

# PALO ALTO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Newsletter

## From the Music Director, Benjamin Simon:

Midway into our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, I have many exciting things to report. I hope you all got a chance to read the wonderful feature article about PACO in the October 21 issue of the Palo Alto Weekly. Copies are available in the PACO office if you missed it. This was a great kickoff to our season.

SuperStrings and Prep are thriving under Kris' watchful eyes and ears, and working towards their first concerts on January 27 (Prep) and February 3 (SS). They are learning, as are all 5 PACO orchestras and many of our alumni, the Third Brandenburg Concerto of our "gala presentation" of "Super-Sized Bach" on the February 25<sup>th</sup> (San Francisco) and 26<sup>th</sup> (Palo Alto) Senior PACO concerts. I hope you will join us at one or both of these concerts – and calling all alumni to help us make a great, big, joyful noise in the Bach. Information for alumni is on a special web page at [www.pacomusic.org/members/alumni](http://www.pacomusic.org/members/alumni).

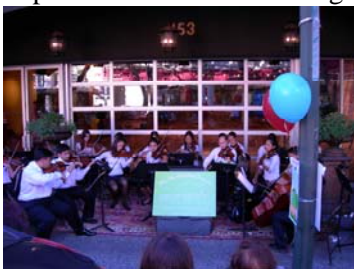
The Debut Ensemble made a wonderful debut on November 13 in concert featuring SF Opera Orchestra cellist Ruth Lane performing Haydn and Thomas Goss – a contemporary New Zealander who visited the orchestra during one of their rehearsals and was very impressed with – and inspirational to – our young musicians. Eugene Sor has taken Debut under his (tall) wing at present, and is preparing them for the Brandenburg performances as well as their second concert on March 5.



Sinfonia, led by Doris Fukawa, has just returned from a successful holiday concert at Pescadero where the absence of our box of percussion instruments necessitated the use of pots and pans during the performance. Needless to say, the concert was a smash hit! I led the ensemble in their first concert on November 19, which featured an amazing performance of Mozart's Violin Concerto #3 in G by Sinfonia member Juhye Lee and a top-notch reading of Arensky's difficult Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky. We had a fantastic time learning Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" in two rehearsals and joining the Senior ensemble for a double-PACO full symphony orchestra on the December 17 concert.



The Senior orchestra has been very busy this Fall. An appearance in downtown Palo Alto's September 2 Art Walk brought passersby to a halt and stopped traffic for blocks. On October 23 we set up shop in the middle of the Stanford Shopping Center and played for a very appreciative audience. These events may have helped to bring a large and enthusiastic crowd to our first-ever Dinkelspiel Auditorium performance on October 29, which was declared "Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra Day" by councilwoman Yuriko Kishimoto.



The program featured noted violinist and PACO alumna Krista Bennion Feeney performing Mozart and Vivaldi. It was such fun working with Krista, and seeing her obvious delight in returning to PACO and her love of music and talent for sharing her musical thoughts so inspiring to our young musicians.

Then it was right back to work for our Seniors, all of whom are juggling fierce sophomore and junior years in high school (or else that endlessly consuming task of college applications) with PACO's high musical demands. Our second concert on December 17 featured alumna violinist/violist (and rising piano goddess) Tanya Gabrielian performing Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto (see interview in this issue for a fascinating glimpse into this very interesting and passionate young artist), plus the above-mentioned double-PACO Schubert symphony and the premiere of a new arrangement for string orchestra of selections from Leonard Bernstein's wonderful West Side Story.

**Other news:** preliminary planning for PACO's next international tour, scheduled for late June/early July 2007. Destination still undecided, but likely central Europe: Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg where so much of our great classical music originated. Stay tuned for details. Programs for our three Bach Celebration Concerts are being finalized, and you won't want to miss a single one: March 12 (Jonathan Salzedo), March 19 (Kris Yenney), March 26 (Ben Simon).

