

Vol 7 Issue 9 *Fall 2018*

Opus Notes

OPUS 118 HARLEM SCHOOL OF MUSIC

25 Years After Carnegie Hall!

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A New Location Opus 118 Expands!

Opus 118 Harlem School of Music has a new office! Last spring, longtime partner school Central Park East II jumped at the opportunity to move into a larger building that would allow both their elementary and middle schools to thrive within the same space.

Thanks to an invitation from Principal Naomi Smith, Opus 118 joined them in the new location in September, allowing our administrative staff to work alongside many of our teachers and students, both during and after the school day. Our new home also has larger communal spaces for recitals and group classes, an elevator, and more space for lessons and storing our instruments.

The street address for our new location is 433 East 100th Street; however, if you are visiting in person, the best GPS address to use is 1960 1st Avenue. The closest subway is the new Q train stop at 96th Street and 2nd Avenue, and the school is also accessible by multiple bus lines. The mailing address for Opus 118 at Kaufman Music Center remains the same. More detailed information and directions to our new office can be found on our website: www.opus118.org.

While many of our after-school lessons and classes have moved to the new location, a new partnership with PS108 School of Authors allows us to continue offering lessons in our former space at 1615 Madison Avenue, enabling us to serve our families in East Harlem neighborhoods that are most accessible to them. Opus 118 is grateful to the faculty and staff of both these schools for welcoming us and for appreciating the importance of music education in their students' lives. We are excited for the year ahead!



Opus 118's After-School Prep Ensemble rehearses in their new space.



Above: Student Mia Cuk working with Nicole Wright; Below: Lynelle Smith working with Catalina John-Melendez.



Rose Baker



Meet the Interns: The New Faces at Opus 118

In 2013, Opus 118 started the Teacher Training Program in order to nurture the next generation of music educators in East Harlem. Talented musicians from around the world have since joined the program to learn co-founder Roberta Guaspari's unique methods and to grow as classroom and group instructors. Opus 118 will begin this fall with five new interns, who will support faculty members in all six of our partnering locations. Find out more about them below:

Rose Baker (BM Manhattan School of Music anticipated) is a violinist originally from Virginia. She is currently studying with Burton Kaplan. Rose performs regularly with the ensembles at MSM, in addition to playing at Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Piedmont Arts, and as concertmaster with the Baroque Aria Ensemble.



Jay Julio

Jay Julio (BM Manhattan School of Music, MM The Juilliard School anticipated), violist, is from Uniondale, New York. He studies with Heidi Castleman and Misha Amory. His performance credits include Symphony in C, New Juilliard Ensemble, AXIOM, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, and Madkoi, and competitions through the National Federation of Music Clubs and Music Teachers National Association.



Sarah Jane Kenner

Sarah Jane Kenner (BM Temple University, MM Manhattan School of Music, Graduate Diploma in Baroque Violin The Juilliard School) is a violinist from New Rochelle, New York. Sarah put together a benefit concert as a young performer in honor of Opus 118! Sarah was the winner of the Juilliard Historical Concerto Competition and has performed with Trinity Baroque Orchestra, The English Concert, Mercury Chamber Orchestra, Les Arts Florissants, Teatro Nuovo Bel Canto, and as the concertmaster of Juilliard 415.



Sooyeon Kim

Sooyeon Kim (BM, MM The Juilliard School) is a violinist who has participated in the Verbier Festival Orchestra and the Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival. Additional performance credits include the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Institution Music School Festival Orchestra, Juilliard Opera, the orchestra at Taos, and concertmaster of the Juilliard Chamber Orchestra. Sooyeon studied with Naoko Tanaka and Frank Huang.



Teresa Pietromonaco

Teresa Pietromonaco (BM Queens College anticipated), violinist, is from Garden City, New York. She studies with Lara Lev and Daniel Phillips. Teresa won the concerto competition at her university and will be performing as a soloist in February of 2019. Additional performance credits include the Community Musician's Collective and The New York Young Musician's Ensemble.

We are so thrilled to have these fabulous musicians on board for the 2018-2019 school year! 🎻



25 Years After

The Concert at Carnegie Hall

October 25th, 1993 is a day that changed the course of Opus 118 history.

