

Noteworthy

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Hear Ye, Hear Ye: Don't Miss the Fielder Competition!

Part II

by Michelle d'Arcy

The 1930s was the golden age of radio. At the start of the decade 12 million American households owned a radio. Less than ten years later, this total had exploded to more than 28 million. One of those radios found a home in a sleepy Hill Country town just east of the Nueces River where it was nestled in the living room of the Cummins family. There, a little girl by the name of Bonnie lived and enjoyed the magical wonders of radio. Bonnie's playmates at elementary school never understood why their friend would leave them holding jump rope or jacks on the playground to rush home to listen to the new-fangled "talking telegram." That little girl grew up to be Bonnie Cummins Fielder. Bonnie once quipped she probably was the only elementary school student in Uvalde, Texas, who couldn't wait to run home to hear opera on the radio. "They really didn't know what to make of me," she chuckled.

A dedicated member and past president of the Wednesday Morning Music Club, Bonnie was a generous supporter of many promising vocal students. She provided scholarships, travel and coaching expenses, living quarters, and practical advice about careers. In 2005, Bonnie was inspired to donate \$25,000 to establish the Fielder Grant Competition to be administered by WMMC. Later the fund was increased by a \$100,000 contribution from her estate. Currently grants totaling \$12,000 are awarded biennially to singers with promising vocal careers. The purpose of the grants is to assist young singers (between 22 and 32 years old) with expenses incurred in pursuit of a professional career in classical music.

This spring the WMMC celebrates Bonnie Cummins Fielder and her bequest by holding the Fielder Grant Competition on March 20, 2019 at 1 p.m. after the regularly scheduled WMMC meeting. The Fielder Grant Committee has been working throughout the fall and winter to hone a highly competitive field to four finalists: Ivy Calvert, Bronwyn White, Rebekah Howell and Emily Helenbrook.

Ms. Calvert, a soprano, hails from Fort Hood, Texas and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Kansas State University and a Master of Music from the University of British Columbia. Some of her recent roles have been Clorinda from *La Cenerentola* as well as Zerbinetta from *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the University of British Columbia Opera Ensemble. She recently performed with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and among the selections she submitted to the Fielder Committee was her heart-rending performance of Mozart's *Durch Zärtlichkeit*. This talented young woman is not only a dazzling coloratura, but she is a dancer as well, specializing in musical theater, jazz, ballet, and modern dance.

The San Antonio soprano Bronwyn White also will appear in the Fielder competition. Ms. White holds degrees from the University of Texas in San Antonio, State University of New York at Purchase (NY), and Texas Christian University. She is an accomplished performer with a wide range of performances including most recently the role of Norina in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at the Fort Worth Opera and Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the Utah Festival Opera & Music Theatre. One of the selections she sent the Fielder Committee was her chilling (and thrilling) rendition of the "Poison Aria" from *Roméo et Juliette* by Charles Gounod.

Rebekah Howell will appear in the Fielder competition as well. Ms. Howell, a coloratura soprano from Houston, holds music degrees from Indiana University and Baylor University. Ms. Howell is a frequent performer with Opera Colorado where she is Resident Artist. She recently appeared on main stage productions in *La Traviata*. Observers heralded her mastery of high notes with her voice having a "gorgeous and sparkling top." One of the selections she submitted to the Fielder Committee was a stunning rendition of Gilda's only aria, *Tutte le feste al tempio*, from Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

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President's Message

Janie Keys

It's String time! The program dedicated to Crusade for Strings offered a variety of styles and held many treats as we listened to works by Corelli, Chopin, Schumann, Bernstein, and Mozart. With the cancellation of the Seven Balkan Dances (we wish Terri Freeland well), violinist Richard Kilmer and pianist Toby Blumenthal-Phillips readily agreed to play Mozart's Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 454, in its entirety. It was a performance greatly appreciated by all and provided a gratifying end to a program dedicated to strings.

In the words of musician Peter Laki in an article written for The Kennedy Center, www.kennedy-center.org, this sonata "is in a class all by itself among Mozart's violin sonatas." He goes on to say that the "unique nature of this sonata is apparent from its very theatrical opening. It is the only Mozart sonata to open with a slow introduction. (The opening Adagio in K.379 is so long it almost feels like a movement in its own right.) Though short, this introduction is both grandiose and intense. The ensuing Allegro is serene and playful, again not without some operatic gestures (this time alluding to comic opera). The magical slow movement contains some enharmonic modulations that are among the boldest Mozart ever wrote, while the concluding Rondo presents a cornucopia of sparkling melodic ideas."

