



# Clef Notes

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF

THE BEACH CITIES SYMPHONY

## JANUARY PERFORMANCE DRAWS OVATION AND PAYS IT FORWARD

Anli Lin Tong's graceful style and superb performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* at the January, 2008 concert drove the full-house audience to its feet in a standing ovation. In keeping with the enthusiasm of the concert-goers and the Gershwin mood, Ms. Tong presented the audience with an encore, a piano transcription of "Embraceable You." Ms. Tong has been an ardent supporter of youth activities with the Beach Cities Symphony, and she was instrumental in planning the January concert to benefit the newly-launched \$500 scholarship for a middle school music student which will be awarded in the fall of 2008. Applications for the scholarship program will be available at the Beach Cities Symphony performance on April 4.

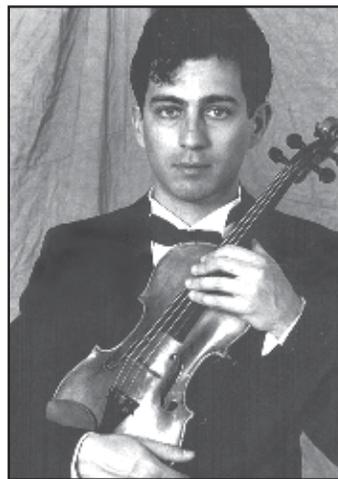


Anli Lin Tong performs Gershwin

Photo: Peter Coffee

All photographs in Clef Notes may be viewed in full color on the BCSA website [BeachCitiesSymphony.org](http://BeachCitiesSymphony.org).

## ROBERTO CANI IS BACK TO PERFORM BRUCH



Roberto Cani  
Violin Soloist

It is with great pleasure that the Beach Cities Symphony Association once again welcomes violinist Roberto Cani, who will perform at the April concert. In January, 2007, Mr. Cani so delighted our audience with his performance of Tchaikovsky's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra that he was encouraged

to play an encore—which he graciously did. For our April, 2008 concert we look forward to his performance of Max Bruch's Violin Concerto in G Minor.

Roberto Cani is acclaimed throughout the music world as not just a performer, but an "artiste," and has been hailed by critics as "...a violinist of high caliber following a great Italian tradition of the virtuoso Paganini."

Roberto Cani began his studies at the age of seven and made his solo debut at the age of nine. He is a graduate of the Milan Conservatory, the Gnessin Institute in Moscow, and the University of Southern California. He has studied with world-renowned violinists Zinaida Gilels, Viktor Tretiakov, Abrahm Shtern, Pavel Vernikov, and Alice Schoenfeld. He has taught at summer festivals in Positano, Italy, and Hvar, Croatia. Most recently, he was invited to be a Professor at the Portogruaro Summer Music Festival in Italy.

Mr. Cani launched his concert career when he won the prestigious Paganini International Competition in Genoa at the age of 21. In the same year, he won the Courcillon International Competition in France, and the Jeunesses

*continued inside*

## CHRISTMAS COMES BUT TWICE A YEAR

By Ruth MacFarlane and Margaret McWilliams

We celebrated the recent holidays twice—first in December in California, and then in January in Ethiopia. We didn't use a time machine to live this impossibility. Instead we flew three silver birds to Addis Ababa and finally rode a bus to Lalibela to celebrate the Timkat Festival (not a celebration of feline friends). It is a colorful Ethiopian celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany, which follows 12 days after Christmas. The discrepancy on the days for celebrating Christmas and the Epiphany is due to the fact that Ethiopians calculated the date on the Julian calendar, which is 12 days behind the Gregorian calendar that we use. As if to emphasize even more that Ethiopia exists in another time, the country is currently celebrating the Millennium. By the Julian calendar, the year 2000 began in (our) September 2007. In the Addis Ababa airport, many buildings were draped ground-to-roof with strings of lights in the national colors of yellow, red, and green, and millennium banners fluttered everywhere. Yet in this country of ancient orthodoxy, Beyoncé Knowles—she of the short skirts and American pop music—was brought in for a celebratory millennial concert in Addis Ababa.

