



EMANUEL AX AND KELLY HALL-TOMPKINS AT THE OLIVIERI CENTER FOR WOMEN

Someone's in the Kitchen

The idea emerged gradually. Before performing a work in public, violinist Kelly Hall-Tompkins has always liked to play it through for colleagues. But in February 2004, as she was preparing for a concerto appearance with the Greenville (South Carolina) Symphony, her husband, percussionist Joe Tompkins, came up with another idea. Tompkins works as coordinator of the cooks at the men's shelter at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan; he suggested that she try performing the music for the shelter residents.

While Hall-Tompkins played her program—Mozart's Violin Concerto no. 4 and an encore of Kreisler's *Recitative and Scherzo*—some of the residents went on about

their business. But others stopped and listened, evidently engaged by what they were hearing. It was enough of response to plant a thought in her head. A year later, in March 2005, that idea bore fruit in **Music Kitchen/Food for the Soul**, a regular series of concerts in which accomplished classical musicians play for homeless people. "This isn't an *underserved* audience," says Hall-Tompkins. "It's a completely *non-served* audience."

The concerts take place at Holy Trinity Lutheran, as well as at the Olivieri Center, a shelter for women. Hall-Tompkins has drawn on friends and colleagues to create a pool of participating musicians. Sometimes the performers find themselves engaged in extra-musical activities—as at the very first concert, when the volunteer cooks didn't show up at the shelter, obliging the musicians to whip up a spaghetti dinner before they sat down to Brahms and Mozart.

Some of the performers—Emanuel Ax, for example—have come from outside of Hall-Tompkins's immediate circle. She approached the pianist during a break at a New Jersey Symphony rehearsal (she's in the violin section); and when she told him about her project, he volunteered to perform. She managed to get Steinway to donate a piano for the day to the Olivieri Center and treated the residents to a program of Beethoven's Violin Sonata no. 1 and the Brahms B-Major Piano Trio, both with Ax. "I went around before the performance telling people, 'Believe it or not, there's going to be a piano right here—and a world-famous pianist to play it!'" says Hall-Tompkins. "They couldn't believe it. It was a glorious day."

Although some in the Music Kitchen's audience members are newcomers to classical music, others bring a lifetime of awareness to the concerts. "Homelessness has no prerequisite: These people can come from all walks of life," says Hall-Tompkins. "We've played for people who come from careers in international business and universities, and they find themselves now to be homeless. One woman said she had worked for the Boston Symphony. I found that particularly poignant."

Hall-Tompkins talks about her "BHAGs"—her "Big Hairy Audacious Goals." One is to get a corporate sponsor to help her expand Music Kitchen/Food for the Soul's activities and repertoire. Another goal is more personal: "My BHAG is that homeless people would be so familiar with this music that they would feel totally comfortable attending a free concert alongside other patrons," she says. "What if these people could come to Carnegie Hall and not feel out of place and ashamed, but have a real personal stake in what's going on there?"

www.kellyhall-tompkins.com www.musickitchennyc.org

The Sound of Glass Shattering

"Whenever I hear the word 'diversity,' I get worried," says **Sarah Manning**. The concept of diversity itself isn't troubling: As a female instrumentalist—a saxophone player, no less—Manning certainly brings diversity to the male-dominated world of jazz. But she rankles at the idea that her gender makes her an oddity. "One time at a gig, someone told me to get up there and 'be a female musician,'" she says. "It means that you're considered separate from jazz as a whole."

Manning (who's based in Berkeley, California) has knowingly planned her new quartet, Shatter the Glass, to be seen as part of the jazz mainstream. She is the group's front person, but the other three members are men: pianist Art Hirahara, bassist Thomson Kneeland and drummer Kyle Struve. "I made a conscious decision not to have an all-female group," says Manning. "In addition to avoiding the 'girl group' trap—where it is too easy to be marginalized—I think that it's important to show that men are comfortable being a part of a group led by a woman."

Manning's ambitions for Shatter the Glass go beyond performance. She intends to use the group as a means of

bringing women and girls into jazz. This summer, she plans a week-long residency in an art space in Northampton, Massachusetts. The storefront location will allow local residents to walk in and listen to the group's rehearsals. Meanwhile, Manning has contacted local music teachers to recommend female students. During the residency, she'll work with one student a day, and talk with them about the problems they might face as jazz musicians.

Ultimately, Manning would like to get nonprofit status for Shatter the Glass. One of her chief reasons: Creating a structure where the quartet can perform outside of the standard jazz-club circuit. "There are places I've played where I wouldn't want my fans to come—where they wouldn't be able to listen to the music" she says. "And they're called 'jazz clubs!'"

Manning cites the Kronos Quartet as a model for Shatter the Glass—a group that looks beyond market considerations to play difficult, worthy new music. By pursuing a nonprofit model, Shatter the Glass can build a full rehearsal schedule into its activities, allowing the quartet to tackle music that could never be

sight-read on the bandstand, and would land with a thud in most jazz clubs.

