



# Take Note

Campolindo Instrumental Music Program  
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## From the Podium

by Harvey Benstein

Music Director and Conductor

Dear Parents, students and the Campolindo/Lamorinda community:

Words alone cannot express my feelings at this point in my life as I move forward to the next chapter and the future. There are so many people to thank and appreciate through the years who have provided support and guidance and who have created many memorable musical moments. I can only look back with satisfaction that I gave it my all, my passion for music, my talent as a conductor and my vision for a comprehensive music program. This cannot be done in a void. Special thanks to Principal Carol Kitchens for her encouragement and support, to my colleagues at Campolindo for supporting and embracing our student's efforts. Thank you to the Campolindo Music Boosters, The Board of Directors, The Presidents, Project coordinators and to our members and donors, who have believed and supported our vision. Our success over the years has been largely due to your continuous support. Most importantly I thank the hundreds of talented and hard working students who have developed and shared their musical gifts and talents, creating special musical moments and developing learning skills way beyond the classroom and rehearsal room. I wish you a lifelong journey of music making, appreciation and support.

You are in good hands, the future is bright and your new director Mr. O.L. (Johnny) Johnson IV has the talent, vision and drive to continue the journey we have been on. Please give Mr. Johnson your full support as you experience this exciting transition.

As I leave the day to day teaching profession I am concerned by the lack of understanding of the role that the arts and music have in our society and in our lives. Politicians and administrators are too quick to cut or



reduce music and arts programs, many which consider the serious study of this art form to be just a frill.

To exemplify the philosophical direction of our music program at Campolindo here is a reprint of the welcome address to the parents of incoming students at The Boston Conservatory given on September 1, 2004 by Dr. Karl Paulnack, pianist and director of the music division at The Boston Conservatory. I hope you will take a few moments to read this and reflect and to keep music alive and flourishing in Lamorinda.

"One of my parents' deepest fears, I suspect, is that society would not properly value me as a musician, that I wouldn't be appreciated. I had very good grades in high school, I was good in science and math, and they imagined that as a doctor or a research chemist or an engineer, I might be more appreciated than I would be as a musician. I still remember my mother's remark when I announced my decision to apply to music school-she said, "You're wasting your SAT scores!" On some level, I think, my parents were not sure themselves what the value of music was, what its purpose was. And they loved music: they listened to classical music all the time. They just weren't really clear about its function. So let me talk about that a little bit, because we live in a society that puts music in the "arts and entertainment" section of the newspaper, and serious music, the kind your kids are about to engage in, has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with entertainment, in fact it's the opposite of entertainment. Let me talk a little bit about music, and how it works.

(Continued Podium Page B)

One of the first cultures to articulate how music really works were the ancient Greeks. And this is going to fascinate you: the Greeks said that music and astronomy were two sides of the same coin. Astronomy was seen as the study of relationships between observable, permanent, external objects, and music was seen as the study of relationships between invisible, internal, hidden objects. Music has a way of finding the big, invisible moving pieces inside our hearts and souls and helping us figure out the position of things inside us. Let me give you some examples of how this works.

One of the most profound musical compositions of all time is the Quartet for the End of Time written by French composer Olivier Messiaen in 1940. Messiaen was 31 years old when France entered the war against Nazi Germany. He was captured by the Germans in June of 1940 and imprisoned in a prisoner-of-war camp.

He was fortunate to find a sympathetic prison guard who gave him paper and a place to compose, and fortunate to have musician colleagues in the camp, a cellist, a violinist, and a clarinetist. Messiaen wrote his quartet with these specific players in mind. It was performed in January 1941 for four thousand prisoners and guards in the prison camp. Today it is one of the most famous masterworks in the repertoire.

Given what we have since learned about life in the Nazi camps, why would anyone in his right mind waste time and energy writing or playing music? There was barely enough energy on a good day to find food and water, to avoid a beating, to stay warm, to escape torture-why would anyone bother with music? And yet-even from the concentration camps, we have poetry, we have music, we have visual art; it wasn't just this one fanatic Messiaen; many, many people created art. Why? Well, in a place where people are only focused on survival, on the bare necessities, the obvious conclusion is that art must be, somehow, essential for life. The camps were without money, without hope, without commerce, without recreation, without basic respect, but they were not without art. Art is part of survival; art is part of the human spirit, an unquenchable expression of who we are. Art is one of the ways in which we say, "I am alive, and my life has meaning."

In September of 2001 I was a resident of Manhattan. On the morning of September 12, 2001 I reached a new understanding of my art and its relationship to the world. I sat down at the piano that morning at 10 AM to practice as was my daily routine; I did it by force of habit, without thinking about it. I lifted the cover on the keyboard, and opened my music, and put my hands on the keys and took my hands off the keys. And I sat there and thought, does this even matter? Isn't this completely irrelevant? Playing the piano right now, given what happened in this city yesterday, seems silly, absurd, irreverent, pointless. Why am I here? What place has a musician in this moment in time? Who needs a piano player right now? I was completely lost.

