

Selected Coverage December 2008

National

Bowling Green Sentinel Tribune
Journal of Oak Park & River Forest
PopMatters
Rutland Herald
San Francisco Sentinel

Local

Canandaigua Daily Messenger
Democrat & Chronicle
Ithaca Journal
Rochester Business Journal

HIGHLIGHTS

Democrat & Chronicle (December 7)

A Perfect Marriage: Romantic tale, ABBA songs give 'Mamma Mia!' remarkable staying power

... The touring musical *Mamma Mia!* returns Tuesday to Rochester with its tale of romance on a balmy Greek island. The plot weaves around 22 hits by the Swedish rockers ABBA, who reigned the Top 10 charts in the late 1970s.

...

The tour producers hope the revival benefits from the recent movie version starring Meryl Streep as the bride's mother, Donna.

"I would pay to hear Streep sing the Yellow Pages," declares Bill Congdon, the show's associate music director and an **Eastman School of Music** graduate.

Carson Times (December 28)

Never too late to learn instrument in this band

The New Horizons Band attempts to prove that when it comes to learning to play an instrument, it is never too late.

The band program is for those at least 50 years old and caters to those who have not previously played an instrument.

The Horizons band concept grew out of a music course at University of Rochester's (N.Y.) **Eastman School of Music** in 1991. Since then, the program has been spreading across the country.

13WHAM (December 29)

Allendale-Columbia Violinist Performs at the White House

Gabrielle Monachino performed some holiday favorites on her violin. The 16-year-old junior at Allendale-Columbia and **Eastman Community Music School** student was selected from over 400 applicants to perform at the White House through a special arts program.

Ithaca Journal (December 3)

Speaker for Ithaca College's fall graduation chosen from among faculty

The speaker for Ithaca College's fall convocation has been chosen from within the college's own ranks.

Susan Avery, an associate professor of music education, will deliver her address at the Reception for December Graduates on Dec. 14 in Emerson Suites, Phillips Hall.

"After (I was told I was chosen) and it all began to sink in, feelings of gratitude and humility surfaced, followed by a wave of panic as I considered the task ahead: to say something to an incredible group of young adults that was worth hearing. I hope I can live up to that challenge," Avery said.

Avery, who grew up in Seneca Falls, received a bachelor's degree and doctorate from the **Eastman School of Music** and a master's degree from Ithaca College. At Eastman she was awarded the Eastman Graduate Teaching Assistant Prize.

Democrat & Chronicle (December 4)

Wright will take reins of Madrigalia choir

Organist and conductor Lee Wright is only 29 years old and doesn't have an advanced degree. When he put in his application to be the director of Madrigalia, Rochester's 18-member chamber choir that has nationally marketed recordings and has won a major award, he compared himself to the president-elect, who also had to overcome views of his inexperience and youth. ... Madrigalia announced the appointment of Wright as its new director on Wednesday after a yearlong search. Wright will officially start in April.

Despite being young, his credentials aren't shabby. Wright holds a bachelor's degree in organ performance and a Sacred Music Diploma from the **Eastman School of Music**. He's also been a part of the local choral community since graduating in 2003, as director of music ministry at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, artistic director for the Rochester Gay Men's Chorus and as a charter member of the Christ Church Schola Cantorum.

Rochester Business Journal (December 4)

Eastman professor, alumni get Grammy nods

Paul O'Dette, professor of lute at the **Eastman School of Music** and an internationally respected performer and scholar of Renaissance and Baroque music, has received his fifth Grammy Award nomination.

O'Dette, who won a Grammy in 1996, will face two Eastman alumni in the Best Opera Recording category,

which is awarded to the conductor, album producer and principal soloists.

Soprano and Renée Fleming ('83) and tenor Anthony Dean Griffey ('01) were also nominated. O'Dette was nominated for "Lully: Psyche," which he conducted along with Stephen Stubbs.

