



**A Letter from the Director** – It has been a year since our last big update. Each year brings new, interesting developments, and new challenges, as well! There have been many highlights this season but perhaps our biggest will come in late April with a series of concerts with countertenor Michael Chance. There's more about this below.

In September, Sarasa collaborated with Prism Opera in an exciting production of Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito." The Boston Globe said that the work "...was exceptionally well-played on original instruments by the all-star Sarasa chamber ensemble." Following this we finished recording our CD of Bach cantatas with singers Sanford Sylvan and Dominique Labelle.

Our concert series began with the award winning mezzo-soprano Krista River who sang a moving and dramatic rendition of Handel's "La Lucrezia." A few weeks later, she made her Carnegie Hall recital debut to critical acclaim. This concert also included beautiful works by Buxtehude and Telemann, and a solo harpsichord sonata of Kuhnau played by Charles Sherman in which he related the composer's feelings as he played—very entertaining!

Aside from pure musicianship, one of the things that sets a Sarasa concert apart from others is this sort of friendly interaction between the performers and audience. We think this not only adds enjoyment to the concert, but deepens our mutual appreciation of the music.

Our November concert featured pianist Robert Merfeld and the group playing a piano quartet and trio by Schumann, and in something of a departure for Sarasa, a modern work by Cambridge-centered composer John Harbison, his "November 19, 1828." The playing was intense and the program was well received by those who were able to attend. All too few unfortunately; the weather was not Sarasa's friend this Winter. Our January program, illustrating the evolution of the string quartet was played in the midst of a blizzard. The music was a warm, wonderful contrast to the driving snow flying past the windows of the Friends'

Meeting House in Cambridge. The feeling inside the hall was quite magical, and both audience and musicians were warmed by it. Despite the fact that this was perhaps the worst storm of the season, more than forty intrepid souls managed to attend, many of them making their way on foot. We feel fortunate to have such a loyal audience! Unfortunately the snow was so severe that we were forced to cancel the Sunday concert in Concord. That was a financial setback for Sarasa.

Our fast approaching last program of the season Amor Hai Vinto ("Love, You Have Conquered") will feature internationally renowned English countertenor Michael Chance. Please see below for the details of the program. This will be a very special and memorable concert. Michael rarely performs in the United States and is best known here through his more than 100 recordings. Because it is such a special occasion, in addition to our usual concert venues, in Cambridge and Concord, MA, we will be repeating this program at the following places: St. Paul's Academy in Concord, NH, on April 22; as part of the Lane Series in Burlington, VT, on April 29, and at the famous Frick Collection in New York City on May 1. If you have friends in these areas please let them know; this will be a memorable concert! For more details go to our web site [www.sarasamusic.org](http://www.sarasamusic.org).

We'll also be performing excerpts live on Boston's WGBH Radio 89.7 FM at 3 PM on Thursday, April 21.

It can't be ignored that we need help paying our way, and much of that help has to come from you. Despite our artistic successes and our loyal audience, bringing in enough funding to truly sustain Sarasa continues to be a challenge. The Bach Cantata CD cost more to produce than we had anticipated, due to an illness that forced a second recording session in September. And in the spirit of bringing you the best musicians, travel costs and fees continue to take the lion's share of our income. And of course the severe Winter weather reduced attendance at our concerts.

So, this is our once a year fund-raising effort and we hope you will

*(continued on back)*



## Don't miss this special concert!

# SARASA ENSEMBLE

## with Countertenor Michael Chance

**8 PM, Saturday, April 23, 2005**

Friends' Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge, MA

**7 PM, Sunday, April 24, 2005**

Parish Hall, First Parish Church, 20 Lexington Rd., Concord, MA

### The Program

Aria from Rinaldo "Ogni indugio d'un amante" - HANDEL  
Sonata XV a quattro per stromenti d'arco - CASTELLO  
Violin Concerto "L'Amoroso" - VIVALDI  
Cantata "Amor hai Vinto" - VIVALDI

Lamentatio "Ach, dass ich Wassers gnug hätte" - J.C. BACH  
Sonata 3 in D minor - BIBER  
Harpsichord Concerto in G minor BWV 1058 - J. S. BACH  
Cantata BWV 54 "Widerstehe doch der Sunde" - J. S. BACH

Tickets available at the door or online at [www.sarasamusic.org](http://www.sarasamusic.org)  
TICKETS: \$19 general/ \$16 seniors/ \$12 students

INFORMATION: (617) 492-4758 Sarasa, 14 High St. Cambridge, MA 02138-4504

*"Chance has scaled the vocal heights with the cream of early-music artists, and the reasons were clear... He is a musician of impeccable taste and expressive vibrancy"*

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

*DIZZY RAPTURE AS CHANCE HITS THE HIGH NOTES: "...The voice is unusually rich for a falsettist, and allied to a refined sense of dramatic possibility, it becomes a powerful vehicle for emotional expression."*

INDEPENDENT, LONDON



Left to right: Elizabeth Blumenstock, Kinloch Earle, Jennifer Stirling, and Timothy Merton. Missing: Hilary Walther Cumming and Maggie Cole.

give as generously as you can, allowing us to continue these musical labors of love and outreach. We hear regularly from the press and others about the high quality of our music making and the wonderful atmosphere generated at our concerts. But we also need your help to spread the word about our concert series and to develop a larger audience. Why not tell your friends about our concerts and bring them along? So please contribute, and please spread the word about Sarasa.

Before our next season, we are planning a special event filled with

food, drink and, of course, music, to celebrate our past and present donors. Please join the list of Sarasa donors now and be included in this festive evening. Each contribution, however large or small, helps keep us alive and encouraged.

