

# MUSICAL GIFTS

OR

HOW A MAINE FISHING VILLAGE  
BECAME A CENTER FOR GREAT MUSIC



By Thomas Wolf, *Artistic Director, Bay Chamber Concerts*

## MUSICAL GIFTS

How did a fishing village, famous for its great sailing ships, its lime kilns, and the purity of its winter ice become a center of great music? This charming book tells the story of a coastal Maine town that has, for almost a century, been a destination for some of the world's great musicians. Launched as a summer music colony by the philanthropist Mary Curtis Bok Zimbalist in 1930, the community's history reflects a larger story of classical music in America. The story is told by Thomas Wolf, the Artistic Director of Bay Chamber Concerts, whose family was part of the musical history of Rockport, Maine for three generations. The book contains over 60 historic photographs and is full of amusing and never-before-told anecdotes of some of the great musicians of the twentieth century.

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This book is part of the 50th anniversary celebration of Bay Chamber Concerts. There is an accompanying film by the same name that covers much of the same history. To learn more about the film, for additional copies of this book, or for more information about Bay Chamber Concerts and its activities, please contact us at:

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*Bay Chamber*

## WHY MID-COAST MAINE?

A friend of mine told me a story about his first trip to Maine: "I had decided I wanted to take the back roads to get to Acadia Park, so I happened to be driving through the town of Rockport on a Thursday night in August. I crossed a charming bridge with flower boxes, drove up a steep hill, and then saw a most astonishing sight. To my right was a gorgeous view of the harbor. And ahead of me was a crowd of people in front of a large, grey building that had a sign calling it an 'Opera House.' I was curious so I parked my car. It looked like the whole town was there. Everyone was kissing and hugging and smiling.

"I felt like I had joined a huge extended family. There were a few kids with violin cases in jeans and tank tops. There was a man carrying his granddaughter (she couldn't have been more than five or six years old). I got in line and bought a ticket, curious to see the inside of the building and planning to stay only a little while and continue my trip. But then I got my second shock. I experienced one of the most incredible concerts I have ever heard in a hall that seemed perfectly designed for music. The musicians were all people I had paid a lot of money to hear in New York, but here, in this setting, it was even more magical. Afterwards, I got to meet the performers in an art gallery next door. It was truly amazing. And that was my introduction to the musical legacy of mid-coast Maine."

*(opposite) The Rockport Opera House on a Thursday night during the summer. For over 50 years, this has been a gathering place for the community to bear great music.*

I have heard my friend's story in one form or another countless times. People discover Rockport, Maine, and nearby Camden and Rockland, and then they learn that the area is a center of great music and music education and has been for decades. Last summer, one couple was from London. Another was from Vienna. At the reception after the concert, they promised to come back.

How did it happen? How did a fishing village famous for its great sailing ships, its lime kilns, and the purity of its winter ice become a musical destination?

That is the story that this book tells. I am no historian so I will tell it my way - as I experienced it and heard about it growing up. I come from a family of musicians who for three generations was part of its history. Their stories and my stories and the stories of others who are no longer with us reach back almost a century. And while this is a voyage into the past, the book is also about the future. For this musical journey continues with a new generation adding to a glorious and rich history. Come be a part of it.

Thomas Wolf  
*Artistic Director, Bay Chamber Concerts*





*Mary Curtis Bok (1876 - 1970). It was her vision, her passion for music, and her love of Maine that led to the creation of the music colony in Rockport.*



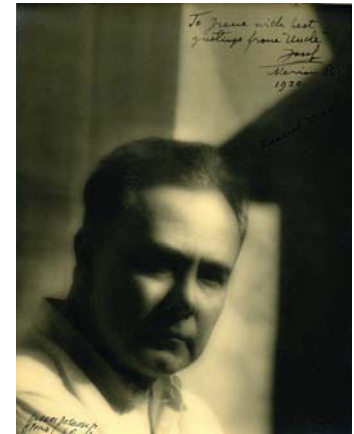
## MARY CURTIS BOK'S DREAM

She may have been reserved (as proper wealthy women of the time were expected to be.) and she may have been overshadowed both by her titan of a father and later by her hard-driving husband. But Mary Curtis was a young woman who had dreams...and she had the resources to realize those dreams. She was the daughter of Cyrus Curtis, a prominent Philadelphian who some claim was the most successful media magnate of all time. Certainly his fortune was immense and his magazines - including the *Ladies Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post* - were staples of the American home. Mary Curtis wrote for her father's publications when she was young (under her mother's maiden name) and then married her father's star editor, Edward Bok, at the age of 19 in 1896. But a socialite housewife she was not destined to be. Music fascinated and enthralled her, and it is through music that she is remembered today.

Mary Curtis Bok was convinced of the power of music. She was one of several ladies (including my great aunt Blanche Kohn) who became convinced that music could improve the lives of young immigrants and decided to launch the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia in 1908 - today the largest community music school in the United States. But in the 1920s, she was after something more ambitious. She wanted to create the greatest musical conservatory in the world, and in 1924 she founded the Curtis Institute of Music, naming the school after her father - whose own love of music had inspired her as a young girl.

The Institute started rather conventionally. Like most conservatories of the day, this one tried to attract students by touting the best local faculty that Mrs. Bok could assemble and then charging the students a fee to offset some of the school's costs. But soon after opening the school, Mrs. Bok consulted with a family friend, the great pianist Josef Hofmann, and asked whether he might consider becoming director. In a conversation that was to have profound ramifications on the future of conservatory education in America, Hofmann told Mrs. Bok that her school could not attain greatness unless three things changed.

First, the school needed an internationally acclaimed faculty - and not just a good one but a great one. Second, tuition had to be free, and living expenses had to be covered so that the youngsters and their parents need never worry about money and the school could attract the best and most talented. And third, she would have to arrange for year-round instruction for at least some of the students who needed that extra level of supervision.



*Josef Casimir Hofmann (1876 -1957), the extraordinary Polish pianist who became the director of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1926. He convinced Mrs. Bok that some students would need year-round instruction and that a summer colony was a necessity.*

Convinced that only Hofmann could accomplish her visionary transformation, Mrs. Bok told him he could name his price (it turned out to be very high). Soon thereafter, Hofmann became director and began implementing the changes, which Mrs. Bok readily agreed to. The timing could not have been better for recruiting a world-class faculty. With the devastation of the Russian Revolution and the First World War, many great musicians from Europe were ready to try their luck in America. As for free tuition, that was also not a problem. Mrs. Bok was rich – very rich – and her fortune would soon endow the Institute lavishly.

But year-round instruction was tricky. Philadelphia, before the age of air conditioning, was not a place where you expected your distinguished faculty to remain during the summer months. So after a year of mulling it over, she made a simple proposition to some of the faculty: “Go wherever you want during the summer and take whichever students you want with you. The school will pay.” My grandmother, Lea Luboshutz, who had joined the violin faculty, took her students to Saint-Jean-du-Luz on the Basque seacoast in France where she had a gentleman friend. The next year, another gentleman friend invited her to Carmel, California. These trips, with an entourage of students in tow, were very expensive. And because the faculty was dispersed, the system did not encourage any sense of a continuing musical community for the school, its faculty, and especially its students.

Then Mrs. Bok had an inspiration. Why not create a musical colony in Rockport, Maine, where her parents maintained their magnificent summer home and where a number of her Philadelphia friends already spent their summers. She began buying up real estate. When the stock market crash came in 1929 and the depression followed, she became even more adamant that this project would not only serve her musical aspirations, but also provide employment for many of the local people of Camden and Rockport who were now out of work.

Mrs. Bok consulted real estate advisors, architects, builders, landscape architects (including the firm of the Olmsted Brothers), and others who could see her dream become a reality. By 1930, the Curtis summer music colony was ready for business. Sadly, it was also the year that Mrs. Bok became a widow. But she remained committed to her idea of a Maine summer musical community.



## LEA

The cast of characters that made up the Curtis faculty in the early days was a colorful bunch. Josef Hofmann had taken his role seriously and had assembled a largely European faculty of distinguished musicians. He himself headed the piano department. The great Russian violinist, Efrem Zimbalist, led the violin department. Felix Salmond, the English cellist, headed the cello department and was later joined by the Russian cellist Gregor Piatigorsky. All of these musicians would end up at the Rockport summer colony.

The faculty member I knew best growing up was the one I lived with during the summer - my grandmother, the violinist Lea Luboshutz. I tell her story here because in many ways it is not atypical. Like so many displaced European musicians of the time, the United States and the Curtis Institute became her home and her extended family.

Lea was born in 1885 in Odessa, Russia, into a middle-class Jewish family that ran a piano business. She began violin lessons with her father at age three, and it was clear from the start that the family had a prodigy on its hands. At five she played her first concert, and the family saw in her their meal ticket to a lavish lifestyle in the glittering capital of Moscow. Two other children in the family were also musically gifted, and thanks to Lea's prodigious talent, all three ended up at the Moscow Conservatory where Lea won the coveted gold medal. By the age of 16, the Luboshutz name was sufficiently well known in Russia that the siblings formed the Luboshutz Trio and toured quite successfully. Lea herself was a sought-after soloist, a striking redhead who insisted that when she performed, a white cloth runner be extended on stage so that her beautiful gowns would not get soiled. It was always a most dramatic entrance!

Participating in the exciting social life of Moscow, she captured the attention of a much older man, a prominent attorney, Onissim Goldovsky, who was an amateur pianist. The two fell in love and when Goldovsky's wife refused to grant him a divorce, Lea and Onissim moved into a splendid household together and started a family. The two led a dashing



*Lea Luboshutz (1885-1965), a Russian violinist who joined the Curtis faculty and brought her students to Rockport each summer from 1930 to 1945.*



*Lea Lubosbutz and her Maine "class" on the back porch of the so-called "Stone House," a beautiful granite building owned by Mrs Bok on Rockport Harbor..*



*Lea Lubosbutz with her great friend, cellist and Curtis faculty member, Felix Salmond (1888 - 1952) at a favorite spot on the Rockport shore.*



life in pre-Soviet Russia, but after the Revolution of 1917, everything changed. The family lost its wealth. Onissim was a politically marked man as one of the Tsar's favorites and, under the strain of the times, had a stroke and died. Alone and with a family to feed, Lea began concertizing in factories, taking her nine-year-old-son, Boris (my uncle), as her accompanist to earn more herring and potatoes for the family meals.

By 1922, the family managed to emigrate to Berlin, then to Paris. But life in post-World War I Europe was difficult. And that is where the story of Lea intersects with that of Mary Louise Curtis Bok, Josef Hofmann, the Curtis Institute of Music, and ultimately the music colony in Maine. By 1926, Hofmann, as the new director of the Curtis Institute,

was recruiting his star-studded international faculty. He went after Lea Luboshutz when he learned that the impresario Sol Hurok had invited her to move to the United States to manage her career. Bok and Hofmann were able to cement the deal and persuade her to come to Philadelphia. But as with all faculty, Lea was free to continue her concert career (this is still the case today at Curtis – all of the faculty members are part-time teachers there). Indeed, the very year she began at Curtis, she introduced a new concerto by Prokofiev to the United States and played its New York premiere. Four years later, she was happily settled in Philadelphia, was a hardworking Curtis faculty member, and was considered deserving of one of the renovated faculty houses and teaching studios on Rockport Harbor.

Lea remained for 15 years on the Curtis faculty. The Curtis Institute Maine house that she occupied was a congregating place where people ate Russian borscht and played music and poker. After driving to Maine one summer, she ecstatically told Mrs. Bok in her thick Russian accent that she loved Americans because they were so thoughtful – “Imagine all those signs at the side of the road helping you to relax that say ‘Soft Shoulders,’” she gushed as she rotated her shoulders back and forth. She bragged about how she practiced day and night – even in her sleep, she said, she “fingered her passages.” Why people found that funny, she never knew.