The story behind the sonata: It owes its existence to the debut of a remarkable young touring violin virtuoso, Regina Strinasacchi, a woman in a time when women rarely performed on the violin in public. According to Wikipedia, she knew Mozart well enough that he composed this sonata at her request. Strinasacchi was born in the early 1760s near Mantua and was trained not only as a violinist, but also as a guitarist at the same school in Venice where Vivaldi worked for many years. She toured Italy, France and Germany between 1780- 1783 and in 1784 arrived in Vienna where she met the 28-year-old Mozart. In a letter to his father, Mozart wrote: "We now have here the famous Strinasacchi from Mantua, a very good violinist. She has a great deal of taste and feeling in her playing. I am this moment composing a sonata which we are going to play together on Thursday at her concert in the theater." On April 29, 1784, she performed a concert with Mozart for Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, where they debuted the sonata.

The legendary story behind the debut: Mozart left the notation of the composition to the last minute as he often did. He had no time to notate the piano part and only delivered the violin part to Regina the night before the concert. At the concert, he put an empty sheet on the piano and then played a part that only existed in his head. (!) According to Mozart's widow, Emperor Joseph II found out about the ruse, as he was looking through his opera glasses and noticed that Mozart had no music in front of him. When Mozart later wrote down the music, he used ink of a different color and had a hard time squeezing in all the sixteenth notes of the piano part underneath the notes of the violin. Another great story of his musical genius.

Next stop in our tour of venues: **First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin at 4007 Grover Ave. is the site for the March 6th meeting.** The program, Dedicated to Piano, will offer a chance to check out the acoustics and setting of the new Sanctuary at the church. The Unitarian Church is a possible location for our meetings next year. I hope to see you there.

Thought for the Day

"A concert is a collection of notes, some of which you intended." (Attributed to Megan Meisenbach, flute)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

March 6th

Meeting location change

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
at 4007 Grover Ave.



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Emily Helenbrook, a soprano from Houston, Texas, holds degrees from Rice University, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Rochester. Most recently she has appeared at the 2018 Opera in the Ozarks as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and as Sarah in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. In November she was featured soloist in Handel's *Messiah* performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. JoAnn Falletta, BPO Music Director, says of Ms. Helenbrook: "I've been following her career, and every time I hear her, she sounds more developed." One of the pieces Ms. Helenbrook submitted with her Fielder application was the exquisite *Arpa Gentil* by Rossini. Prior to her appearance in March at the WMMC Fielder competition, she is performing at the Lotte Lenya competition in Rochester, New York.

The Fielder Committee hopes WMMC members will stay for this spring's competition. With easy parking at our current venue, Triumphant Love Lutheran Church, as well as the surfeit and proximity of so many good restaurants to enjoy lunch in the Great Hills/Domain/Arboretum area, attendance at the competition will be far easier than in previous years. A quick search of YELP yielded an extensive list of eateries in the area to entice audience members: <http://bit.ly/2B5bko3>. One of this writer's recent choice discoveries is Austin Cheese Company in the Arboretum at 10000 Research Boulevard (<https://austincheesecompany.com/>). Additionally, and less than a mile from church, there are many favorite grocery stores (Randalls, HEB, Sprouts, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods), all of which have deli departments boasting sandwiches, soups, salads, and beverages, with some offering hot entrées.

So won't you join us? Once again, the competition starts at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20th. We would love to express our appreciation and gratitude to these talented young women at the start of their careers by delivering an appreciative audience with lots of good cheers for all the work and dedication that bring their gifts to our stage and to the Fielder Grant Competition.

On Joy and Sorrow

(From *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese-American, 1883 - 1931)

Then a woman said, Speak to us of Joy and Sorrow.
And he answered: Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.
And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.
And how else can it be?
The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.
Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?
And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?
When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has
given you sorrow that is giving you joy.
When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are
weeping for that which has been your delight.
Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater."
But I say unto you, they are inseparable.
Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other
is asleep upon your bed.
Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.
Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.
When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or
your sorrow rise or fall.

ABOUT OUR PERFORMERS

Melanie Richards, piano

Melanie was born into a musical family and started piano early with her mother and later violin and viola with her father. The family ensemble (sister on cello) traveled around Texas to promote their music camp in the Hill country. Later she received music degrees from Barnard College and North Texas State. Working out of the NY State area, Melanie toured internationally as pianist with a performing eurhythmy group. She has a piano studio in Round Rock.