Several Eastman alumni perform with bands that are up for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. Rick Shaw ('81), Bernie Dresel ('83) and Brian Scanlon ('81, '83) are on Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band nominated recording "Act Your Age," while Lew Soloff ('65) performs with Carla Bley and Her Remarkable Big Band on the nominated CD "Appearing Nightly." Another alumnus, Alan Pierson ('06), is a conductor on the CD "Reich: Daniel Variations," one of the albums bringing Judith Sherman a classical producer of the year nomination. (*Also reported by WHEC-TV, Democrat & Chronicle*)

PopMatters (December 5)

Women Lawyers, Bankers, and Presidents? Sure. Women Rockers? Not Just Yet.

The skewed numbers make the point. For rock music in the year 2008, women have virtually no access, and no one seems to care. There may be no other industry or form of entertainment—outside of sports—that has such institutional discrimination. Law firms and banks do better than the "progressive" world of rock music.

So what's going on here? Is it blatant sexism at the highest level? Are the big bad record labels responsible? Are only a few special women capable of playing instruments at a professional level? Do we blame the high schools? Music programs at the colleges? ...

The Van Fraternity

Even today, there are very few ways for rock musicians to get to the top of the business without that experience of traveling and sleeping in vans as they move from city to city, explains **Eastman School of Music professor** John Covach, a rock historian and a guitarist who logged his own time on the road in his younger days. The rock band, he says, is a fraternity. "Most of the players today toured as 20-somethings, with a fraternity mentality. I can still feel that way when I play, like I'm stepping back into my early years."

Baby Steps

But these efforts, noble as they seem, are too little and a bit too late, and aren't sufficient to take on such a large issue. Changing the systems of institutional discrimination requires colossal efforts from all the stakeholders. **Eastman's School of Music** undergraduate population is about 52% male and 48%

female. That's when you include strings, opera, voice, winds, piano, and other areas. For bass students only, it's 81% male, and 19% female. For percussion, it's 85% male, and 15% female. High school music programs focus on concert bands and orchestra, with some emphasis on jazz bands. Formal rock programs at the high school level are very rare. But traditional garage bands remain as popular as ever for boys.

Rutland Herald (December 5)

A family that plays together ... the Ying Quartet
The Ying Quartet – an all-sibling string quartet – has been a local favorite ever since it conducted a residency in area schools in 1993, in only its second year of existence. It was so enthusiastically received that the four returned a year later for another residency, culminating in a concert that packed the Barre Opera House. And they have continued to return to Vermont regularly ever since.

Long quartet-in-residence at the **Eastman School of Music** in Rochester, N.Y., where they live, the Ying Quartet teaches in the string department and leads the rigorous chamber music program. From 2001-2008, the Ying has also been the Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University. The quartet received its training with members of the Cleveland, Tokyo, Emerson and Juilliard string quartets.

Democrat and Chronicle (December 10)

Sounds like very, very old times
Ossia, **Eastman School of Music**'s student-run contemporary music ensemble, is going retro for its upcoming concert. That's not a flashback to the '70s, but rather, a bit of borrowing from the 1400s.

The concert features modern music referencing historical sounds and instruments from the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods. Viols will be more than polite background music, and recorders — the short plastic whistle from the Renaissance you were forced to play in elementary school — will be playing more than "Hot Cross Buns."

Democrat and Chronicle (December 12)

She's in the spotlight in the nation's capital
Gabrielle Monachino is a little nervous about a violin performance she has in Washington, D.C., on Monday. She thinks she'll do well, but Gabrielle – nicknamed Gigi – has the jitters because she doesn't know who will show up while she's playing Christmas classics during a 90-minute show at the White House. . . .

Gigi credits Jeremy Zhu, an instructor at the **Eastman Community Music School**, for pushing her creatively. She takes lessons with him twice a week and practices for hours at home.

San Francisco Sentinel (December 16)

DAVID HIGGS, Organist – CHRISTMAS PIPE DREAMS this Saturday at SF Symphony
One of America's leading concert organists, David Higgs is also Chair of the Organ Department at the **Eastman School of Music**.