On this day, now 25 years ago, co-founder Roberta Guaspari along with 37 violin students from three East Harlem public schools and some of the world's most renowned musicians, joined together on the stage of Carnegie Hall in a quest to save the East Harlem violin program. The story of this concert involves major players in the creation of the organization, a series of wonderful coincidences, and an outcome that made Opus 118 recognized across the world!

In the spring of 1991, Roberta began preparing for an End of Year Concert that she thought would be her last. The funding for her East Harlem public school violin program, then ten years old, had been cut, and the future of this program was uncertain. At the same time, public interest in her non-profit organization, created to save the program, was growing. An article about her program's struggles appeared in the New York Times, and TV journalist Morry Alter ran a piece on a local station. This piece included Roberta's home phone number on the bottom of the screen for those wanting to help. It was then that she received a surprise Mother's Day phone call from a powerful ally: violinist Itzhak Perlman had seen her story and wanted to help. He appeared as a guest at the 1991 End of Year Concert and began calling on colleagues to see the program for themselves. Violinist Arnold Steinhardt and wife Dorothea von Haefen visited the classes at three partner schools and determined they wanted to help the program, eventually coming up with the idea to hold a benefit concert to be called Fiddlefest.

With a firm belief in the importance of music education for all children, Steinhardt and von Haefen connected Roberta to friend Isaac Stern, violinist and President of Carnegie Hall, who stepped in to provide access to the Hall, one of the most famous in the world, after other options fell through. Philanthropist and Carnegie Hall board member Walter Scheuer joined the effort as one of the chairmen and sponsors of the event. Through exhaustive planning and the use of many different connections, the concert was booked for October 25th, 1993 with the goal of featuring dedicated Opus 118 students collaborating with some of the most accomplished musicians in the world



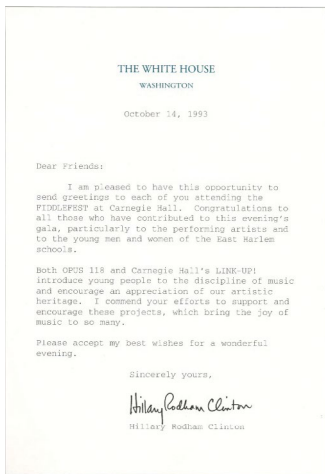
Students perform at a Fiddlefest concert; Center: Itzhak Perlman, Isaac Stern and Opus Students; Bottom, Poster from the documentary "Small Wonders"



Packed with a full house, the auditorium in Carnegie Hall had an incredible energy that evening, which led Roberta to feel that she had “a mission to take the magical spirit of tonight’s concert with us” going forward. Those in attendance for Fiddlefest heard an array of fantastic musical selections in genres from classical to jazz. Billy Taylor, jazz pianist, acted as the master of ceremonies. Opus 118 students began the concert, wowing the audience with two Bach minuets and “Sinfonia” by Telemann. The musicians most instrumental in organizing the concert all chose to perform: Perlman played pieces by Kreisler, Elgar, and Falla; Steinhardt

joined his colleague Michael Tree from the Guarneri Quartet to play Bartok duets; and Stern came to the stage

and performed a sonata by Leclair joined by Midori, then just 22 years old. Sisters Ani and Ida Kavafian selected “Navarra” by Sarasate for their duet and Diane Monroe rounded out the classical pieces, playing a Stravinsky suite and an arrangement of Amazing Grace. Jazz pieces included Gershwin’s “Summertime” by Karen Briggs and pianist David Grusin, and a performance of Jerome Kern’s “All the Things You Are” by John Blake Jr. and host Taylor. Fiddler Mark O’Connor was joined on stage by the students of Opus 118 to play a rousing rendition of his “The Orange Blossom Special,” still a favorite of Opus 118 students today. The finale featured the advanced students accompanied by the adult violinists, first playing “Happy Birthday” to Midori, then Bach’s “Double Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor,” a virtuosic favorite. After the concert, Stern exclaimed, “There have been many in this hall. Very few have radiated this utter joy of camaraderie.”



Top Right: Students, including current Opus 118 faculty member Charlene Bishop, at Fiddlefest. Above: Then First Lady Hillary Clinton sent a congratulatory letter to the young performers at Fiddlefest.

