33" of ambient sound (or silence, if you will). Brubaker will also join forces with guest pianist Ursula Oppens to perform the complete piano music of Meredith Monk. And our intrepid Contemporary Improvisation department, along with *noir* pianist Ran Blake and trombonist Aaron Hartley, will evoke the suspenseful atmosphere of two cinematic thrillers, Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt*, and Chabrol's *Le Boucher*.

Woodcock continued on page 4

In This Issue:	The Abreu Fellows: Who We Are.....	2
	From Jordan Hall to Fenway Park.....	4
	A New Student's Guide to NEC and Boston.....	6
	Ask Emmy!.....	7

Letter from the Editors

by Neal Markowski & Zach Preucil

Dear Readers,

Welcome and welcome back to the New England Conservatory of Music. As editors of *The Penguin*, we are looking forward to another year of producing publications that best fulfill the intellectual, academic, and social needs of the NEC community.

The Penguin is just one of the many things that make NEC unique. The articles in this monthly publication address a wide variety of topics, from recent NEC-related events to reviews of concerts and new albums to in-depth editorials on the important issues facing the music world today. Ultimately, *The Penguin* serves as a voice for the community of NEC - a place where students, faculty, and staff can participate in an ongoing dialogue that enriches our lives as students and prepares us for where we are collectively headed in the future.

As we begin the school year, we invite you to join the conversation. Feel free to e-mail us at thepenguin@necmusic.edu, follow us on Facebook, or attend our weekly meetings in Bistro 33. We look forward to hearing from you!

Best Wishes,

Zach Preucil (B.M. '12) and Neal Markowski (B.M. '13)



The Abreu Fellows - Who We Are

by Albert Oppenheimer

Dear incoming NEC students,

Hello! My name is Albert Oppenheimer ('09, '11) and I am a composer (among other things). I'd like to introduce you to a program which I feel is an essential part of the NEC community, but whose participants don't get much time to mingle. I'd like to introduce you all to El Sistema, The Abreu Fellowship, and this year's fellows: the Class of 2012. I encourage you to find each of them during orientation and introduce yourselves- they are very excited to meet each and every one of you. Treat it like a scavenger hunt- first one to meet all ten fellows, wins! (Bonus points if you can introduce yourself to our tireless director, Erik Holmgren.)

El Sistema:

El Sistema is a social program whose goal is to empower children, families and communities through the process of making music together. El Sistema exists today as a model of how a music program can both create great musicians and dramatically change the life trajectory of hundreds of thousands of a nation's neediest children. Participation is free for all students and open to anyone who is willing to play. Many begin attending their local El Sistema center, called a "nucleo," as early as age 2 or 3, with the vast majority continuing well into their teens; attending up to six days a week, three to four hours a day, plus retreats and intensive workshops. After 36 years, Venezuela now has over 60 children's orchestras, almost 200 youth orchestras, 30 professional adult orchestras and dozens of choruses. To the children and families that live there, it is simply a part of their culture. Children come to know the world through the act of making music together.

The Abreu Fellowship

The goal of the Abreu Fellows Program is twofold: to educate 10 people each year to make significant and sustainable contributions to the growth of the El Sistema movement in the United States and, through that work, to contribute knowledge and artifacts that are of use to others interested in growing El Sistema in the U.S. Our challenge, in translating El Sistema to the United States, is not just to teach children but to teach adults. We need to reimagine hundreds of years of musical culture with a new sense of possibility and then develop the skills, experiences, and relationships to build our imaginations in the real world.

The people that take on this challenge are understandably remarkable. The third class of Abreu Fellows comes to NEC from throughout the United States and brings with them a set of experiences that create an immense amount of potential to unpack throughout the year. They have founded music organizations in cities throughout North America, taught in Atlanta, New York, Chicago, Bermuda, Mexico, Venezuela and India and performed with orchestras in from Berlin to Los Angeles.

The following are the Abreu Fellows Class of 2011-2012: Aisha Bowden, Julie Davis, David France, Ben Fuller, José Luis Hernández-Estrada, Stephanie Lin Hsu, Jennifer Kessler, Alysia Lee, Avi Mehta, and Albert Oppenheimer.