And then I, along with the rest of New York, went through the journey of getting through that week. I did not play the piano that day, and in fact I contemplated briefly whether I would ever want to play the piano again. And then I observed how we got through the day.

At least in my neighborhood, we didn't shoot hoops or play Scrabble. We didn't play cards to pass the time, we didn't watch TV, we didn't shop, we most certainly did not go to the mall. The first organized activity that I saw in New York, on the very evening of September 11th, was singing. People sang. People sang around fire houses, people sang "We Shall Overcome". Lots of people sang America the Beautiful. The first organized public event that I remember was the Brahms Requiem, later that week, at Lincoln Center, with the New York Philharmonic. The first organized public expression of grief, our first communal response to that historic event, was a concert. That was the beginning of a sense that life might go on. The US Military secured the airspace, but recovery was led by the arts, and by music in particular, that very night. (Continued Podium Page C)



From these two experiences, I have come to understand that music is not part of “arts and entertainment” as the newspaper section would have us believe. It’s not a luxury, a lavish thing that we fund from leftovers of our budgets, not a plaything or an amusement or a pass time. Music is a basic need of human survival. Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we can’t with our minds.

Some of you may know Samuel Barber’s heart wrenchingly beautiful piece Adagio for Strings. If you don’t know it by that name, then some of you may know it as the background music which accompanied the Oliver Stone movie Platoon, a film about the Vietnam War. If you know that piece of music either way, you know it has the ability to crack your heart open like a walnut; it can make you cry over sadness you didn’t know you had. Music can slip beneath our conscious reality to get at what’s really going on inside us the way a good therapist does.

Very few of you have ever been to a wedding where there was absolutely no music. There might have been only a little music, there might have been some really bad music, but with few exceptions there is some music. And something very predictable happens at weddings-people get all pent up with all kinds of emotions, and then there’s some musical moment where the action of the wedding stops and someone sings or plays the flute or something. And even if the music is lame, even if the quality isn’t good, predictably 30 or 40 percent of the people who are going to cry at a wedding cry a couple of moments after the music starts. Why? The Greeks. Music allows us to move around those big invisible pieces of ourselves and rearrange our insides so that we can express what we feel even when we can’t talk about it. Can you imagine watching Indiana Jones or Superman or Star Wars with the dialogue but no music? What is it about the music swelling up at just the right moment in ET so that all the softies in the audience start crying at exactly the same moment? I guarantee you if you showed the movie with the music stripped out, it wouldn’t happen that way. The Greeks. Music is the understanding of the relationship between invisible internal objects.

I’ll give you one more example, the story of the most important concert of my life. I must tell you I have played a little less than a thousand concerts in places that I thought were Carnegie Hall; I enjoyed playing in please the critics in St. Petersburg. I thought were important; music critics heads of state. The most important place in a nursing home in a small ago.

I was playing with a very dear friend began, as we often do, with Aaron written during World War II and Copland’s, a young pilot who was we often talk to our audiences about rather than providing them with this case, because we began the decided to talk about the piece later out and play the music without the piece, an elderly man seated in the concert hall began to weep. This



in my life so far. I have played important. I like playing in Paris; it made me very happy to have played for people I of major newspapers, foreign concert of my entire life took Midwestern town a few years

of mine who is a violinist. We Copland’s Sonata, which was dedicated to a young friend of shot down during the war. Now the pieces we are going to play written program notes. But in concert with this piece, we in the program and to just come explanation. Midway through a wheelchair near the front of man, whom I later met, was

clearly a soldier-even in his 70’s, it was clear from his buzz-cut hair, square jaw and general demeanor that he had spent a good deal of his life in the military. I thought it a little bit odd that someone would be moved to tears by that particular movement of that particular piece, but it wasn’t the first time I’ve heard crying in a concert and we went on with the concert and finished the piece. (Continued Podium Page D)

When we came out to play the next piece on the program, we decided to talk about both the first and second pieces, and we described the circumstances in which the Copland was written and mentioned its dedication to a downed pilot. The man in the front of the audience became so disturbed that he had to leave the auditorium. I honestly figured that we would not see him again, but he did come backstage afterwards, tears and all, to explain himself. What he told us was this: "During World War II, I was a pilot, and I was in an aerial combat situation where one of my team's planes was hit. I watched my friend bail out, and watched his parachute open, but the Japanese planes which had engaged us returned and machine gunned across the parachute chords so as to separate the parachute from the pilot, and I watched my friend drop away into the ocean, realizing that he was lost. I have not thought about this for many years, but during that first piece of music you played, this memory returned to me so vividly that it was as though I was reliving it. I didn't understand why this was happening, why now, but then when you came out to explain that this piece of music was written to commemorate a lost pilot, it was a little more than I could handle.