*Lea Luboshutz in her first car. She was amazed at how thoughtful Americans were. They seemed to understand that new drivers could get very tense and so they put up signs on roads that said “Soft Shoulders.”*



## New York Herald Tribune, December 18, 1930, *Page 1*

### **Mrs. Edw. Bok to Provide Work For Jobless in Two Maine Towns**

*Special to the Herald Tribune*

Camden, ME. Dec. 17. - Through the philanthropy of Mrs. Louise Bok, widow of Edward Bok, the noted publisher, the unemployed of Camden will be provided with work this winter. A recent survey by H.A. Thomas, town manager, showed that thirty-eight men were out of work here. He communicated with Mrs. Bok and at her direction work will now be given to all these men.

The first job for them will be the demolition of the old McKinley stable, in Mechanic Street, long considered a fire trap; next the auditorium or the town hall will be redecorated, the building repaired and new offices fitted up for town officials to replace the present inadequate quarters.

A similar project for aiding the unemployed has been in progress for the last two months in Rockport, where Mrs. Bok recently purchased several parcels of real estate, including the waterfront properties of the Rockland-Rockport Lime Corporation. Landscape artists have been

grading and beautifying the latter property and a week ago 115 men were at work there. Because of weather conditions the working crew now numbers sixty and for the balance of the winter work will be provided for two groups of forty men each, working alternative weeks. This project will cost \$500,000.

As those needing work at Rockport are estimated to number eighty, this arrangement is to solve the unemployed problem in that locality. As soon as the weather permits in the spring the crew again will be increased and the work of grading and improving flower beds will be continued. Several men also have been employed in other properties owned by Mrs. Bok at Rockport.

It is impossible to estimate just what Mrs. Bok's outlay will be in aiding thus the unemployed of Camden. It is said that the cost of renovating the town hall probably will amount to \$10,000. Mrs. Bok is paying the bill for the materials as well as the labor.

Mrs. Bok maintains two summer homes in Maine, one here and one in Rockport, a town adjoining. The population of Camden is about 3,000 and that of Rockport 2,000.



THE CITY  
DITV

*Main Street, Camden, Maine. It was Mrs. Bok's largesse during the 1930s that kept Camden's residents and those of neighboring Rockport from suffering the worst of the economic woes endured by other Maine towns during these years.*





*Lubosbutz and Hofmann practicing in Maine for their next season's joint recital tour.*

*(opposite) (Clockwise from top) MaryLea Cottage - the Rockport House that Mary Bok prepared for her friend and faculty member Lea Lubosbutz. (2) An invitation extended to the musical community of Rockport for a tour of the renovated cottage. (3) One of Lea's Carnegie Hall Programs (4) Joint recital programs with Hofmann.*



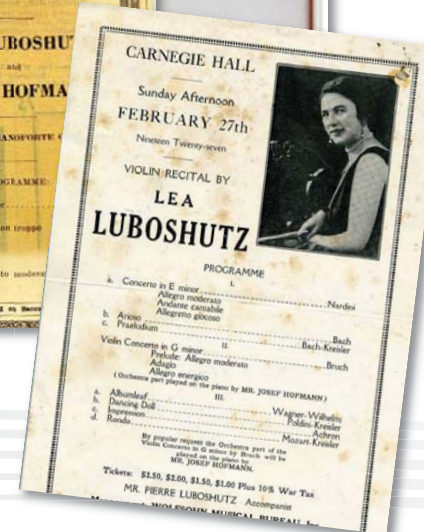
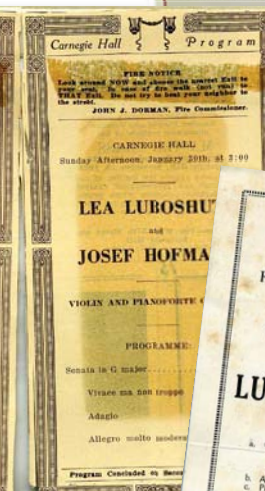
## MARYLEA COTTAGE

While it took until December of 1930 for the New York Herald Tribune to pick up the story of a construction boom in Camden and Rockport, Maine, Mary Curtis Bok's projects had actually begun two years before. She was determined to launch her summer music colony by May of 1930. Several houses had been purchased and refurbished, many on the eastern shore of Rockport Harbor. One was a small fisherman's cottage and outbuilding that seemed as though they would be ideal for my grandmother.

Though Mary Curtis Bok was my grandmother's employer, the two were more than professional colleagues - they became friends. The proper Philadelphia society woman and the fiery red-headed Russian violinist who had lived and had children with a man to whom she was never married, seemed to understand one another. So it seemed only fitting to Lea that when her friend Mary provided a beautiful house on the Maine coast, she should name it after their friendship - MaryLea Cottage. During the first year there, Lea found that the roof of the teaching studio was low and her bow would hit the ceiling if she stood - so for the first time in her life, she taught sitting down. Mary was mortified and had the roof removed the next winter and rebuilt ten feet higher.

Each year, when Lea would give her Carnegie Hall recital with either her brother Pierre or her son Boris at the piano, Mary would come to New York faithfully. In 1935, the *New York Times* praised Lea's "exceptional musicianship and refinement of style." In 1936, the *Times* reviewer called her tone "warm, sensitive and emotionally expressive." Mary was thrilled. She had promised Lea something special, and by the summer of 1936, Lea arrived to find a totally renovated and expanded first floor in her house, one large enough for Lea's students to give their small recitals, together with a magnificent porch overlooking the harbor. Lea and her family responded with a grand invitation to the musical community to come for cocktails and supper on the "A Deck" of the "S.S. MaryLea" to "celebrate its maiden voyage."

It was in that same large room that my brother Andy and I made our debuts before the musical elite of Rockport 20 years later. Five years after that, we hatched the idea of a new Rockport concert series that would continue Mary Curtis Bok's dream.





## THE GOLDEN AGE AND THE BAD BOYS



*The sign for concerts at Captain Eells' Boat Barn. The facility was purchased and renovated by Mrs. Bok and became a perfect concert hall.*

Most people think of the 1930s as a time of hardship and of the first half of the 1940s as the challenging war years in the United States when there was continued sacrifice by many. But for those who loved music and lived in Rockport, Maine, in the summer, the period from 1930 to 1945 was a golden age. According to the stories of those who lived in that time and place, the Curtis largesse appeared limitless; and whatever people wanted, they seemed to get. Students were given superb instruments to play. They were provided with an incomparable musical education - completely free of charge. They lived in beautiful houses provided with piers and floats and boats on Rockport Harbor where they could swim in the afternoon after lessons and practice. There were cars at their disposal. For many of these youngsters who had come from economically deprived homes, it was a dream come true.

But there were troublemakers among the students. One, by his own admission years later, was Sammy Mayes. Mayes is remembered today as the only cellist to have held the principal chair of both the Boston Symphony and the Philadelphia Orchestras (his fellow Curtis student Joseph de Pasquale accomplished the same feat on viola). Part Native American by birth, he wanted to live up to his reputation among fellow students as a wild Indian. As he later recounted to me, one of his memorable feats was to get drunk and see how fast he could race one of Mrs. Bok's cars down a steep hill. The result on one occasion was a stupendous crash into a telephone pole. Miraculously, Sammy wasn't seriously injured, but the car was totaled and the pole split in two. "I remember the top of that pole just hanging from the wires and swaying in the wind. That's when I suspected I had had too much to drink." Patient Mrs. Bok was willing to grant him another chance.

Deprived of a car, Sammy's next exploit was to "go huntin'." Though he had never handled a gun before, he got a local friend to lend him a shotgun and convinced a bunch of his fellow Curtis students that hunting was in his Indian blood and they should help him find a big moose or bear that very night. When they heard something in the woods, Sammy picked up the gun and fired. It was not a moose, nor a bear, but a dairy cow that had strayed to the edge of the field. By some strange stroke of fate, Sammy's shot hit the mark - directly into the udder of the cow. The piteous moaning of the animal continued until its owner came out of the farmhouse to finish the job. Mrs. Bok had yet another bill to pay to keep the farmer from complaining to town officials.



*A reception after a Curtis Quartet concert at the Boat Barn with Curtis pianist Vladimir Sokoloff (1913-1997). Violist Max Aronoff is on left (with tie), violinist Jascha Brodsky is in the middle of the fireplace opening talking to Pierre Lubosbutz (pianist) and Lea Lubosbutz, and cellist Orlando Cole (with cello) stands in front of Sokoloff (in dark suit). Harpist Carlos Salzedo (in white pants) stands between Cole and Lea Lubosbutz.*

*(below) Curtis cellist Samuel Mayes (1917-1990) spent summers in Rockport and always seemed to be getting into trouble. He claimed it was because one of his grandfathers was a Cherokee chief. Two counties in Oklahoma were named after his ancestors, Rogers County and Mayes County, and he was related to the famous American humorist Will Rogers.*

Despite the trouble that some students got into Monday through Saturday, Sundays were reserved for concerts in Captain Eells' Boat Barn. It was a lovely facility that Mrs. Bok had had renovated specifically for music, and its wooden walls and floor gave forth a warm and luscious sound. Students and faculty performed both separately and together. A photo from those years captures a typical post-concert reception at the barn where four students - Jascha Brodsky, Max Aronoff, Orlando Cole, and Vladimir Sokoloff - receive congratulations from Curtis faculty members, including Lea Luboshutz and Carlos Salzedo. Each of these students would later become a member of the faculty. These concerts at the board barn were ultimately to become famous. They were opened to the public, and when audiences became too large to accommodate, a repeat concert was scheduled later in the afternoon. Sammy Mayes and his cronies never misbehaved on Sundays. They knew this was a time to be serious.



*Photo from the Curtis Institute of Music*

REMBRANDT STUDIOS  
PHILA. PA.







## GRISHA, PETYA AND JASCHA

Grisha, Petya, and Jascha were old friends from Russia. Grisha and Petya had performed together many times throughout Europe and the United States. Grisha was Gregor Piatigorsky, the towering Russian cellist who joined the Curtis faculty in 1941. Petya was my uncle Pierre Luboshutz, who with my aunt Genia Nemenoff formed a famous duo-piano team and spent their summers in Rockport (though they were much too busy with international touring to teach). Jascha was Jascha Brodsky, the first violinist of the Curtis Quartet, who came to Curtis originally as a student of Efrem Zimbalist and quickly was promoted to the violin faculty in 1932.

Although musically the men were incredible role models for students, their extra-musical life was somewhat unconventional and frowned upon, especially by my Russian grandmother and great grandmother, a somewhat fierce woman who had stared down the border guards in Russia as she left with pockets stuffed with her family jewels. Pierre made vodka in his bathtub in several versions – the strongest of which was referred to as Jascha’s blood. Sampling the various vintages was a regular activity of the three men. There was much partying, many late nights, and, well lubricated with Jascha’s blood, they would act out musical parodies of some of their artist colleagues. Pierre’s recreation of Anna Pavlova as the dying swan in Tchaikovsky’s ballet *Swan Lake* with Jascha’s over-the-top rendering of the orchestra part on the piano was a party favorite that I witnessed many times as a youngster.

In Maine in the early 1940s, the alcohol consumption of the three men was not limited to the homemade stuff. During the war years, everyone had to go to nearby Rockland with government-issued vouchers to buy alcoholic products. The men hated these trips involving long lines and much wasted time.

On one occasion, my uncle Pierre and Grisha made the trip with my mother and were dismayed to find that the lines were even longer than usual. Pierre suggested that Grisha go to the local drugstore and pick up some medication for his mother-in-law – the Baroness de Rothschild – who was spending the war years with her husband in the United States while France was occupied. She and the baron were visiting him in Rockport that summer.

*(opposite) Russian pianist Pierre Luboshutz (1891-1971), of the duo-piano team of Luboshutz and Nemenoff, was inseparable from Curtis Quartet violinist Jascha Brodsky 1907-1997). Luboshutz named his extraordinary home-made vodka “Jascha’s blood.” No one ever got the recipe.*

Grisha was gone about 20 minutes, during which time the line moved hardly at all and Pierre's frustration was mounting. Then as Grisha was returning down the road, Pierre had an inspiration. The Russian cellist stood six foot six; he was unshaven and was wearing an old red plaid lumberjack shirt. He was clearly not the most savory-looking character after their partying of the night before.