"While many jazz standards can make pleasant background music in a restaurant, new music is not acceptable in many traditional jazz venues," says Manning. "After all, do you really want to be overwhelmed with emotion while tucking into a pile of garlic mashed potatoes?"

www.shattertheglass.org
www.sarahmanningmusic.com



SARAH MANNING

American Ensemble

Club Act

A veteran chamber music fan would find the music familiar, but not the venues. The background chatter doesn't necessarily stop while the musicians play; ice in cocktail glasses creates a tinkling obbligato; individual movements get rounds of applause; cigarette smoke (laws permitting) clogs the air. Sometimes there are even requests from the audience. The **Parker String Quartet** (Daniel Chong and Karen Kim, violins; Jessica Bodner, violist; and Kee-Hyun Kim, cello) has lately been playing rock clubs. This past fall, the quartet toured from Massachusetts to North Carolina with Manhattan singer/songwriter Wynn Walent, whose intimate style fits well with the Parker's music-making, drawing in crowds that proved extraordinarily receptive to classical chamber music. The tour was the brainchild of Patrick Hammond of Concert Artists Guild, the quartet's management.

Most of the details of the Parker's professional life are status quo for an up-and-coming classical ensemble: a residency at New England Conservatory in the Professional String Quartet Training Program; regular appearances in traditional venues like Weill Recital Hall in New York, the Gardner Museum in Boston and the William Andrews Clark

Memorial Library at UCLA. But at places like Barbès in Brooklyn or the Lizard Lounge in Boston, the group steps off the beaten track, appearing before audiences composed mainly of chamber music novices. The program is straightforward concert fare—Mozart, Haydn and Schumann mixed with modern pieces by Kurtág, Ligeti and Webern—but most often performed a movement at a time, with the musicians offering commentary beforehand. “Most of the people are basically our own age, so it's like talking to your friends about music,” says Karen Kim, the group's second violinist.

In mixing club gigs in with more conventional engagements, the quartet is gaining exposure for chamber music among people who would be loath to set foot in a recital hall. “The biggest thing I've learned is that people love the music,” says Kim. “Other factors prevent them from going to concert halls—high ticket prices, a fear of the unknown. There's a lot of protocol: It doesn't always feel like the most relaxed or fun thing to do.”

For the musicians themselves, the club dates provide an energizing change. They find it especially interesting when they get to perform the same piece back-to-back in a traditional concert and a club. “You can play a movement of Schumann [at a club], and people will be like ‘Wow, that was really awesome,’” says Kim. “It's a much more visceral reaction.” www.parkerquartet.com



THE PARKER STRING QUARTET

The Piano Man Gives Back

Composer Laura Kaminsky was looking for scholarship money. She had started in 2004 as dean of the **Conservatory of Music at Purchase College**, part of the State University of New York, and soon identified some specialized areas that needed funds that could not come out of a state budget. Chief among them: a graduate string quartet-in-residence.

Help was on its way. “Out of the blue, we got a phone call,” Kaminsky reports. “The man told us he was representing a distinguished person in the entertainment field who had selected a number of musical institutions for grants of approximately a quarter-million each. ‘This person's concern is that young musicians have a difficult time sustaining their careers and often give up.’ We were given a question: Could our institution address this?”

The net result: This fall, the young iO quartet came to Purchase as its first Billy Joel String Quartet in Residence. “We were told the donor was ‘somebody who didn't want to be named who cares about the plight of young musicians,’ and I thought of Billy Joel,” says Kaminsky. “Once we were further along in negotiations, he was announced as the person behind this generous gift.”

Purchase is one of seven East Coast music institutions to receive gifts of roughly \$300,000 from the Billy Joel Endowment Fund; other recipients include the Eastman School of Music, the Tanglewood Music Center, the Juilliard School and New England Conservatory. “There's nothing complicated about it,” says Edwin London, Joel's business manager and the liaison with the beneficiaries. “It was a way of [Joel] showing his own interest in support, and perhaps stimulate others in the industry to do the same. He simply selected some worthy organizations within his geographic area.”

The Purchase program has been structured to bridge the resident quartet's transition from student to professional life. As part of its residency, the iO quartet is playing on campus, as well as going on outreach ventures into inner-city schools, in tandem with the new music string quartet Ethel. But a significant focus of the program is focused on providing iO with the kind of guidance that doesn't

come from a coaching session: applying for 501(c)3 non-profit status, generating publicity photos and press materials, preparing applications for grants and competitions.

Perhaps iO's biggest boost from the residency, though, is the ability to *behave* as a quartet. “Last year, if we had a concert, we'd need to be prepared, but we'd have a month in between engagements doing our own thing,” says Christopher Gross, the group's cellist. “All of us are paying New York City rents, so we still have to do things on the side to make it work—we still aren't musically monogamous—but it has given us the opportunity to be working continually. It's the difference between what a professional quartet and an ad hoc group does—and the residency is completely the reason.”