And if I needed any more corroborating evidence, my final item here will be to report on our recent 4<sup>th</sup> Annual PACO concerto competition. Let me say first that I believe music is NOT a competitive activity, and Kris, Linh and I are constantly working to lessen the competitive pressures and impulses inherent in a hierarchical system such as an orchestra. I tell my young charges that it is not "about" sitting first chair or playing louder/faster than anyone else: music is an art about feelings/emotions/colors/relationships and the joy of music resides in the sharing and communicating using the unique language that is music. OK, now back to the "competition": we drew a record number of PACO players, 34 in all. I think it's great that so many of our young musicians practiced so well and were courageous enough to stand in front of me and play. The level of commitment and musicality on display was truly outstanding, and I congratulate each and every one of you: you're all "winners" in the most important sense. Here is the list of those chosen to play a solo on an upcoming PACO concert; I hope you will support all of these performances with your attendance.

Soloists on the June 2, 2006 SuperStrings Concert

**Kevin Chen (violin) - Vivaldi Summer**

**Erica Buonanno (violin) - Vivaldi Concerto in A minor (first movement)**

Soloists on the May 19, 2006 Preparatory Orchestra Concert

**Ashwin Swaminathan (violin) - Accolay Concerto in A minor (first movement)**

**Jennifer Kim (violin) - Vivaldi Concerto in G (Op 3 #3)**

Soloists on the June 4, 2006 Debut Ensemble Concert

**Veronica Kim/Cindy Chang (violins) - Vivaldi 2 Violin Concerto in A minor (Op 3 #8)**

Soloists on the May 13, 2006 Sinfonia Concert

**Stephen Kim (violin) - de Beriot Concerto #9 in A minor, op. 104**

**Tom Yaron (violin) - Haydn Concerto #2 in G Major**

**Emily Hou (violin) - Saint-Saens Havanaise Op. 83**

**Timothy Kim (violin) - Beethoven Romance in G**

Soloist on the November 2006 Sinfonia Concert (date TBA)

**Theodore Chao (violin)**

Soloists on the June 2007 PACO Concert & International Tour (dates TBA)

**Christine Chon (violin)**

**George Lu (cello)**

## An interview with international piano sensation Tanya Gabriëlian:

On December 17, 2005 Tanya returned from London to her musical roots at PACO to perform Beethoven's Piano Concerto #5 with the Senior Orchestra on their second subscription concert at Dinkelspiel Auditorium.

PACO: When were you in PACO? You played violin, yes?



TG: I started PACO when I was in 5th grade and stayed until I graduated high school in 2000. I did join on the violin, although now I do fully understand the superiority of the viola. [editor's note: This shows Tanya's obvious maturity as a musician!]

PACO: When did you start music lessons? Violin?? Piano?? Were they equal for you when you were growing up?

TG: I started piano at the age of 3, and violin just before I turned 5. I played more violin than piano until about 12 or 13. Although I do miss many things about string playing, particularly the intimacy that can be achieved in chamber music, I enjoy the self-sufficiency of the piano.

PACO: Was your household a musical one? How did you parents encourage your musical education?

TG: There are no musicians in my immediate family, but my parents were very encouraging. They took me to lessons, and put up with my hours of scraping away at the violin and banging away at the piano without complaints, probably with lots of aspirin to ease the headaches. I don't think you could ask any more from a parent.

PACO: What was PACO like when you were here?

TG: We were one big family--still many of my closest friends today were part of the orchestra. Bill Whitson created such a warm and inviting atmosphere that it was only natural for music to flow out of us. I hope that people in PACO today can enjoy music in such a compassionate environment and realize that we are involved to serve the greater goal of music and to encourage musical and personal growth, which go hand in hand.

PACO: Was there a "turning point" that convinced

you to pursue a professional career?

TG: Unfortunately not. I am not one of those people who are convinced that they were born to be a musician. I see music as just another art medium, and I struggle with the thought of being an artist in terms of an artist's role in society today, particularly with all of the atrocities happening throughout the world. But for me, the greatest thing about art is that it is a reminder of humanity. I think that if you choose to be an artist, you are forced to be a bit optimistic. Art is a symbol of hope, to keep awake the sense for meaning and to find our own integrity.

PACO: How did you choose piano over violin?

TG: Why is the sky blue? Fate. It just suits me better.

PACO: Describe your musical life since PACO days.