How does the music do that? How did it find those feelings and those memories in me?"

Remember the Greeks: music is the study of invisible relationships between internal objects. The concert in the nursing home was the most important work I have ever done. For me to play for this old soldier and help him connect, somehow, with Aaron Copland, and to connect their memories of their lost friends, to help him remember and mourn his friend, this is my work. This is why music matters.

What follows is part of the talk I will give to this year's freshman class when I welcome them a few days from now. The responsibility I will charge your sons and daughters with is this:

"If we were a medical school, and you were here as a med student practicing appendectomies, you'd take your work very seriously because you would imagine that some night at 2AM someone is going to waltz into your emergency room and you're going to have to save their life. Well, my friends, someday at 8 PM someone is going to walk into your concert hall and bring you a mind that is confused, a heart that is overwhelmed, a soul that is weary. Whether they go out whole again will depend partly on how well you do your craft.

You're not here to become an entertainer, and you don't have to sell yourself. The truth is you don't have anything to sell; being a musician isn't about dispensing a product, like selling used cars. I'm not an entertainer; I'm a lot closer to a paramedic, a firefighter, a rescue worker. You're here to become a sort of therapist for the human soul, a spiritual version of a chiropractor, physical therapist, someone who works with our insides to see if they get things to line up, to see if we can come into harmony with ourselves and be healthy and happy and well.



Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, I expect you not only to master music; I expect you to save the planet. If there is a future wave of wellness on this planet, of harmony, of peace, of an end to war, of mutual understanding, of equality, of fairness, I don't expect it will come from a government, a military force or a corporation. I no longer even expect it to come from the religions of the world, which together seem to have brought us as much war as they have peace. If there is a future of peace for humankind, if there is to be an understanding of how these invisible, internal things should fit together, I expect it will come from the artists, because that's what we do. As in the concentration camp and the evening of 9/11, the artists are the ones who might be able to help us with our internal, invisible lives."

Karl Paulnack

**GOODBYE MR. BENSTEIN! WE WILL MISS YOU!**

## Musicians Playing to Support Our Music Program



Be sure to thank your fellow musicians for helping to raise **\$250.00** for our music program. Elizabeth Liao, Michael Huang and Annie Carlson accepted an invitation from the Campolindo Sports Boosters to play at their annual auction dinner. It was held at Moraga Country Club

on April 14. They formed a trio, prepared the music and entertained guests for two hours. Playing outside of the comfort of your own music room brings many rewards, including confidence and ability. We appreciate these students giving their time and talent to benefit the music department.

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## From Your Outgoing President, Sue Carlson

Even as I write this, I am trying to figure out how I got so lucky to be the 2011-12 Campo Music Boosters President. It is not without melancholy that I say goodbye to the Music Boosters. I have truly enjoyed this year as your president. But mostly it is the relationships fostered through this journey that I cherish. I have been so fortunate to work with incredible, committed adults and gotten to know and respect so many amazing student musicians. Traveling to Beijing, China with the orchestra in 2011 afforded me the rare opportunity to have quality time with these extraordinary, talented kids. I will always hold dear the fondest memories of that trip of a lifetime.

I will miss my "peeps" in the music room. I depended upon so many of my special friends (you know who you are) to help me out over the past two years and you always came through for me. We shared music in the community at Pizza Antica, Farmers Market, Christmas luncheons, and other fund raisers. You helped me on your lunch breaks, your evenings and your weekends. You represented the music department with pride and ownership and I couldn't be more grateful for your leadership.

I couldn't have succeeded without the unending support of my daughter, Annie. She was always my Go-To-Girl whether it was delivering flyers, conjuring up recruits or making announcements on my behalf. I am so proud and appreciative for all her help.

I look forward to continuing as a community supporter of the arts to hear amazing Campo music played on a level that always exceeds expectations. Being a part of this group fills me with pride and a sense of belonging to something vital. Harvey Benstein built an amazing, respected, enviable music program during his 15 years of commitment at Campo. I know the tradition of making fine music will continue under the leadership of Maestro Johnson. Thank you for great memories and heartfelt involvement. See you around Moraga!



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## WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

To Keep Music Boosters strong, we need parents to get involved in Campo Music 2012-13. It's a fun way to stay involved in your child's activities and a great way to connect with other parents. Let's keep Music Boosters traditions strong. Consider co-chairing with a friend.

Here are the positions we need to fill:

**WELCOME BACK BBQ --- POPS POTLUCK --- HOSPITALITY.**

Please contact Sue Carlson or Chitra Suri.