How fortunate we were to be able to share in the excitement of Ethiopian Orthodoxy's biggest religious celebration of the year. Festivities, which continue around the clock for three days, include throngs of worshipers in all sorts of religious attire parading through the streets to carry the symbolic Ark of the Covenant to the sacred area for chants and rituals culminating in baptisms, and finally the return of the symbols to the churches. Music and singing are central to their religious practices. Every church has one or more cylindrical drums, with a cow skin drum head at each end, one being large and the other small, each giving a distinct tone. Deacons and worshipers carry sistrums, small wishbone-shaped hand instruments strung with metal

discs on wires. As the sistrum is tilted from side to side, the discs slide and jingle together, in a delicate cascade of sound. A brass horn adds a blaring, tooting tone. The singing is rich and resonant, sometimes stately, sometimes sprightly, and often punctuated with ululations from the women. A bit of sleep is very hard to snatch during the frenetic three-day celebration.

The Ethiopian people trace their ancestry through the Queen of Sheba, the lass from Axum who bedazzled King Solomon when she visited him in Jerusalem. (Their form of Christianity is closely related to Judaism in its practices). Their finely chiseled noses and lips suggest an Arabic strain, while their strikingly large almond-shaped eyes remind one of Egyptian wall paintings. Their own ancient wall paintings in churches are full of faces with delightfully wide-eyed expressions.



*Priests in Timkat Festival procession carrying elaborate prayer crosses, and shaded by multi-colored velvet umbrellas decorated with sequins and gold braid.*



*Farmers poling boats to transport sugar cane to market across the Blue Nile. Passengers laden with market goods await boat in foreground for return trip.*

Western Ethiopia is rightly called the "Roof of the World." At altitudes above 8,000 feet, it is marked with magnificent escarpments, broad plateaus, and deep coiling river valleys. The people there are mostly peasant farmers who grow grain crops, beans, lentils, and sugar cane. Since it was harvest time, we saw dozens of threshing floors, which were simply large circles of dirt tramped flat and hard. Oxen or donkeys tramp out the grains, which are then winnowed by tossing the grain into the air, so that the chaff can blow away. The brilliant yellow swath of chaff is a striking sign of a threshing floor, against the rich brown and green landscape. The farmers use hand plows pulled by oxen, and even apparently unusable slopes are intricately terraced to eke out a few more yards of arable land. Since neither the Ethiopian Christians nor the Muslims eat pork, it is doubtful that there is a single pig →

THE BEACH CITIES SYMPHONY  
**BARRY BRISK, MUSIC DIRECTOR**

*presents*

**ROBERTO CANI**  
VIOLIN SOLOIST

*in a performance of*

**Concerto in G Minor**  
**by Max Bruch**

*Also featuring*

**Pavane by Gabriel Fauré**

**Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*, by Robert Schumann**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2008**

**Marsee Auditorium, El Camino College • Crenshaw Blvd. at Redondo Beach Blvd.**

**FREE ADMISSION & FREE PARKING**

**concert time: 8:15 P.M.    pre-concert lecture: 7:30 P.M.**

**Information: (310) 539-4649 or (310) 379-9725 • [www.beachcitiessymphony.org](http://www.beachcitiessymphony.org)**

in Ethiopia. Strangely, we did not see fruit trees growing in the farm yards or villages, though the climate would be suitable for apples and stone fruits.

Other exotic sights included seeing the replica of Lucy's 3-million-year-old bones in the museum in Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie's palace, the head waters of the Blue Nile, the rock churches carved from the ground in Lalibela, the ruins of the Queen of Sheba's palace, obelisks at Axum, and the sacred building claimed to hold the Ark of the Covenant. These wonderful sights are a part of a country that is struggling to feed its people and to gradually emerge from its poverty. We felt very fortunate to have been able to visit, but returned with new appreciation of the wonders of food in America and the luxuries of having soap and hot and cold running water available at any hour of the day or night.