"Did you hear?" Pierre said to my mother in a loud voice, in his heavy Russian accent. "A murderer escaped from the Thomaston prison last night. He is very tall and he was wearing a red plaid shirt. He is supposed to be very dangerous." People turned to look at Pierre and saw Grisha coming at a fast clip. Terrified, they ran in every direction. The line evaporated and Grisha, puzzled by the activity, went right up to the window to claim his prize bottles.

*Russian cellist and Curtis faculty member Gregor Piatigorsky (1903-1976) was a third member of the Jascha-Petya-Grisha trilogy in Maine. His imposing size made him an impressive figure both on and off stage.*



## DAD

My father married my mother in 1933. To anyone in Philadelphia, the marriage of a 16-year-old immigrant Russian girl into one of the city's most distinguished and oldest Jewish families would have seemed like real luck. Writing about Philadelphia's Jewish community, Nathaniel Burt in his book *The Perennial Philadelphians* states, "A single family, the Wolfs, dominate the Philadelphia scene in the present century as the Biddles did the Christian scene in the last century. As there is or was a Biddle, so there is a Wolf for every occasion: sporty Wolfs, scholarly Wolfs, artistic Wolfs, social Wolfs, legal and financial Wolfs".... (p. 568).

Yet despite this lineage, my mother's family felt it was my father who was the lucky one since he had married into their family. They were willing to welcome him even though he didn't have any of the attributes that mattered. He was not musical, he could not quote long passages of the European classical literature by memory in the original language (in fact, he spoke only English and was not well read even in that language), and his track record as a sports star in high school counted significantly against him. In the heady world of the Curtis summer colony in Rockport, Dad was not a player (except when he brought fresh trout home from one of his many fishing excursions).

But Dad, to his credit, wanted to make up for his lacks by studying an instrument. My grandmother, ever vigilant of the family reputation, chose the flute as his instrument - thereby not risking a besmirching of the family's achievements in the piano and string world. She secured for him an outstanding teacher and a magnificent flute, made by the incomparable Verne Q. Powell.

Despite Dad's slow progress and obvious and admitted lack of talent, nothing could dampen his enthusiasm. At the time, various very famous musicians would publish arrangements of melodies from operas and symphonies to be played as solos, and Dad invested in these as they came out, wanting to play his favorites for my mother and, on rare occasions, the rest of her family, who did not particularly look forward to these events. One of his particular favorites was an Adagio and Presto arranged by the great violinist Jascha Heifetz, which could be played either on violin or flute with piano accompaniment.







*Jascha Heifitz (1901-1987) was one of the legendary Russian violinists of the century. Though noted for a cool demeanor, he definitely had another warmer side to his personality as evinced by his willingness to play chamber music with amateur flutist, Billy Wolf.*

*Though Billy Wolf was the non-musical son-in-law of Lea Lubosbutz, she convinced him to make a valiant try at learning an instrument. But when he got to Maine each summer, he much preferred hanging out with Curtis students and fishing.*



As it happened, Heifetz and my grandmother were great friends from Russia who had studied with the same teacher. Heifetz would visit her from time to time when his travels brought him in close proximity. One of these visits occurred soon after Dad had located the Adagio and Presto. He practiced it feverishly, hoping (but not revealing to the family his hope) that maybe someday he might play it with Heifetz himself. On the day of one of Heifetz's visits, Dad spread out the music on the piano and left his flute set up in a very obvious place. Heifetz passed the piano on his way to the living room and said, "Oh, my little Adagio and Presto. Looks like someone is a flutist in the family and is playing it."

"Yes," said Dad, excitedly. "I have always dreamed that someday I would play it with you."

To the horror of my grandmother, Heifetz sat down at the piano (which he played quite well) and accompanied my father in the slow introductory Adagio. My father struggled and made it through. Then the fast Presto began with a piano solo, which Heifetz began at its fast pace. Again, to the horror of the family Dad said, "No, no, that is too fast."

"But it is a Presto," said Heifetz. "That's the way it goes."

Dad's retort went down as one of the most embarrassing moments in family history: "Not if you want to play it with me."

Despite Dad's musical limitations, he was a great champion of the later musical aspirations of his sons to start a music festival in Rockport. In 1960, it was Dad who found us a venue, opened a bank account for us, came up with the name Bay Chamber Concerts, provided some financial backing, and drove us on fund-raising calls (since I was not old enough to drive). He was very discreet and always left me far enough away from the prospects' houses that no one noticed.





## THE END OF THE COLONY

For 15 years, the Curtis Music Colony in Rockport was a destination for many of the school's teachers and students. During the 1940s, many of the young men went to war and the number of students diminished. In 1941, Efrem Zimbalist became director of Curtis, and two years later Mrs. Bok married him. Some worried that it might be a star-crossed marriage as it was called the Event of Thirteens. Edward Bok had been 13 years older than Mary Curtis. Mr. Zimbalist was a man 13 years her junior. She had been a widow for 13 years before she married him. Was this all unlucky? It turned out not to be the case. It was a very happy marriage that lasted until Mary Curtis Bok Zimbalist's death 27 years later.

No one accused Zimbalist of being a fortune hunter. He had become very wealthy in his own right as a violinist who was also a shrewd businessman and investor. As he looked over the finances of the school, what he saw troubled him. There was no way it could continue on its present course. Expenses exceeded income by a considerable degree. The Curtis fortune and the size of the endowment, though still large, were in decline. Something had to change and something had to go. And that something was the very expensive summer colony in Rockport. Houses were put up for sale, and some were sold to faculty members (MaryLea Cottage is still in our family, for example).

Beginning in 1946, Rockport continued to be a destination of choice for some few faculty members, and some continued to bring their students - including Mr. Zimbalist. But the musical activity was much diminished and largely ad hoc. The Sunday concerts were discontinued, Captain Eells' Boat Barn was sold, and the only concerts that were given were occasional benefits for the local hospital or the YMCA, or informal musicales in private homes. My grandmother, now in her 60s, chose to retire and devote herself to seven (soon to be eight) grandchildren. That was a mixed blessing for us since it meant daily violin lessons with a strict disciplinarian starting at age five. Many tears were shed on a one eighth size violin and I can still show you the lines on my fingers where her ruler slapped down when I played an out-of-tune note on the strings.

*Russian violinist Efrem Zimbalist (1890-1985) became director of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1941. Two years later, he married Mary Curtis Bok, who was 13 years his senior. In 1945, they decided to close the Curtis summer colony in Rockport.*



*Pianist Andrew Wolf (1943-1985) and his brother, flutist Thomas Wolf (1945- ) at about the time they founded Bay Chamber Concerts in Rockport, Maine, in 1960. Mrs. Zimbalist was delighted with the idea of reviving the Curtis concerts and provided a generous gift to launch the concert series.*

## THE BEGINNING OF BAY CHAMBER CONCERTS

The generation of faculty and students that had made up the Curtis summer colony was mostly long gone in 1960. But there was another crop of students coming along. My brother Andy and I (ages 15 and 17) were joined by four other students who were determined to create a concert series just as the older musicians had done so a quarter century before. But the question was how. Where would we play? The concert venue had been sold. Who would sell tickets? Where would we find an audience?

The first task was to secure some money. Mary Louise Curtis Bok Zimbalist was the patroness who had created the original Curtis summer music colony in Rockport. Her generosity was a matter of legend, and she was a great friend of my grandmother's. So my brother and I prevailed on my grandmother to get an appointment with the "grande dame," though she was insistent that we practice holding a tea cup properly so that she wouldn't be embarrassed if Mrs. Zimbalist offered tea. Once a date was set, suddenly my brother was "too busy." It was to be just me (the youngest of the musicians at age fifteen) who had to talk to Mrs. Zimbalist.

My father drove me to Lyndonwood, her magnificent house by the ocean. He left me at the end of the driveway for I did not want her to know I was too young to drive. When I walked into the large house with its beautiful antiques, oriental carpets, signed photos of famous musicians, and an extraordinary view of Penobscot Bay, I almost lost my courage.

But Mrs. Zimbalist, with a sweet but firm voice, gave me tea and asked me to tell her of our idea. I blurted it out and she was enthusiastic, immediately asking how she could help (as if she didn't know). "We will need money," I said.

"How much would you like?"

That was a question I had not anticipated, and I was almost tongue-tied. I just assumed that when you asked people for money, they decided how much they wanted to give you.

"A thousand dollars," I said, coming up with the largest number I could possibly think of at the time. It represented about a third of our first year's budget and about \$10,000 in today's dollars.



*The earliest known photo of the Wolf brothers (circa 1950) and later, planning a Bay Chamber Concerts season (circa 1980). Tom served as artistic director for the first three seasons. Andy took over until the 25th anniversary. Tom returned to lead the organization through its 50th anniversary and beyond.*

Mrs. Zimbalist walked over to her desk, got out her checkbook, and asked one last question.

“To whom shall I make out the check?”

Again, I was floored. The organization did not yet have a name. “Make it out to me,” I answered.

And that is how I became the artistic director of Bay Chamber Concerts, a position that I or my brother would hold for the next five decades.





## SALZEDO, CHALIFOUX, AND THE HARP COLONY

He was born two months prematurely after his mother took a fall in 1885. By the age of three, he was dubbed by Queen Maria Christina of Spain “my little Mozart.” Originally a piano prodigy, his father wanted him to play a second instrument. Since the older brother played the violin and since our hero was considered too weak to play a wind instrument, the boy took up the harp. It was thus that Carlos Salzedo, a man who was to play a crucial role in the musical history of midcoast Maine, became a harpist. His progress was so rapid on the instrument that he became a sensation in his native France and came to the attention of the legendary conductor Arturo Toscanini, who brought him to America in 1909.

Salzedo was a natural for the internationally acclaimed faculty that Josef Hoffman was assembling for the Curtis Institute of Music in the 1920s. When the idea of a Curtis summer music colony in Rockport was put forward, Salzedo liked the idea and was willing to relocate from his own summer spread in Seal Harbor. But his ambitions were far greater than simply being one of several Curtis faculty members, bringing a few students to the area. He wanted to do nothing short of establishing the greatest harp colony in the world. Over the subsequent decades, some say he accomplished that feat. He set up his summer school in Camden, the town next door to Rockport, in order to be nearby the Curtis colony but somewhat independent of it.

By mid-century, scores of harpists from many countries would descend on Camden each summer. Housed with local families, they would study with “Maitre,” as Salzedo liked to be called. Some of his students were young prodigies. Others were well established in their careers. His seaside house overlooking the outer harbor of Camden doubled as his teaching studio. It had many upstairs rooms where students could practice. At the end of August, some of the harpists would return with Salzedo to Philadelphia and to the Curtis Institute. One was Edna Phillips, who would end up as principal harp in the Philadelphia Orchestra and later teach at Curtis. Another, Alice Chalifoux, would become principal harp of the Cleveland Orchestra. Still others would go elsewhere. Having been at the Salzedo Harp Colony was a badge of honor and a resume builder, whether or not you were a Curtis student.

*French harpist and Curtis faculty member Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961) set up his harp colony in Camden. Many of his students went on to major careers including (far left) Edna Phillips, who became principal harp of the Philadelphia Orchestra and (far right) Alice Chalifoux, who became principal harp of the Cleveland Orchestra.*





*Harpist Alice Chalifoux (1908-2008) was very small but that did not diminish her extraordinary talents as a swimmer or harpist. When Salzedo died in 1961, he bequeathed his harp colony and school in Camden to her.*

When the Curtis colony was disbanded in 1945, Salzedo was undaunted. His harp colony continued and grew. By the 1960s, he was suffering from a heart ailment but teaching more than ever. Doctors told him to cut down on his schedule, but he simply wouldn't comply. His enthusiasm for the formation of our new concert series called Bay Chamber Concerts was unbounded. He offered to prepare one of his Curtis students, 19-year-old Margarita Csonka, to play in one of the first season's concerts. He also offered to coach a trio of students in an ensemble that would play Debussy's sonata for harp, flute, and viola - a work Salzedo had discussed with the composer himself. Midway through our rehearsals, Csonka learned that she had been selected to join the Philadelphia Orchestra, one of the youngest players ever to do so (her career there lasted 50 years). The Debussy performance on August 3, 1961, was a celebratory event. Sadly, it was marred a week later by Salzedo's sudden death from a heart attack.

