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Benjamin Zander conducts

NEC's Youth Philharmonic Orchestra
Friday, May 30, 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

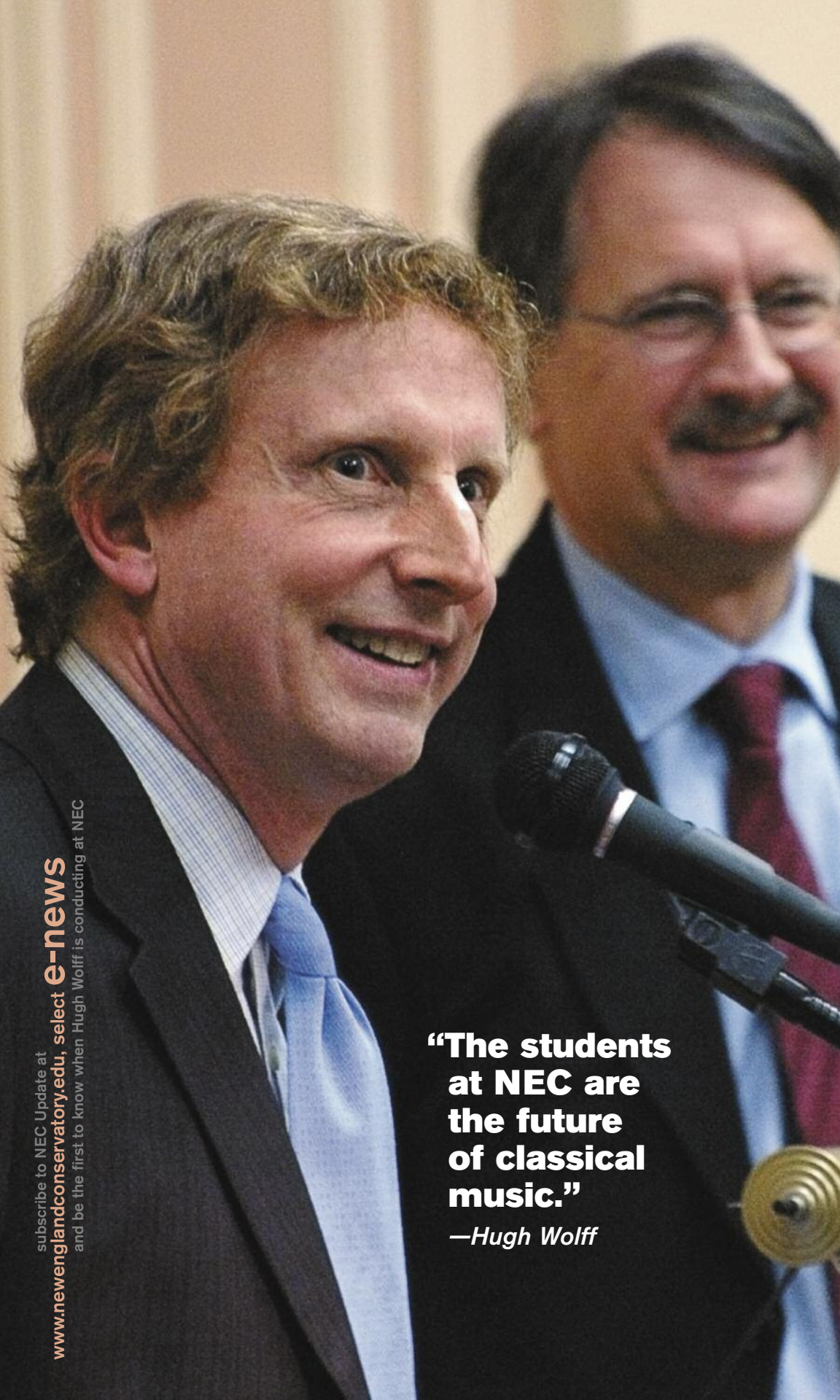
**Brahms Symphony No. 4
Schumann Cello Concerto
with Tavi Ungerleider**

\$10 / \$5 students, seniors / free with NEC i.d.
concerts.newenglandconservatory.edu

Vol. 33, No. 2, Summer 2008

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY
NOTES





**“The students
at NEC are
the future
of classical
music.”**

—Hugh Wolff



NEC's 2007/2008 orchestral concerts were lit up by a meteor shower of guest conductors, giving Boston music lovers a chance to experience some of the

most intriguing figures on the American orchestra scene. At the end of these visits, NEC President Tony Woodcock announced that Hugh Wolff had accepted his invitation to come to NEC as Director of Orchestras.

