

SUMMER 2008

Friends

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Friends OF THE
Center
FOR THE
Arts

THANKS TO ALL FCFA FRIENDS FOR A GREAT YEAR!

Everyone agrees that the 2007-2008 season was outstanding, both in the quality of the performances and the record-breaking level of financial support from the Friends for the Great Performances season.

We are most grateful to the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Bill Reeder, for his enthusiastic advocacy of the work of volunteers. His view of our Friends group was apparent when he stated recently, "The strength which the Arts at Mason receives from the Friends of the Center for the Arts cannot be overstated. At every juncture we are the beneficiaries of tireless work, and interactions between the Friends and all of us in the College of Visual and Performing Arts." We also applaud Tom Reynolds, Director of Artistic Programming, who works tirelessly to develop a season program that is exciting and diverse, season after season.

To all of those Friends members who volunteered for "Meet and Greet" table duty, worked in many capacities on special Friends receptions and dinners, stuffed envelopes, and encouraged their friends and associates to join the organization – a big thank you. The year could not have been as successful without you.

To FCFA board members, who have given generously of their time and talents to the work of the Friends of the Center for the Arts, a big thank you for your tireless efforts.

Finally to all FCFA members, thanks for your generous contributions and support. This coming season's patrons will be grateful that Friends members have funded the purchase and installation of new video cameras and monitors in the lobby area. It is through the support of the FCFA that such improvements are made possible.

Don't wait too long before you send in your subscription form and membership renewal! You don't want to miss out on all the opportunities of the new season.

Thanks again to all for helping to make this past year memorable.

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FCFA's Staff Support



Deborah Páez (left) and Nyla Louh (right)

Over the years FCFA has been blessed with exceptional staff support. A big thanks is owed to Nyla Louh who stepped forward to handle liaison duties on a temporary basis following Kathy Beyer's departure late last year.

Our new staff liaison, Assistant Director of Development, Deborah Páez, joined CVPA in February. Many of you may have met her at the Center's 2008 preview event. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Deborah's background includes performance with USC's jazz choir both nationally and internationally, fundraising for the Santa Fe Opera, and most recently, Development Manager with The Washington Chorus. Deborah received an M.A. in Arts Management from George Mason University in May.

<http://fcfa.gmu.edu>

Do we have your email address?

The Friends of the Center for the Arts would like to use electronic communications more frequently in order to make better use of your contributions. Next time you are at the Friends refreshment area, please check the binder to see if we have your correct email address or you can send your current email to dpaez@gmu.edu. We do not share email addresses.

Please refer to the "Friends Go Green" article at the end of this issue.

Friends Helping Friends: New FCFA Volunteer Opportunities

Are you outgoing? Do you like to meet new people? We hope you will consider becoming an FCFA volunteer! We are excited to announce the new volunteer opportunities for next season at the Friends coffee/refreshment area and the membership table in the Concert Hall lobby.

To bring more visibility to the work of the Friends, volunteers will change from staffing the "Meet and Greet" information table to supporting two new opportunities. First, we are looking for sociable people who enjoy hosting the Friends-only refreshment area before performances and during intermission. Volunteer responsibilities will include introducing new Friends to others, facilitating conversation, and promoting Friends events. As a special thank you, volunteers will receive a free ticket to the performance for which they volunteer.

Second, there will be a new-and-improved Friends table that will focus on membership renewal and recruitment. We need outgoing, approachable and knowledgeable volunteers to staff the Friends membership table in the Concert Hall lobby before performances and

during intermission. Responsibilities will include explaining FCFA membership benefits and taking membership applications. These volunteers will also receive the same free ticket benefit as mentioned above. Training for both tasks will be provided in September and is essential for understanding the new procedures.

For those of you who have been our "Meet and Greet" volunteers, we hope you will commit to helping us next season. Susanne Zumbro, who will continue to coordinate scheduling and will contact all previous "Meet and Greet" volunteers to assist with the coffee area and the new "Friends" table. You can select your work preference and also indicate which performances you prefer. Based on your responses, Susanne will organize the schedule and notify you concerning your assignments. If you want to be included in this volunteer opportunity, you can contact Susanne directly at szumbro@rocketmail.com or at 703.569.2750.

For other questions about these and other volunteer opportunities, please contact Deborah Páez at 703.993.4188 or dpaez@gmu.edu. Thank you!

Introducing Our New Board Members

Elizabeth Chong, Associate Professor in Mason's College of Health and Human Services, was introduced to classical music as a teenager in Korea. A founding member of Mason's Faculty Arts Board, she volunteered last year as co-chair of the Friends' Bergen Philharmonic dinner event.

Carol Robinson has a bachelor's degree in music and was an opera and oratorio mezzo soprano soloist. Besides opera, she enjoys symphony and choral music, dance, theatre and the visual arts. She moved to Fairfax last year with her husband and is Mason's new Associate Dean for Research, College of Education and Human Development.

Al Sims studied physics in college, but also minored in music, having first contemplated a career as a concert pianist. Instead, he became Vice President of a small local Long Island

magazine that reviewed local arts and music events, and he served on the board of several corporations.

Eloise Stinger was a teacher and manager before retiring as the Chief of Staff to the Brookings Institution's president. She has enjoyed a life-long interest in live theater and believes that all the arts bring people of many backgrounds together in a shared experience unlike any other.