There was much speculation about what would happen to the harp colony. When Salzedo's will was read, the news was beamed around the world. Alice Chalifoux, one of his most successful students, would inherit the school. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, to musician parents in 1908, she had gone to Curtis at age 19, come to Maine as a student during the summer, and was appointed principal harp of the Cleveland Orchestra four years later, an extraordinary feat. She held that position for the next 43 years performing under conductors Rodzinski, Leinsdorf, Szell, and Maazel and making countless recordings including a Grammy-award winner. After her orchestral career, she devoted herself to teaching. She held a number of prestigious faculty appointments and gave masterclasses all over the world (including in China long before Americans traveled there). Today her students occupy the majority of important harp positions in American orchestras and conservatories.

I met Alice on her first visit as the new head of the Salzedo School in 1961. I will never forget my first impression. Alice was considered a giant of the music world, so I expected a large physical presence. But she stood less than five feet tall. Even so, the charisma was palpable. My distinct memory of the first meeting was of Alice advising me not to fall in love with her 16-year-old daughter (though I am sure she said other things as well). I am afraid I did not take her advice.

For four decades, Alice Chalifoux supplied Bay Chamber Concerts with student performers (many of whom went on to illustrious careers), and she even played herself at Rockport concerts on occasion. We benefitted as well from innumerable coaching sessions and lessons, with student ushers from the harp colony, and with Alice's far-ranging advice (about music and life). Alice lived to the ripe old age of 100, dispensing that advice until the end.




No portrait of Alice is complete without reference to her humor. Quite simply, she was one of the funniest people I ever knew (though many of her best *bon mots*, unfortunately, are unprintable). Her explanation: "What do you expect? I hung around those Cleveland Symphony men all those years when I wasn't getting dressed in my harp case back stage!"

Once we were in a coaching session with Alice, and one of my colleagues was asking a question or two after each suggestion Alice made. Exasperated, Alice finally turned to him and said, "You might want to keep your mouth shut for a while. You will live longer." The musician kept quiet, but the session didn't go particularly well. I said something to Alice about it. "Do you think the concert will be okay?" I asked. "At this point, I would trust in the Lord and keep your bowels open." (from Joan: I don't understand what this means and I wonder if others may not either) she said, and then added in all seriousness: "Don't try to outdo yourself when you perform. Just go out there and play the way you play." What great advice. It has been my mantra ever since.

Alice was only seriously angry at my brother and me on one occasion. We had booked a harpist for Bay Chamber Concerts without consulting her (I believe Alice had been on tour in Europe, so we made the choice without her). As bad luck would have it, the young harpist was not one of Alice's students and had not been trained in the Salzedo method. "How was I to know?" my brother said. "I thought everyone good was part of the Salzedo tradition." When the night of the concert arrived, we hoped Alice wouldn't come. But come she did - with over students in tow. When the concert was over, I sought out Alice. "What did you think?" I asked. "You just set back the cause of the harp 100 years!" With that off her chest, no more was ever said about the fateful evening. And while she lived, we never booked a harpist again without consulting Alice.

8 B Portland, Maine, Sunday Telegram, July 30, 1961

## News Of Maine



**Chamber Concert Trio**

Harpist Margarita Csonka, flutist Thomas Wolf and pianist Andrew Wolf rehearse number they will play with the Bay Festival Quartet at Thursday's Bay Chamber Concert in St. Thomas Parish House, Camden. All are teen-agers. (By Staff Photographer Moore)

*Harpist Margarita Csonka was only 19 when she first appeared at Bay Chamber Concerts in 1961. She was one of Salzedo's favorite students both at Curtis and in Camden and the same year was appointed to the Philadelphia Orchestra.*

## BIDU AND THE ART OF FUND-RAISING

When we created Bay Chamber Concerts, lots of people gave us advice. After all, we were teen-agers and they surmised (quite correctly) that we didn't know much. One piece of advice was that in order to gain credibility, we ought to establish an advisory board of famous musicians. "They don't really have to do anything except lend their names to the endeavor," we were told. "In fact, don't ask them to do anything else." Since so many well-known musicians spent summers nearby, assembling the group was a piece of cake.

But there was one person I desperately wanted who was going to take some coaxing. It was Bidu Sayao, the recently retired Metropolitan Opera soprano who had made a sensation with her recording of Heiter Villa Lobos' *Bachiana Brasileira No. 5* with eight cellos just a few years before. The story of the recording itself had been the stuff of legend – apparently it had been made in one take and was so magnificent that no one dared do another. In 1962, Bidu Sayao had announced to the world that she would be moving to Maine permanently, and I was excited that our newest permanent resident superstar might be mentioned in our publicity.

Our grandmother was pressed into service and secured an appointment for me with her old friend. I went to Bidu's hotel suite in New York in the spring of 1962. I met her husband and little dog, and I made my pitch, asking whether she would serve on our advisory board.

"Do I have to give any money?" she asked. "No," I answered

"Do I have to go to any concerts?" Again, the answer was no.

"Do I have to go to any meetings?" A third time came the answer – no.

"Good," said Bidu, "I will do it."

Years passed and I never laid eyes on Bidu Sayao again. She remained on our advisory board until her death at the age of 97, almost four decades later. Her name appeared in our publicity. But I pretty much forgot about it.

Then, in 1987, I was attempting to raise money from a large national foundation in New York. People told me I would never get an appointment, but miraculously, not only was I successful in doing so, but the foundation's president said he would see me. I made a special trip and was ushered into his office. I began my pitch and the elderly gentleman interrupted me.



“Listen,” he said. “This is very simple. We don’t have to talk about your organization. I will give you a grant. Normally we would not be supporting you, and I am doing this out of my own discretionary fund for a simple reason. I am an opera fan. And Bidu Sayao was for me one of the greatest singers who ever lived. I remember her final performance at the Met in 1952. I remember her singing under Toscanini. But I have completely lost touch and didn’t even know she is still alive. And now I find she is on your advisory board. How lucky for you! How is she?”

Panic set in. I had met Bidu Sayao once a quarter of a century before and talked to her for all of 10 minutes. In desperation, I answered, “The last time I saw her she was fine.”

I then spoke about a gift of French soap that Bidu had sent to my grandmother (not mentioning that my grandmother had passed away 20 years before). I also spoke about Bidu’s little dog based on my memory of him (or her) from years before, and I improvised, “Bidu had no children so she was devastated when the little dog died.”

Fortunately, it was enough. My host spent the rest of the time talking about every recording he owned that included Bidu Sayao and every role that he was aware of her having sung. And I walked away with \$10,000.

I had only one other experience with Bidu. It occurred two years later. At long last, we had assembled a soprano with eight cellists to honor our distinguished musical resident and her incomparable performance of Villa Lobos’ *Bachiana Brasileira No. 5*. The musicians were excited (they all knew every note of the famous recording). All I had to do was figure out a way to get Bidu to the concert. I asked my mother to help.

Mom called Bidu, reminded her of the friendship with my grandmother, and then spoke about the two young boys who had started the concert series in Maine “with your help,” as she put it. According to Mom, Bidu sounded a little frail and a little hazy but eventually put it all together. “They are doing your Villa Lobos on the series, and they are dedicating the performance to you,” said my mother. “Can we send a car to pick you up so you could be there to receive the honors?” “Heavens,” screamed Bidu in a voice that would have filled the Metropolitan Opera House, “I hate that piece.” And with that she slammed down the phone. I explained to the audience later, “Madame Sayao is so sorry she cannot be with us tonight but she was indisposed.”



*Metropolitan Opera soprano Bidu (1902-1999) was another Maine summer resident who served on the advisory board of Bay Chamber Concerts. Late in her career, she made a sensation with her recording of Villa Lobos’ *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*. In this photo, taken on Fifth Avenue, Sayao is wearing a hat made from the Villa Lobos record.*





## THE STRING QUARTET TRADITION

From the earliest days of the Curtis Institute, there was a commitment to chamber music ensembles – most especially the string quartet (two violins, a viola, and cello). My grandmother played in a faculty ensemble that called itself the Curtis Quartet for a year or two, but the name was soon given over to an extraordinary young student ensemble formed in the early 1930s that spent summers in Rockport. Their success was augmented by the compositions of a fellow student, Samuel Barber, who wrote some seminal works for the genre. One of them is generally thought to be among the most important pieces of American classical music ever written – Barber’s famous “Adagio” (which was later arranged for string orchestra but was originally part of a string quartet). Another Barber work for string quartet, this one with baritone, was his “Dover Beach,” originally recorded by the Curtis Quartet with Barber himself singing. The Quartet completed this recording just before setting off on their first European tour in 1935. By this time, the four members of the quartet were pretty cocky – they had appeared at the White House at the invitation of the Roosevelts and were becoming famous.

When the idea for a revival of summer concerts was being discussed in 1960, the prestige and importance of the Curtis Quartet influenced the final shape of the programs. The decision was to have a resident string quartet that would be the central feature, with other musicians serving as guests as needed. The personnel of that first quartet ensemble – called the Bay Festival String Quartet – included several promising young students. Two were in Rockport already studying with violinist and Curtis director, Efrem Zimbalist – the violinist Hidetaro Suzuki (who became concertmaster of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra) and Takaoki Sugitani (who later joined the Cincinnati Orchestra). Jane Field, who after graduating from Curtis would become a member of the National Symphony, was the violist, and the cellist was Noel Snyder. Noel was a talented musician, but he was torn regarding his career. At the time he was not only a student at Curtis but also a biology major at nearby Swarthmore College. He later went on to a distinguished career as an academic biologist.

From 1961 to 1973, the question of who would play in the Bay Festival String Quartet became an increasing concern. Who was available? Who knew the quartet literature? In 1973, my brother Andy who had taken over as artistic director, made a crucial decision. A string quartet ensemble was too important to leave to chance. Why not make a commitment to an established professional group consisting of four players whose livelihoods were made by playing string quartets every day? As luck would have it, two such ensembles had recently formed at the Marlboro Music Festival – both with strong Curtis connections and one with connections to Rockport.

*(opposite) The Curtis String Quartet was the backbone of the Curtis summer music colony, and its members were beloved by the townspeople of Rockport. In 1941 they were invited to participate in the Fourth of July parade dressed as they would look a century hence.*





Shmuel Ashkenasi was part of one of these new groups that called itself the Vermeer Quartet. Shmuel had performed in the very first season of Bay Chamber Concerts, having come to Maine a couple of years earlier as a teenage student of Efrem Zimbalist. My first impression of this young Israeli violin phenomenon was that he was a funny guy who spoke very little English and preferred to spend his time beating me at cards (for money of course). I learned his English was a lot better than he pretended so I gave up on the cards. When Shmuel took a top prize at the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow, everyone assumed he would go on to become a leading soloist. But the chamber music bug had bitten him, and in the early 1970s he formed the Vermeer Quartet – a group that would be nominated for three Grammys, perform on five continents, and become one of the most respected ensembles of its kind in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was the resident quartet at Bay Chamber Concerts for over three decades.

Andy's invitation to the Vermeer Quartet to make Rockport its summer home was a shrewd one. Bay Chamber Concerts was known at the time as a nice venue for students and young professionals starting out. But with the Vermeer, its reputation was enhanced and established professional musicians who had not taken the concert series seriously before now wanted to come. That same year, the concert series moved from the 200-seat Parish House of the Episcopal Church to the 400-seat Rockport Opera House. Such was the prestige of the Vermeer that the concerts continued to sell out despite doubling the number of seats.

In 2002, Marc Johnson of the Vermeer Quartet let it be known confidentially that the group was going to disband in five years. I was grateful for the warning and the lead time. For a number of years, I had pondered who could replace the Vermeer and had my eyes on a young quartet that was becoming internationally acclaimed – the Saint

Lawrence String Quartet. I invited them to come to Rockport and share the stage during the remaining seasons of the Vermeer. By the time the Vermeer played its last concert – at the Rockport Opera House on November 29, 2007– the Saint Lawrence was already attracting a new and exciting group of musicians and its own loyal audience. Who knows what wonderful musicians the future will bring?