Wolff is charged with elevating orchestral studies to one of NEC's signature programs. Having led orchestras here and abroad and garnered multiple Grammy nominations with his extensive recording output, Wolff is relocating to Boston in order to give pride of place to the five concerts he will prepare and conduct with NEC's student orchestras each year.

President Woodcock expects Wolff to be active in the community through the creation of a new “animateur” program and as a “catalyst for partnerships with the Boston Symphony Orchestra,” which Wolff has conducted many times.

But what students care about most, as revealed in a get-to-know-you session held at NEC in late February, is that he's prepared to put them to work. The players know that to succeed in their goal of joining a professional orchestra, the best preparation is to assume the work ethic of a professional orchestra. “We're going to stir it up,” Wolff said, promising a mix of repertoire, rehearsal formats, and recording sessions to ensure that orchestra players no longer “think of orchestra as ‘that other thing they do.’ It should be as exciting as when you're playing in a quartet.”

Wolff is coming to a school where orchestral activity stretches all the way from a seven-tier Preparatory School program to the three full-scale College Orchestras. He says, “The eager, gifted students at NEC are the future of classical music and I am thrilled to help guide them. Our concert last fall was a terrific start; I look forward to many more.” Wolff's first official NEC concert in his new role is with the NEC Philharmonia on October 2, 2008. Mark that date on your calendar as a blazing launch to the fall concert season!

a new direction for NEC's orchestra program

HUGH WOLFF

ARRIVES

“This is someone I could do business with.”

—President Tony Woodcock



Miro Vintoniv

by Ellen Pfeifer



Tom Fitzsimmons

Jack Vernon, Wendy Shattuck, Deborah Elfers, Ginny and Pete Nicholas

NEC thanks Jack Vernon for his indelible legacy as Board chair

Jack Vernon has been the very model of a modern “roll up your sleeves” Board chair.

Stepping down in spring 2008 from the top position, which he assumed in 2002, Vernon leaves an indelible legacy as a leader who governed from the trenches, not from Olympian heights.

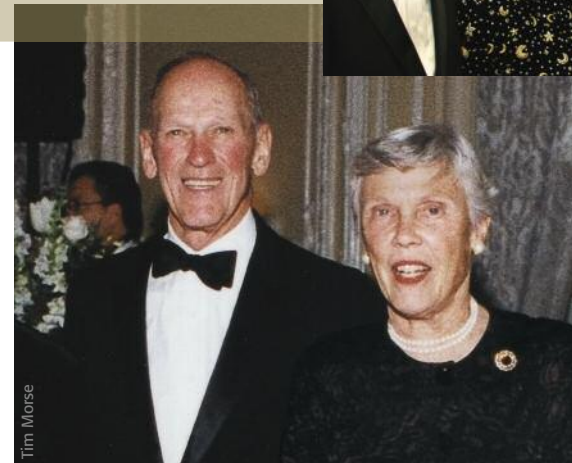
NEC President Emeritus Laurence Lesser has known Vernon since the 1980s, when NEC engaged his executive search firm to identify a new CFO. The two hit it off immediately, as Lesser found that “Jack has a deep and abiding love of music,” with an attitude toward the Conservatory that is “totally generous, giving, and unselfish.”

Becoming an Overseer in 1990 and a Trustee in 1996, Vernon and fellow Trustee Kitty Pell chaired a presidential search committee that led to the surprising but popular choice of Trustee Daniel Steiner as NEC’s president in 1999. “Jack recognized the value in people and was able to see exactly what the institution needed,” Pell recounted.

Vernon then joined Hope Baker to co-chair the Feast of Music gala planning committee, to which he later recruited two NEC alumnae—Wendy Shattuck and Deborah Elfers. “Jack understood that Feast of Music was critical to engaging new board members and donors,” Shattuck recalled. “He wanted to make sure that we brought the gala up to another level.”

In May 2002, Vernon was elected chair of the NEC Board of Trustees. “He got to know tons of people, key people in the organization, so he was always well informed,” said David Scudder, Vernon’s predecessor as chair. “He was first-rate in his knowledge base. He knew how the organization ticked.”