Janie Keys, piano

I have two degrees, both from the University of Texas: a BA in French and a MM in Piano Pedagogy (studying with Nancy Garrett). Even though my degree in music was decades ago, I'm still studying the piano. My current teacher is Sheila Paige (see pianowellnessseminar.com). I love all my Suzuki trained students especially my 5 year olds.

Timothy Woolsey, piano

Timothy Woolsey is Professor of Piano Emeritus at Texas State University where he taught from 1975-2010. He taught adjunct at the University of Texas in 2015-2016, and he still teaches privately at home. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from UT Austin where he studied with John Perry.

Brian Grothues, piano

Brian is a pianist and teacher in Austin, Texas with over 35 students. He pursued music at the University of North Texas in Denton earning his Bachelor's degree Cum Laude. In 2008, Brian completed the Master's Degree in Piano Literature and Pedagogy from the University of Texas under the guidance of celebrated pianists Gregory Allen and Sophia Gilmon. He has studied piano and music history in Vienna, Austria as a member of the IES study abroad program. Brian has collaborated with a multitude of instrumentalists and vocalists in concert, and he plays in a Queen tribute band called Magnifico.

Betty Mallard, piano

Dr. Betty Mallard is an Associate Professor Emeritus of the Butler School of Music Keyboard Division where she was a faculty member for 31 years and served as Chair of the Keyboard Division for 7 years. Betty holds degrees in piano performance, a BM and a DMA degree from The University of Texas and an MM from USC. She retired from UT in the fall of 2011. She soon found life without teaching quite pointless. Now she enjoys teaching children and adults of all ages at her home, and she performs whenever the opportunity presents itself. She most recently is enjoying performing four-hand piano music with Dr. Angelica Lopez, a member of WMMC.

Angelica Lopez, piano

Angelica Lopez grew up in the Rio Grande Valley where she asked for and received the gift of piano lessons for her 8th birthday. Music-making permeated her life as she continued piano lessons, played French horn in high school band, served as an organist at her church, and accompanied fellow students for high school assemblies and UIL events. She moved to Austin to study in the Music Department at The University and fell in love with both the City of Austin and the concert-scene. Angelica and her husband, Chuck, were able to permanently relocate to Austin in 1983 and one of the first things she did was to join the Wednesday Morning Music Club. She has been a Suzuki piano teacher since 1985 when she enrolled in Suzuki teacher training.

Factoids

1. The tension of the 230—odd strings in a grand piano exert a combined force of 20 tons on the cast iron frame.
2. The largest piano ever made weighs 1.4 tons and is 5.7 meters long. The piano was made by Adrian Mann, a New Zealand piano tuner.
3. Stagehands mistakenly installed a malfunctioning piano for an hour-long solo Jazz performance. The musician, Keith Jarrett, had to improvise around the instrument's limitations. A recording of this concert went on to become the best selling piano album of all time. – [Source](#)

Events Calendar



Austin Chamber Ensemble – austinchamberensemble.org

Mar. 1 and Mar. 2, 7:30 PM - First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive
Appalachia Waltz, Bolling and more.
The Austin Chamber Ensemble welcomes the return of James Anderson, violin/fiddle, to perform selections from Claude Bolling's *Suite for Violin and Jazz Piano*, along with a jazz trio (Martha Mortensen Ahern, piano; Phil Spencer, bass; and Brennan Howell, drums). Karla Hamelin, cellist, will also join the ensemble performing works by Mark O'Connor, Paul Schoenfeld and others.

Austin Chamber Music – austinchambermusic.org

Mar. 2, 7:30 PM - First Unitarian Church, 4700 Grover Avenue
East Meets West - Synchronism.
Program includes *Piano Trio in G Major* by Claude Debussy; *Distance de fee* by Tōru Takemitsu; *Piano Trio* by Maurice Ravel. Featuring Sandy Yamamoto, violin; Amy Levine-Tsang, cello; and Michelle Schumann, piano.

Gilbert and Sullivan Society - gilbertsullivan.org

Mar. 2, 7:30 PM and Mar. 3, 2:00 PM - Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School, 11908 N. Lamar H.M.S. Pinafore.
This classic Gilbert & Sullivan comic opera is a beautiful and romantic tale of a lowly sailor and his love for the captain's daughter. *H.M.S Pinafore* is a comic opera full of topsy-turvy humor and boatloads of bright and cheerful tunes. Ralph MacPhail, Jr. is Artistic and Stage Director, with Jeffrey Jones-Ragona as Music Director. Grand piano accompaniment by Jeanne Sasaki.