*(top) The heart and soul of Bay Chamber Concerts for more than three decades was the Vermeer String Quartet. They arrived in 1974. On the facing page, the personnel in the early years consisted of (from left) cellist Marc Johnson, violist Nabuko Imai, and violinists Shmuel Ashkenasi and Pierre Menard. In the picture on the right, taken just before the quartet's final performance in 2007 at the Rockport Opera House, the second violinist (2nd from left) is Mathias Tacke, and the violist (on the right) is Richard Young.*



*(Bottom) With the retirement of the Vermeer Quartet, the Saint Lawrence String Quartet took over as Bay Chamber Concerts resident ensemble. From left Geoff Nuttall, Christopher Costanza, Scott St. John, and Lesley Robertson.*

## THE RETIRED PIANIST

By the fourth season of Bay Chamber Concerts, things were in disarray. The year before, my brother Andy and I had decided we'd had enough. Neither of us wanted to manage the organization - a thankless job that paid almost nothing. A young Curtis student - a French horn player - stepped in. He had the odd notion that brass music was going to be very popular, more popular than other chamber music. People stayed away in droves. The small surplus we had assembled was depleted. Less than \$five was left in the bank. The French horn player left for England, never to return. Unless one of us was willing to take over, the organization was finished.

So began Andy's initially reluctant but eventually long and successful tenure as artistic director - one that lasted until his untimely death during the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Bay Chamber Concerts in 1985. Andy was a remarkable pianist - a student of Eleanor Sokoloff and Rudolf Serkin (the man who succeeded Efrem Zimbalist as Director of Curtis). Though our parents did not want him to attend Curtis but rather go to a regular college where he could get a liberal arts education, Andy rebelled. After an unhappy year at Columbia University, he ended up back in Philadelphia. This was perfect because he could scout the best talent among his fellow Curtis students and book people for the subsequent summer's concerts.

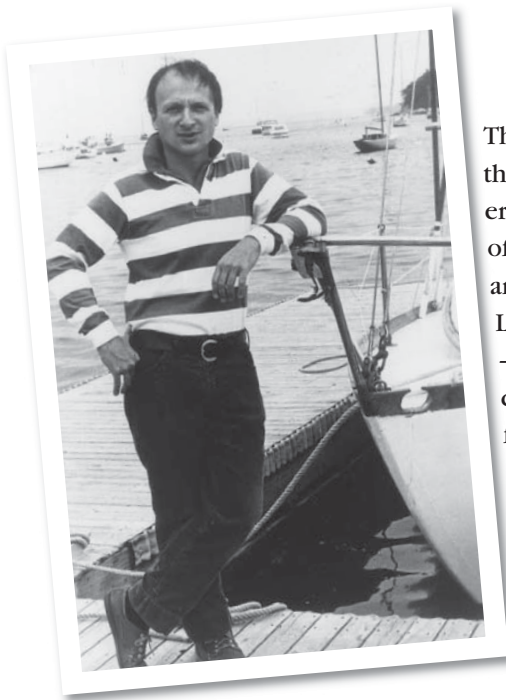
Andy had a deal with my grandmother. If he practiced four hours a day, he could take the day after a concert off, sleep late, go sailing, and not touch the piano. But at about this time, my grandmother was practicing again. She had had a reunion with her old friend the great cellist Pablo Casals, who told her that at 89 he practiced and was an amorous husband every day. She decided that a little practicing might not be a bad thing. Being an early riser, she started at 7:30 and was done by 9 - about the time Andy was lingering at the breakfast table.

After a particular concert Andy decided to test my grandmother's dictum. He didn't practice for three days. The tension in the house was palpable. My grandmother would storm out after breakfast and spend time in her garden where she would tend vegetables with a neighbor - a retired banker. By the fourth day, when Andy came out to pick radishes, my grandmother said in a loud voice, "Isn't it interesting. Three of us. All alike. A retired banker, a retired violinist, and a retired pianist." The tension was broken, everyone had a good laugh, Andy returned to the piano, and the family breathed a collective sigh of relief.



*Though his parents at first resisted and hoped he would go to an academic college full time, Andy Wolf ended up at the Curtis Institute of Music and later went on to become a well-established pianist. His special focus and love was chamber music and accompanying major soloists in recitals. His summers were spent at Bay Chamber Concerts until his career and life were cut short by a brain tumor at age 43.*





*(above) Andy Wolf was an accomplished sailor and enjoyed taking musicians to concerts on the island by sailboat. He ended the practice when the musicians got fogged in after one of the concerts for three days.*

*(right) Andy Wolf was also a pilot. In this photo, he is preparing to take musicians to a concert in Northern Maine. Once again, unpredictable weather ended the practice; the musicians preferred the dependability of car travel.*

Though many of our forebears had played there often, Andy was the first of our generation to play in Carnegie Hall and many of the other great musical halls of Europe and Asia. His tours with Isaac Stern and Leonard Rose were especially fun for him - he wasn't accustomed to flying first class or taking the Concorde to Paris. (In fact, he often flew himself to concerts during the summer as he was an experienced pilot). The hotels on tour (that others were always paying for) were described as extraordinary. He once made the mistake of having his laundry done at Claridges in London at Isaac Stern's suggestion. Yes, fresh flowers separated his undershorts and socks. But the bill was over \$200.

Andy died of a brain tumor at the age of 42. His colleagues and family were devastated. In his memory, they set up the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award - to honor a pianist under the age of 40 who has made a significant contribution and commitment to chamber music. The winners read like a who's who of the younger generation of outstanding pianists, and we at Bay Chamber Concerts have had the great fun of seeing them go on to major careers in the music world. It was especially gratifying when one of the winners, Wu Han, took over the flagship chamber music organiza-



**FAVORITE PASTIME** — Pianist Andrew Wolf, left, can be seen flying when he's not practicing his music. Wolf is pictured here taking up Pierre Menard, a member of the Vermeer Quartet. Wolf and the Vermeer Quartet will present an all-Beethoven performance Thursday night at 8:15 at the Rockport Opera House.

## Wolf, Vermeer Quartet Will Combine Talents For All-Beethoven Program

ROCKPORT — Pianist Andrew Wolf will join the Vermeer Quartet in an all-Beethoven program this Thursday night at 8:15 p.m. at the Rockport Opera House.

This week's Bay Chamber Concert will feature a Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in E flat Major, Opus No. 1 and a String Quartet in B flat Major, Opus 130.

Discussing the program, Wolf explained that the trio is the composer's first published work and is "easy for the audience to relate to," while the string quartet is a more serious piece.

Members of the Vermeer Quartet who will perform Thursday evening are violinists Shmuel Ashkenasi and Pierre Menard, cellist Marc Johnson and violist

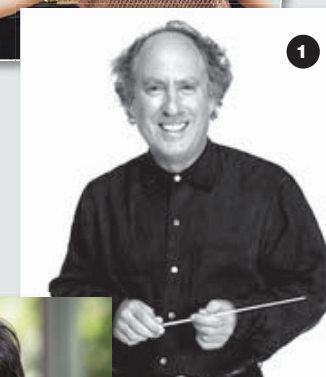
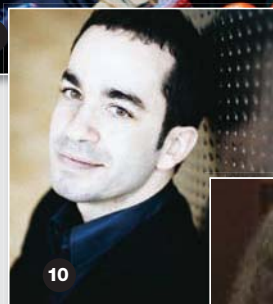
and we can't change that fact," Wolf explained.

Reflecting on the development of the Bay Chamber Concerts now in their 17th season, Wolfe noted that, "If you take little steps toward your goal, you will get there faster than you think. People who want to get there in one or two big steps can create problems for themselves," he added.

"In developing the Bay Chamber Concert Series over the years we have tried to think conservatively financially and have offered what we consider to be the highest quality music to our patrons," Wolf said.

The Bay Chamber Concerts will continue on Thursday nights at the Rockport Opera House through Aug. 25.

tion in the country with her husband David Finkel - the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. It was also fun to watch Christopher O'Riley become a media star with his From the Top radio and television programs featuring young artists (a couple of those programs were recorded as part of Bay Chamber Concerts featuring our very own young musicians from Maine). I was also thrilled to be at Jonathan Biss' debut with the Boston Symphony when he performed the Beethoven triple concerto with his violinist mother and later read the enthusiastic coverage of his Carnegie Hall debut in 2011 (our grandmothers, Lea Luboshutz and Raya Garbousova, had been musician colleagues and friends). When the first winner, Jeffrey Kahane, became music director and chief conductor of a major orchestra, I knew Andy would have smiled. One of Jeffrey's hallmarks was to make the orchestra play with the same intimacy as a chamber ensemble.



### Andrew Wolf Award Winners

- 1 Jeffrey Kahane - 1987
- 2 Lydia Artymiw - 1989
- 3 Christopher O'Riley - 1991
- 4 Wu Han - 1993
- 5 Anne-Marie McDermott - 1995
- 6 Jeremy Denk - 1999
- 7 Jonathan Biss - 2001
- 8 Natalie Zhu - 2003
- 9 Max Levinson - 2005
- 10 Inon Barnatan - 2008
- 11 Anna Polonsky - 2011





## CHATTY AND “THE BOOKS”



*Albert Chatfield, Bay Chamber Concerts' longtime treasurer, with his wife Marion and in the field with his beloved “Belties” (Belted Galloways).*

*(right) Albert and Marion Chatfield with farm manager Dwight Howard and a championship bull. The Chatfields shared a love of chamber music and were longtime supporters of Bay Chamber Concerts.*

Anyone who has been to Maine’s midcoast has probably visited Aldermere Farm and seen the famous herd of Belted Galloways – cattle that have helped form part of the brand of the area. The man who brought the herd to Maine was one Albert Chatfield, a Cincinnati native whose family had summered in Rockport since the end of the 19th century. Chatty (as many people referred to him) was an imposing man – someone the young musicians who started Bay Chamber Concerts deferred to and were a bit frightened of. He was known for his generosity, and though he supported local causes handsomely, he did so quietly, and many of his philanthropic efforts were unknown. As it turned out, he was a great music lover and a charter subscriber to Bay Chamber Concerts. He was also a man who understood finances, budgeting, and everything that had to do with money.

By the fourth year of Bay Chamber Concerts, we needed him. Our bank account was down to five dollars. We had no reserves and the future looked bleak. When Andy asked Mr. Chatfield whether he would help us out, he said he needed to see the books. A hardworking volunteer who had been with us from the start – Charlotte Stancioff – handed him the checkbook. “No, I need to see the *books*,” he repeated. None of us knew what that meant. The only financial records we kept were the deposits and payments recorded in the checkbook. Mr. Chatfield was horrified. He agreed to become treasurer only if he could oversee all the finances.

So began a 30-plus year association that turned Bay Chamber Concerts from a financially precarious start-up to a fiscally sound institution. Chatty’s technique was masterful. At budget time, after a morning in his fields with farm manager Dwight Howard, he would meet with us and lecture everyone about how likely it was that the world was going to be in turmoil, that no one would buy tickets, and that fund-raising would be off. He then made us pare our expenses. By the end of the process, our budget would be so conservative, that we would inevitably end the year with a surplus, especially since Mr. Chatfield encouraged our beleaguered box office manager, Milford Payson, to “sell a seat as many times as you can” (meaning if a seat appeared empty at concert time, we should just go ahead and sell it). Rather than letting us get our hands on the excess money left over at the end of each season, Chatty always invested it on behalf of the organization. Gradually, we built up a nice cash cushion that became the beginning of an endowment.

Chatty disliked music written after Debussy, and when “modern” music was performed, he was vocal in his disapproval—so vocal, in fact, that I would often hear him in a stage whisper, heard throughout the hall, saying to Marion (his wife), “I don’t know why they play this music.” But he was faithful in preparing for every concert and every piece.





Before he drove to Florida for the winter, navigating the Airstream that he would live in when he arrived, he would ask my brother what music was to be played the next season. He would dutifully stock up on all the recordings so he could listen and be ready when it was played during the next season.