Vernon recruited friends and acquaintances to the NEC boards. “He gave me a whole new life at NEC,” said Life Trustee Carol Henderson. Friends since their college days at Smith and Amherst respectively, Vernon knew Henderson had been a music major in college, and steered her to the



Tim Moise

Jack and Anne Vernon

Conservatory just as she was stepping down from an important chairmanship at the Museum of Fine Arts.

Don Jones, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, praised Vernon’s “work ethic” and pointed to the example Vernon set in creating, then enhancing, the Jack and Anne Vernon Scholarship during the Gift of Music Capital Campaign, and his taking on a mentee through the board’s mentorship program. “He would rearrange his schedule and his life to be here,” said Elaine Lawrence, Director of Board Relations. Leading the presidential search, which brought the hire of President Tony Woodcock in 2007, Vernon “ensured that everyone had a voice and that all constituencies were represented, from students and faculty to staff and board members.”

When NEC lost its beloved president Daniel Steiner in June 2006—with the search committee still laboring to identify the right candidate for President and the school facing a leadership vacuum—Vernon tracked down Laurence Lesser on vacation in France and persuaded him to become interim CEO. “Jack rose to the occasion very quickly and professionally,” Scudder said.

“My first impression of Jack was at the first interview session I attended,” President Woodcock recalled. “I thought ‘this is someone I could do business with.’ And so it has proved.” Vernon “has been a great mentor, advisor, and supporter of the new ideas I bring,” Woodcock continued. “I remain enormously grateful to Jack for attracting me to NEC and the opportunity of leading this great institution. And I feel personally indebted to him for his work and his friendship.”



Miro Vintoniv

NEC’s new board chair

This spring, J. Stephen Friedlaender (seen above with President Tony Woodcock) succeeds Jack Vernon as NEC’s new board chair. Friedlaender is a founding principal of HMFH Architects, Inc., and has been involved with NEC for many years.



Miro Vintoniv

“He gave me a whole new life at NEC.”

—Carol Henderson, Life Trustee



David Balsom/From the Top

visit www.newenglandconservatory.edu/partnerships for more on "From the Top" and other NEC partnerships

Bassoonist and high school senior Kian Andersen at a taping in Huntsville, Alabama.

All-classical All-kids Commercial-free

Q: I'm a high school senior, and my friends don't understand why I get up early every morning to practice my instrument.

A: At From the Top, we're all about kids like you. We exist to show the value of young people who have made a commitment to excelling as classical musicians. You count just as much as your high school quarterback.

Q: I listen to the radio and podcasts, watch the Web, TV, and YouTube, and hang with my friends on Facebook. Where do I find you?

A: All those places. You may also have seen us in your music textbook—for real!

If you're a classical music kid living outside big city U.S.A., "From the Top" may be the only thing entering your community that says you matter—or that classical music itself matters. That taping at your local theater, church, or auditorium is probably the first time that venue has had national exposure. And it all began at NEC.

In 1995, NEC trustee Gerald Slavet got together with members of the NEC administration to tape a radio show pilot. That's what it was called then, "the radio show pilot." More than anything else, it was an idea about getting classical music out on the airwaves in a new way. And as the show's host—pianist Christopher O'Riley '81 A.D.—has observed, it was with kids and through kids.

By 2000, after a lot of thoughtful fine-tuning, a season of episodes had been taped in NEC's Jordan Hall and around the country, and the show, which now had a name—"From the Top"—began to air nationwide. Now distributed by NPR, the show has more than 750,000 weekly listeners on nearly 250 stations, and ranks among the top 5 weekly programs on radio, along with "Car Talk" and "A Prairie Home Companion."

In 2007, the first episode of the television series "From the Top at Carnegie Hall" aired. The first two seasons of this new, parallel incarnation will be the first PBS program to stream a full season online at PBS.org/fromthetop, starting in April 2008. Each month, fromthetop.npr.org runs a different video clip from the radio show tapings—including many Jordan Hall episodes.

From the NEC idea people who guided "the radio show" through its first steps—to Jordan Hall as a recording home base—to the NEC Preparatory School students who frequently show up on air as performers—to the dozens of alumni of the show who receive a guaranteed allotment towards tuition when they enroll at NEC—this is a partnership that is an NEC family activity in every sense. Of equal importance, it's an enterprise that continues to get the word out that "classical music is cool"—in all the places where families with young people will hear and see that message.