Georgetown Symphony Society - gsstx.org

Mar. 3, 3:00 PM – Georgetown H. S. Klett Center for the Performing Arts, 211 N. Austin Avenue
The Round Rock Symphony, Stefan Sanders, conducting.
The Vivace Youth Orchestra will perform Carl Nielsen's *Alladin Suite* and Nino Rota's *Suite from The Godfather*. Guest artist Joseph Alessi, trombone, will perform Launy Grandahl's *Trombone Concerto* and Nino Rota's *Trombone Concerto*.

Panoramic Voices - Panoramicvoices.org

Mar. 3, 4:00 – 6:00 PM – 1156 Hargrave Street
The fourth collaboration between Panoramic Voices' singers and orchestra in which rock, pop, country, rap, and other musicians from the community and beyond are showcased. Concert will benefit the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians. Guest artists TBA

St. Edwards University Choral, Madrigal, Masterworks Singers & Orchestra

March 10, 7:30 PM – Mabee Ballroom on the University Campus
March 14, 7:30 PM – St. Theresa Catholic Church
Will be performing their spring concert.

Salon Concerts – salonconcerts.org

Mar. 10, 4:30 PM – private home
The Miro Quartet will perform *Lyric Suite* by Alban Berg and *String Quartet in G Major* by Franz Schubert.

Austin Symphony – austinsymphony.org

Mar. 22 and Mar. 23, 8:00 PM – Dell Hall, The Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Drive
Creative Expressions.
A musical treat served up by your Austin Symphony Orchestra, celebrating the treasures composed by women through the ages. The evening's banquet begins with *Overture in C Major* by Fanny Mendelssohn and continues with expressive works by "Lili" Boulanger, Clara Schumann, Vitezslava Kapralova and award-winning American composer Jennifer Higdon. Joined by the famed group Time for Three and prominent pianist Michelle Schumann, ready your taste buds for a palette of artistic decadence!

Austin Civic Orchestra - austincivicorchestra.org

Mar. 26, 7:30 PM – Bates Recital Hall, 2406 Robert Dedman Drive
Texas Rising Stars.
Come hear the winners of the Butler School of Music's String Concerto Competition perform concerti accompanied by the orchestra. Camille Saint-Saëns's "Bacchanale" from *Samson et Dalila*, Samuel Barber's *First Essay for Orchestra*, and the U.S. premiere of Roydon Tse's *Sinfonia Concertante* are also on the program.

Conspirare – conspirare.org

Mar. 26, 7:30 PM – St. Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 W. 15th Street
March Moderns.
These three concerts will take listeners on a week-long musical journey with music by national and global voices from the United States to Iceland to Afghanistan. Selections explore relevant topics of freedom, equality, love and the human condition.

Mar. 29, 8:00 PM – Bates Recital Hall, 2406 Robert Dedman Drive
Songs for Muska.
This is the world premiere of *Songs for Muska* composed by 2017-2018 American Prize winner Jocelyn Hagen. Hagen's musical textures and colors sing in these settings of landays (2-line Pashto folk poems) translated by Eliza Griswold and Farzana Marie's translations of poems by young Afghan women.

Mar. 31, 4:00 PM - St. Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 W. 15th Street
Canticle.
Kyle Smith's ethereal new work, a setting of St. John of the Cross' *Spiritual Canticle* for voices, three cellos, and vibraphone, will surround listeners in a sensual sound bath to conclude the festival.

Texas Early Music Project - early-music.org

Mar. 30, 7:30 PM – Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue
Mar. 31, 3:00 PM – St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive
A Symphony of Voices: Choral Masterworks of Tudor England.
Many voices, both solo and choral, performing some of the most sublime, moving, and exhilarating music imaginable. This is the world of early Tudor England, with music compiled between c.1490 and c.1520, featuring guests Ryland Angel, countertenor and Mary Springfels, viola da gamba.

<http://music.utexas.edu/> - check all events online

2018–19 Met Live in HD Season
(movie theatre transmissions)
LIVE PERFORMANCES

DATE - SAT	COMPOSER	Opera
MAR 02—11:55 AM CENTRAL TIME	GAETANO DONIZETTI	<i>La Fille du Régiment</i>
MAR 30—11:00 AM CENTRAL TIME	RICHARD WAGNER	<i>Die Walküre</i>
MAY 11—11:00 AM CENTRAL TIME	FRANCIS POULENC	<i>Dialogues des Carmélites</i>