

William Schuman Remembered at 100: A Musical Giant

Sarah Lawrence will celebrate the 100th birthday of the late composer William Schuman, on Wednesday, December 1 in a program that includes his choral and instrumental music, an address by the president of The Juilliard School, as well as a documentary film about one of America's most respected contemporary composers.

Schuman, who taught at Sarah Lawrence from 1935 to 1945, was a giant in 20th century American music, a prolific composer who wrote orchestral, chamber, and choral works performed at concert halls around the world. He also served as a leader in music education as president of The Juilliard School in Manhattan.

The event, to be held at Reisinger Concert Hall at 7 p.m., will celebrate Schuman's storied musical career and look back on his contributions to music

education. Guest speaker will be Juilliard President Joseph Polisi, the author of *American Music—The Life and Times of William Schuman*.

In 1943, while at Sarah Lawrence, Schuman was the first composer to win the Pulitzer Prize. He won a special Pulitzer citation in 1985 for his contributions to American music and music education.

It was during his decade at Sarah Lawrence that Schuman developed his approach to music education. According to a 1986 article in *Spotlight*, "The philosophy behind Sarah Lawrence College, then considered a progressive school, meshed with William Schuman's own ideas on teaching, including a curriculum tailor-made for the individual. The atmosphere provided by teachers who 'do' (composers teaching composing and dancers teaching dancing) gave Mr. Schuman the freedom to



Photo: DeLar

put his own theories, which were soon to revolutionize music education, into practice."

Schuman was steeped in Americana. His one-act opera, *Casey at the Bat*, celebrates

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Pre-Med, Learning by Helping

Sarah Lawrence students Nikhil Wadhvani and Hannah Steinberg have their hearts set on becoming physicians. Volunteering each Saturday at the St. Anthony's Free Medical Clinic in the Bronx has helped strengthened their resolve.

On Saturdays during the school year, Dr. Robert Quintano, a Bronxville plastic surgeon, picks them up at 8:30 a.m. at the Sarah Lawrence campus and drives them to

East 155th Street, where the clinic operates in a converted classroom. Sponsored by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the clinic provides free care, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Steinberg, of Chattanooga, TN, began volunteering at St. Anthony's last year. "It's a great experience," says the Sarah Lawrence junior. "I'm learning valuable skills, and I really enjoy helping people. There are few things that make me happier."

Like all the volunteers, Quintano, who helped found the clinic in 1998, doesn't get paid for his Saturday mornings in the Bronx. The clinic offers immunizations, medical exams, asthma care, well-child visits, and anemia checks. According to the students the patients seen at the medical clinic are among the thousands of New Yorkers who lack health insurance coverage.

The Sarah Lawrence students are given responsibility for initial contact with patients, many who begin lining up at 8 a.m. They take their blood pressure and pulse, find their height and weight, and conduct a vision test. After the intakes are completed, the students observe as the physicians conduct physical exams and take patient histories.

"It's fascinating to see what concerns them, and what doesn't concern them," Steinberg says. "It's a really good learning environment."

Wadhvani, of Berkeley, CA, says he enjoys interacting with the patients.

"It's nice to sit down and talk with them," he says. "The doctors really need us. It helps them to do their jobs better."

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America's national pastime, while his composition, *On Freedom's Ground: An American Cantata*, premiered at Lincoln Center in October 1986 to coincide with the Statue of Liberty's centennial.

At Sarah Lawrence he transformed the chorus into the "most talked about group on campus," according to the College newspaper, which compared the ensemble and its popularity on campus to Notre Dame's football squad, with Schuman seen as Sarah Lawrence's Knut Rockne.

In a 1986 Sarah Lawrence celebration, Schuman recalled how his experience there influenced his work. "Sarah Lawrence trusts the arts," he said. "The arts are viewed as the stuff of education and not as an emotional bath or an appendage to the main business of life."