“ A whole note can have character!”



Laura Blustein

a cellist, chairs NEC's Preparatory string chamber music program.

visit www.newenglandconservatory.edu/faculty for biographies and links

Miro Vintoniv



Lucy Chapman

a violinist, chairs NEC's College strings and chamber music departments.

“ I think singing is the beginning of chamber music.”

No lessons. No rehearsals. No interruptions. Two members of the New England Conservatory faculty get together in a room to talk about stuff that matters: singing with friends, the All-Star Game, how to sabotage a performance (or not).

LC: There are always levels to explore. You get a string quartet that's already playing in tune, that's already playing a fairly basic, nice blend of sound, and with some real emotion and some give and take and awareness—but then... that's the *beginning*—then you have a long way to go: to learn to vary their sounds more, to have more subtlety of sound, more subtlety of blend, more subtlety of balance, more stylistic differences—everything! There's always more, there's always more. It's an endless thing. And then, if you do get to some incredible level in playing—well, that's *one piece*, OK, fine. You can go and just learn more literature, it's endless.

RS: So really you're both just getting people at a life stage beyond which they're going to keep on moving.

LC: I hope that *I'm* at a life stage beyond which I'm continuing to move! ☺
I think singing with friends—singing at home with your family before you're even playing an instrument—is the beginning of chamber music.

LB: I agree. I think it's listening to lots of different kinds of music, and just singing in the car—very simple things like that. With young kids you try to make it as interesting as possible. When kids play chamber music from a very young age, what's fun about it is that they're having a good time, they're with friends.

Rob Schmieder keeps the tape rolling and tries not to interrupt too much.

LC: There are so many levels to “learning chamber music.” First of all, there’s a great literature, a phenomenal literature. So it’s really worth working hard, just to be able to play your instrument and to go and hear this fantastic music and to be part of it. But then there’s the personal side, which is the ability—we work on this all our lives—to recognize that we’re part of the whole, and yet to be able to hold our sense of our individuality within that. To come out and be the soloist—and then to be subservient. Those are life lessons, and I think we all learn them constantly through chamber music. ☺

I remember when a student came up to me who had been given the cello part to the Mozart clarinet quintet—one of the great pieces of the literature—and she said “Lucy, I just want to know what do you do when there really isn’t anything to play in your part?” To which I thought, Honey, you have some stuff to learn about what there is! The same girl came to me seven weeks later and said, “I really want to thank you, because I wasn’t joking, I honestly didn’t know the importance of a bassline, I just played melodies on the cello.” She honestly thought, I have a two-bar melody, that’s the only thing I have to play in this piece.

LB: It’s funny, because it’s more than harmony, it’s often the character of the sound that’s grounded in the cello part. For someone to think that the only time I really mold my sound or think about the character of my sound is if I’m playing the melody! But—a *whole note* can have character!

LC: A violist friend and I used to do a quartet demonstration where we showed subtly how to make it really difficult for the first violinist to sound good. We could sabotage their playing! Sitting back on the rhythm, on the tempo, just a little bit—so that nothing flows. Or pushing subtly—so that everything is just really uncomfortable at a certain place, because you can’t settle. Or having a slightly heavier, regular beat—so the melody can’t quite get across the bar line. And even the first violinist, who

was a wonderful player and was the first violinist of a major quartet for a while, said “Whoa, it’s amazing how difficult—and how easy—you could make it for me.” ☺ Communicating within a group, one person stops and says “I really think the tempo is too slow” and a second person in the group says “Too fast.” And somebody else says “I think maybe we could think about ebb and flow a bit, with certain places where it could hold, and certain places where it could flow.” That person has effected an immediate change, so that those two people haven’t polarized.

LB: I wonder if there’s one person like that in every professional group that’s been together for a while. You can listen to the point where you’re together with another person. And then you can listen to the point where you’re feeling exactly what *they’re* doing with their sound, so you know what *you’re* going to do with your sound, and everything is working like something that’s alive. That’s what you play music for. ☺ Another thing—if kids play a lot of chamber music when they’re young, they’re so much better orchestral players. When you’re playing in an orchestra, you’re *listening*. Even reacting to your stand partner.

