

Stay on Stage News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2006



Houston Symphony Takes Texas and its big sky to Carnegie Hall

The Houston Symphony — for the first time in nearly a decade — took its talents to Carnegie Hall on January 24, 2006 for a concert that earned good reviews from New York City music critics and the 250 fellow Texans who came along.



The Methodist Hospital Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) and the Weill Medical College of Cornell University helped sponsor the unique presentation. The event was designed to showcase the Houston Symphony's appeal and also to celebrate the nearly two-year collaboration and affiliation between Methodist and Weill Cornell Medical College.

The symphony performed Rice University resident composer Pierre Jalbert's new piece *big sky* as well as two Mozart arias with famed soprano Barbara Bonney. The opportunity highlighted Houston's vibrant performing arts scene and gave city leaders and symphony supporters a chance to remind the Big Apple that Houston is right behind New York City in the number of performing arts seats available in a single concentrated area.

The event also gave Methodist physicians a forum to trumpet CPAM's role in caring for performing artists. The seven-year-old Center offers performing artists the most comprehensive care system in the nation, giving them what sports medicine centers have provided for athletes for decades.

For symphony musicians, a date at the revered and historic Carnegie Hall is like making it to the Super Bowl or World Series. Houston Symphony Conductor Hans Graf told a *New York Times* reporter that performing at Carnegie Hall is an enormous boost for musicians — "like a vitamin pill for an orchestra."

Wellness Tips for Singers

Good Vibrations

Just as athletes in any sport need good hydration, singers should take in plenty of water to ensure well-lubricated vocal folds for good vibration. Singers with normal heart function and kidneys should drink at least two quarts of water each day. A good way to check your hydration level is to observe urine color — if it's clear and pale, you're keeping up with your body's water needs.

Avoid caffeinated drinks and alcohol since they suck water out of the system. Small amounts are okay only if flushed with plenty of additional water. To combat the drying effects of airplane flights, try to drink at least eight ounces of water per hour while in the air. A dry inside environment can also dry out the vocal cords. Fight back with a humidifier.

The State of the Arts in Houston

Houston offers an entertainment menu as diverse as its population and traditions. Whether you're in the mood for a Tchaikovsky violin concerto, the new play "Golda's Balcony" by Broadway Across America or the Houston Ballet performing "Don Quixote," Houston has it all.

It is one of only a handful of U.S. cities hosting five major performing arts groups — ballet, opera, music, theatre and musical theatre. It is home to the Houston Symphony, the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet and the Alley Theatre. It also is home to the Society for the Performing Arts, the largest non-profit presenting organization of its kind in the southwest.

Several smaller theater groups are found throughout the sprawling city, the nation's fourth-largest with a combined regional population estimated at close to 4 million people. Houston is second only to New York City in the number of performing arts seats available in a U.S. metropolitan market.

Thousands of performing artists call Houston home, and hundreds of musicians, dancers, singers and actors from around the globe perform on its stages each year. Known around the world for its Texas Medical Center, NASA and space exploration and major league sports franchises, Houston also has a long and rich history of some of the finest performing arts offerings in the nation.

Here is just a sample of upcoming performing arts treats in the Houston area:

- Alley Theatre..... *Witness for the Prosecution*
- Houston Ballet..... *Don Quixote*
The Nutcracker
- Houston Grand Opera..... Verdi: *Simon Boccanegra*
Mozart: *Don Giovanni*
- Houston Symphony Beethoven's Ninth Symphony
An Evening with Burt Bacharach

Upcoming Event...

Free Seminar

“Body Fuel: What Is Needed For Optimal Human Performance”

Featuring Dan Benardot, Ph.D., DHC, RD, FACSM

Wednesday, May 10

5:00–6:00 p.m.

**The Methodist Hospital
Dunn Tower**

**Rio Grande Conference Room
6565 Fannin Street**

Dan Benardot is the co-director of the Laboratory for Elite Athlete Performance and Associate Professor of Nutrition and Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University.

For more information, please call 713-441-4971.

Cellist Overcomes Seizures with Help from CPAM Doctors

Cellist Victoria Bass was only 21 when she started having unexplained tremors that shook her entire body. Usually they occurred right before she went to sleep at night. But when they hit during rehearsals — one session lasting three hours — she feared for her career.

“It was just a few minutes every night — but then it got longer and started happening during the day as well,” Bass says. “I had an attack in an orchestra rehearsal at Rice University and had to go to the hospital. I held up the whole rehearsal for awhile — that made me feel really bad.”

The possibilities were terrifying for the young musician.

Her cello teacher referred her to The Methodist Hospital Center for Performing Arts Medicine where she was seen the next day. Bass’ shaking was put under control with muscle relaxants while doctors ordered a series of tests. Ultimately doctors diagnosed a nerve problem between the brain and the heart, one which causes arteries to send out less blood than normal.

It changed Bass’ life.

“The muscle relaxants control attacks and through other changes in my diet and lifestyle, the shaking has become much, much, much less frequent and intense,” says Bass.

Now 23 and a recent Rice graduate, Bass substitutes with the Arkansas Symphony, performs with the Foundation for Modern Music in Houston, tours with a cello/flute/percussion trio called Vox and auditions for graduate programs. Her goal is to perform new music through solo and chamber performances and to start graduate school in the fall.

It’s a hectic schedule, but she carries on with confidence that the tremors will not hamper her cello playing. And she has referred fellow performing artists to CPAM. “I think it is a fabulous organization,” she says. “The doctors I worked with were so caring and understanding.”

Center for Performing Arts Medicine — a One-Stop Shop for Performing Artists

The Methodist Hospital’s Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) has a philosophy performers know best: the show must go on. Whether artists dance, sing, play instruments or act, their health needs require top attention in order to give their best — performance after performance.

CPAM is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week network of over 64 doctors representing more than 23 medical specialties. Houston-based performers and those from out-of-town can easily register with CPAM and secure appointments with CPAM physicians within 48 hours or less, when needed.

Registration includes a CPAM Artist Card that provides performers with a patient liaison during emergency room visits,

coordinated care among physicians and a focus on artists’ special needs. The one-of-a-kind Center is a institution that combines patient care, education and research to keep performing artists healthy for long and successful careers.

For more information about CPAM and its unique services, call 713-394-6088 or visit www.methodistperformingarts.com.



Alley Theatre resident company member Bettye Fitzpatrick gets a flu shot from CPAM physician Dr. Jeffrey Kalina at a *Stay on Stage* event