*Ruth MacFarlane is a former university lecturer in her native South Africa and is the BCSA Chairman of the Board. Margaret McWilliams, Ph.D., is a violinist with the BCS orchestra, a member of the BCSA board, a writer of college textbooks on nutrition and food science, and is a former professor at Cal State Los Angeles.*

*Roberto Cani, continued from page one*

Musicales International Competition in Belgrade, where he captured a special prize for the best contemporary work. He also won the national Minetti Prize in Italy, and top honors at the Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow.

In addition to his native Italy, Roberto Cani concertizes throughout the United States as well as Germany, Belgium, Austria, Spain, Russia, Croatia, Poland, Serbia, France, Taiwan, Japan, and South Africa. He is a frequent soloist with orchestras and has performed, most notably, with the Moscow Philharmonic, La Scala Orchestra, RAI Symphony (Italy), Belgrade Orchestra, Zagreb Orchestra, and Missouri Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Cani has performed in major music halls worldwide including Los Angeles' Royce Hall, and Moscow's Bolshoi Zal and Tchaikovsky Zal. He premiéred "Zigane and Kardos" by Randy Kerber—dedicated to him and renowned cellist Andrew Shulman—and "Vis Vitae" by Aaron Zigman.

Mr. Cani performs on a Pietro Guarneri of Venice violin, on loan from the ProCanale Foundation in Italy.

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## BEACH CITIES SYMPHONY

final concert of the  
**2007-2008 SEASON**

**May 23, 2008**

Hector Berlioz: "Festivities at the Capulets,"  
from *Romeo and Juliet*

MTAC Artists of the Future soloists—to be announced  
Richard Wagner: Prelude from *Die Meistersinger*

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

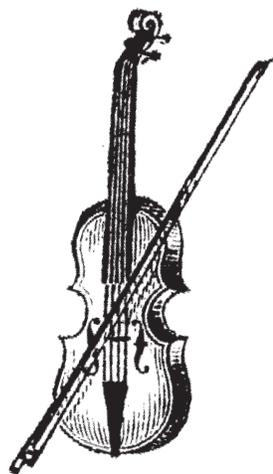
Doris and Jack Riehm  
Frank and Lynn Cooper  
James and Ellen Starr  
Nasim and Anita Amin  
Linnea E. Eades

*Thank you for supporting our organization!*

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### \$500 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IS IN THE WORKS

At the January concert, the BCSA announced the establishment of a yearly \$500 scholarship to be awarded to a deserving middle school music student. Information and applications have been mailed to area music teachers and South Bay middle schools. Information and applications may also be downloaded from the BCSA website: [BeachCitiesSymphony.org](http://BeachCitiesSymphony.org). For questions about the scholarship, please call (310) 539-4649 or (310) 379-9725. A heartfelt thank you to all the generous attendees who donated to the scholarship fund, in addition to the original donors—the Hunter family, the Niland family, and the friends and family of Norma Gass and Caswell Neal.



### JANUARY 2008 PRIZE WINNERS

In the members' raffle at our January 25 concert, the CDs donated by Borders Books and Music in Torrance were won by Frank and Lynn Wells of Torrance and John Williams of Hermosa Beach. The floral arrangement by Lily's Flowers and Gifts in Torrance was won by Evelyn Sorensen of Torrance. In the general raffle, Al Chavez of Palos Verdes won the dinner for two at the Farm Stand in El Segundo. Janet Lyons of Hawthorne won the gift certificate for dinner for two at the Second City Bistro, also in El Segundo.

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Beach Cities Symphony News information: 310-379-9725, 310-539-4649, or [www.BeachCitiesSymphony.org](http://www.BeachCitiesSymphony.org)

Editors: Pat Chavez, Margaret McWilliams

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