Bowling Green Sentinel Tribune (December 18)

Naxos CD celebrates Adler works

A recording celebrating the work of composer Samuel Adler, of Perrysburg, and featuring pianist Laura Melton and other musicians from Bowling Green State University has been released. All the works on "Samuel Adler: Of Musique, Poetrie, Art, and Love" are world premiere recordings.

The Grammy-award winning label has put the CD out as part of its American Classics series. The German-born Adler is a professor emeritus at the **Eastman School of Music** and teaches at Juilliard School in New York City.

Canandaigua Daily Messenger (December 18)

'It has inspiration all over it'

In Gian Carlo Menotti's 50-minute opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors," the Magi, following the star in the east, stop at the humble home of a poor widow and her crippled son, Amahl. Her desperate circumstances, including her fear for Amahl's future, lead the woman to steal from the gold the wise men are bearing for the newborn King. What follows is a tale of compassion and miracle.

Mercury plans a Friday performance in Canandaigua, at St. Mary's Church on North Main Street; and further weekend performances at the church's Rochester namesake. It will be accompanied by string quartet, harp, oboes and piano. Benton Hess, co-artistic director of Mercury Opera Rochester and distinguished professor of voice at **Eastman School of Music**, will conduct.

Hess, too, speaks of the "honesty" of Menotti's work, noting that capturing the intimacy of the piece with its small cast and close setting can pose a challenge.

"Getting a sense of the honesty and the intimacy of the piece in a large space takes some difficulty," he said. "It was written for television, after all; the cameras were up close and personal all the time."

Journal of Oak Park & River Forest (December 22)

All I want for Christmas is airplay

Alice Miller, an 82-year-old musician, composer and resident at the Oak Park Arms, had one simple Christmas wish this year. She wanted to hear her music on the radio.

"I just thought we needed some new Christmas songs," Miller said. "We always hear the same songs every year. Why not hear mine just this once?"

Miller, a lifetime Oak Parker, has been a musician and composer since the age of 7 when her mother encouraged her to study the piano with Geneva Robinson, a private teacher in the neighborhood at the time.

After graduating from OPRF High School, Miller accepted a scholarship at **Eastman School of Music** at the University of Rochester, New York, where she worked hard honing her skills at the keyboard. She has composed over 100 songs since.

Democrat & Chronicle (December 24)

News briefs: Church showcases new organ tonight
Christ Church, 141 East Ave., will celebrate Christmas Eve with a 10 p.m. service with performances on a new Craighead-Saunders organ. The featured guest is David Higgs, chairman of organ faculty of the **Eastman School of Music**.

The organ is a re-creation of an 18th-century Central European organ and is the only one of its kind in the United States, said Carlos Mercado, chairman of the music department for the church. Performances will also be given by other musicians and the church choir.

Democrat & Chronicle (December 31)

Music in Rochester area hit high notes in 2008: Best Road Show: The Eastman Eight
Late in the evening of Nov. 4, a handful of **Eastman School of Music** students marched through downtown streets with their instruments, stopping at the Democratic victory party at the Hyatt and then Abilene Bar & Lounge in an impromptu celebration of Barack Obama's big win that night. According to Rochester Police Department estimates, the noisy parade grew to about 100, including onlookers moved to join the excitement. "We were so empowered," Eastman student Paul Child told the Democrat and Chronicle, explaining that the students wanted to share their patriotism with the community. "To see my fellow students tearing up at the sound of our national anthem is a huge deal, to say the least, for our generation, and for the future of our country." That empowerment petered out a bit when the cops stepped in and arrested 10 celebrants, including eight students. Charges will be dismissed if everyone stays out of trouble for six months.

(Note: There are numerous references every day in the media identifying musicians and scholars as Eastman School of Music alumni or current or former faculty; this report includes selected clippings.)