LC: And this isn’t just strings. Playing in a brass quintet teaches you how to have a group sound for brass, and playing in a woodwind quintet—if you’re in an orchestra, how many of those “floboe” sections do you have to work on, where there’s flute and oboe in octaves with the flute above? John Ferrillo and Elizabeth Rowe do that so beautifully in the BSO. Have you heard them this year? I’ve just been struck by their ability to keep the flute and the oboe so beautifully matched, it’s phenomenal.

LB: I’ve gone to First Monday concerts where you see the faculty playing, and you know they haven’t had time in their schedules to rehearse a whole lot, and yet because they’re so experienced and so instinctively keyed into each other—you hear concerts that are astounding. These are people that maybe never played together before. It might be like seeing the greatest All-Star

baseball game, where the players somehow have a chemistry. Something like a very complex double play, where your timing is on, but your first baseman and second baseman—they don’t play together normally! It’s just completely spontaneous. Something happens, and everybody reacts. It’s more than split-second: it’s anticipating. That’s what you see in these concerts—it’s incredible.

LC: The playing together *is* important. It does bring the faculty together so well, you experience them as musicians in another way when you play with them. Sometimes alumni play on First Monday concerts, and it’s wonderful to play with somebody who was a student two years ago.

LB: All these things we’ve been talking about—the way you learn to talk to your colleagues, and talk about solving problems in playing chamber music—it’s great teaching stuff for all of us, it just works right in. I’ve seen this even with this thing that we started up about three years ago, working with Tanya Maggi, with outreach between the College kids, sometimes honors ensembles, coaching in the Prep department. ☺ The Ariel Quartet will come in and just zero in on something. They’ll have all sorts of games and thoughts on how to accomplish a musical idea. I have one string quartet where the oldest is 13, three of them have been playing together for five years already. And so for the Ariels, it’s like working with a younger version of themselves. They can go in and meet the kids—they themselves are not still kids, but they’re not so far from being kids—and the Prep kids just respond to them completely positively and they’re role models.

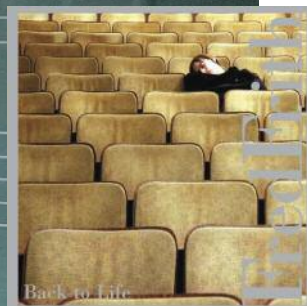
LC: I hate to say it, but they see us as old folks, the kids see this next age group as really something they could reach for. They’re cool college kids.

“ Something happens, and everybody reacts.”

—Laura Blustein

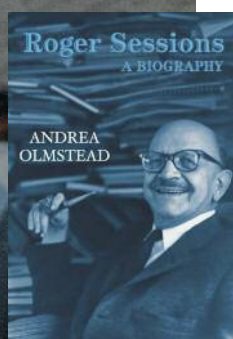


The Con Brio Trio, coached by Laura Blustein, performs at “Kids in Harmony” 2008.



Guitarist/composer Fred Frith worked with Stephen Drury and the NEC students and alumni of Callithumpian Consort during an NEC residency back in September. A mere four months later, some of these performances appeared on Frith's *Back to Life*—one of dozens of CDs on John Zorn's Tzadik label that are led by or include NEC faculty, alumni, and students.

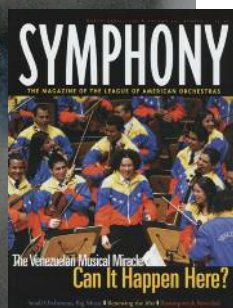
NEC students, alumni, and faculty have been busy publishing books and CDs over the past few months. Here is a sampling.



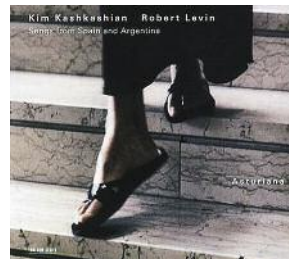
Andrea Olmstead of the Prep/SCE music history faculty seals her ownership of Roger Sessions studies with this biography, her fourth book on Sessions.



Prep alumnus Sebastian Baverstam—finishing his freshman year as an NEC College student—is on the November/December cover of *Teen Strings*, which teases a story on the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra's 2007 China tour.



"The Venezuelan Music Miracle: Can It Happen Here?" asks *Symphony* magazine's March/April 2008 cover story, with extensive coverage of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra's November visit to NEC and Symphony Hall.