Bob Warakomsky, a graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a Master's in engineering management. He retired from the military after 25 years. Having studied the violin and viola, he has had a lifelong interest in music and has been a season subscriber to the Great Performances for 10 years.

Friends Share Their Views

The 2008-2009 Friends' Season Preview was held on April 2, 2008. A capacity crowd enjoyed the tasty hors d'oeuvres, raffle drawings, and live music in the main lobby. They were then treated to a preview, hosted by Tom Reynolds in the Concert Hall, of the next season's line up of spectacular performances. Comments made by some of the enthusiastic attendees included the following:



<http://fcfa.gmu.edu>



Rob and Debbie Spear

Rob and Debbie have been regular VA Opera attendees since 1995, and Debbie said: "We are particularly looking forward to Puccini's *Tosca*." Rob added, "We are also excited about the Cherryholmes Bluegrass performance." Their suggestion for what they would like to have as an added feature next season was "...a reception with wine and cheese, or coffee and dessert, after a Friday evening opera performance."

Phyllis and Joe Kotwicki

Phyllis and Joe thoroughly enjoyed their first Season Preview event. "We are regular attendees at many Great Performances, and particularly enjoy opera, symphonic orchestra concerts, and jazz," remarked Phyllis. Joe added, "We are very excited about next season's schedule, with the appearance by the Ballet Flamenco Jose Porcel high on our list of must-see performances." He also said, "We would also like to see the Friends host an event associated with the Ballet Flamenco." Phyllis quickly noted, "This would be a wonderful occasion to bring Joe's mother who just loves flamenco and Jose Porcel."



Dick and Maiju Wilson

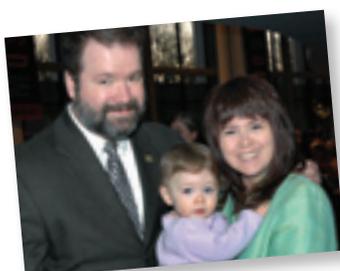
Dick and Maiju are looking forward to next season's performances and "especially the performance of Brian Stokes Mitchell during the ARTS by George celebration in September 2008," said Maiju. Dick added, "We also are avid opera fans and are eagerly anticipating the new opera season." Rounding out their broad musical tastes, Maiju noted, "We are excited about the upcoming appearance of the Metropolitan Jazz." Although they enjoy the pre-performance discussions, they would like to see a post-performance event with the artists themselves as speakers, if they are available.

and the band played on



Doug and Susan O'Boyle

New Friends members Doug and Susan are devoted fans of classical music and Susan enthusiastically stated: "We are looking forward to next season's concerts." She quickly added, "We are also excited about the upcoming *A Celtic Christmas* and the Trinity Academy of Irish Dance." Doug said, "I would like to see the Friends schedule events where the musicians discuss the features and intricacies of their instruments." They both added: "We love the intimate atmosphere of the Concert Hall where the audience seems so close to the performances and where people are so friendly."



Robin Auger and family



Rick and Clara Oborn with Christine O'Hara toast the event

Friends enjoying other Friends

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Please Welcome the 2008-2009 FCFA OFFICERS

Ida Portland
President

Judy Weltz
*Vice President for Events**

Paulette Miller
*Vice President for
Membership*

Jane Tombes
*Vice President for
Communications*

Charlie Lawson
Secretary

A.J. Driscoll
Budget Officer

FCFA NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jane Tombes
Gordon Canyock
Eileen Duggan
Robin Auger
Bob Warakomsky

*Please note the change in title
from Vice President for Programs.

The Friends Go Green!

Beginning in Fall 2008, the Friends of the Center for the Arts will begin a process of developing more environmentally-friendly practices to reduce the amount of paper consumed each season. **We will start this initiative by using e-mail to send invitations electronically for the Discussion Series and the popular 2009-2010 Friends Season Preview event.** Not only will this save paper but also time and postage, which will enable more of your membership dollars to be used towards the mission.

We encourage you to join us in this effort and provide us with your e-mail address. Please note that hard copy invitations will continue to be sent by regular mail for all other 08-09 special events not mentioned above.

Important new features of the 3rd Annual ARTS *by George!* event – September 28, 2008

Two new and exciting features are part of the third annual presentation of **ARTS *by George!*** Sponsors and ticket buyers now have a new option to designate their financial support to the *Great Performances at Mason* season as well as to scholarships for students in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Also added this year is a silent auction of unique, arts-related items and experiences offered by faculty and staff of the CVPA.

ARTS *by George!* raises funds that enhance Mason's ability to present the very best in the performing arts. **Support of this annual college-wide benefit event provides the Friends of the Center for the Arts with another way to support the Great Performances** at Mason season. Please note that your participation in **ARTS *by George!*** will not change your FCFA membership level.

Individual tickets for this unique evening are \$200 each. The ticket price includes entrance to the event where guests will experience the extraordinary talents of students and faculty; delectable food and beverages; a concert by the incomparable, Tony Award-winning, Broadway leading man, Brian Stokes Mitchell; and a post-performance champagne reception on-stage with the artist.

Invitations will be sent to our mailing list in August. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. To be sure that you receive your invitation or if you have any questions, please e-mail Deborah Páez at dpaez@gmu.edu or call 703.993.4188.