Albert Oppenheimer is an Abreu Fellow ('12) and NEC Alum. Send questions and comments about this article to Albert.Oppenheimer@necmusic.edu

A Welcome Letter from the Office of Student Services

by Suzanne Hegland, Assistant Dean of Students

The staff of the Office of Student Services is excited to welcome a new class of students from all over the world to New England Conservatory. We're here not only to help you negotiate the non-stop activities of Orientation Week, but to assist you throughout the school year. Below you'll find a handy cheat sheet of information about who does what in Room 224 of the St. Botolph building. It won't take long for you to realize that while we are a small campus, we have big personalities!

Tom Handel is the Dean of Students (as opposed to Tom Novak, who is the Dean of the College. *Warning:* Keep your Toms straight!). Dean Handel put himself through college working as a bicycle messenger. In this capacity he discovered many of Boston's hidden treasures such as the best place to take a nap (Christopher Columbus Park), the cleanest rest rooms (1 Beacon Street) and friendliest receptionists (the law firm of Ropes & Gray).

Suzanne Hegland is the Assistant Dean of Students. She is the token non-musician on staff and has been known to mix up violins with violas and mispronounce the word bass. She compensates by telling ever so slightly off-color jokes and performing dramatic readings of spam emails.

Mary Weber is the Director of International Student Services and Academic Advisor. Mary is a fearless adventurer who has bungee jumped and skydived. But don't let her bravado intimidate you, she only recently learned to ride a bike (and has the diploma to prove it), and she is unable to drink soda because the bubbles tickle her throat.

Rebecca Teeters is the International and Academic Student Advisor. Rebecca is not only an NEC alum who performs regularly in the Boston area, this soprano is also the reigning Gold Medalist in Bocce Ball and Pie Baking at the "Mattern Family Olympics" and will be defending her titles next summer.

Bob Winkley is the College Registrar and keeper of a gorgeous jungle of plants in his sunny office. Bob fell in love with orchids at the tender age of 15 and has been growing them ever since. He's been an accredited judge with the American Orchid Society since 1998 and is now the chair for the Northeast Judging Center.

Christina Calamaio is the Associate Registrar. A self-described "army brat" who lived in the former West Germany as a child, Christina is an NEC alum who sings in the Boston Lyric Opera Chorus. She is also a thrift shop fashionista who excels at finding the best bargains for her fabulous outfits.

Allie Cionco is the Director of the Residence Hall. Allie loves to play basketball and as a result has broken the same finger 5 times. She's also been hit in the face, causing a deviated septum. Allie no longer plays basketball for safety reasons.

Maya Jacobs is our new Coordinator of Student Activities. A recent NEC alum, Maya dislikes potatoes in every form, even potato chips and fries.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

NEC hosts hundreds of concerts every year. In addition, the Student Activities Center sponsors educational and social events throughout the academic year. Below is a partial list of upcoming events. For more information see the following pages on the NEC Website:

Concert Calendar - <http://necmusic.edu/concerts-events>

Student Activities Center - <http://necmusic.edu/student-activities>

Additional events are listed in the Prelude Calendar which was included in your Orientation Packets.

Sept. 1st - 5:30 pm, Pierce Hall

Kati Agocs: Northern Lights (Harpist premieres NEC faculty member's composition)

Sept. 4th - 3:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Fenwick Smith, NEC Faculty Recital

Sept. 11th - 2:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Day of Remembrance - NEC Youth Philharmonic Orchestra

Sept. 13th - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Susanne Friedrich, NEC Faculty Recital

Sept. 14th - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

New Music at NEC, Stephen Drury conducts Avant-Garde Ensemble

Sept. 15th - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Joe Maneri Tribute

Sept. 19th - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Michael Meraw + Damien Francoeur-Krzyzek, NEC Faculty Recital

Sept. 21st - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Hung-Kuan Chen, NEC Faculty Recital

Sept. 23rd - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

A Far Cry, NEC affiliated, conductorless chamber orchestra

Sept. 25th - 2:00 pm, Jordan Hall

Paula Robison and Katherine Chi, NEC Faculty and Alumnus Recital

Sept. 26th - 8:00 pm, Jordan Hall

NEC Philharmonia - Conducted by Hugh Wolff - Mahler Symphony No. 1



Drew Cryer is a junior harp performance major. Send comments and questions about this article to Drew.Cryer@necmusic.edu.

