

The Leading Note Foundation

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2008

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **August 26, 2008:** Sinfonia Ottawa presents a summer fundraising concert in support of the Leading Note Foundation, 8 p.m. at the First Unitarian Congregation, 30 Cleary Avenue, Ottawa. See page 2 for more details.
- **September 16 & 18, 2008:** KidSingers and OrKidstra begin their second year of classes!

OrKidstra hits the road with three-school tour

The OrKidstra took it to the streets in April and May, with performances at three local schools. On April 30, the group stopped in at Cambridge Street Public School, then it was on to St. Anthony for a May 1 appearance. The mini tour ended May 8 with a performance at Centennial Public School. These three Centretown schools are the main schools from which the program draws its OrKidstra students. "Some kids were really nervous about performing for their friends,"



says Leading Note staffer and OrKidstra helper Sheilah Craven, "but they all played really well and their school buddies were very enthusiastic".

The tour followed on the heels of OrKidstra's exciting first concert performance on April 28 in Mac Hall at the Bronson Centre.

Aside from providing an opportunity to see OrKidstra in action, the school concerts were also a successful recruiting tool for the new KidSingers program. Director Marg Stubington was on hand to lead the audiences in some vocal participation and help introduce KidSingers. Certainly a wonderful ending to our first official teaching season!

Summer strings and singing



How do we know our kids love OrKidstra? Twenty children auditioned and participated in our summer string program, which began June 2 and wrapped up June 30 with another superb concert. The program was made possible by a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Ottawa.

With the summer session came another new feature we're excited to announce here: the KidSingers choir. Led by Marg Stubington, an Ottawa based music director and composer who has led some of the city's best community choirs (see page 4 for more), KidSingers is the wonderful sound of 25 young voices only just discovering their full abilities.

"Basically, she's super excited," said one mother of her daughter, adding that her KidSinger has been giving private vocal performances over the phone to family members

in India.

The new group joined their OrKidstra compatriots in wowing the full house of family and fans that filled Mac Hall at the Bronson Centre for the June 30 performance. Though the program gave ample opportunity for both KidSingers and OrKidstra players to demonstrate their remarkable progress thus far, the groups were particularly stunning when they combined on a number of pieces, including *Dona Nobis Pacem*, or when mixed and matched, as when the choir and string players collaborated on *Are You Sleeping?*

Whatever the combinations, all the players and singers rose to teacher/conductor/arranger Margaret Munro Tobolowska's pre-show suggestion that the group "fill the room" with sound.

The enthusiasm was as evident among the performers as in the audience; when not busy singing,

various KidSingers were seen bobbing their heads and even playing 'air violin' along with their peers on violin and cello.

During their raucous version of Stephen Hatfield's *Foggy Birthday Shuffle*, the KidSingers showed a bit of flair, ending one line with a powerful declaration of 'What you said-uh!'

"I'm very impressed by their level," said Margaret to the very happy audience mid-show. "I really feel they've done a great job."

Those in attendance heartily agreed and showed their appreciation with plenty of "Bravos!" and whistling.

The summer session wasn't all work, however; the students were treated to a session-ending pizza party. Music wasn't entirely forgotten though and the students enjoyed an animated adaptation of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* along with selections from Disney's *Fantasia 2000* at the party.

**"Basically,
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papa in India
over the
phone."**

**- A KidSingers
mom**

**"I'm very
impressed by
their level. I
really feel
they've done a
great job."**

**- Margaret
Munro
Tobolowska
at our year
ending concert**

Foundation board combines passion, expertise

As you've already seen, the first OrKidstra season ended with a bravura performance by both our summer string students and the new KidSingers group.

There are some exciting, new behind-the-scenes additions to tell you about as well; namely, the formation of the Leading Note Foundation's board of directors. Tina Fedeski has been named Executive Director of the Foundation.

The Board includes some faces you'll already know, including Leading Note co-owner Gary McMillen, who will lead the board as chair. Gary is also an amateur cellist (and former rock drummer), having performed with local ensembles such as The Strings of St. John's.

Executive Director Tina Fedeski is, of course, co-owner of the Leading Note with husband Gary, co-founder of the foundation and OrKidstra, as well as an in-demand freelance flautist and teacher in her own right.

Board member Margaret Tobolowska worked closely with Tina to found the OrKidstra program and is a cellist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra when not teaching with OrKidstra.

Secretary Sheilah Craven, aside from being manager of the Leading Note, holds a degree in music therapy from Wilfrid Laurier University, is a soprano with Ottawa community choir Tone Cluster and plays keyboards in The City Above, a local rock band.

Vice-chair Sylvia Gazsi-Gill is a former elementary school teacher, percussionist, and the founding executive director of the Nadasdy Foundation for Arts and the Environment, an international not-for-profit body dedicated to founding a centre for arts and the environment in Hungary. Sylvia became actively involved with the Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra more than 30 years ago and served as its executive director for eight years.