***CMEA FESTIVAL***

***A GREAT  
SUCCESS!!***



**Congratulations Mr.  
Benstein, and  
musicians of  
Orchestra and  
Symphonic Band**



Both ensembles received  
**Unanimous Superior**  
ratings from all four  
adjudicators...  
the highest  
ratings possible.



## **Thank you to our Student Music Council**

**Thank you for all your efforts and great attitudes:**

Parker Hasler & Luther Kuefner, Co-Presidents,  
Annie Guo & Athan Gousios, SB Representatives,  
Annie Carlson, Orchestra Representative,  
Newton Kwan, Sophomore Representative



**Thank you for  
your support**

Your tax-deductible contribution helps to enhance musical education and musicianship at Campo.

**Visit us on the Web!**

**[www.campomusic.org](http://www.campomusic.org)**

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### **From your 2012-13 President, Chitra Suri**

I am very excited to continue with the Music Boosters next year. This year was a great introduction to this select group of dedicated parents and teachers. It was also a tremendous opportunity for me to see, first hand, what it takes to keep a phenomenal music program like ours stable and flourishing.

There are big changes ahead. A music department without Mr. Benstein is still difficult to imagine. The large, pre-eminent, enviable high school program that we have today is his creation. He has always challenged our kids to become accomplished musicians – whether in jazz, chamber, orchestra or band. The path may not have been easy – thus it is to our kids’ credit that they strived to always meet the challenge! And now we welcome Mr. Johnson and hope the program will reach new heights under his leadership. The music building renovations are scheduled to begin next May but will probably not impact the programs excessively at that time.

My aim next year is to maintain the strength of the Music Boosters in providing our young musicians with all the extra support possible. I also hope we can assist in programs to establish meaningful ties with the Middle School and help in building a stronger community presence. I am still relatively new to this district, having moved here from New York less than two years ago. I continue to be impressed by the keen interest, support and commitment of the parents and look forward to working with everyone to help maintain the vitality and success of our high school music program.



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### **Thank you 2011-12 Project Chairmen**

Welcome Back BBQ: Laura Chen  
POPS Potluck: Necia Hasler  
Homecoming Concessions: Mary Beth Leonard  
Hospitality Receptions: Laura & Eliot Smyrl  
Photography: Kevin Goto & Curran Kwan

Publicity: Seri Gomberg  
Concert Attire: Laura Chen  
Senior Gifts: Dana Gill  
Webmaster: Teresa Chow  
Jazz Dinner Dance: Diane Haley

## **“Take Note” Spring Newsletter 2012**

Dear Campolindo Students and Parents:

How exciting it is to be joining you next Fall as your new Instrumental Music Director! It is truly a privilege to be welcomed by a community of families who are committed to high standards in education and the arts.

It was a pleasure to meet many students, parents and future colleagues during the interview and selection process. I felt your sincerity, earnestness and concern for the program, and I know we can work together successfully to maintain the Campolindo tradition of musical excellence while reaching forward with new experiences.

Soon, I will begin the process of getting to know each of you individually. I can hardly wait! For now, I will share a little about myself and give you an idea of what I have in mind for the next phase of progress for the Instrumental Music Program at Campo.

I want you to know that I had a really great teacher when I was in college. His name was Harvey Benstein! He was strict. He made us give him our best every day. He had enormous respect for the music and insisted that we show respect for that music by playing it as perfectly and sensitively as possible. I cherish the years that I played under his baton and I know I have big shoes to fill.

I've lived in Louisiana, Florida, California and most recently, Texas. I've learned important lessons and had amazing experiences in each place, but California is my true home. It's thrilling to be coming back, but I don't look forward to the moving process. If you've ever moved, you know what I mean.

I've worked in three different high schools in my career. In each school, I've been successful in increasing the number of students in the program and along with that, the level of skill and commitment. I believe that a high-quality, engaging music program is the key to growth.

I like school because it's fun. I like to work hard because it's rewarding. I like teaching teenagers because they are open to change, frequently insightful and often hilarious. I love music because it is the most natural healing product ever created. Music, young people, hard work and fun – that's why I chose this career.

I have a vision for the Campolindo Instrumental Music Program of the future. It involves having ensembles that are overflowing with talent and love of music. It includes activities and challenges that encourage personal growth and create amazing memories that last a lifetime. In my vision, we are all taking care of each other, appreciating and valuing our differences and holding each other in high esteem as we take bold steps forward.

Look for me to arrive in mid-July. In the meantime, I hope you all have a restful summer and come back in the Fall ready to be a part of something familiar but new, maybe different but certainly wonderful.

Most sincerely,

***Johnny Johnson***