So now you know a little bit about us - it's time to let us get to know you! You'll find Allie and Maya in the Student Activities Center near Brown Hall, and the rest of us on the second floor of the St. Botolph building. You'll be meeting all of us in some official capacity or another over the coming weeks, but we encourage you to drop by and say "hi!"

New Security Measures

Those of you who are returning students will notice that we have introduced new security measures at each of our campus buildings to assure your safety. We have added electronic card readers to the 295 Huntington building, Jordan Hall, and the Residence Hall. This means you will have to scan your NEC i.d. to enter those buildings. We have also reorganized our security team and engaged Guardian Security Protection to create a comprehensive security program for the Conservatory. As a result, you will see new faces behind the front desks at Jordan, St. Botolph and the Residence halls. What, you ask, has happened to our wonderfully congenial Stan Stowers and Jose Tookes, who previously presided at the entrance of Jordan Hall? Well, they are now manning the fort at 295 Huntington with Stan also taking some shifts at Jordan. They will be delighted to see you if you stop by to say hello.

With these and other changes, our hope is that we can maintain the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff, boards and concertgoers without sacrificing the warm, friendly atmosphere of NEC.

Again, welcome back! And I look forward to greeting all of you and hearing your music throughout the year.

Very best wishes,
Tony Woodcock

From Jordan Hall to Fenway Park

by Rob Cinnante

On Wednesday, July 6, one of NEC's very own, Alexandra Lang (MM '09) performed the National Anthem at the Red Sox Game. Since graduating with master's from NEC in 2009, Lang has performed extensively throughout the United States and abroad. Highlights include her debut in the title role of Massenet's "Manon" at Opera in the Ozarks in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. An avid performer of American music, Lang created the role of Sibyl Vane in Jeff Brody's premiere of "The Picture of Dorian Gray" with Longwood.

RC: How did the Red Sox find you?

AL: When I'm not singing during the day I work as a hostess at Burton's grill near Fenway Park. There I met Beth Krudys, Director of Fenway Affairs. A regular client at the restaurant, I got to know her, and knowing I was an opera singer, she had said back in May, "Wouldn't it be fun if you sing the National Anthem at the Red Sox Game?" In May of this year I sent a head shot, resume, and recording of a Debussy aria. At the beginning of June I was busy performing in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with Longwood Opera and kind of forgot about it, figuring if it happened it would be sometime next year.

RC: Then what happened?

AL: Well, towards the end of June I was out of town and got an email from her requesting that I send a recording of myself singing the National Anthem. The following week I had a lesson with Maria Spacagna, my current teacher, and told her about it, so we recorded it at the end of my lesson. The next day Beth came in the middle of lunch while I was at work and told me I would be singing the following week!

RC: Wow, that's great. So, what was the experience like?

AL: I had a wonderful time, such a great experience. How powerful the roar of the crowd is. It was also great because it was Neighborhood Night and the Red Sox gave me tickets for me and my family. I also got to meet the mayor.

RC: Was it your first time singing for a major sporting event?

AL: In high school I sang for a lot of the football games, and a few summers ago at Opera in the Ozarks I performed at a minor league game, but this was by the far the largest group I've ever sung for.

RC: I have to admit that several times I've auditioned or sent in demos to various sports teams, but have never been selected. Do you think these organizations are less likely to select a classically trained singer over a pop singer? Do you think people react differently?

AL: I think it is one of those special moments when classical music intersects pop culture. The reaction was more than positive. Our craft of learning to sing and self-amplify, people have a very emotional reaction to it. I think it really reaches people. I really remained true to a melody that pop singers sometimes tweak and people had a wonderful reaction to it. I was ecstatic to do it! I think when given the opportunity to hear classical singing lots of discoveries are made for people. They might not have been exposed to it because of their background, but people love it. It one of those moments where I felt proud to be a singer and celebrate the country.



Photo courtesy of Image Unlimited

RC: Any plans to sing again with the Red Sox?