Fiddlefest was an overwhelming success, helping Opus 118 raise funds to secure its future and garnering attention from news outlets and beyond. Reviewer Allan Kozinn from The New York Times was taken with the preparation of the students, writing: “There was reason to marvel at the players’ technical polish, but the impact of the performances went deeper. It was clear from the vigorous attacks and releases of the young musicians’ bowing and from the concentrated passion with which they dug into their lines that Ms. Guaspari has shown them how to experience the mixture of visceral and spiritual excitement that is the best part of making music.” The buzz from this concert also provided the basis for two Oscar-nominated films about Opus 118, documentary Small Wonders and motion-picture Music of the Heart, with Meryl Streep in the starring role as Roberta Guaspari. In the years to follow, there would be several more concert events for Opus 118 inspired by the 1993 Fiddlefest.

25 years later, Opus 118 looks back fondly at Fiddlefest as an event that gave us hope for the future and a served as a starting point for effective change. The continued support from both those in the concert and in the audience has allowed us to grow and thrive. Since then, we have had the chance to double the amount of partner schools in our In-School Program, establish our After-School Program for lessons and classes, and begin our Teacher Training Initiative. This inspiring event was the catalyst for Opus 118 to get off the ground and provide musical opportunity to thousands of students in East Harlem. We look forward to harnessing the same energy for the years ahead!

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“There have been
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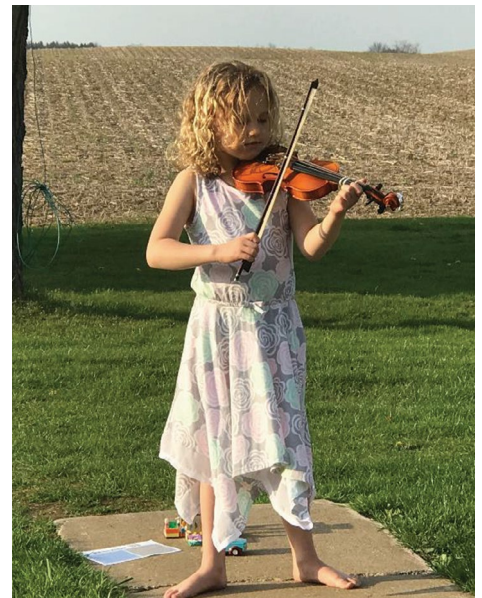
Student Spotlight:

Anika Iwanesky

Anika Iwanesky, a CPE II fourth grader, likes to look ahead. Since joining the Opus 118 In-School Program as a first grader, she has been able to get a glimpse at the repertoire she will get to learn as she continues her violin studies. Opus 118's curriculum, carefully designed by co-founder Roberta Guaspari, documented by Lynelle Smith, and studied by all strings faculty, paces the students in a way that enables them to simultaneously build upon and reinforce their technique. Because students of varying grade levels participate in the End of Year Concert every June, beginner students can hear what the more advanced kids are playing and have a sense of what lies ahead for their own studies.

Anika's participation in private lessons has also helped her look forward because her weekly lessons make her feel prepared for her group classes and allow her to play increasingly difficult music, which "for [her], is a good thing because [she] like[s] being on top of things." While Anika looks to the year ahead, her fondest Opus 118 musical memory so far is learning to play Allegro in past years. As a student in our After-School Program, Anika practiced all 100 days of the 100 Day Practice Challenge in 2018 making her next goal, "to get to the song Can-Can by the end of the year," attainable. As Anika continues to advance, it is likely that this year's beginners will be similarly inspired by what she accomplishes!

Opus 118 violin and CPEII student Anika Iwanesky performs at CPEII.



Recent Photos & Upcoming Performances

We would love to invite you to hear our wonderful students perform. Below are the remaining student performances scheduled for this year. Dates are subject to change; visit www.opus118.org or call (646) 842-2775 for the most up-to-date information. All recital hours are held in our new space at Central Park East II (433 E 100th Street; enter from First Avenue) beginning at 7PM, unless otherwise stated.