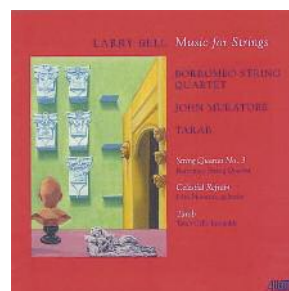


Violist Kim Kashkashian presents transcriptions of Spanish songs with longtime partner, pianist Robert Levin—audience tested in a Jordan Hall faculty recital.

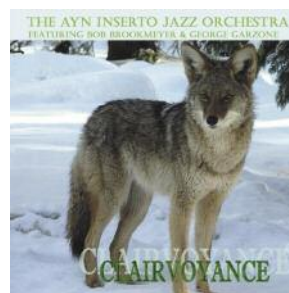
"The beauty of the music almost comes as a shock."
—Kansas City Star



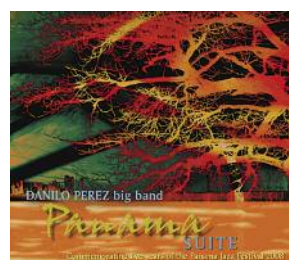
The band Waitiki, cofounded by bassist Randy Wong '03 "on a whim," claimed the Hawaii Music Awards "Exotica Album of the Year" trophy in 2007 and 2008.



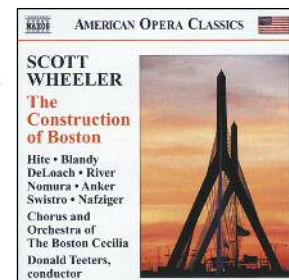
NEC Quartet-in-Residence the Borromeo String Quartet and guitarist John Muratore '79 M.M. perform on the CD *Music for Strings* by Prep theory chair Larry Bell.



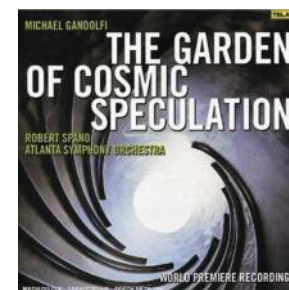
Ayn Insetto '01 M.M. was the ASCAP Emerging Composer at the 2008 International Association of Jazz Educators Conference in Toronto.



This suite—honoring the fifth year of Danilo Pérez's Panama Jazz Festival and with a band of NEC and Berklee players—had its radio launch in a live New Year's Eve performance on NPR.



Scott Wheeler '78 M.M. recorded his Boston opera in Jordan Hall with NEC singers and under the baton of Donald Teeters '58. The roster of NEC artists on the Naxos label continues to grow: D'Anna Fortunato of the voice faculty stars on another recent Naxos opera CD, David Schiff's *Gimpel the Fool*.

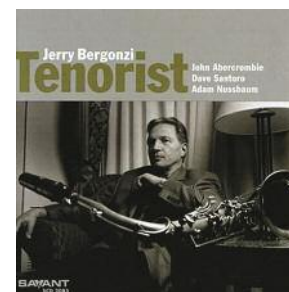


Michael Gandolfi's orchestral suite, with the conductor who premiered it.

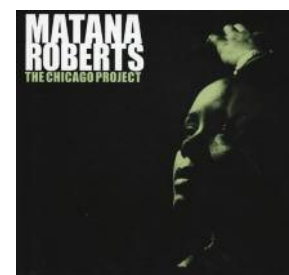
"ASO Takes a Walk on the Wild Side"
—Atlanta Journal Constitution headline



The 2008 Grammy Award for "Album of the Year" went to a jazz album for the first time since 1964. Vocalist Luciana Souza '94 M.M. and NEC Visiting Artist-in-Residence Dave Holland collaborated on this project.



"Bergonzi's latest is waking more people up to what all those saxophonists have known.."
—John Garelick, Boston Phoenix



Alto saxophonist/composer Matana Roberts '03 M.M., rated one of "New York's 10 Best Performances of 2007" by *allaboutjazz.com*, nods to her home town, Chicago, and its Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians.

OUTSTANDING REUNION



Her reunion happens every day

For many alumni, a Reunion visit to NEC may be the first time they've been on campus in 10, 25, even 50 years. For Carole Haber '83 M.M., who is being honored in May with an Outstanding Alumni Award, Reunion happens every day—because she teaches at NEC in Room 220, where she once had her weekly voice lesson.