Once again, we must tell you how grateful we are to you all—individuals, foundations, and other sponsors—for supporting Sarasa. We hope to see you for our last concert of the year in April, and at our forthcoming musical evening—created just for you!  
-Timothy Merton

**The Sarasa Outreach Program** – Our concerts are only the most visible part of Sarasa. Equally or perhaps more important is the part you cannot see: Sarasa's unique outreach to incarcerated youth. Many teenagers, in trouble with the law, have never been exposed to anything but popular culture, and today's popular culture is sending very toxic messages to our youth. They deserve better. Through our performances and residencies we work to bring another view of the world to these teens. We help them see that there is more to life than they have been shown and far more beauty. Life with genuine art can be both uplifting and enriching. Meanwhile, we see time and again that these children are attuned to appreciating fine culture, and in many cases are starved for it without realizing the fact. Many of these teenagers are hearing classical music for the first time; some are enraptured by it. And for some it is a step toward understanding that there is a better way to live, and that they might change their lives. With your assistance, we try to help them with that first step. So, happily, our outreach program with juvenile offenders continues to blossom.

The Kalliopeia Foundation renewed its grant of \$20,000 for our work in correctional facilities. This includes nine outreach concerts and three three-week residencies. Since our last newsletter, we have conducted four residencies in lock-ups for teenage girls. The residencies evolved with each visit and were incredibly moving, both for the girls and for ourselves. We now have a cohesive music group that manages all our residencies and which has developed repertoire and ways of working with the teenagers. The musicians are Bill Hudson, tenor; Krista River, mezzo-soprano; Timothy Merton, cello; and Sarah Bob, keyboard.

**WHAT WE DO** – Singing is something most teenagers can relate to, and if not the music at least the words. The residencies have inspired several girls to inquire about voice lessons. One performance of the song "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" always ends with two groups of girls having a great time by joining in and singing it to each other across the room. The song "Freedom is Coming" is also one that they can really get behind! Writing poetry is an important part of the residency. Bill set one of the girls' poems to the music of a Bach chorale and we sang it for them. It gave her such a sense of pride to have her poem set to music with her name on the top of the page. Tim often plays "The Swan" by Saint-Saens. When we ask if someone might like to improvise a dance to this piece there is always a willing girl. It's usually a dance combining their idea of classical ballet and hip-hop moves. It always brings the house down and makes us realize what raw and untapped talent these girls have.

This season, we have also been funded by the Ben E. Factors Foundation, a family fund. We chose to use this funding to bring some different kinds of music to the teenagers in the lockups. In November we brought in the opera company Intermezzo to perform a short contemporary one-act opera called "The Game" by Brian Hulse, for a group of teenage boys. Based on a story by Jack London, it is about the relationship between a boxer and his fiancée in the 1920's that ends very tragically with him dying in the ring. After the first several minutes of guffawing and getting used to the opera idiom they were hooked. It was a real success! In February we brought *Talisman* to a teenage boys' lock-up. They presented their traditional Russian Gypsy musical program, which brought music of the Rroma (Gypsy). Vadim Kolpakov of Moscow's Romen Theatre performed astonishing leaps and turns that had the boys clapping and shouting. Wearing traditional costumes they played on Russian seven string guitars, accordions and sang in Russian and Rroma.

As for how other's view our efforts, here is a quote from a letter written by the Program Director of the Spectrum Girls Detention Unit in February 2005: "The ensemble have such a way, through their personalities and music, to reach deep into our girls' hearts and bring out the good that is in each

of them. The girls sang together, danced together, planned together, acted together and laughed together. I believe that most of them did not think that such positive interaction with each other was possible."

It seems that some 'first steps' may have been taken. We hope so, and with your help we hope to continue.

## Sarasa Series 2005-2006

Next season Sarasa will once again feature two wonderful and renowned singers in its concert series in Cambridge and Concord. In the fall, tenor Frank Kelley, so familiar to Boston audiences, will be performing a baroque program. In late April the world-renowned soprano Nancy Argenta will be guest soloist with the ensemble. Included in this program will be several works of Handel of which she is a famous interpreter. Basset clarinetist, Eric Hoeprich, will join the ensemble next January to perform fortepiano trios with Maggie Cole and Timothy Merton.



### CD RELEASE SOON!

We have been talking about our CD of Bach Cantatas with stellar soloists Dominique Labelle and Sanford Sylvan for some time now. We have had to postpone the release of the CD, but our recording label AVIE

is moving along with the production. It already sounds fantastic and it will be worth the wait!

## CRAIGIE STREET BISTRO

*Our Community Restaurant Partner, has created a few special offers for the Sarasa community.*

### 4 WAYS TO ENJOY 3-STAR CUISINE, JUST 6 MINUTES FROM HARVARD SQUARE

**FIRST**, there's their popular "CURTAIN FOR CERTAIN" EXPRESS. It's a \$29.99 Prix Fixe Dinner— it's guaranteed to satisfy your palate, be easy on your wallet, and allow you to walk to your show or concert in time for your curtain. Mention Serasa and you'll receive a complimentary glass of wine with your meal.

**SECOND**, you can visit the bistrot AFTER THE SHOW when a \$29.99 prix fixe meal is also served, or you can enjoy one of their homemade desserts and coffee.

**THIRD**, dine any Wed-Sunday evening and see why they were awarded 3-STARs by Boston Globe and Herald, as well as being named one of the "TOP 10 NEW BISTROTS IN N. AMERICA" by Food & Wine, "EDITOR'S PICK" by Gourmet, and "BEST AFFORDABLE FRENCH RESTAURANT, 2004" by Boston Magazine.

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