Gary Katz, the board's treasurer, is a chartered accountant and partner in Logan Katz LLP and a budding guitarist.

Legal advisor Stéphane Emard-Chabot teaches in the University of Ottawa's law faculty, served two terms as a downtown city councillor on the pre-amalgamation Ottawa council and is an amateur flautist.

Board member Barbara Clark founded the Ottawa regional youth choir in 1982 and retired as its conductor in 2007. Barbara was named to the Order of Canada in 2001 and has served as artistic director for the UNISONG Festival, which brings together hundreds of choristers each year for an en masse performance to mark Canada Day in Ottawa.

Ottawa resident and amateur flautist Robin Higham recently retired from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade while extending his interest in policy research through the University of Ottawa's Centre on Governance. There, he has studied the

areas of cultural pluralism, cultural diplomacy and the governance of culturally diverse societies.

Susan Carter is a practitioner and analyst working in the not-for-profit sector, addressing specifically development in that area as well as relationships between non-profit organizations and government both in Canada and abroad.

Formerly a teacher in Ottawa, Cheryl Casey devoted countless volunteer hours during her years as a stay at home mother to the Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy, the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and other arts groups.

Bob Gayner joined the federal government's Trade Commissioner Service in 1957 before being named Canada's ambassador to Iraq and serving as consul general in Chicago. He next managed an agency of the Canadian International Development Agency assisting businesses based in eastern Europe in doing business in Canada.

Judith Szabo is the principal partner of J.J. Szabo International, an Ottawa based consulting firm specializing in international strategic communications, marketing and project management. A former journalist and broadcaster, she also sits on the Canadian Board of Directors for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM Canada).

All in all, an impressive group of dedicated individuals.

Sinfonia Ottawa steps up with fundraiser

Since the publication of our last newsletter, community support for the Foundation's work has continued to be strong.

On May 11, supporter John Royle opened his home to host an impressive line-up of performers, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra's wind quintet.

Charles Hamann (oboe), Joanna G'froerer (flute), Lawrence Vine (French horn), Christopher Millard (bassoon) and Kimball Sykes (clarinet), were accompanied by Stéphane Lemelin on piano.

John hosts one or two concerts a month in his home. It was Lawrence Vine who suggested the quintet perform and that they collect donations for the Foundation.

"I was delighted when Larry suggested

that and immediately accepted," says the host.

Over \$1,000 was donated and John is actively involved in another fundraiser set for this month.

On August 26, Sinfonia Ottawa, a local summer orchestra (John is currently president) will perform. Janos Csaba will conduct and organizer Peggy Atherton promises a program of wide appeal.

Soloists Matthias Maute and Sophie Lariviere will be part of Sinfonia's performance of Maute's own composition, On the Death of Henry Purcell.

Pianist Elaine Keillor, also a distinguished research professor emerita at Carleton University, will perform the solo in Haydn's Piano Concerto in G major.

"We strongly support The Leading Note Foundation's mission to provide opportunities for children to learn music, develop creativity, teamwork and other skills, in a community-based environment," says Peggy. "We hope that proceeds from the concert will contribute to the funding of this important task."

The performance will take place at Ottawa's First Unitarian Congregation (30 Cleary Avenue) beginning at 8 p.m. Adult tickets are \$22 in advance (\$25 at the door). Students will be admitted for \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door, while children under 12 will be admitted free of charge.

Advance tickets are available from The Leading Note (370 Elgin Street). For more information, please visit www.sinfoniaottawa.ca or call 819-684-7360.

Thank you to our Donors who supported our first year!

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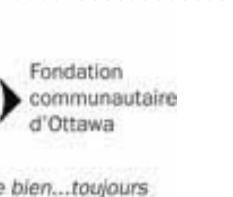
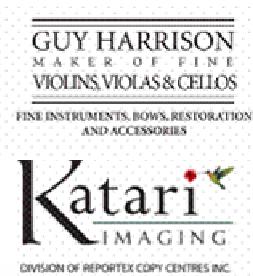
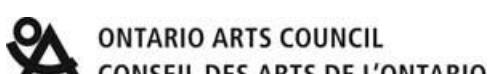
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Many thanks once again to our generous donors for supporting our crucial first year. Ongoing support to continue building this vital program will be most happily received!

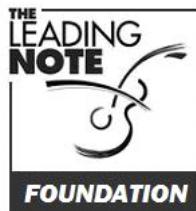
Many thanks to our invaluable teachers: Susan Rupp, Jean Barsalou, Paul Casey, David Thies-Thompson, Andrea Armijo Fortin, Alma Thrift, Margaret Tobolowska, Anne-Marie Guedon, Peter Rapson, Brian Yoon, Karen Donnelly, Jonathan Sandler, Tina Fedeski, Marg Stubington, Shannon Cole, Laura Hawley and our mentors from the Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy.