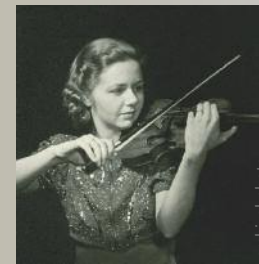
Haber, a lyric coloratura soprano, studied with one of NEC's teaching legends, Helen Hodam. Quite apart from her considerable success on the opera and concert stage—where she has played the Queen of the Night and introduced new music by Daniel Pinkham—Haber is now a teaching legend in her own right, with a studio schedule filled to capacity.

The arenas where Haber's students are heard—ones that have been filled by her own voice—represent a reunion of yet another kind. And the variety that has made up Haber's own career is evident in her students as well. In a single day, Haber can address the musical theater ambitions of undergraduate Ryan Martinez—as well as help his older brother, graduate student Brandon Martinez, sustain an opera role throughout a run.

Join Carole Haber, NEC's other Reunion honorees, and all your old friends at Reunion 2008, May 16–18.



archival photo
Roger Voisin



archival photo
Lydia Woods



The Neume 1929
Esther Sands Hocker

In Memoriam

Alumni Esther Sands Hocker '29 DP • Carlyle Nelson '29 B.M. • Antigone (Economides) Helmis '34 DP • Eleanor Congdon Putney '36 B.M. • Ethel (Zung) Rubin '36 DP • Lydia Hinckley Woods '37 DP • Takouhi Chorbajian Der Manuelian '45 DP, '47 B.M., '50 A.D. • Loring T. "Pete" Briggs '50 • John R. Carmody '50 DP • Robert T. Chaplin '50 • John Lewis Manuel Jr. '50 • Frank G. Bono '51, '56 • Lorraine Alice Phillips Brill '51 • Elizabeth "Betsy" (Johnston) Ostroff '51 • William Holbert '52 • Carlo Racamato '57 • Richard A. Beauregard '59 • Thomas P. Mills '59, '71 M.M. • Robert Donaldson '63 • Sheldon Morgenstern '66 M.M. • Albert Rawlins '72 M.M. **Faculty** Roger Voisin

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

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Chair, Board of Trustees

Tony Woodcock
President

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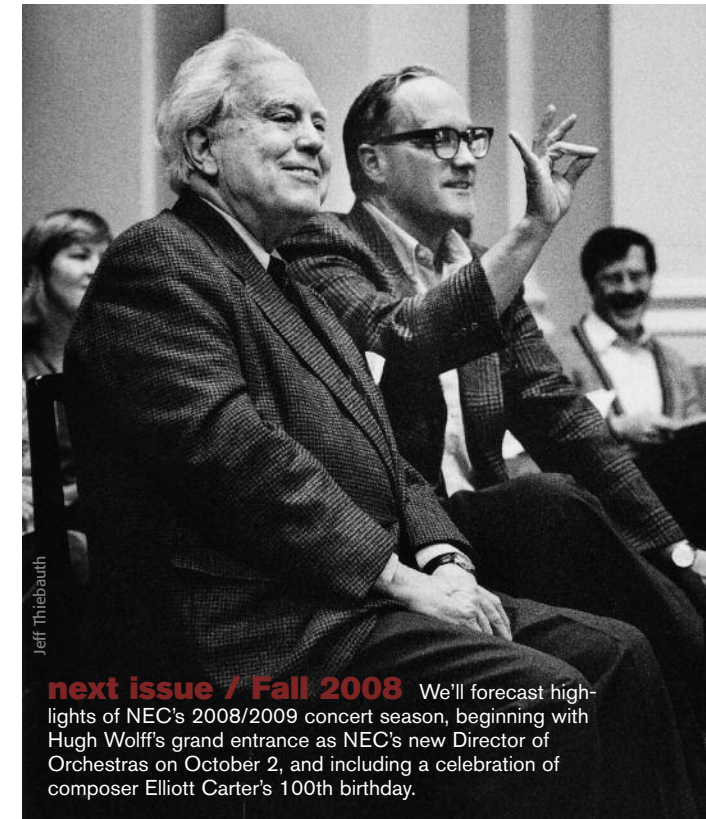
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NOTES is published for alumni, parents,
and other friends of the Conservatory.
We invite your comments.



Jeff Thiebaut

next issue / Fall 2008 We'll forecast highlights of NEC's 2008/2009 concert season, beginning with Hugh Wolff's grand entrance as NEC's new Director of Orchestras on October 2, and including a celebration of composer Elliott Carter's 100th birthday.