



Wednesday Music Club

October 2019 Newsletter

Fall Luncheon Report



Wednesday Music Club inaugurated its 97th season on Wednesday, October 2nd with a splendid performance by soprano Heather Hightower, clarinetist James Tobin, and pianist Linda Blondel. Their program, "The German Lyric Tradition," spanned the early and mid-Romantic eras through *Lieder* of Schubert and Louis Spohr. An unusual arrangement of Mahler for voice, clarinet and piano represented late 19th century romanticism, giving the audience a capsule overview of the Romantic era in German vocal music.

The trio opened with Schubert's "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" [The Shepherd on the Rock], a masterpiece from 1828, his last year. It is believed to be the last song he composed. Only one other Schubert song approximates this one in scoring: "uf dem Strom" for tenor, horn and piano. The obligato clarinet served a pastoral function in illustrating Wilhelm Müller's text - longing for a distant sweetheart - and lent gracious lyricism to the early cantilena section. Clarinet and soprano were equal partners in the later coloratura runs that make this song a favorite with singers. The dialogue and echo between Heather Hightower's light lyric soprano and James Tobin's warm clarinet were delicious, ably supported by Linda Blondel's sympathetic support from the keyboard.

Finely-tuned ensemble among the three performers was equally apparent in the next work, a set of six German Songs, Op. 103 (1837) by the violinist and composer Louis Spohr. Best known for the symphonies, opera, and chamber music, Spohr also composed about 90 songs. While most were for voice and piano, he was a keen explorer of off-the-beaten track instrumental

combinations in his chamber music. In this Opus 103 group, arguably his best songs, his exploratory ventures were quite evident. James Tobin explained the different roles of the clarinet's engagement with the soprano, and noted that Spohr generally wrote with denser textures than in the Schubert that opened the program.

The program finale was an arrangement of the finale of Mahler's Fourth Symphony. The original is for soprano and orchestra. Linda Blondel explained that she was delighted to learn this arrangement, because Mahler was primarily a symphonist and composer of large works for voice and orchestra; consequently, pianists rarely have the opportunity to perform his music. Heather Hightower added that it was the first time she could recall singing a text that mentioned asparagus!

"Das himmlische Leben" [The Heavenly Life] is a text from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* [The Youth's Magic Horn], a collection of German folk ballads and poetry that was assembled in the first half of the 19th century. Mahler drew extensively on it for his songs, song cycles, and symphonies. This finale to the 4th Symphony shows us a tender, joyous side to his personality, a childlike viewpoint that believes in a heaven where angels bake bread, fish swim happily into the net, and St. Peter looks on benevolently.

Clearly these three performers relished embracing this delicious music, delivering a carefully calibrated, understated performance that brought smiles to virtually every face in the audience. "The program was just perfection. Each musician using their instrument so beautifully," was one of several comments I received afterward from those in attendance at Farmington Country Club. Enhanced by engaging comments from all three performers and helpful German texts and English translations (courtesy of Heather Hightower), the music was over all too soon.

---Laurie Shulman, program chair



President's Message

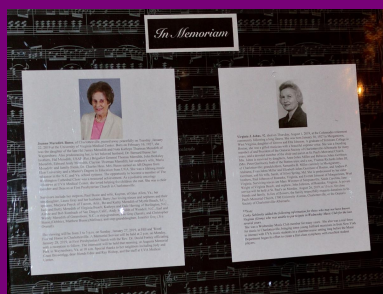
Over ninety WMC members and guests gathered at Farmington Country Club on October 2nd for the kick-off to our 97th season, consisting of a beautiful program and a delicious lunch! We are now over 171 members strong and thrilled to have 13 NEW members, some of whom attended and received a hearty welcome. Luncheon Chair Linda Smith outdid herself to produce a smoothly run, successful event. Thanks went to her and to the many helpers, including Janet Schwerdt, who provided lovely flower arrangements for the tables.



There was a lot about the Club on view on easels and two display tables. An "In Memoriam" poster honored the memory of departed members Jeanne Busse and Virginia Johns. Club activities and outreach were highlighted, and guests were encouraged to pick up a WMC brochure and consider joining our ranks. Among other things, I called attention to the start-up next summer of the exciting new initiative of the WMC summer piano camp - the Alma Huesing Piano Camp - to be co-directed by Barbara Moore and Melody Day.

In conclusion I shared the news that a new era will dawn for the Wednesday Music Club by virtue of a partnership developed with the new Center at Belvedere, under construction by the Senior Center. Beginning in the fall of 2020, the Club will hold all its monthly meetings, Young Musicians Recitals, and Winners Recital in the new state-of-the-art auditorium there, where we will have ample parking and no steps to negotiate. This announcement was greeted with heartfelt applause!

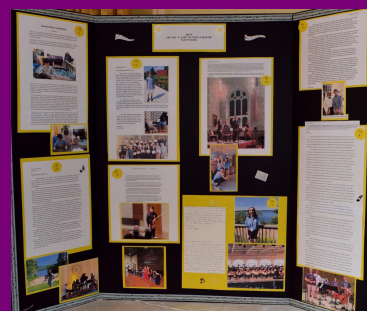
---Corky Sablinsky, WMC President



In Memoriam



Music Here! Program



*Music Camp
Scholarship Winners*

**WMC November Meeting
Wednesday, November 6, 2019**



10-11:30am
First Presbyterian Church Chapel

Program
***Alpha and Omega: Connecting
Instruments Through Time***

Greg Howard, Chapman Stick
Angela Kelly, flute



Save the Date! Musical Interlude 2020

Saturday, January 11, 2020
Rotunda Room, Westminster Canterbury
3-5pm

Program
Stacey Sharpe, violin
Tina Hashemi, jazz vocalist
Bobby Carlson, piano

November New Member Coffee

On Wednesday, November 20, WMC member Linda Smith will host a New Member Coffee at her home for those new to the Club to meet Board members and to learn more about the Wednesday Music Club community. Look for invitations coming later this month.



Wednesday Music Club Announcements

Early Music Access Project

presents

Meditation on Hildegard

Saturday, November 2, 2019

7:30 pm at the Municipal Arts Center

Amanda Gookin, Cello
**David McCormick, Medieval
Fiddle (Viele)**

**[Click here](#) for details and to purchase
tickets**

The Follies at Live Arts

Club member Phyllis Koch-Sheras will be playing the part of the opera diva in Live Arts' production of *Follies* by Stephen Sondheim.

October 4-27, 2019

**[Click here](#) for details and to purchase
tickets**



The Center for Vocal Study

Our October luncheon vocalist and WMC member Heather Hightower has opened The Center for Vocal Study, a facility devoted exclusively to the art and craft of the human voice. To welcome the community to its new home, The Center is offering free Saturday workshops through November 16. [Click here](#) for additional information regarding programs, classes, and location.

MISSION

The Wednesday Music Club promotes and expands quality musical and educational opportunities for its members, for teachers, for music lovers, and for the youth of Central Virginia through regular performances, competitions, shared group experiences, and financial support.

VISION

The Wednesday Music Club will foster and sustain a vibrant music climate throughout Central Virginia, especially among young people.



Visit the [Wednesday Music Club Website](#) to read more about membership, events, and programs and to view pictures of all WMC events

[Click here to make a donation to the WMC](#)
[Click here to join the WMC \(or to send the link to a friend\)](#)