Keeping up with Mr. Chatfield's fertile mind, full of ideas and concerns about the future, was always a struggle, especially because he liked calling on Sunday mornings at 7 a.m. to discuss things. After all, he had already been out in the fields and had breakfasted. Indeed, I was thrilled for many reasons when his niece Polly became President of the board, but surely one of those reasons was that she became the lucky recipient of the 7 a.m. calls!

The only time I saw anyone get one up on Mr. Chatfield was when he commissioned Jay Hanna, a local artist, to paint a sign for Aldermere Farm that would feature prominently a beloved "Beltie" - one of his signature cows. The cows are immediately recognizable since they are all black except for the signature wide perfectly symmetrical white stripe that goes clear around the midsection. When the sign was delivered, Chatty was thrilled. "How much do I owe you?" he asked Jay in his imposing tenor voice. "Oh, I don't worry about the money," came the answer. "Just give me a chunk of the white meat."

## AN UNUSUAL ISLAND CONCERT

Who would have guessed that a rescue at sea could have led to an island concert series?

Before the era when recreational boaters had access to radar or GPS, a sudden fog on the Maine coast was a fearsome occurrence. When one of those hit our family, cruising off of Vinalhaven Island in Penobscot Bay, we were only too happy to be rescued by the island's doctor, one Ralph Earle. As we warmed ourselves by Dr. Earle's kitchen wood stove, we learned that he was a music lover and a lover of opera. In fact, he and his mother listened on their radios every Saturday to the Metropolitan Opera's live broadcasts on which my uncle Boris Goldovsky did intermission features explaining the operas. Dr. Earle was thus thrilled to have what he called "celebrities" in his house. Over hot chocolate and a tasty meal, he said that if we ever wanted to start a concert series on his island, he would be only too happy to help out.

And help he did. In 1961, the young Bay Chamber Concerts musicians thought it would be nice to have a place to repeat concerts and make a little extra money. Dr. Earle and a group on Vinalhaven Island got together with a similar collection of islanders on nearby North Haven to form the Fox Island Concerts – a partner organization of Bay Chamber Concerts' to this day. We shared in the cost of musicians, program printing, and ferry tickets to make sure we could get the program started.

Most of the concerts on Vinalhaven were happy affairs, but one was especially challenging. In 1967, we were getting ready to play a concert on North Haven Island. Fifteen minutes before it was to begin, our cellist told us sheepishly that he had forgotten his music. Unfortunately, that meant every piece on the program would have to be scratched since he played in all of them. Had this happened today, a quick call with a fax number or a scanned email would have solved the problem. But in 1967, unable to do the round trip to the mainland in less than three hours, we were stuck.

Then someone in our group came up with a great idea. Every musician generally memorizes his or her solo repertoire. He asked the question, "Okay guys, what solo pieces do you have ready?" In 10 minutes we had crafted a program of solo pieces for the various instruments. I went out and said to the audience, "I know you have printed programs, but you can put them away. Tonight, you are going to have a treat. The musicians who are here are so extraordinary that we wanted you to be able to hear them as soloists, and so each will get to play for you one of the great solo works for his or her instrument."

*A favorite Bay Chamber Concerts pianist and summer resident of Vinalhaven Island, Frederick Moyer, demonstrates the Steinway piano acquired for the new Smith-Hokanson Memorial Hall on the island. Lwonard Hokanson, one of the musicians for whom the hall was named, was the longtime resident pianist of Bay Chamber Concerts.*

The bewildered audience became one of rapt attention as musician after musician proudly played his or her polished solo pieces. The concert was a success, and I was delighted when several people afterwards said, “Thank you for changing the program. It was so...well...different.” If they had only known!

For decades, our programs on the islands took place in churches. But in 2004, the citizens of Vinalhaven built and opened a beautiful concert hall as part of the island’s new high school. It was dedicated to two native-born islanders who had become well-known classical musicians - Kelton Vinal Smith, longtime trombonist and tuba player in the Boston Symphony, and Leonard Hokanson, a pianist internationally recognized as a recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician who, after a long career in Europe, returned to the United States to teach at Indiana University. Leonard also served as Bay Chamber Concerts’ resident pianist for 20 years.





## BAY CHAMBER CONCERTS...WAY DOWN EAST

In the late 1960s, newly married and searching for the “real” Maine, my wife and I took a long trip. We were trying to find an unspoiled place far, far away that tourists hadn’t found. We drove to the town of Machias and located a realtor who we figured could show us some isolated property as far from civilization as we could get and still be in the United States. It would provide a respite from what had always been a very hectic life.

Robert Guptill, the realtor, turned out to be a renaissance man. Yes, he could build log cabins from trees he had cut down himself, but he also loved music. His wife, he told us proudly, was the organist at the beautiful white church whose spires we saw driving into town. As luck would have it, Bob connected my name with a radio program he had heard on Maine Public Radio. “You weren’t the guy who played the flute and started that concert series?” When I admitted that my brother and I had done so, he said, “I’ve always thought we ought to have concerts like you have right here in Washington County.”

“Well,” I said “you really need an especially good hall with superb acoustics.” Bob made a U-turn, drove back into town, took us into the church sanctuary – one of the most gorgeous spaces I had ever seen, with a warm and wonderful sound – and told me it could be provided. A few notes on the organ proved him right. Within a year, Bob got his concert series – six summer concerts under our artistic guidance. The connection was to be so close that we chose the name Machias Bay Chamber Concerts, and after over 40 years, the organization thrives to this day. A lovely feature of the events there is that after the concerts, the entire audience is invited to a potluck in the church basement. The programs feature the same wonderful artists we present in Rockport, including some with a special connection to the area. Indeed, when Machias Bay Chamber Concerts had to raise money for a new Steinway piano, a local summer person, Keith Lockhart, the conductor of the Boston Pops, agreed to do a benefit.

Driving to Machias during the summer is a long trek, and I tell musicians to double-check that they have everything they will need because there is no turning back after more than two and a half hours on the road. On one occasion, we had eight musicians and a harp and I was especially concerned that nothing be forgotten. I grabbed my flute, my music, and my concert clothes (my white jacket had just come back from the cleaners), and I threw them in the car, rushing to help load the harp and chide everyone else about not forgetting things. Upon arrival in Machias, we had a short rehearsal and then went down to dress. Taking off my shorts and sandals, I grabbed my white jacket and realized to my horror that my formal black pants were not in their usual place on the same hanger. Of course, I realized too late, they had not gone to the cleaners so they were on a hanger of their own...back in Rockport (three hours away).

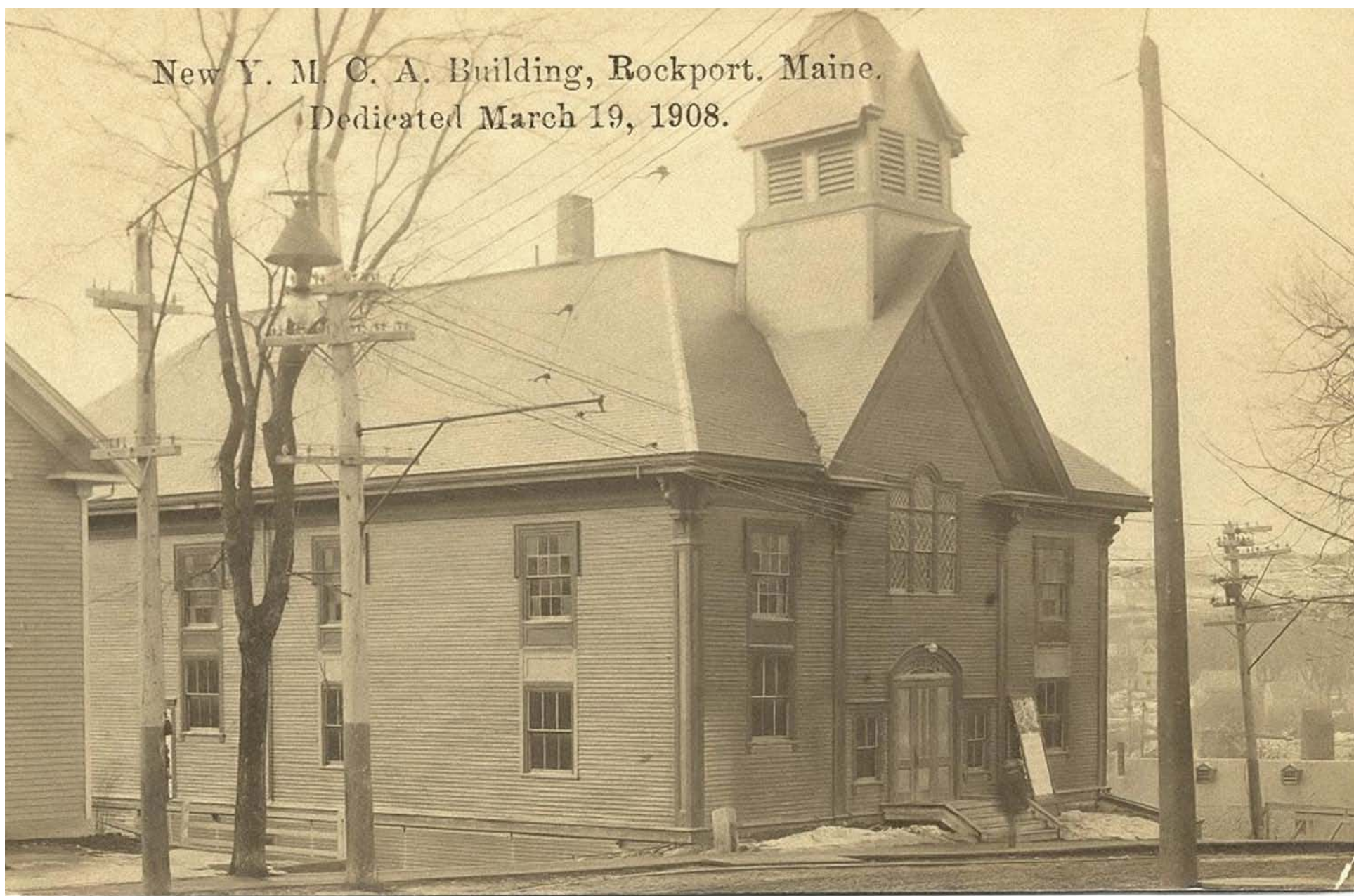
Playing in a white jacket and short pants was not an option. So what to do? The good news was that Prentice Pilot (our bass player) and I were never on stage at the same time - perhaps we could share a pair of formal black pants. The bad news: Prentice is tall (very tall) and thin and I am short and...well - fat. The pants were a good foot too long and I couldn't close them at the waist. Prentice reminded me that he had a cummerbund, and as long as I was careful, it might cover the opening in front and hopefully keep the pants from falling down. As to the cuffs, safety pins would have to do.



After that night, I had a newfound respect for actors and opera singers who have to change costumes quickly, especially when the fit is not perfect. A team of musicians helped Prentice and me do the backstage switches each time one or the other of us would come off stage. When it was time for me to go out, bow, and play, I was extremely careful. I confess that my bows were slight that night and they only involved a head nod. Anything else might have been disastrous.

*Three founders of Machias Bay Chamber Concerts, Mrs. Hollis ("Billie") Ingalls, Maurine Jans, and Robert Guptill, in front of the organ pipes in the Center Street Congregational Church. It was the magnificent acoustics of the church that convinced the musicians of Bay Chamber Concerts that a concert series there would be successful. Four decades of successful programs proved them right.*

New Y. M. C. A. Building, Rockport, Maine.  
Dedicated March 19, 1908.