AL: I had a great time, and they enjoyed my singing. I would definitely do it again if invited back.

***For more on Alexandra, visit her website:
www.alexandralang.com**



Robert Cinnante is a 1st-year graduate voice major. Send comments and questions about this article to Robert.Cinnante@necmusic.edu

Modern Lovers - *Modern Lovers*

by Neal Markowski

Hello and welcome (or welcome back) to New England Conservatory! I figured that for our first review, I'd do something a little different here. Rather than reviewing a new album, I decided to review one that means a lot to me. The album is around 35 years old with some of the songs being 40 years old. 40 YEARS! But that's not the only reason I picked this LP.

You see, growing up in Chicago, I was able to watch films like *The Blues Brothers* or *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and have some sort of connection with them. These were films that I loved, made in a city that I loved, with landmarks that I was able to recognize. The prison that John Belushi was in during the opening scenes of *The Blues Brothers* is only minutes away from where I now live. If I had to rely on Boston's cinematic history to get an impression of the city, I might think it was a place filled with bank robbers, Celtics fans and mathematical geniuses. Luckily, there is more to Boston than what the makers of *Celtic Pride* and *Good Will Hunting* would like you to think. Coincidentally, Jonathan Richman's lyrics throughout this album could read as a "sights to see in Boston" brochure. Have a car? Go cruising up and down Route 128. Want to go on a date? Well, walk through the Fenway. Groceries? Go to Stop & Shop. And that's just from two separate songs!

To backtrack a bit, Jonathan Richman was the singer and the guitarist on this album. He was a young kid from Natick, probably 19 when he wrote "Roadrunner," who was really into the Velvet Underground. The story of him moving to New York City living on the Steve Sesnick's couch (the V.U.'s manager) is one of those that's almost romantic in its presentation (suburban MA boy escapes to NYC to follow his favorite band and make it as a rock star, only to return to Boston weeks later.) David Robinson was the drummer, whose solid, pounding beats turned songs like "She Cracked" into a high-speed trains with crash cymbals. Jerry Harrison would play the organ and keys on the album, and his blend of fuzzed-out 2-chord drones and tasteful solos (see "Old World" for proof when he and Richman play a solo in unison) would become pivotal to the Modern Lovers' sound. David Robinson, a fellow Harvard student of Harrison's certainly had the John Cale vibe within his bass playing. It would be these four that made up the original Modern Lovers and the Modern Lovers you hear on this album.

As you might imagine, the music itself is heavily indebted to the Velvet, but elsewhere, it's an entirely different machine at work. Richman's lyrics couldn't be more different than Lou Reed's. Richman focused on the joys of suburban life. Driving around all hours of the night, going on dates at the Museum of Fine Arts (which remember, you can go to for free as an NEC student), and really, just girls in general. Jonathan Richman certainly had a thing for the ladies, but it's easy to see why he kept singing about them – who wants to date a guy who sounds like he

has a head cold every time he sings? For all intents and purposes, Richman is kind of a dorky guy, but that's why we all love him. His songs are also really good, and the band does a fantastic job at playing them. You can listen to various re-recordings of "Roadrunner," but it lacks that urgency that these tracks had when they were recording in 1972.



It's worth noting that this album was primarily recorded in 1972 (with one song from 1971) but wasn't released until 1976, some 2 years after the original line-up broke up. David Robinson would later find fame and fortune as he became the drummer for The Cars, another critically acclaimed Boston-based band. Jerry Harrison would also continue playing music afterwards when he joined this little band known as the Talking Heads just after the release of their first single. Richman would use the "Modern Lovers" name in various capacities throughout the '80s, only rarely playing the songs featured on this album. He's still touring today, with 3 shows planned at the Middle East in October.

As promised, here's a short list of places that would be included on the "Jonathan Richman Walking Tour of Boston" should it ever exist:

Museum of Fine Arts
The Fens
Government Center (if you check out the bonus tracks)
Stop & Shop
Route 128
Boston University

There is probably a whole bunch more, but I'm going to stop there. Hopefully, this will give you some idea of how great Boston can be as a city so long as you don't get all of your information from *The Departed*.

