

**Northern Illinois University
School of Music
April/May 2007 Newsletter**

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AUDITION DATES

Formal audition dates for the NIU School of Music are now over.

FACULTY NEWS

Our new faculty members, **Avalon Quartet** and alum **Oksana Ezhokina** (MM piano 1999) performed live on WFMT on Friday April 6.

Paul Bauer has received an NIU Foundation Venture Grant of \$20,000 to fund "Implementing Music Video Conferencing for Instructional Purposes in the School of Music." Video conferencing in the business world uses telecommunications of audio and video to bring people at different sites together for "virtual" meetings, and adapting these business world tools for use in the music world allows for highly effective interaction for many purposes including one-on-one (private lesson) instruction, group (master class) instruction, and concert performances using the regular (commodity) internet and NIU's new connection to Internet2. We will be purchasing equipment that will allow us to have live audio/video conferencing connections with other sites by August 2007. We will have two sets of equipment, so we can provide it to the remote site (driving distance from campus) such as public schools. We will also be able to connect with other universities and entities across the country and internationally. This is the first step toward the NIU School of Music being able to utilize resources of Internet2 that became available within the last year.

While on sabbatical, **Eric Johnson** held a week residency at Clare College, Cambridge University, England, in February, where he worked with the Clare College Chapel Choir and conducted Evensong services.

Robert Fleisher introduced his Five Songs from Carl Sandburg's "Prairie" during a faculty recital by soprano Sangeetha Rayapati (assisted by pianist William Campbell) at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL on March 28.

Greg Barrett will be performing May 6 and 7 with the Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra. From May 14 - 22 he will be performing recitals and teaching in Sydney and Brisbane, Australia.

Ann Montzka-Smelser's application was accepted by the Suzuki Association of the Americas and she will now be a Suzuki Teacher Trainer. This project was four years in the making and now allows Ann to give training and accreditation in the Suzuki Method to future teachers. Ann will attend the Suzuki Leadership Conference in Toronto, Canada this May and will intern with famed Suzuki Teacher Trainer, Nancy Lokken at the American Suzuki Institute this August to finalize her Teacher Trainer status. Ann will be teaching the course "Seminar in Suzuki Pedagogy," music 377/577, this fall. This class will offer our string students a detailed approach to beginning violin and viola students at any age. Ann will also teach at chamber music camps and Suzuki Institutes in Vail, Colorado, San Marcos, Texas, and Deerfield, Illinois this summer.

Director of Orchestras **Brett Mitchell** has been offered and has accepted the position of American Symphony Orchestra League Conducting Fellow of the Houston Symphony beginning in September 2007. This is a 2-year appointment with an optional extension for a third year, to be determined by the midpoint of his second season. He will be covering all classical concerts, editing radio broadcasts, and conducting approximately 25 family, education, and community concerts per season. This is a full-time position, and will necessitate both moving to Houston and leaving his post here at NIU, though he will be continuing on with his duties in Paris as Assistant Conductor of the Orchestre National de France.

Steve Duke performed with the NIU Steel Band, directed by Liam Teague at Boutell Concert Hall on Sunday, April 22.

Rodrigo Villanueva presented a drumset Master Class at the "XVII Jazz en Lima Festival" on April 12. He performed with his jazz project, and The Jazz Facultrio at the NIU Concert Hall on April 27 with guest artists Stephen Anderson and Craig Butterfield. He has been invited to participate in a series of concerts in Lima, Peru at the end of the Summer featuring himself and his music at the Jazz House Peru, one of the most prominent private music programs in Peru.

Tom Bough received word that he has been invited to present at The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic next year. The title is "Recruit, Retain, and Train Your Low Brass Section," which he has presented at IMEA, Tennessee MEA, and MENC regional conventions in Portland, Hartford, and Lincoln (Nebraska).

Ron Carter would like to share a video: "Chops" 2007, USA, 87min, World Premiere, Director: Bruce Broder, <http://link.brightcove.com/services/link/bcpid15869177/bctid792434289>
The video shows high school students in their endeavors to be part of Jazz Live at Lincoln Center.

