

Chairs' Corner – September 2007
UW World Series

TO: UW Foundation, Campaign Cabinet, Deans, Development & Alumni Staff
FROM: Orin C. Smith, Chair, UW Foundation
Daniel J. Evans, Vice Chair, UW Foundation
William H. Gates, Campaign Chair

Dear Friends,

Concerts in the UW World Series (no relation to baseball) are very classy shows. In any one season at Meany Hall, you might see the Emerson String Quartet, pianist Murray Perahia, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company—all international luminaries. You would see, as well, groups you have never heard of from vibrant artistic traditions you probably know nothing about. (For this season's schedule—23 artists or groups from 18 countries—go to <http://www.uwworldseries.org/artists.cfm>) If you have been in the World Series audience, you know that these can be heart-stopping performances.

So it is no small claim to say that the most exciting performance last season may have been, not at Meany Hall, but at Rainier Beach High School. There, on a Friday night in April, 130 students from T. T. Minor Elementary School and Meany and Washington Middle Schools took the stage alongside the Young Eight, an African American string octet featured in the World Series chamber music season. (The group's debut performance, by the way, took place at Seattle's Benaroya Hall in 2003.)

The musicians of the Young Eight had spent two weeks (one in fall and one in spring) coaching and inspiring these students in their classrooms, as part of the World Series educational outreach program. In between the two "residencies," the World Series provided an extra weekly music lesson for some students and spent much staff and volunteer time on logistics. When hundreds of parents and friends turned out to hear the results that April night, the atmosphere was electric. You can hear it in the comments that came back to World Series staff. From a teacher: "I am still reeling after this amazing night." From a parent: "I will remember for a long time the joy and pride many of us felt in hearing the Young Eight and all of the students from each school as they made music of high quality at every level." From a volunteer: "In my 40 years of teaching, I have done many school performances but that was the most exciting I have ever been a part of!!!"

To get a glimpse of this and other World Series outreach programs (and hear some sizzling Beethoven by the Emerson String Quartet), go to <http://www.uwworldseries.org/community.cfm> and activate the slide show at the bottom.

For World Series director Matt Krashan, educational outreach is a personal mission. Soon after arriving in 1982, he started Youth Matinees, which this season will bring some seven thousand school children to Meany Hall for six free, hour-long versions of World Series performances. Almost all the matinees fill up as soon registration opens the

previous spring. (Screening dance groups for youth-appropriate material can be a challenge, Matt admits wryly—“There are those moments, at matinees, when we look at each other and say, ‘Oh no.’”)

Over the years, the World Series added master classes for UW students, pre-show conversations, and community forums on arts-related topics. But the big breakthrough for Music in the Schools—the program that arranges residencies like that of the Young Eight—came in 1995, when the Ladies Musical Club (LMC) decided to end its own ambitious performance series in Meany Hall. The club proposed, instead, to collaborate on educational programs tied into the World Series. Together, Matt and the LMC designed a program that would bring World Series artists into underserved schools that had no music program, with each school signing on for three years. The World Series does coordination and fundraising for the residencies, while the club contributes hundreds of volunteer hours. The program has expanded beyond the original design, and this year World Series artists will make about forty visits to twelve schools.

All this reflects a larger trend. “Ten years ago,” says Matt, “the educational work done by ensembles was maybe a twentieth of what it is now. Today they see it as part of their job, a core piece of what they do. There’s a real belief that this music belongs to everybody. What’s always incredible to me is the way a group like the Young Eight can bring music from 300 years ago to life for young kids.”

Matt is under no illusion that the World Series programs, even together with the many similar programs of other Seattle arts groups, can replace the sadly diminished arts education in the public schools. “There’s a tremendous amount of work going on in the community,” he says, “but it’s not nearly enough. We’ll never have the resources to make major, systemic change.

“But we’re not just sprinkling stardust. We give kids an experience that’s different from what they see on TV. We show them quality performances that open up a window they haven’t had a chance to look through before. I think that makes a difference. If I can impact one kid’s life and one school, I’ll be damned happy.”

By those criteria, Matt should be a happy man. After last spring’s Rainier Beach concert, wrote the T. T. Minor music teacher, “Two of my students told me their parents bought them violins.” The T. T. Minor music program itself exists largely because of a World Series residency by the Marian Anderson String Quartet in 2000. And one of last April’s student performers summed up the experience this way: “I learned that if you want to be the best, you cannot settle for ‘better than average.’” Those sound like impacts to us.

If you would like to see for yourself, you can sit in on a school residency or attend a youth matinee. Just call World Series development director Courtney Clouse Haneuse (616-6296) or education director Alice de Anguera (685-2369). Both are immersed in the outreach programs and love to show them off.

Orin, Dan, and Bill

Looking Back

- As of August 31, 2007, our **total Campaign giving since July 1, 2000, reached \$2,358,708,266 toward our \$2.5 Billion goal.**
- The August Report of Contributions Notes is attached and contains fundraising details.

Looking Ahead

- **Friday, January 25, 2008**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee; 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting.
- **Friday, April 25, 2008**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee, 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting. Washington Weekend April 24-26, 2008.
- **Friday, September 26, 2008**, Campaign Finale. Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, and Recognition Gala.