TG: I've been living in London since I graduated from high school. I'm finishing my Masters at the Royal Academy of Music now. Probably sounds more glamorous than it actually is. Lots of grey, lots of rain, lots of hard work. I have really appreciated how hard of a path it has been for me, in terms of living in a new country, finding support, etc., and I think that any struggle you find personally will help you musically. I've been very lucky in many ways--I have worked with brilliant teachers, including Alexander Satz, Hamish Milne, and Arthur Pizarro, and have had luck in competitions as well--Scottish International Piano Competition, and Khachaturyan International Piano Competition. These things have brought me some work--I haven't been in the same country for longer than a few weeks since the start of this term with the concerts I've had recently. But the important thing is to realize that you never stop learning and to continue to find the time to practice and to work hard.

PACO: What are you hoping for in the future? Where would you like to be in five years? Ten years? When you're 50?

TG: Ideally, I would just like to have the opportunity



to share music with an audience. For me, the beauty of music is not in the perfection of technique, but in its ability for communication. I find it sad that classical music today has come to represent in many ways an aesthetic elitism. It is my desire to use music not as a primarily aesthetical pursuit, but instead to take pleasure in the ability for music to portray raw emotion. Music should reveal the potential to work together and to bridge the many divides among people, by showing that all people feel the same emotions and go through the same personal struggles. I would like to be able to communicate with people through performance until the day I die.

PACO: Have you any advice for young PACO musicians who might be considering professional careers?

TG: I would be the last person to encourage someone to get into music--it is a difficult path with little material comforts. Love of music and need for music are two separate things in my mind. Only go into music if you can't live without it.

~ Ben Simon/Tanya Gabrielian.(12/5/05)

From the Director and Conductor of Superstrings and Preparatory Orchestras, Kris Yenny:

The SuperStrings and the Prepsters have been hard at work on their programs for January and February. Along with our regular orchestral offerings every player has his or her ensemble and the awesome task of grasping the 3rd Brandenburg for the BIG Anniversary Celebration later in February with Toute l'Ensembles du l'PACO!

First, on January 27th, the Prepsters will present their ensemble selections and then will go for Baroque with a challenging Telemann Concerto, featuring the nimble fingers of our own violinist, Winston Young, at the harpsichord. They will then set your toes tapping with a lively and captivating Csardas, sure to bring out the gypsy in you. Capping this program will be a return visit by the Woodside Priory Chamber Symphony, who wowed us last year with their help on the Pirates of the Caribbean Suite; this time, it will be the "American in Paris" Suite by Gershwin stretching our musicians another relatively uncharted musical direction - Jazz.

On February 3rd our SuperStringers will present several ambitious ensemble works, and then all together pieces by Mouret, Handel, Mozart, Bartok and the Beatles, and will be joined by special guests from the Prep group in their rendition of the Brandenburg 3. Most uniquely, we will also perform a WORLD Premiere composed by our own PACO factotum, Cary Chin! He has devised a piece - "DOUBLE DRAGON DANCE" - for two Ch'in (Chinese traditional zithers) to be played by Tessera and DeLenn Chin with the orchestra accompanying. There will be a Chinese drum....and maybe even an actual dragon....In the music you will hear a pair of dragons emerging from the mists and dancing together to a final crescendo with fireworks sounding in the strings to help ring in the Chinese New Year! Don't miss this first!

The SuperStrings are very pleased to be hosting the St Lawrence String Quartet with Robert Kapilow on January 10th. We hope to see many of you there, as well (see details under *Special Events in January*).

Altogether, it has been a fruitful year already, and the players are really excited about being a part of PACO. I hear many tales of the inspiration they gain from hearing the older groups play, and the excitement grows weekly towards our major confluence of all PACO-it's everywhere in February!

Other Orchestra News: Debut's "Musical Chairs ensembles" perform at Stanford Hospital

Friday, November 4 brought new meaning to the term "musical chairs" Three ensembles from the Debut orchestra performed at various staging sites throughout Stanford Hospital as part of an informal community outreach effort. The ensembles treated hospital visitors, patients and family members to Mozart's Divertimento, Schubert's Quartet in A minor, and Vivaldi's L'Estro Armonico.

The ensembles rotated between hospital locations so that as many people as possible had a chance to hear the three pieces. Warm thanks and enthusiastic response greeted the ensembles wherever they played. Many thanks to the helpful and supportive PACO parents who were on hand to assist the performers in moving chairs and stands.

Plans are being made to continue these informal concerts with the remaining five Debut ensembles just prior to concerts in February and June.