OVERALL RATING – 17 golden tickets.

KEY TRACKS – "Roadrunner", "She Cracked", "Old World"



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



A New Student's Guide to NEC and Boston

by Yijuan Geng

Welcome to NEC! You're very fortunate to be at one of the world's best-known music institutions. As you adjust to your new environment, I'd like to share with you some suggestions and recommendations that will make your transition easier and more enjoyable.

Spaulding Library

You don't have to look far to find this library as it's right on the first floor of NEC Residence Hall. This is your resource for scores, music, and reading materials. You can check out reserve books at the first floor circulation desk, and use either of the two photocopiers for a charge of 7 cents per page using your Penguin Pass. You can even get a day pass to the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum (available at the first-floor circulation desk).

Firestone Library

In the basement below Brown Hall (there are two sides of the basement at NEC...don't get confused!), you'll find the audio library with thousands of high quality CDs, DVDs, concert videos, LPs, and quite a few cassette tapes. Although these items are not allowed to circulate outside of the library, there are plenty of listening stations including two large, private rooms for group listening and viewing.

Instrument Library

In the other side of the basement below Williams Hall, you will find the Instrument Library. Instruments can be borrowed through the end of the school year. I've tried one or two and have personally found the experience of exploring new instruments to be very fascinating.

Music Espresso

Across the street at the 295 Huntington Avenue building, you will find NEC's very own sheet music retailer. Located on the second floor, this store sells the academic books you need for classes as well as music scores of various genres and editions. While you are there, you may also find some cute gift items for family and friends. Down the hall to the right upon exiting Music Espresso, you'll find the NEC Copy Center on the left. Here, you can buy course packets and get studio keys (with permission). Large packages mailed to students in the Residence Hall may also be picked up here.

Computer Lab

Located in the basement of the St. Botolph building, you will find NEC's best technological resource, complete with music-ified iMacs. The music technology classroom right across the hallway also offers multiple computers.

Music Referral Service

Located on the second floor of the St. Botolph building just a couple of doors down from the Office of Student Services, the Music Referral Services has a bulletin board on which potential gigs are posted. Sign up and check it regularly - you can find good opportunities to perform and teach.

SAC

NEC's Student Activities Center is situated across from Brown Hall. Staff members consistently plan events both on and off-campus. The SAC also oversees NEC's many student organizations, including religious groups such as SGI Buddhism and the NEC Fellowship with Christ, groups for cultural causes such as Musicians for Humanity, and the publication of the newspaper you are currently reading!

Keep an eye out for emails, public announcements and posters - they are always carefully designed and filled with surprises. Past events have included a Boston Duck Tour at the beginning of the semester, apple picking later in the Fall, Halloween decorating parties, a ski trip, a barbeque, prom and many more!

By the way, you don't want to miss any of these upcoming events:

Sunset Harbor Dance Cruise, Sep 2nd

Sponsored by the SAC

Watch the sunset over the city as you cruise Boston Harbor and dance the night away under the stars. We will meet on the steps of Jordan Hall at 6 pm and travel by subway to the harbor.

Welcome Back Cook-Out, Sep 7th, St. Botolph Parking Lot

Sponsored by the SAC and NEC Alumni Association

Grab some food and mingle with new and returning students as we celebrate the first day of the year!

Moreover, don't forget to pick up your BSO college card for free student tickets. You'll love these unbelievable concerts!

Free workshops/seminars

The last things I'd like to tell you about are the very interesting extra-musical classes taking place at school (a complete list is available in your orientation folder). Past topics have included coping with performance anxiety, time management, budgeting, audition preparation, website design, health issues, and the development of practical interpersonal skills. These events help us to become more complete as students and musicians, and I suggest that you attend as many as your time allows.

Outside of NEC

There are many historical and cultural sites around the city such as the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Science, the Boston Public Garden and the Freedom Trail. Moreover, walking along the Charles River, visiting Harvard University, or chilling with friends at Revere Beach are also good ways to take some time to enjoy Boston.

There is always a new story to hear or a new fact to discover. Have fun, and best wishes for a productive school year!



Yijuan Geng is a junior piano performance major. Send questions or comments about this article to Yijuan.Geng@necmusic.edu.

