



# The Chorus Newsletter

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## Rhapsody!

On the same program with us when we sing the Durufle Requiem will be Sergei Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43, with Carolyn Colton, piano, WMPA 2008 Concerto Composition Winner

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini is another of Rachmaninoff's most famous works. This piece is written in the form of theme and variations of one of Paganini's themes. The piece is written for piano and orchestra, as are most of Rachmaninoff's pieces. The reason for this is that Rachmaninoff was a pianist and wanted to be able to perform most of his pieces. The Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini explores the seemingly simple theme by Paganini and converts it into many varied transformations.

Rachmaninoff's talents at the piano were evident from an early age. His mother began teaching him to play at the young age of 5. Four years later in 1882, Rachmaninoff began attending the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Rachmaninoff was a somewhat typical child and often skipped and failed classes. Sergei also forged his report cards to pretend that his grades were still decent. Soon, Rachmaninoff was failing every class and transferred to the Moscow Conservatory. In the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninoff was able to study under some of the greatest Russian musicians of all time, such as Nikolai Zverev, Peter I. Tchaikovsky, and Anton Arensky.

Source: The Music Chamber

## Singing in Schlesinger?

The Metropolitan Chorus will be singing their program at Schlesinger in early March. Advanced sale tickets cost as much as \$45 a seat for adults, with a \$5 discount for seniors and military personnel. "Youths" may buy tickets for \$5.00. I assume this means students, but...

How can they charge this much for their concert? Perhaps a performance by saxophonist Branford Marsalis can make it happen.

Another Chorus of note in the Washington, D.C. area is **Choral Arts**. They plan a February concert *not* at Schlesinger, but at the National Presbyterian Church on Nebraska Avenue, in D.C. They ask \$45 for orchestra seating as well. The big advantage of attending a concert at this church is that the parking is free. Choral Arts has performed at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall for years. Kennedy Center parking this year is said to be about \$17.00. Could this account for the move to the church?

Meanwhile, the search goes on to find a way for the NOVA Community Chorus to return to Schlesinger, with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic providing accompaniment.

## NOVA Foundation

The NOVA Foundation is an organization known by the Federal Government as a 501c3 organization. This means that any money donated to the Foundation can be deducted from one's Federal income tax. If you wish to contribute, Dr. Whitmire would like you to give him the check so that he can record them and make sure they end up in the right account.

Next page!

Music  
Humor



Shearing

## MUSICAL HUMOR

## George Shearing

**Cadence:** When everybody hopes you're going to stop, but you don't.

**Final Cadence:** When they force you to stop.

**Virtuoso:** a musician with very high morals. (I know one.)

There were two people walking down the street. One was a musician. The other didn't have any money either.

What's the first thing a musician says at work?

"Would you like fries with that?"

**MUSIC:** a complex organization of sounds that is set down by the composer, incorrectly interpreted by the conductor, who is ignored by the musicians, the result of which is ignored by the audience

**Accidentals-** Wrong notes.

**Agitato-** One's state of mind after playing a wrong note.

**Transposition:** The act of moving the pitch of a piece of music that is too high for the sopranos to a point where it is too low for the basses.

**Arpeggio:** "Ain't he that story-book kid with the big nose that grows?"

**The stages of a musician's life:**

1. Who is <musician's name>?
2. Get me <musician's name>.
3. Get me someone who sounds like <musician's name>.
4. Get me a young <musician's name>.
5. Who is <musician's name>?

From: The Web

Shearing was born on August 13, 1919 in Battersea, South London, England and was the youngest of nine children. He was born blind to working class parents: his father delivered coal and his mother cleaned trains in the evening. He started to learn piano at the age of three and began formal training at Linden Lodge School for the Blind, where he spent four years.

Though offered several scholarships, Shearing opted to perform at local pub, the Mason's Arms in Lambeth, for 25 bob a week playing piano and accordion. He even joined an all-blind band during that time and was influenced by the albums of Teddy Wilson and Fats Waller. He made his first BBC radio appearance during this time after befriending Leonard Feather, whom he started recording with in 1937. In 1940, Shearing joined Harry Parry's popular band and contributed to the comeback of Stéphane Grappelli. Shearing also won seven consecutive Melody Maker polls during this time. Around that time he was also a member of George Evans' Saxes 'n' Sevens band.

### The US years

In 1947, Shearing moved to the United States, where he began to play in a harmonically complex style that mixed swing, bop and modern classical influences. One of his first gigs in the States was at the Hickory House. He performed with the Oscar Pettiford Trio and led a quartet with Buddy DeFranco, which led to recording problems since Shearing was with MGM and DeFranco was with Capitol Records. In 1949, he formed the first "George Shearing Quintet", a band with Marjorie Hyams (vibraphone), Chuck Wayne (guitar), John Levy (bass) and Denzil Best (drums) and recorded for Discovery, Savoy and MGM, including the immensely popular single, September in the Rain (MGM), which sold over 900,000 copies. Shearing himself would write of this hit that it was "as accidental as it could be."

In 1956, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. He continued to play with his quintet, with augmented players through the years, and recorded with Capitol until 1969. He created his own label, Sheba, that lasted a few years.

Source: Wikipedia

The Chorus Newsletter welcomes news, articles and photographic contributions. Are you planning a recital? Tell us when and where and we will get the word out. Call the editor, Bob Trexler at 703 978-9171 or e-mail at [Rctrex@aol.com](mailto:Rctrex@aol.com).

The Chorus Newsletter contains information about and for members of the NOVA Community Chorus. It is privately published monthly except during June and July. The College has no responsibility for its content. Members are encouraged to contribute articles and news about musical offerings and musical topics to Robert Trexler, editor and publisher, at [Rctrex@aol.com](mailto:Rctrex@aol.com)