~ Eileen Skrabutenas, Debut Ensemble's Orchestra Coordinator

From the President of the Board of Directors, Dorsey Bass:

PACO's 40th anniversary season is off to a roaring start and the Board has been working hard to keep up. Extra special efforts by our publicity team (and outreach efforts by the orchestra) have lead to record setting attendance in our newest venue, Dinkelspiel Auditorium. Our grant writing and fundraising teams are working hard to ensure the financial health of the orchestra so that we can continue to offer excellent music and scholarships to students in need. It is truly an honor to get to witness the teamwork that keeps PACO going. Please mark your calendars for all the remaining concerts of all of the PACO orchestras. Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year!

Thank You

Thank you to all parents and volunteers, in particular the tireless orchestra coordinators, for all your invaluable assistance in making PACO function so well. We are constantly impressed by everyone's dedication and willingness to pitch in – the strong ties that bind our PACO community together make this organization a very special one indeed.

Calling All PACO Alumni...

COME ONE COME ALL!!!

In celebration of PACO's 40th Anniversary Season, we will present an unforgettable rendition Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto, but we need your help! Alumni and all five levels of our current ensembles are invited to join the Seniors onstage in two performances of this beloved masterpiece on February 25 and 26, 2006. Together we create a "joyful noise" to honor PACO's proud history, of which we are all part.

Please plan to join us and spread the word! RSVP to [info@pacomusic.com](mailto:info@pacomusic.com). More information is available on [www.pacomusic.org/members/alumni](http://www.pacomusic.org/members/alumni).

Auditions for New Members

This is it: the once-a-year opportunity for talented young string players to audition for a spot in one of PACO's ensembles. Auditions will be held on **Saturday, April 29, 2006**. Most openings occur at the SuperStrings level, and we like to "get 'em young". But limited openings do appear in our other orchestras. If you are a young musician looking for a challenging and rewarding musical experience within a close-knit community, or know of anyone fitting this bill, please call the PACO Office at (650) 856-3848 or email [info@pacomusic.org](mailto:info@pacomusic.org)



Applications will be accepted beginning in February. PACO is an equal-opportunity auditioner: we accept violists!



# Mark Your Calendar!

## January 2006

January 27      *Preparatory Orchestra Concert #1*      Covenant Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.

## February 2006

February 3      *SuperStrings Concert #1*      Covenant Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.  
 February 18      *Sinfonia Concert #2*      St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 8 p.m.  
 February 24      *Fundraising Kick Off*      Cubberley Community Center 5:30 p.m.  
 February 25      *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert*      Florence Gould Theater, 1:30 p.m.  
 February 26      *PACO Concert #3*      Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 3 p.m.

## March 2006

March 3      *Debut Ensemble Concert #2*      Cubberley Theatre, 7 p.m.  
 March 12, 19, 26      *Bach Celebration Concerts*      Valley Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.

## April 2006

April 29      *Auditions for 2006-2007 season*      Covenant Presbyterian Church

## May 2006

May 7      *Music in The Garden*      *TBA*  
 May 13      *Sinfonia Concert #3*      St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 8 p.m.  
 May 19      *Preparatory Orchestra Concert #2*      Covenant Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.

## June 2006

June 2      *SuperStrings Concert #2*      Covenant Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.  
 June 3      *PACO Concert #4*      Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 8 p.m.  
 June 4      *Debut Ensemble Concert #3*      Palo Alto Cultural Center, 3 p.m.  
 June 24 - 28      *Dunsmuir/Ashland Tour*

## July 2005

**Summer Break**

## August 2006

August 6 - 13      *Summer Chamber Music Workshop*      Monte Toyon, Aptos  
*(for upper three levels orchestras only)*

## Special Events in January

### A special visit to PACO by the world-famous Jacques Thibaud Trio

(a string trio - violin, viola and cello).

On Wednesday, January 4, the JTT will be visiting the Debut Ensemble and Sinfonia to meet our young musicians and perform for them.

Please join us for these special events: 6 - 6:30 pm and 7 - 7:30pm in Cubberley M2

**Admission Free**

*Founded at the Berlin School of Art in 1994, the Thibaud Trio has emerged as a leading ensemble, performing around the world to rave reviews: "Virtuosity tempered by audacity, warmth, and humanity" (The Strad - London); "Compelling and graceful... a triumph" (Los Angeles Times). The Trio is in town for a series of performances with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, including a Palo Alto concert on Sunday Jan. 1 at 4pm, St. Mark's Episcopal Church 400 Colorado St (off of Middlefield - where the Sinfonia is performing this*

season). More information on this admission-free concert at [www.sfchamberorchestra.org](http://www.sfchamberorchestra.org). They will be performing Mozart's 'unfinished' masterpiece, the Sinfonia Concertante in A, and Jean Françaix' delightful string trio.