Moderated by Chester Biscardi, director of Sarah Lawrence's music program, the program will include Schuman's "Prelude," written in 1940 while in residence at Sarah

Lawrence, performed by the Sarah Lawrence Women's Chorus, and his *String Quartet No. 4* (1950), performed by Juilliard's Afiara String Quartet. Sarah Lawrence seniors Noor Sandhu, soprano, and Chelsea Wright, piano, will perform Schuman's *Orpheus and his Lute* (1944).

Reflections and remembrances will be presented by Schuman's son, Anthony Schuman, and Sarah Lawrence Faculty Emeritus Hyman H. Kleinman, who was also Schuman's colleague at Juilliard.

The evening will also include a showing of the documentary, *Composer Portrait: William Schuman*, which was produced by his publisher, Theodore Presser Co. A reception in Marshall Field will follow the performance. The William Schuman Music Library will feature an ongoing exhibit about Schuman and his time at Sarah Lawrence. ■

Printmakers Raise Funds to Share Their Art

For three weeks last summer, Meaghan Brown, a senior at Yonkers High School, came to Sarah Lawrence to paint, make sculpture, and learn the mysteries of silk-screening, that centuries-old practice made new with today's technology.

It was a time for engaging collaboration with high school students from around the country in one of the College's summer programs, as well as focusing on ways to turn her fledgling artistic vision into artwork to share with the world. Brown, 17, says she was particularly taken by the printmaking, which was done using the silk-screen process. "I discovered new ways to express myself," says Brown. "There were so many mediums to explore."

Brown's participation grew out of a printmaking demonstration at the Yonkers Riverfront Library in the fall of 2009 for 18 students of Kim Kratz, an art teacher at Yonkers High. Sarah Lawrence visual arts faculty member Kris Philipps conducted the demonstration, which was such a hit that that Philipps approached her Sarah Lawrence students to see if they would help raise money to provide a scholarship for a Yonkers student to attend the summer program.

They did so, donating several of their completed art projects for a fundraising drive held late in the spring semester as part of an open house to display student work for parents and members of the College community. The printmaking sale fetched about \$2,500.

Amy Gartrell, a printmaking technician at Heimbald, says the workshop touched on several methods to make a print—from the paper-and-stencil technique used for decades, to computer-aided designs that use photosensitive emulsions to create the screen.

"It's more technical than painting and drawing, and it's a great skill set for these students to learn," says Gartrell. "They learn to make posters and t-shirts, and have the ability to make multiples of their work to share." ■



Members of the Bronxville League of Women Voters, (l to r) Janet Jaidi, Adelaide DiGiorgi and Irma Moore, posed with a "cutout" of Sarah Bates Lawrence during Orientation 2010, where they helped register students to vote.

Pre-Med: Learning by Helping

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Wadhvani, a junior, is taking organic chemistry this fall, and will study cell biology and biochemistry in the spring. He plans to take the Medical College Admission Test in May, with the possibility of starting medical school in 2012.

"There were times when I wasn't so sure I wanted to go to medical school," he says. "The free clinic has been a good environment to see what I'm comfortable doing. Working with patients has been great. Nothing compares to that satisfaction." ■

inTOUCH

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SLC's Will Frears to Direct Tony Award-Winning Musical *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

He made his debut as a theatre director in 2003 and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. And he's won awards for his film direction. The son of renowned director Stephen Frears, Will is making a name for himself both in the U.S. and his native U.K.

Twenty years ago, Will Frears was a high school dropout in England when his mother's friend, American playwright John Guare, suggested Frears spend the summer in Massachusetts, working at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the Berkshires. There, Frears fell in love with the stage and learned about Sarah Lawrence, where he enrolled a year later.

This fall, Frears, who graduated in 1996, will direct Guare's rollicking rock musical, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the Tony Award-winning production based on Shakespeare's 17th century play. With music written by *Hair* composer Galt MacDermot, the show debuted in 1971.

The play will be performed December 9, 10 and 11 in the 200-seat Suzanne Werner Wright Theatre in the Charles R. DeCarlo Performing Arts Center. Tickets are set aside for community residents, so call (914) 395-2412 for reservations.