## VENUES

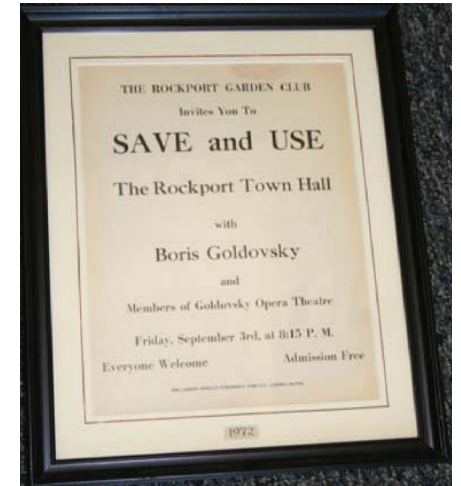
Over the years, music has been performed in wonderful spaces in the midcoast – from beautiful private homes to museum spaces and even the out-of-doors. Captain Eells' Boat Barn and the Bok private home were where concerts took place initially in the 1930s. But in recent years, four primary venues became primary destinations. One is the beautiful 500-seat Camden Opera House built in 1894 and completely renovated 100 years later. Another, for larger events and for dance, is Strom Auditorium, an 826-seat facility that opened as part of the new regional high school complex in Rockport in 2000. A third is the Strand Theatre, built in Rockland in 1923 and beautifully renovated by the Simmons family in 2005.

But if any facility can be thought of as part of the identity of our organization, it is the Rockport Opera House. Originally built in 1891, it has served as everything from a touring vaudeville house to a YMCA to a high school gym to a municipal office, with many other uses sprinkled in. According to Bay Chamber Concerts' longtime treasurer, Albert Chatfield, his father used to garage the family carriages in the lower level in the winter months. High school graduations were always important events there as evidenced by the programs displayed on the wall downstairs.

Given how magnificent the main upstairs hall is for chamber music, it is scary to consider just how close the building came to demolition. In the early 1970s, the Town of Rockport was ready to move its offices out of what was then being called the "Town Hall." The upstairs auditorium had not been used for years, and the rumor was that it was dangerous and unsuitable for serious performances. The plan was to tear the whole building down and build a parking lot.

Members of the Garden Club were incensed. The Opera House was part of Rockport's history. My mother, who was a member, asked her brother, the opera impresario Boris Goldovsky, whether he would check out the auditorium. It took him about five minutes to realize that the hall had the potential of being a gem – most especially because of its warm and beautiful acoustics. He offered to give a demonstration concert despite the fact that the hall was in pretty rough shape (a poster for that event is pictured on this page). It was a tremendous success, and local people became energized.

Uncle Boris also offered something a lot more tangible. He had received a major grant from the Ford Foundation to train operatic stage directors. What better way, he decided, to train them than to have them involved in the transformation of an auditorium. Together with his longtime technical director, he brought the whole class to Rockport. Along with volunteers from the town and local architect Stephen Biggs, they began the process of transformation, including a stage shell and rigging that allowed Bay Chamber Concerts to move into the hall in 1974.



*(Above) A poster for the concert in 1972 when opera impresario Boris Goldovsky brought a group of singers to demonstrate the superior qualities of the long abandoned Rockport Opera House and to save the building from demolition.*

*(opposite) The Rockport Opera House eighteen years after it was built. One of the floors house the YMCA's basketball court and was also used for high school graduations. The concert hall itself was an acoustical gem from the day it was built and remains so to this day.*

In the early 1990s, it was clear that the building would need a complete top-to-toe renovation and was raised to do so with Bay Chamber Concerts patrons providing a substantial portion of the costs for the town-owned building. Once again, Bay Chamber Concerts' focus was on the auditorium space, though we also installed air conditioning, acquired new chairs, and made other adjustments including the installation of an artist "green room" downstairs.

Part of what makes the Opera House so special is the lovely Mary Lea Park next door. It was created and dedicated to the memory of my grandmother in 1966 with land provided by the town and funds donated by family and friends. Like her house, the park was named for her (Lea) and her great friend Mary Curtis Bok (Mary). Mrs. Zimbalist celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in part by honoring my grandmother with a visit to the park a week after it was officially dedicated and opened.

*From left: (1) Entry to the Rockport Opera House (2010). (2) Another view of the same. (3) Mary Lea Park adjoins the Opera House and overlooks Rockport Harbor. (4) The renovated Strand Movie Theatre in Rockland serves as another musical venue.*





## FIRST CHAIR ALL STARS

Musical reminiscences can become very tiresome when they contain a catalogue of famous artists who have played memorable concerts. With more than 2,000 concerts representing the long history of the music colony in Maine from 1930 until the present day, it would be foolhardy to go down that road.

There are some remarkable claims to fame. One of my favorites is that every director of the Curtis Institute of Music from Josef Hoffman in 1930 to the present day has performed in Rockport. This includes, in addition to Hofmann, the composer Randall Thompson, the violinist Efrem Zimbalist, the pianist Rudolf Serkin, the oboist John de Lancie, the pianist Gary Graffman, and the violist Roberto Diaz. Besides Curtis itself, how many others communities can make that claim?

There is also the fact that many Grammy Award winners were presented, and on dozens of occasions our venues were used as tryout sites for important Carnegie Hall programs or other important appearances by the artists as they toured around the world. Bay Chamber Concerts has commissioned new works, and the community hosted several world premieres. One of these – a chamber music score by Stephen Prutsman played to a hilarious Buster Keaton film – was voted the most popular performance the following year when it was repeated at the Spoleto Festival.

Over three quarters of a century, only one concert was cancelled and one other was shortened, both due to ferocious snowstorms. Despite illnesses, broken bones, and pulled muscles among our musicians, and despite cancelled flights and broken-down vehicles, concerts always took place as planned. It has always been a point of pride that if there is an audience, there will be a performance.

One of the other special claims to fame is the First Chair All Star concerts – programs that bring principal players from the top orchestras to play chamber music together. Imagine having the principal horns of the Boston Symphony, the



*Joseph Silverstein, former concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with Nurit Bar-Josef, concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra, at a rehearsal for one of the popular First Chair All Star concerts.*



**Liang Wang**



**ALL STARS**

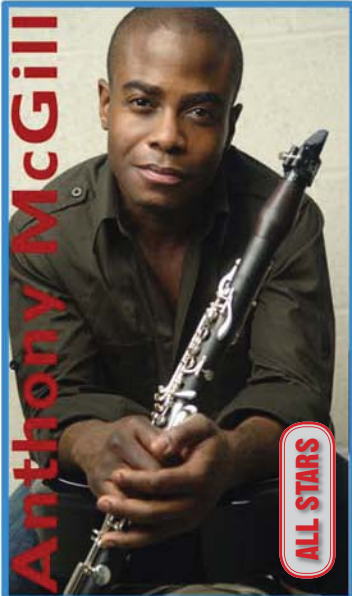
**Liang Wang**

Current team: New York Philharmonic  
Position: Principal oboe  
Farm Club: Curtis Institute of Music  
Statistics

**Anthony McGill**

Current team:  
**Metropolitan Opera Orchestra**  
Position: Principal Clarinet  
Farm Club: Curtis Institute of Music  
Statistics

**ALL STARS**



**Anthony McGill**

**ALL STARS**

*The First Chair All Star Concerts are some of the most popular programs at Bay Chamber Concerts. They feature principal players from some of America's finest orchestras who come together to play chamber music. The concept is based on a sports all-star team and so the idea of having player cards (like baseball cards) seemed inevitable. Here is what two of these cards look like.*

Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony sitting side-by-side in a performance of a Mozart wind serenade! As one audience member said that night, "Sadly, that is a sight (and sound) I will never hear again...anywhere."

The idea for the First Chair All Stars came from Joe Robinson, former principal oboist with the New York Philharmonic. We were talking about the incredible interest generated by professional sports around all-star games. "What about for orchestra or orchestra musicians?" he asked. His first idea was a bit of a nonstarter. "How about a playoff concert between the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic on some neutral turf - say, Orchestra Hall in Chicago? We could even package cards with musician photos and statistics with bubble gum the way they do in baseball." But with the second idea, he hit pay dirt. Principal orchestra musicians in major orchestras are among the finest on their instruments in the world. Why not bring them together to play chamber music?

The idea became wildly successful. Joseph Silverstein, the former concertmaster of the Boston Symphony, often played host, inviting veterans and young superstars from all over the country to play. A particular highlight was a world premiere featuring principal winds from the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra performing with the Brubeck Brother Quartet in a work written by Chris Brubeck. It was so popular that Chris convinced his father, the legendary Dave Brubeck, to come back with him to Maine the following year.

*Cellist Anne Martindale Williams  
(Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra)  
rehearsing with Kirsten Johnson  
(Philadelphia Orchestra)*





## STEINWAY PIANOS



*(above) Irene Goldovsky Wolf playing the Josef Hoffman Steinway with a grandchild.*

Bay Chamber Concerts' history is studded with Steinway piano stories. The very first rehearsal in 1960 for the very first concert was played on a Steinway that Curtis Institute Director Josef Hofmann had played at my parents' wedding in 1933 and then had signed and given to them. It was the first and last time he played at a wedding. He said he wasn't accustomed to having people talk while he played or walk out before he was finished.

Another Steinway was a gift of the Sokoloff family - distinguished pianists long associated with both Curtis and Bay Chamber Concerts. Vladimir Sokoloff had been an early president of Bay Chamber Concerts, and his wife Eleanor, who was connected with Curtis both as a student and faculty member for more than 80 consecutive years, gave us his piano when he died. Then there is the Steinway B - a gift from Diana Rigg. This magnificent piano had been selected for Diana's mother by none other than the great conductor George Szell (of the Cleveland Orchestra), and he clearly picked well.

In Bay Chamber Concerts' community music school you can see the so-called L. L. Bean Steinway. Soon after the sporting goods magnate's death in 1967, my brother was called by our piano technician and told to drive right away to Freeport with his checkbook. Two hours and \$1,000 later, Andy owned a wonderful instrument that was for years the Bay Chamber Concerts' main rehearsal piano. A few years ago a member of the Bean family wondered whether we might be interested in selling it back. But I couldn't imagine it. It would be a little like selling Beethoven's hunting shoes.

One family that has had a special relationship with Bay Chamber Concerts and pianos is the Bixlers. This connection began in 1987 when the first winner of our Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award, Jeffrey Kahane, brought his own piano to Rockport for the performance that was to be broadcast on National Public Radio. The morning after, I received a call from Elsie Bixler. "Why did Kahane bring his own piano? Is there something wrong with ours?"

"Well," I conceded, "our concert grand is not the best."

"Well then, I am going to buy you a new one." And buy it she did. The magnificent concert grand that is our main concert piano is coveted by musicians who play here. When Leonard Hokanson, our resident pianist at the time, found the instrument in New York after a long search, I was in London in the office of the director of the British Museum. "Emergency call from New York," I was told. It was Leonard who said he had found the ideal piano, but there was a line behind him of people wanting to buy it. "Go ahead," I said. "Don't lose it." And the piano became ours.

Ann Bixler, Elsie's daughter-in-law, also played a central role in our acquisition of a piano. One February morning, my wife and I set off for a country auction in Maine. I was a bit bored until to my astonishment I saw an extraordinary





Photo: Art Durity

*A student plays on one of the many Steinways that grace the community music school.*

Steinway amongst the old furniture, pots, dishes, and clothes. “Wow,” I thought to myself. “I am going to get the steal of my life.” I imagined no one else knew what was being auctioned, and I waited patiently throughout the day until the instrument was put on the auction block. Unfortunately, what I did not know was that Ann Bixler was also planning to bid on this instrument to secure it for the Farnsworth Art Museum. I was devastated when the bidding on the piano got out of reach. I was jealous that the Farnsworth got such a great instrument. Then some years later I learned that because of some changes in the Farnsworth’s program, the museum no longer needed this piano. In the end, Ann’s Steinway did come to Bay Chamber Concerts – to her delight and mine.

Finally, more recently, after several older musician members in my family had died, a nice Steinway was passed on to my daughter Lea and her family. My grandson Asa had started taking lessons at age five, and I had visions that with a great instrument in his house, we could start nurturing the next generation of family members for Bay Chamber Concerts performances. When Asa was to visit us in Maine that summer, I asked whether he would be bringing his piano book so he could practice. “Do you have a piano, Grandpa? Is it a good one? Is it a Steinway?” I was super impressed that my fantasy of a great young pianist was already being realized – here was a five-year-old discerning enough to care about the instrument on which he would practice. I bragged about it to several friends. “No, Dad,” said Asa’s mother. “Sorry to disappoint you. There is a reason Asa needs a Steinway. The only way he can find middle C is by locating the ‘S’ of ‘Steinway’ on the piano lid.”