89.5 WNIJ, the News/Talk service of Northern Public Radio will broadcast a 60-minute special about The **Vermeer Quartet** at 6 pm on April 29th. The group has been associated with Northern Illinois University as "resident artist faculty" since 1969, currently winding down a "farewell tour" with one last NIU concert on Wednesday, May 2nd. Sunday's broadcast will include some history, some commentary, and of course some music by The Vermeer Quartet, such as "The Seven Last Words of Christ," and other selections recorded live from the group's most recent NIU appearance.

Again, the **Vermeer Quartet's** final concert at NIU will be held on Wednesday, May 2 at 8 p.m. A reception will be in the Concert Hall lobby following the concert. All are welcome.

Tim Blickhan's choral composition, Dolor Meus (1999) was performed by the Master Singers Chorale, Inc. of Northern Ohio in a concert in Cleveland on April 22 (<http://www.mastersingersinc.org>).

STUDENT/ALUMNI NEWS:

JoEllyn Caulfield received her Masters in Vocal Performance in 2004 from Michigan State University, where she was a TA, teaching Class Voice for non-music majors and private lessons for college credit. She moved back to Illinois and is currently teaching private students in Naperville and the surrounding suburbs.

Rob Deemer premiered some of his works at the Eastern Trombone Workshop at Fort Myers in Washington D.C. Last spring Chicago Lyric Opera/Santa Fe Opera trombonist Mark Fisher commissioned him to write a solo work for trombone and piano; in September the project was amended to orchestrate the work into a concerto as well to be performed at one of the largest conventions of trombonists in the world. The concerto version of "Monuments" was performed by Mark and the U.S. Army Orchestra. Rob has a few more premieres as well – a 20-min. ballet based on the various styles of Rhumba was performed for the first time at the University of Oklahoma with choreography by MFA candidate Nikki Bybee; in Austin the MamaJama Productions ensemble performed his string sextet "Cuba" with text by 2006 Beatrice Hawley Award-winning poet Brian Turner in a concert at the Scottish Rite Theatre in a special concert that benefited Direct Relief International's clinics in Uganda.

Rob Deemer has accepted an offer from SUNY-Fredonia for their tenure-track composition chair position starting in the Fall of 2007.

Amanda King is now singing for small opera companies and performing in Chicago.

Amanda (Mandy) Bajek Harnack has been a full-time musician since graduating from NIU. She teaches classroom music, and private piano, as well as accompanying. She owns Park Ave. Music, Inc. in Lombard, and is the keyboardist/manager for 7DEEZ, a Disco show-band. www.7deezband.com

Saalik Ziyad tells us that his album *Twelve Minutes of Love* is now available online on iTunes and Napster as well as some other mp3 companies. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact him at sziyad@the5after7project.com Also.

Susan Hofflander is currently appearing in a show at the Guthrie Theater. She has been singing and performing professionally since graduating in 1978.

When the Blue Man Group called the Phantom Regiment offices for their drum line to play at Northern Illinois University on April 4th to help promote their Megastar 2.0 concert tour, it was hard to say no, but they had to. Their drum line wasn't around to help out. So, they called on their friends at Northern Illinois University. Director **Tom Bough**, **NIU drum instructor Phil Beale**, and the **NIU drum line** provided pre-show entertainment. "30 degree weather is not the best for drumming outside at all, but the NIU drum line did a great job entertaining people at the NIU Convocation Center before the show. Afterwards the members were treated to floor passes and a meet and greet backstage with the Blue Man group after the show. Thank you NIU from your friends in Rockford!" <http://www.regiment.org/story.cfm?ID=681>

The School of Music has just been notified that the Liberace Foundation for the Performing and Creative Arts will provide an award of \$13,000 to fund the 2007-08 NIU Liberace Jazztet, the seventh consecutive year of support. The funds go directly to six students to fund junior/senior/graduate student scholarships or GA appointments. The continuing hard work of students, faculty and staff has paid off again!

The NIU **Liberace Jazztet** returned from Lima, Peru, where they spent a full week performing by invitation at the Festival Jazz en Lima 2007. It was a tremendous experience for our students artistically and culturally. The latest Liberace Jazztet CD, titled "Monkin' Around," is available from the School of Music.

Be sure to check out our new web site. Dr. Blickhan has updated the site & it looks great!

<http://www.niu.edu/music>

Alumni - Do you have a link you want to add to our website? Just let us know!

We also have an alumni update form on the website just for you!