"This musical is a piece of pure entertainment," says Frears, a member of Sarah Lawrence's theatre faculty. "It's romantic, there's mayhem, and stylistically, it's brilliantly all over the place. It has cheap laughs, and there's physical comedy."

Guare, one of America's leading playwrights, is best known for his plays, *Six Degrees of Separation* and *The House of Blue Leaves*. His latest drama, *A Free Man of Color*, opens in November at Lincoln Center.

Frears has emerged as a successful director in New York's stage and film world. In 2010 he directed the play, *Year Zero*, at the



Photo: Quyen Nguyen

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Second Stage Uptown in Manhattan, and his first full-length movie, *Coach*, was released this summer.

Frears says the musical works well with the College cast of 28, with the young actors energized by MacDermot's lively score. ■

The story depicts the adventures of lifelong friends Proteus and Valentine, who leave the countryside to experience the life of urban Milan. Both fall in love with the same woman, who happens to be betrothed against her will, by her father, to another man.

"The driving force in *Two Gentlemen* is youthful exuberance," says Frears. "It's all about what a good time people can have." He says the musical is a welcome change from the more serious plays he has worked on in New York's Off-Broadway scene.

"It's a chance for me to do something other than direct a play with four unhappy people in a room," he quips. "This play is a really good time."

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“Pop-Up Adventure Playground” at Yonkers Riverfest Engages Kids

On a bright Saturday afternoon in mid-September, children swarmed the lawn at Philipse Manor Hall in downtown Yonkers to play at the “pop-up playground” conceived by researchers at Sarah Lawrence’s Child Development Institute and carried out in partnership with Groundwork Hudson Valley and with consultation from staff at the New York Coalition for Play.

On the lawn, children created sculpture from scrap wood, painted cardboard boxes to wear as huge masks, jumped in piles of leaves, and created new environments from tarpaulins draped over wooden poles.

Tricia Dooley, who lives at Hudson Park on the Yonkers waterfront, watched her boys—Logan, 6, and Mason, 4—cavort in the leaves. “I like it when they can express themselves and just be themselves in the outdoors with no television or videos to distract them,” said Dooley.

The “pop-up playground” in Yonkers is part of a growing international movement to create play environments that encourage exploration and creativity. These playgrounds are spaces dedicated to children’s play, where adult facilitators may bring scavenged or donated low-tech objects for the children’s improvised creations.

The event, part of this year’s 18th annual Yonkers Riverfest, grew out of the Institute’s involvement in promoting free, unstructured play as a crucial element in child development. At a time of increased focus on drilling youngsters on literacy and math skills even in early childhood centers, Sarah Lawrence’s Child Development Institute stresses that children’s play is the ideal way to develop young minds, and build the capacity for literacy and an array of other important skills.

“Play is a child’s right, builds social skills, and fosters the ability to collaborate,” says Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and CDI Consultant Rachel Grob.

Ten Sarah Lawrence students assisted at Riverfest, volunteering to gather the materials, and then help facilitate play on the Manor lawn. Jane Gorski, a Sarah Lawrence sophomore, says she liked working with the children as they figured out what to do with the scrap materials that lay about on the grass. “It showed how much fun you could have, without needing a ton of expensive toys,” she says.

Kim Ferguson, a member of the Sarah Lawrence psychology faculty, says it would be exciting to explore working with Yonkers residents and organizations to create a permanent adventure playground in the

city. Rick Madger, executive director of Groundwork Hudson Valley, says he hopes the one-day installation at Philipse Manor Hall was the beginning of a long-term collaboration.

“We are glad to be able to bring to Yonkers the international movement to reclaim the notion of play,” said Madger as he watched Aaron Parker, 8, hammering a nail into a house façade he was building. “It’s a great way to let children shape their own environment.”

Parker, meanwhile, swung intently at a stubborn nail as he drove it into the wood to create the imaginary house that was coming to life before his eyes. “This is fun,” he said. “I love to build.” ■

Photo: Dana Maxon



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