

PYP P N O T E S

A newsletter for musicians, parents, friends, and family of the Portland Youth Philharmonic Association

September 2010

The Hatt Rack

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Another year is underway and we're preparing for another opening night. I can't remember ever writing a column here about nerves, but it seems like a good time. Being nervous for a performance or audition isn't shameful, it is normal. What I think is important is developing a strategy that will get you past the effects of nervousness in both the short and medium terms. The long term goal is to defeat those effects, of course.

I think there are two elements to consider when dealing with the condition of nervousness; preparation and normalization. Being prepared is the most important thing. If being nervous causes you to perform at only 75% of your capacity, then you need to be 125% prepared! In musical performance, it goes back to the slow, careful preparation that we always talk about at PYP. You have to train yourself to execute passagework so thoroughly that no distraction can get in the way.

Normalization simply means exposing yourself to the condition of nervousness on a frequent basis. I think that young musicians don't make enough opportunities to play for groups of people. I suspect that playing for a group of your non-music friends will make you very uncomfortable (and maybe them too, but that's another story) but will aid in having you become used to that feeling and lessening its effect on your performance.



Play for your grandparents and their friends regularly. They will actually like it and you'll soon find yourself in a more comfortable state (or at least less uncomfortable) when performing.

Besides all that, it is important to care for yourself properly on days when you need to perform or audition. Get plenty of sleep during the days leading up to your concert or audition. You may be so nervous that you are not hungry, but you have to eat something. Fruits are healthy and easy on your stomach. Bananas are a favorite of performing musicians. Urban legend suggests that bananas have some kind of chemical in them that combats the effects of nervousness, but I have my doubts. They are yummy, though, and will combat dry mouth to some extent. You'll want to avoid caffeine and junk of most kinds. If you play a wind instrument, you'll want also to avoid food with ingredients or spices that are mouth-coating, such as certain salad dressings, garlic, etc.

Most of all, love what you are doing. Performing great music is a privilege, and the emotional gratification that comes from being a part of a big performance will leave stronger memories than the nervous energy you feel during or beforehand.



Johnson's Java

Greetings to everyone in PYCO and PYWE, and welcome to our upcoming 2010–2011 season. I have very high hopes for both groups this year. Based on your auditions, both groups are extraordinarily talented. We have lots to accomplish this season – for the very first time PYCO will be performing two full symphonies, and PYWE will be covering a lot of challenging repertoire building up to the Finale of Shostakovich's 5th Symphony for our concert in Spring. Please remember a few things: 1) Always bring a pencil; 2) Own and USE both a metronome and a tuner; 3) Practice the difficult parts of your music slowly and rhythmically – working for a clear, even technique. The easier parts work to build a beautiful, sustained, even sound, and sense of musical line. There is always more to work on than meets the eye. I know each of you wants to become the best player possible, so always look to dig deeper into your playing; 4) You are all taking music theory. Learn as much as you can from this course. When taken seriously, your musical skills will become sharper and you will be able to identify and solve problems more rapidly. For certain, practice your major and minor scales and arpeggios every day. Throughout the course of the year you will all be asked to perform a scale and arpeggio for your colleagues during rehearsal, so stay sharp! Beyond this I would ask two things of all of you. First: Strive for excellence. No matter what your career path, your experience in the PYP organization will have a profound impact on your success in the workplace. Second: For heaven's sake – have fun!!! Truly enjoy your time working with each other. The balancing of these two concepts will allow you to have full and meaningful lives. Let's have a great season making music together. Bless you all!!

Best wishes!!
Larry Johnson

Carol's Corner

YSE has gotten off to a great start! Now, beginning our third week of rehearsal, the rigorous demands of being a member of this ensemble are becoming clear. It is simply not sufficient to “show up” at rehearsals; music must be carefully practiced during the week, so that rehearsal time can be spent making music--not just learning the “basics”, i.e. finding the notes and playing them in time. To be sure, this is a process that is ongoing throughout the career of every serious musician, professional or amateur, and the time to instill effective practice habits is NOW! I'm thrilled to be a part of this challenging journey which offers such gratifying rewards along the way. It is my hope that you will receive immense joy for the effort that goes into playing music with artistic integrity, respect, and understanding. I look forward to an exciting and stimulating year!

Carol Sindell



Harney County Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra, 1915

• PYP Mini-Tour

- Sagebrush Orchestra Centennial Celebration
Burns, Oregon
October 29-31, 2010

(Condensed version, Pick up full Reed & Heed at Rehearsal)

Call Time: 9:45 am on Friday, October 29
Meet at Jackson Middle School
Upper Parking lot

Please don't leave your car in the school parking lot. You may leave it parked on the street at your own risk. PYP nor the school will be responsible for any loss or damage.