ALSO...

**A special musical presentation hosted by the PACO SuperStrings  
Robert Kapilow and the St. Lawrence String Quartet delve into Shostakovich's Eighth String Quartet - a  
fascinating talk and musical demonstration.**

Tuesday January 10 from 4 - 6pm, Cubberley M2

Admission Free

*If you've ever seen Rob in action, I don't need to explain what he does. He takes the music apart (using the quartet to demo), and gets the audience to examine it in a way not ordinary; and he has such energy and enthusiasm, the whole audience (whatever their background) is totally engaged. This is the same program they are bringing to Lincoln Center in New York City in February.*

Don't miss these exciting musical events!!!

## Fundraising Kick-Off in February

Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – 5:30 p.m.  
Cubberley Community Center's Auditorium

Stay tuned for more details...

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala

In celebration of PACO's 40th Anniversary, we will present a special concert on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. at Florence Gould Theatre in San Francisco, featuring cellist Matt Haimovitz performing Schumann's lovely cello concerto, plus a performance of Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto joined by PACO musicians from all five of our ensembles plus alumni who are coming into town to help us celebrate our 40th Anniversary. All attendees are invited to a special reception following the Sunday concert at Stanford University.

We hope that you will join us. Reserved ticket prices are \$20 and may be purchased directly from the PACO Office, using the order form on page 8. (*Note: PACO family pass is not valid for special event*).

## Anniversary commemorative items (limited quantity):

1. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary T-shirts - \$15 each (available in size youth L and adult S, M, L, XL)
2. Tote bag - \$10 each (14x14x1½ in black color with silks screened in white)
3. Poster - \$5 each (autograph available upon request)

All items are available for purchase at the PACO and Sinfonia's concerts. You can also email your order to the PACO Office, and we'll have them ready for you to pick up during office hours or rehearsals.

## "Music in the Garden" in May

Please join us for our Music in the Garden chamber music concert on Sunday afternoon, May 7. This annual event has become one of the highlights of our season, and is a fundraiser for PACO. The musical program features our very own PACO chamber music ensembles performing masterpieces from the chamber music repertoire. Catered delicacies and beverages plus a lovely pastoral setting make this a very special PACO event. Please put this on your calendar and contact the PACO Office for more information.

# PACO's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala

The Board of Directors of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra  
cordially invite you to attend

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concerts



Saturday, February 25, 2006 - 1:30 p.m.

Florence Gould Theatre

(located at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park, San Francisco)

Sunday, February 26, 2006 - 3:00 p.m.

Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford

Featuring cello virtuoso Matt Haimovitz performing Schumann's lovely cello concerto,  
plus a performance of Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto joined by PACO musicians from all five of our  
ensembles together with alumni from PACO's illustrious past.

Reception following Sunday performance  
Oak Lounge at Tresidder, Stanford

For information

Call 650-856-3848 | Visit [www.pacomusic.org](http://www.pacomusic.org)

### Ticket Order Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Email  
( )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

### Please reserve

**Saturday, Feb. 25, 1:30 p.m. concert in San Francisco  
(limited seating)**

_____ General pass	@ \$20	= \$ _____
_____ Student pass	@ \$10	= \$ _____

**Sunday, Feb. 26, 3 p.m. concert at Stanford**

_____ General pass	@ \$12	= \$ _____
_____ Senior pass	@ \$8	= \$ _____
_____ Student pass	@ \$6	= \$ _____
Tax Deductible Contribution		= \$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed		= \$ _____

Mail order form with check payable to PACO and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:  
Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, 4000 Middlefield Road, #M1, Palo Alto, CA 94303

4000 Middlefield Road, #M-1  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Phone: (650) 56-3848  
Fax: (650) 856-3847  
[info@pacomusic.org](mailto:info@pacomusic.org)  
[www.pacomusic.org](http://www.pacomusic.org)



*Celebrating 40 Seasons of Excellence 1966-2006  
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***Acknowledgement***

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