

SIDE BY SIDE

The cover of this issue of *Overtones* shows a sunny, spirited moment during a wonderful time for a group of Curtis students and faculty. We traveled in May to the island of Ischia off Italy's Neapolitan coastline and gathered at La Mortella, the colorful, flower-filled retreat of the late William Walton. Lady Walton still presides there and has added concert activities to complement the natural beauty of this garden setting. Several of our students and faculty member Mikael Eliassen performed, and I had the distinct pleasure of leading a master class on the Walton Viola Concerto in the composer's own home.

This brief spring interlude provided us an example of the special synergies Curtis can achieve through the interaction among a distinguished faculty and extraordinarily gifted students. In a sense, our residency in Ischia became the international performance debut for an increasingly important aspect of the Curtis curriculum: creating opportunities for our young musicians to rehearse and perform with their teachers, both in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Our Ischian week also bolstered our plans for a new touring program, dubbed Curtis on Tour. This initiative will offer students additional performing opportunities alongside their teachers and with distinguished alumni around the country. Our first tour takes place next spring in southern Florida. Curtis on Tour will introduce our students to professional performing situations and to new audiences beyond Philadelphia. These tours will also include outreach events, giving them the chance to hone their communication skills. And we plan to repeat our Ischia residency in May 2007.

Our aim to place students side-by-side with musical luminaries will augment our already impressive program of master classes during the coming school year. In November, we'll welcome the remarkable violinist Leonidas Kavakos to Curtis for a residency during his week as a guest artist with the Philadelphia Orchestra. I'm grateful to the orchestra for entering into an unprecedented working relationship with us that makes it possible for Mr. Kavakos to spend an unusual amount of time at Curtis — leading master classes, rehearsing chamber music with our students,

and performing with them in the Sextet in B-flat major by Brahms as part of a student recital on November 20.

In January, Michael Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony, will be in residence at Curtis for several days, in an extension of a longstanding program in which the Curtis Symphony Orchestra has benefited from the guidance of world-renowned conductors visiting Philadelphia.

That conductors of international stature have long been happy to work with our orchestra is a direct result of its uniformly professional standards. Credit for these goes to a lineage of conducting teachers and orchestra trainers — including Fritz Reiner, Eugene Ormandy, and Max Rudolf — who have instilled an unflinching commitment to excellence in generations of Curtis students. Otto-Werner Mueller has continued this tradition with distinction since 1986, and we will honor his dedication and his 80th birthday when Mr. Mueller conducts the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in Verizon Hall on October 22.

Because Curtis students aspire to careers onstage, we encourage them to perform as much as possible. Public performance affords them valuable lessons that can be learned in no other way. This is why our young musicians participate in well over 100 concerts, recitals, and opera productions each year. When students play alongside those of distinguished artistry and vast experience, as so often at Curtis, the impact of such performance lessons is tremendous.

Here's another way to extend those lessons: Imagine, as a student, being able to analyze a full video recording of every recital in which you play. This is a rare learning opportunity, indeed! And yet it's becoming a standard feature of our curriculum, thanks to an innovative collaboration among the Joseph and Marie Field Foundation, Philadelphia public television station WHYY, and Curtis. Broadcast-quality cameras are now recording every student recital in Field Concert Hall, giving our students a document of their work and a unique learning tool of a quality that no other conservatory can offer.

At the same time, a much broader audience can enjoy performances from Curtis on tele-



President Roberto Díaz ~ PHOTO: L.C. KELLEY

vision. Y Arts, a new digital cable channel, began airing *On Stage at Curtis*, a series of 25 recitals, on September 18. Two programs will also air on WHYY's analog channel, TV12.

Each of these new initiatives embodies our daily commitment to the best training we can give our students. Our mission states, "The Curtis Institute of Music trains exceptionally gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists on the highest professional level." As we move forward, this core purpose will be at the heart of everything we do. ☺

Roberto Díaz