Friday, October 29

9:45 am Call Time at Jackson Middle School
10:15 am Buses leave for Burns

Please pack a lunch to eat on the way

4:30 pm Arrive in Burns – Check into hotel

Saturday, October 30

7:00 pm Concert at Burns High School
c. 8:30 pm Reception for PYP to meet
community members

Sunday, October 31

- 8:00 am Breakfast
- 9:00 am Buses leave for Portland
- c.12:00 pm Lunch stop. Bring money for fast food
- 3:00 pm Arrive back at Jackson Middle School

Repertoire:

Hanson: Symphony No. 3; Ives: Variations on America;
Hanson: Fanfare; and the National Anthem

What You Need to Bring -

- Your instrument.
- Concert dress
(See handbook pg. 18 for dress code).
- A sack lunch to eat on the bus on the way to Burns on Friday.
- \$\$ Bring money for a fast food lunch on Sunday.
- Anything you will need for a two-night stay.
- Cellos – Bring “donuts”
- If you have any special dietary needs you may want to bring some extra food with you.
- Bring warm clothes for the morning at the fairgrounds. (Coats and long pants.)

All of you are required to ride on the buses, unless you have made previous arrangements with Ann. Those arrangements need to be made by Monday, October 25 and need to be in writing.

A note to parents -

If you need to contact your child...

You can call Ann on her cell phone, 503/984-9220.

Musicians and Staff will all be staying at:

Best Western
534 Highway 20
Pines, OR (Right next to Burns)
541-573-5050

If you will be able to attend the concert...

The concert will be at

Burns High School
1100 Oregon Ave., Burns, OR

Tickets required.

\$10 General admission and \$15 Reserved seats

If you would like to buy tickets, contact Harney County Chamber of Commerce directly at 541-573-2636 or go to their website at www.harneycounty.com.

The History Behind the Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra Centennial Celebration

The Portland Youth Philharmonic's roots extend back to Harney County and the Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra. The vibrant and talented violinist, Mary Dodge, arrived in Burns, Oregon in 1910. She began sharing her musical gifts with the local children, playing for them in a tent at her husband's engineering camp. Funds were secured to purchase instruments from Harney County rancher, Bill Hanley, lawyer and artist C.E.S. Wood and Burns businessmen. Under Mary Dodge's careful instruction, the children began to learn to play their instruments. By 1912, the group had become the Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra and the first concert was performed.

The vision of Mary Dodge led the orchestra to achieve musical excellence in a very short time. The Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra toured Eastern Oregon with the Redpath Chautauqua programs in 1915. Concert tours to Portland soon followed and the 35 member orchestra enthralled their listeners with their musical achievements. The group was housed at the Imperial Hotel and for three performances, people stood in line for a city block to hear the young musicians. They also performed for the state fair in Salem and won \$100 for their efforts.

In 1918, Mary Dodge left Harney County and moved to Portland accompanied by several students of the original orchestra including Ruth Saunders and Gwendolen Lampshire. Mary Dodge continued teaching in Portland and formed an orchestra at the Irvington School. This group became the Portland Junior Symphony and was later renamed the Portland Youth Philharmonic.

The Harney County Arts in Education Foundation is hosting the Centennial Celebration in hopes that it will help restore the social impact of music education in Harney County. This celebration will give Harney County residents the opportunity to display their rich heritage to today's members of the Portland Youth Philharmonic. Many people in Burns and the surrounding area have been working for months to make this trip special for us and we are very much looking forward to the trip.

A message from our new Executive Director

I am delighted to be in the company of true dedication and extraordinary talent – that which defines PYP. Throughout my first three weeks as Executive Director I have shared time with PYP’s staff, members of its board, parents, students, arts industry leaders, donors, and PYP’s friends in the community. My first mission: to learn the value of PYP as defined by those who are most closely involved. A particular delight for me was meeting Maestro Jacob Avshalomov who dedicated 40 years as PYP’s second Music Director. It has become deeply satisfying to see that PYP is an organization with its heart truly in the right place. In answer to a question recently raised by a musician, “What does the Executive Director do”, it is my job to learn from all of you and to create an environment where you and future young musicians will continue to thrive in your own quest for knowing. I will hear and see you soon at rehearsals and concerts as the season unfolds. I look forward to our collective journey of learning.

Kevin A. Lefohn

PYP is offering a free double bass class that will be taught by bass players from the Oregon Symphony. If you are interested in working with professional musicians, and are available on Saturday afternoons beginning October 9, please contact Ann Cockerham, PYP Orchestra Manager, at 503.223.5939 extension 102 or at ann@portlandyouthphil.org.

MUSICIAN ROSTERS Resource for Carpools

Separate rosters for each ensemble will be handed out at rehearsals soon. These rosters will contain contact information for each player in an ensemble. They can be helpful when setting up carpools. Parents, if your child does not bring home a roster, feel free to contact Ann Cockerham, an Orchestra Mum/Dad, or call the office so that we can get you a copy.

Events Calendar

October 2

PYP Strings at Jackson Middle School

October 9

Bass Class from 2:00–3:30pm at Jackson Middle School

October 9

PYP Strings at Jackson Middle School

October 16

PYP Strings at Jackson Middle School

October 24

Concerto Competition

October 29-31

PYP Mini-Tour to Burns, Oregon

November 3

PYP Fall Preview Concert at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon

November 6

YSE Lobby Concert at 7:00pm

November 6

PYP Fall Concert at 7:30pm