Many thanks to the numerous performers who donated their time and talent to fundraising events for us: Leah Roseman, Mark Friedman, Edvard Skerjanc, Sally Benson, Jane Logan, David Thies-Thompson, Leah Wyber, Margaret Munro Tobolowska, Karen Donnelly, John Ellis, Jill Kirwan, Don Renshaw, Nick Atkinson, Bryan Cheng, Jeremy Gibbens, Brandon Zhao, Thirteen Strings, Renée-Paule Gauthier, Frédéric Lacroix, Laura Hawley, Nick Piper, Shannon Cole, Wendy Berkelaar, Joanna G'froerer, Charles Hamann, Larry Vine, Kimball Sykes, Stéphane Lemelin, Sinfonia Ottawa.

Many thanks to our great supporters in so many roles: Sylvia Gazsi-Gill, John Royle, Jill Laforty, Denise Fung, Steven Mazey, McLeod-Stewarton United Church, Colin Traquair, Troy Kay, Paula Koundakjian, Lesley Hendry, Steven Fouchard, Sheila Craven, Barbara Riley, Greg Idasz, Jennie Riddick, Christine Johnson, Venezuelan Embassy, The Leading Note music store, Gary McMillen.



The Leading Note Foundation received official charitable status in July. Our donors can expect to receive their tax receipts soon!



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Mandate

The mandate of The Leading Note Foundation is to give children from low-income communities the opportunity to learn and make music together and the chance to benefit from the individual skills and community values that are inherent in music-making.

Mission Statement

The Leading Note Foundation will:

- provide children in low-income communities with free group and individual music lessons and the opportunity to perform in an OrKidstra;
- instill and reinforce mutual respect, discipline, teamwork, creativity, and self-confidence — all values and skills that are inherent in music-making;
- foster community participation by encouraging young musicians to become mentors to children in the program;
- broaden the community's understanding of the value of music and the arts by involving volunteers with diverse backgrounds and skills to establish a vibrant network of music educators, players, and community members to strengthen music programs.

Meeting Marg: KidSingers director speaks

Can you discuss your educational background and run down your professional experiences to date?

I studied piano at McGill but had an arm injury in third year and that forced me to focus less on solo piano and more on other activities. I learned how to play the organ, and did some church work (singing and playing organ) and choir conducting. After graduating from McGill (1984) I worked as a musician doing various jobs from '84 - '90. I was also always singing in good amateur choirs and accompanying choirs or singers. In '90 I moved to Ottawa thinking that I'd end up being an elementary school teacher (which would have been ultimately more sensible). I tried teaching for awhile (part-time '92-'97 ESL and Adult Literacy) but always kept up some piano teaching. I got busier with Ottawa community choirs too.

Have you worked with children before this?

Yes. Piano teaching - mostly children at first - has been a constant since I was about 21. I also volunteered at the MacKay Centre for Deaf Crippled Children in Montréal for two years and was a summer camp counsellor for 6 weeks at Camp Massawippi (North Hatley, Quebec). That was an eye opener and hard work but wonderful. At 26 I became a choir director for the Suzuki Summer Camp held in Montréal.

How does KidSingers differ from your work with adults?

Children pick up tunes and words so quickly, in new languages as well. You have to stay a step ahead of them and that's a good challenge. They also pick up good habits for singing and performing (and bad ones!) so in many ways I'm more self-conscious as a director when I'm with children.

In general, how did the first KidSingers season go? How have the kids progressed and what's in store for the next session?

The singers did a wonderful job in the short time we rehearsed. I was very lucky to have pianist Laura Hawley and singer Shannon Cole with me; Shannon worked separately with an older group and gave me good advice about some of the young voices. Good positive energy for me and the kids. We had about 25 kids ages 6-13 for 8 sessions. They learned many songs and performed five of them in the concert; one sung in Latin, one in Hebrew, one in Swahili and two in English. They worked very co-operatively despite large age differences. They also sang with the orchestra which was a great opportunity. In September we hope to offer choir, on Tuesday afternoons, to two age groups - grades 2,3 and grades 3,4,5. They will sometimes work together but most often separately. We'll do basic music reading and

some solfège and rhythm in addition to singing songs. Choir is a good place to learn many of the rudiments of music. Eventually some children will move onto other instruments, some, we hope, may even be interested in auditioning for children's choirs in the city (like the Ottawa Children's Choir). I would also like to introduce songs that the children bring from their own countries of origin, cultures. Mark Wilkinson will be working with me; he is a University of Ottawa voice student doing a practicum with KidSingers. I'll have lots of fun with Mark; he's got a lot of experience with choir singing - this summer he's touring with the Ontario Youth Choir - and has worked with children. Having a young man studying voice as a role model for the kids is a bonus.

What have you enjoyed most about the experience so far?

I've enjoyed working with Tina and Margaret and Susan - their dedication, good humour, patience, many long hours planning and teaching, lugging instruments, stands... (I only worked a few months, unlike them!) This first year has been so successful. I've enjoyed being around children from many different countries. I feel very lucky to be involved.