Ask Emmy!

Hi, my name is Emmy. But darlings, you can call me M. I'd like to offer you some solicited advice. What kind of advice can I hand out? Why should you bare your soul and write in? Can I be trusted? Well all right then, let's dig in.

First, I should let you know that I'm not expert in anything. I can't offer definitive solutions or absolute truths. But I can listen, think, and write. And I like doing all three. So, here's what I'm proposing: a monthly column that will catch all sorts of questions—personal, artistic, career-related, maybe even a question or two about food (did someone say cedar planked salmon with a balsamic and brown sugar reduction?). If I can't wrap my head around your issue, I'll find someone who can. We've got a lot of lively minds here at NEC—don't see why I couldn't hunt down just the right person to respond to your individual, specific and very unique question. This column will have guests: fun guests, savvy guests, maybe even a guest panel, if your question so requires.

So that's the bit about what kind of advice you might seek in this column. Now back to your earlier question: who is this M person, and why should I trust her to handle my inner anxieties with care? Here's my back story, no frills or enhancements.

I was born in Altoona, Kansas, population 454. I've got a week's worth of colorful stories about Altoona, but you'll just have to wait on those. I found my calling early on—by age five I just knew I would be an astronaut. Then I hit 10, and my true calling became clear. Music. I wanted to play every instrument I could get my stubby fingers around: flute, piano, saxophone and the sweet, sweet trumpet. My music took me to college and on to graduate school. It took me lots of places too—frenetic New York, Hotlanta, ponderous Jerusalem, crunchy Burlington, our nation's capital, and now, the Hub of the Universe. Whatever the zip code, I took root in a community of fellow musicians. Something about my Altoona charm, I guess, made me the go-to for advice. Before long, I would get a knock, a text, an email, asking M for a chat.

There's more to my story, but that's part of the fun. Each little nugget of advice could come with a freshly spun tale.

Let's get on to logistics. If you have a question, there are a couple ways you can get it to me, or one of my well-regarded guests:

- Scribble a note and drop it in M's box outside of SB226.
- Email ask.m@necmusic.edu. I'll keep your identity close to the vest, that's a promise.

I've introduced myself, and now it's time. Time to get me those burning questions. Time for me to take root.

Yours,
M



Emmy (or M) is a fixture of the NEC Community. Send your questions or comments to Ask.M@necmusic.edu

NEC Students Triumph at XIV Tchaikovsky Competition

by Zachary Preucil

NEC's name became even bigger this past June as current students and recent alums scored unprecedented success at the fourteenth quadrennial International Tchaikovsky Competition.

Cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan, who received his Artist Diploma from NEC in May as a student of Laurence Lesser, was awarded the gold medal in his category on June 30th, marking the culmination of a two week-long competition which saw him also receive the Audience Prize and a special award for the best chamber concerto performance during the competition's second round.

NEC's accolades were not limited to Hakhnazaryan's achievements, however; violinists JeHye Lee (M.M. '08, G.D. '10) and Nigel Armstrong ('07 Prep.) received third and fourth prizes, respectively, in their category. Lee, who studied with Miriam Fried, also received an award for the best chamber concerto performance during the second round. Armstrong, who studied with Donald Weilerstein, received an award for "Best performance of the work written specially for the Competition" - John Corigliano's, "STOMP."

The three prize winners only represented a small percentage of the ten NEC-affiliated students who were invited to participate in the finals of what is considered to be one of the world's most prestigious classical music competitions. The other finalists, comprised of recent alums and current NEC students, included violinists Yoo Jin Jang, Tessa Lark, Xiang "Angelo" Yu, and Nancy Zhou; cellists Jacqueline Choi, and David Eggert; and pianist Lukas Vondracek.

The competition was the highlight of what turned out to be an highly successful summer for NEC. George Li, a young pianist in the NEC Prep. Department, performed at a White House State Dinner, recent NEC graduate Joshua Weilerstein was appointed as an assistant conductor at the New York Philharmonic, and numerous other students achieved success at several summer music festivals. One can hardly wait to see what further achievements NEC students and faculty will have in the year ahead.



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