Opus 118 Recital Hours

Wednesday, November 28

Monday, December 17

Wednesday, January 23

Tuesday, February 12

Thursday, March 14

Wednesday, May 8

Thursday, May 23

Harlem Chamber Players Concert

521 W 126th Street

Saturday, March 30, 4PM

Practice Challenge Celebration Recital

Friday, April 12, 6PM

Guitar and Piano Recital

Monday, June 3, 7PM

Honors Recital

Friday, June 7, 6:30PM

End of Year Concert

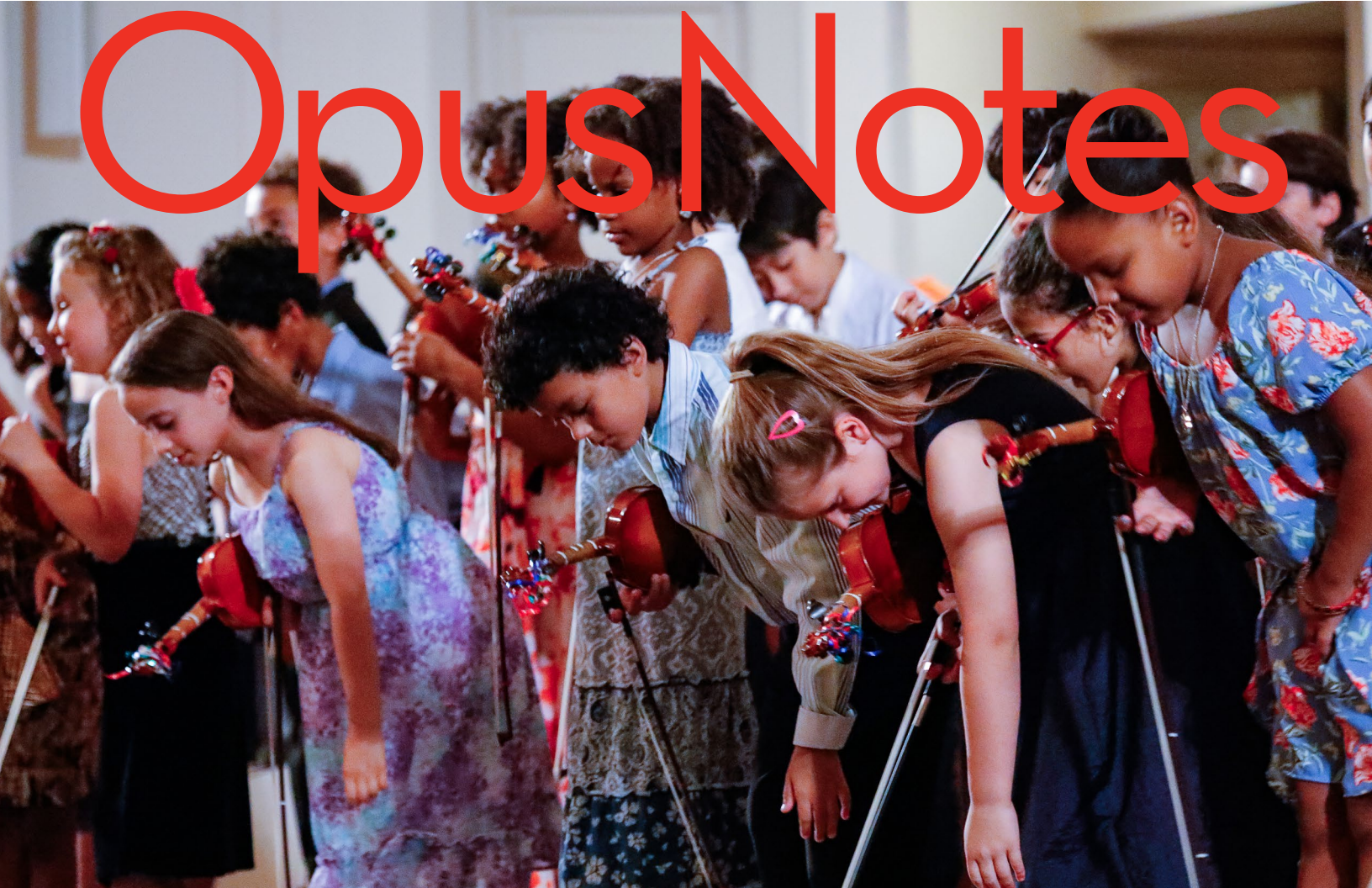
The American Academy of Arts and Letters

Thursday, June 13th 6:30PM



Our Favorite Photos: Top and center photos: scenes from our End of Year Concert. Bottom row: Roberta and students in the Prep Ensemble enjoy rehearsal in the new space. **On the Front Cover:** A student conducts the performance ensemble from her seat at the End of Year Concert.

OpusNotes



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