They're words that might well warm Billy Joel's heart. music@purchase.edu; www.ioquartet.com



THE iO QUARTET

Rocky Mountain High

The dominant pastimes each winter at Colorado's Durango Mountain Resort are two-mile-high skiing and snowboarding. But for three weeks every summer, the base of Purgatory Mountain hosts an entirely different activity: **Music in the Mountains**, an annual classical music festival that features orchestral and chamber concerts, along with a conservatory that brings 150 young musicians to the Rockies to work with participating musicians.

Considering the spectacular setting, the festival makes a natural tourist destination. But the core of its support comes from the neighboring community—the town of Durango and its surrounding areas. It has proved an unusually welcoming environment for both the music and the performers. Many of the musicians return year after year; some have even bought homes in the area and plan eventually to retire there. And many of the locals—a combination of longtime residents and urban exiles—bring an abiding love of music to the festival's activities.

"It's an absolutely beautiful place," says Gregory Hustis, principal horn of the Dallas

Symphony Orchestra and the festival's director of chamber music. "And it's like the rest of Colorado, where you can't find a place with more than six people and a herd of cattle that doesn't have music in the summer."

This summer's performances will take place in the festival's existing 550-seat tent. But in 2007, the festival will have a whole new look, with a brand-new 700-seat tent and ample lawn seating. While the present tent shuts out the surrounding vistas, the new one will open up in back toward the West Needle Mountains, treating audience members to a spectacular view as they listen. ("We're keeping the tentmakers in business," says Hustis.) The festival orchestra will also have a new conductor, chosen from a field of seven. In an unusual arrangement, each of the seven contenders was invited to conduct a concert with the orchestra; three appeared in 2006, and the remaining four will be seen this summer.

Even though the Music in the Mountains festival is limited to late July and early August, its local presence lasts all year. Its "Taste of Music" program sends musicians into area schools to perform and teach. The festival's ongoing efforts raised awareness of classical music to such an extent that 250 of the school district's 4,800 students are studying string instruments; the students even have their own string orchestra.

"There's something special about this community," says Tom Jones, president of the festival's board. "The community loves music, and the musicians love Durango." www.musicinthemountains.com

SEGUES

Sebastian Currier's *Static* (scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano) has become the first chamber work for which a composer has received a Grawemeyer Award, an international honor carrying a prize of \$200,000. The piece was commissioned by **Music from Copland House**.

The violist **Yu Jin** has joined the Ohio-based **Miami String Quartet**, marking the MSQ's first personnel change in 12 years. She replaces longtime violist **Chauncey Patterson**, who has retired from the quartet for medical reasons. Jin has been the principal of Canton Symphony Orchestra, City Music Cleveland, and second chair of Red {an Orchestra}. The Miami String Quartet is quartet-in-residence at Kent State University and visiting quartet-in-residence at The Hartt School of the University of Hartford.

In January, the board of directors of Boston's **Longy School of Music** elected **Karen Zorn** to be the school's tenth president. Zorn succeeds Anna Kuwabara, who served as interim president since 2006, and Kwang-Wu Kim, who had stepped down to become dean of the Herberger College of Fine Arts at Arizona State University at Tempe. Ms. Zorn was previously associate provost and associate vice-president of Berklee School of Music.

In Memoriam

Whitney Balliett, jazz critic
Michael Brecker, saxophonist
Alice Coltrane, pianist
Peggy Gilbert, saxophonist and bandleader
Carter Harman, composer, critic, record producer
Leroy Jenkins, violinist/composer
Siegfried Landau, conductor
Gian Carlo Menotti, composer
Bob Rosengarden, percussionist
John Thow, composer

Swan Song

After a career of nearly four decades, the **Vermeer Quartet** (Shmuel Askenasi, Mathias Tacke, Richard Young, and Marc Johnson) decided to make this season its last. The decision was announced last year during its annual performance of Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ* at Rockefeller Chapel in Chicago. But in fact, the members had been planning the disbandment for more than four years before that.

"The impetus came from me," admits Johnson, the group's cellist. "My wife wanted to be able to put a number on when [the quartet] was going to come to an end and we could move into the next portion of our lives." Johnson told his colleagues that he would understand if they wanted to find a new cellist to replace him, but all concerned ultimately decided it would better to simply dissolve the group.

According to Johnson, apart from the understandable desire to lead a more settled life and leave behind a 100,000-mile-a-year touring itinerary, the decision has a quit-while-you're-ahead aspect. "I've seen a lot of our esteemed older colleagues play past the point where they should have stopped," he says. "You want to play only while you have the possibility of playing well. We think maybe we've got that right."

Needless to say, this final season has packed an emotional punch for the musicians. They know that their final concert will be loaded with emotion. (It will take place late in the year at the Bay Chamber Concerts in Rockport, Maine.) "What we hadn't anticipated was that it would be a whole season of last concerts in places where we had home stadia," says Johnson. "We had our last concert in Amsterdam, our last concert in Paris, our last concert in New York."

"For all of us, it's been our life's work," says Johnson. "This season feels extra sweet."

