



*From the Director* – “This unbridled leap into unflown, spacious skies is what we experienced with the ensemble as they genuinely reinvented *Le Quattro Stagioni*,” according to the *Boston Musical Intelligencer’s* account of Sarasa’s thrilling foray into Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* this past year—the centerpiece of a season rich in musical variety. “This was not newness for the sake of the change, but a finely thought-through sharing of the dramatic strands of these amazing scores among first-rank professionals, fleet-footed collaborators in reinvention.”

As we begin another year, it is worthwhile to pause a moment and take stock. One essential component to Sarasa is collaboration. Musically this means mining the talents of many superb musicians from across North America and the United Kingdom. Through the leadership and extraordinary artistry of friend and violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock, Sarasa was able to reach new heights on its continuing musical journey. But collaboration also speaks to you—our supporters—without whom we would not exist. And it speaks to our ongoing work in youth detention centers and our interest in collaborating with other musicians and ensembles in order to expand and deepen our outreach and residency efforts.

Taking stock can also be a matter of personal reflection. Therefore I must share with you that after much consideration, I have decided to make a change in Sarasa’s plans going forward. This will be our 12th season—years filled with wonderful music and meaningful work. But the time passed quickly, and “suddenly” I found myself turning 60 and needing to take a yearlong break from our regular concert series. Although this means we will not be presenting a formal chamber music series in 2010–2011, Sarasa is still very much in the business of making music. As future concerts are scheduled, we promise to keep you informed of all our upcoming events. However, my purpose in taking this musical break has been to refocus my energies on growing and improving our youth education programs.

This past year we expanded our residencies twofold and facilitated five outreach concerts—reinforcing our commitment to the incarcerated teenagers we work with. Please take a look at the attached “evaluation” written by one of the teenage girls who participated in a Sarasa residency.

Her words are a moving testament to the reality these

young people face in their daily lives and to the power of music to effect deep change. Our primary task this coming season will be to engage other musical groups to visit, perform, and interact with these young women and men. We have been in contact with student opera workshops, a cappella singing groups and various instrumental ensembles in an effort to increase the youth’s exposure to different kinds of music and to make their lives a little richer while “on the inside.” We ask your assistance in



Left to right: Amie Weiss, Charles Sherman, Elizabeth Blumenstock, Timothy Merton and Jenny Stirling.

helping us to identify high-quality ensembles or individual musicians who might be interested in performing (with our guidance) in youth detention centers. We can assure them of an unforgettable and rewarding experience.

Of course we also seek your generous financial support to help us maintain these worthy programs. Since we will not be seeing each other as often as we’d like, given the absence of our concert series, I would like to remind everyone just how much we depend on your generosity to keep our work alive and growing. This newsletter will be our only general fundraising appeal this year, and we sincerely hope you can assist us in bringing as much music and humanity to the lives of these teens in detention as possible.

The Kalliopeia Foundation has once again been our principal outreach supporter, along with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Amelia Peabody Foundation, the Otto and Marianne Wolman Foundation, and of course the many generous donations from individuals such as yourself. We are grateful for every contribution, however great or small. As one teacher wrote to us after our visit to her unit: “You brought such joy and peace to our program, we are forever grateful to you for this experience.” With that in mind, we hope we can count on you as a continued supporter and member of the Sarasa family.

–Timothy Merton

## Reactions from a teen residency in January 2010

PELLETIER CENTER, WESTBORO, MA

*I liked our performances because it brought us closer together and brought out our talents. It helped us feel for each other more and understand what each one of us was going through. It helped us with our self-esteem and showed us that if you give it your all without caring what others think, in the end, others will think even better of you. It gave kids confidence and helped them feel as if they were the center of attention even if it was for only five minutes at a time; it gave kids hope. I also liked the group singing, and drumming because it taught us to play in unisance [sic] and together.*

*I've never sang in front of people before, but they made me want to... I learned that it takes much more than a great voice to sing. Music, I feel, is a way to express yourself. It is a way to show emotion or tell a story. People come out in music, whether the tune/mood is anger, romance, beauty, or sadness, it all sounds beautiful and it is all a part of life. Each emotion makes each song different, just like our emotions make us different.*

*Sometimes I write poems. I think this helps me with my*

*anger. It's a great thing to be able to write down your feelings.*

*I feel that listening to music here calms and soothes me. Also, at funerals of my friends I have gone to, the music is very important. It lets you think about a lot. Also, a song that you listened to with a best friend, no matter how far apart you and that person may be, if you hear that song you come to feel like you're sitting right next to them.*

*My best friend Sage is an incredible singer. Her voice brings tears to my eyes. However, she comes from a poor household and she just recently got hit by a drunk driver, which permanently bruised her physically and mentally. She is absolutely gorgeous but I don't think she realizes it. When she sings, people listen and I think that in her voice is where she finds her true beauty. Like when she sings, her beauty from inside comes out and covers her scars. I love music because she loves music and I love her. She is the true meaning of music coming from within, beauty coming from within. Thank you for opening my eyes to what I hadn't seen before.*



Left to right: Kristen Watson, Timothy Merton, Nathan Troup, and David Richardson

**INVESTING IN SARASA**—Sarasa's account with Wells Fargo Advisors offers an easy way to contribute in a variety of ways to Sarasa. Please contact our financial advisor Chad Besegai at 617 723 3200. Several ways of making donations are listed to the right:

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