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES

In 1960, when we were establishing Bay Chamber Concerts, we paid a call on Arthur Strout, Esquire, a wise old local lawyer who offered to help us form a legally constituted nonprofit corporation. In drawing up our papers, Mr. Strout wondered aloud whether our activity might be interpreted as being just a bit too commercial to pass scrutiny with the Internal Revenue Service, the agency that would be granting our tax exempt status. “You boys are running the show, performing, and getting the money. Not sure that constitutes a legal charity.” Just to be sure, he advised, why not give a scholarship to a young Maine musician each year? We readily agreed, and at the final concert of the 1961 season, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, we gave our first scholarship to Waterville-based James Lee Davis, a baritone, to help him with his studies at Juilliard. The \$300 scholarship represented almost 10 percent of our entire budget.



*Pianist Anastasia Antonacos won several prizes at Bay Chamber Concerts. At the age of 16 she was invited to testify before the U.S. Congress on behalf of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.*

Each year thereafter, we gave at least one scholarship, then two, then three, and offered as many as eight. After a time, we called them “prizes” since some of the youngsters were not in music school but still needed the money to help with their musical educations. Today we offer a senior and a junior prize (for any instrument) and prizes for piano, woodwind, vocal, jazz ensemble, and chamber music ensemble, and a general prize for musical excellence. Many of the prizes have been generously endowed. Candidates must be youngsters from Maine, and today the quality level is so high that the young musicians give a “Young Stars of Maine” concert – one of Bay Chamber Concerts’ most popular programs for the community. Some of the prize winners go on to careers in music; others do not. But all have had their lives positively affected by their musical studies, and many end up at the country’s top colleges and universities majoring in every conceivable subject.

With almost 200 prizes given over the last 50 years, I hope I can be forgiven for not remembering each and every prize winner’s name. A few years ago, that turned out to be awkward. Someone on the Board of Bay Chamber Concerts asked whether we might approach the superstar American singer, Kate Aldrich, about appearing at Bay Chamber Concerts. “You know, she is from Maine,” I was told.

“Well,” I answered, reviewing her website, “she is singing everywhere – La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, other major European and American houses – she is probably too busy to sing for a small organization she has never heard of, but I can certainly ask.” When an inquiry was made, a lovely reply came from Kate Aldrich reminding us that she had been our 1992 vocal prize winner while she was still in high school, at the time trying to decide whether to become a figure skater or a singer. While the hoped-for concert with Kate has not yet materialized given her schedule, we were able to snag her for a wonderful appearance in the film *Musical Gifts* about the Rockport music community and Bay

Chamber Concerts. Just as exciting, several of us were able to experience her spine-chilling debut as Carmen at the Metropolitan Opera House on May 1, 2010.

Another prize winner, pianist Dr. Anastasia Antonacos, now a university professor of piano with an impressive resume of concerts and prizes, was one of the few teenagers ever to testify on behalf of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts before the U.S. House of Representatives. Her testimony must have been compelling because when she was finished, the chairman of the proceedings requested that a piano be brought into the hearing room. Annie performed for a crowd, delighted to have the long day of speakers broken up with some real music.

Then there was the gala dinner for the Curtis Institute that I attended in New York in 2011 in advance of a concert of the Curtis orchestra at Carnegie Hall. I was seated next to a poised young man who seemed to know me. "I am Joel Noyes," he said. "Remember all those times in Rockport?" It turned out he had won several prizes and participated in our Next Generation Chamber Music Program. "Yes," he said, "I have to thank you for that and for my New York debut. I don't know if you remember, but when I was 12 years old I played in a trio with Anastasia Antonacos and Meagan McIntyre. We played a couple of concerts in Rockport, and then performed in a showcase for young chamber groups at Alice Tully Hall. If I remember correctly, Bay Chamber Concerts organized the whole thing and facilitated my New York debut! And you treated us to a meal at Fiorello's after the performance across from Lincoln Center."

And what had happened to Joel since, I wanted to know? He had gone on to the Curtis Institute of Music, graduated, and immediately secured a position in the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera. I had never realized on the night when I went to Kate Aldrich's debut as Carmen that I was actually listening to two Bay Chamber Concerts prize winners at the Metropolitan Opera.



*Kate Aldrich, another Bay Chamber Concerts prizewinner, made her debut as Carmen at the Metropolitan Opera in 2011.*



## “NEXT GENERATION”



During the summer of 1989, Kathie Johnson, a pianist who had performed for Bay Chamber Concerts with her cellist husband Marc, invited me to lunch. She had an idea. I knew that Kathie was a well-known piano teacher and musical coach in Chicago. So I was not surprised when she asked me whether I thought it might be a great idea to start a summer chamber music program at Bay Chamber Concerts for kids. Young musicians could come for a week, be coached by the older musicians, and give a concert for their parents and the community at the end of the session. “Think about it,” she said. “You and your brother were 15 and 17 years old when you started Bay Chamber Concerts. This would be the start of the next generation.”

My first thought was, How could I say “no” – politely and firmly? The last thing we needed during an exhausting summer season was another activity, especially one involving kids. How would we recruit them? Where would we house them? How would we ever find enough good young string players in a state like Maine? How would we pay for it?

Kathie was undeterred. For every question there was an answer. The Johnsons themselves had children, students, and acquaintances through their considerable networks adequate to pilot a program with string players and pianists even if not one other youngster showed up. Already several families had volunteered to house children. And some donors had expressed interest. "Okay," I said, "Let me test the fund raising-waters." We set a goal, I submitted two grant proposals, both were funded, and we were on our way. In keeping with our Curtis Institute roots, tuition and housing were to be free, enabling any youngster to participate

For the next 20 years, Kathie and Marc Johnson ran Next Generation, as the program was to be called. Hundreds of young students, mostly from small towns in Maine, went through what many of their parents described as life-changing experiences. For many it represented a first opportunity to play serious chamber music, be coached by world-class professionals, and meet other young musicians like themselves. "You have no idea how important this has been," said one parent. "We come from a very small town, and Lisa has always thought of herself as different from other kids. It has often been so lonely for her to be so committed to her music. But now she finds there are others like her. She has made friends for life this week and is so transformed."

A decade after the initiation of Next Generation, a group of older amateur musicians came to me to complain. "How come," they asked, "you have to be a kid to get such a wonderful chamber music coaching experience?" Didn't Bay Chamber Concerts realize there were scores of musical amateurs out there who want to participate? The result of the conversation was the Fall Foliage Chamber Music Weekend for Amateurs, a chamber music program in which individuals as old as 90 came together to play and be coached. Led by Muir Quartet cellist Michael Reynolds and a host of wonderful musician-coaches, the program became extremely popular.

I did learn one thing about amateur musicians, however. During the first year, we planned many ancillary activities during afternoons and evenings. But most people just wanted to play...and play...and play. They were in heaven. I think if we would let them, they would have played for 24 hours a day!



*Pianist Kathie Johnson and cellist Marc Johnson were the founding directors of the Next Generation program and ran it for 20 years.*

*(left) Artistic Director Thomas Wolf takes a break from a Next Generation coaching session with young musicians from Maine. The program was initiated in 1990.*



*(Above and opposite). Four views of Bay Chamber Community Music School. Thanks to the generosity of Leucadia Corporation, the school finally got a magnificent home in downtown Rockport in 2010.*

## A SCHOOL

In the year 2000, the local Independent School Council in midcoast Maine discussed the idea of starting a student orchestra for the many young people who might be interested. By sharing student musicians across many schools, the hope was that there might be enough youngsters to fill out such a group. Monica Kelly, a member of the Council and a board member of Bay Chamber Concerts, took the initiative and created the Odeon Orchestra. Initially just for string players, it became such a success that it became an independent nonprofit organization. But many at Bay Chamber Concerts wondered if Odeon really should be part of Bay Chamber Concerts. Talks were initiated, and by 2006, the two organizations were one. With growing demand, Odeon was to become two orchestras and then three in subsequent years.

At the same time, pressure was building among many parents in the area for Bay Chamber Concerts to create a music school. Many families drove long distances so kids could have lessons or coaching. There was a growing demand for musical instruction locally. Why not create a school?

Once again, the hackles went up on the back of my neck...and I wasn't alone. Many board members were also concerned. Where would we house such a school? Where would we find faculty to teach year round - individuals who reflected the high quality that Bay Chamber Concerts was known for? How would a school be funded? I suggested that a committee work on a plan for a school and issue a report - perhaps a few years later in 2010. By that time, I would be 65 years old, and my secret hope was that by buying a few more years before any real implementation would begin, I could quietly start my retirement.

What I did not reckon with was the intensity of the interest, the skill of the planners, and the fortuitous good luck of a partnership with Leucadia Corporation. Leucadia had come to Rockport and made a major purchase of land for high-end development. Its executives believed that if buyers were to be attracted, the downtown needed to be revitalized. There were many historic buildings that stood empty. Why not create a cultural center in downtown Rockport with Bay Chamber Concerts' community music school anchoring it?





An architectural plan was put forward and approved, and in less than a year, the building renovation was completed. So in 2010, the committee had gone beyond the planning stage. The Community Music School of Bay Chamber Concerts was open for business in a magnificent building with an incomparable view of Rockport Harbor. The initial student body of 80 in June swelled to 200 by the end of the year.

What would be an appropriate event to launch a community music school in the same town where 80 years before Mary Louise Curtis Bok had created the summer school of the Curtis Institute? It didn't take long to come up with an answer. Roberto Diaz, Curtis' distinguished president and world-class violist, came to speak to the students about what it takes to become a professional musician. His talk was followed by a private concert in which Diaz played with several Curtis students. If you had closed your eyes, you might have thought it was 1930 all over again.



## THE LEGACY CONTINUES

It is 7 p.m. on a winter's night in Rockport, Maine. Join me as we cross the bridge over the Goose River. There is snow on the ground. The temperature is below zero. As you bundle up, you may wonder why I brought you on this outing. Some of the buildings are dark.

But coming up the hill, one building is lit up. If you were to enter that building, you would hear music – lots of it. This is a school – the Bay Chamber Community Music School. And the joy of that music you are hearing is palpable. It bounces off of every wall and warms the soul.

Rockport returned to its musical roots in 2010, fifty years after Bay Chamber Concerts was established and a little more than three quarters of a century after Mary Louise Curtis Bok transformed a little fishing village in Maine into a colony for music education. She brought students and faculty from her Philadelphia-based Curtis Institute of Music for instruction and concerts. Her hope was that from that colony would come the next generation of musical stars. And they did – lots and lots of them.

*(opposite). It may be night time, but the lights burn brightly at the Bay Chamber Community Music School. Whatever the weather, the building is always full of warmth and music.*

Today, the concerts and the music education continue. But the 21<sup>st</sup>-century school in Rockport is different. It is not a conservatory. Its aim is not to train the musical stars of tomorrow, though some of the students will go on to musical careers. This is a school for everyone, from toddlers to nonagenarians. The lights that shine from the windows brighten the whole community.

That is the legacy. That is the future.



Photo: Nickolay Tarabanov



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List them

### PHOTO CREDITS

### OTHER THANKS

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**Other**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Thomas Wolf has had a distinguished career as musician, educator, consultant, author, and administrator. A co-founder of Bay Chamber Concerts with his pianist brother in 1960, he celebrated 50 years with the organization in 2010 and continued to serve as its Artistic Director as it began its second half century. A soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the age of sixteen, he spent sixteen seasons as the principal flutist and company manager of his Uncle Boris Goldovsky's touring opera company. He has served as the Executive Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts and as a principal with WolfBrown, an international consulting firm he founded in 1983 to assist music organizations, other cultural institutions, foundations, government agencies, and municipalities. Thomas Wolf holds a doctorate from Harvard and has taught at Harvard and Boston Universities. Wolf is the author of *Managing A Nonprofit Organization in the 21st Century*, *Presenting Performances*, *And the Band Stopped Playing*, *The Search for Shining Eyes*, *How to Connect with Donors*, and other books including, with Boris Goldovsky, *Touring Opera*. Wolf serves as an Overseer of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and is listed in the International Who's Who of Musicians.