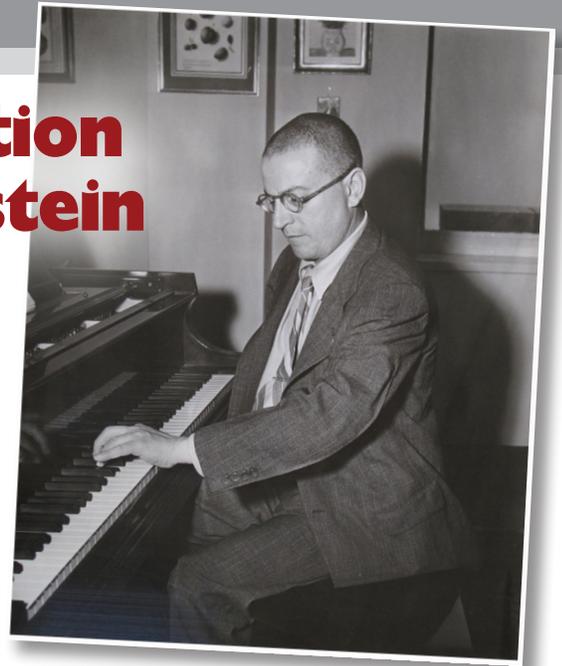


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The Determination of Paul Wittgenstein



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When Paul Wittgenstein was growing up in Vienna in the early 1900s, he could not imagine the adversities he would encounter. Son of a steel magnate and beneficiary of great luxury and wealth, calamity was not on his radar, but he would meet it, and he would face it with fortitude.

Paul's father, Karl, was foremost an industrialist but also an amateur violinist and avid patron of the arts. He befriended Johannes Brahms and Gustav Mahler who would often visit the family palace. He was also host to Richard Strauss who would sometimes play duets with young Paul on one of the family's seven grand pianos.

While Karl patronized the arts, he was a strict disciplinarian and an oppressive force in the lives of his children, and he strongly discouraged them from making their living in the arts. So, it wasn't until after Karl's death that Paul made his debut as a young pianist. He was on track to develop a career as a musician, but the start of World War I interrupted his plans the following year.

Paul was called into military service, and it was while fighting along the Russian front that he lost his right arm in battle and was captured.

While a prisoner of war, it is reported Paul drew a charcoal outline of a keyboard on a crate and would practice on his "piano" for hours each day. A visiting diplomat witnessed this desperate determination and had Paul transferred to an internment camp where he would have access to a real instrument.

After the war, Paul got to work refining his technique and reintroducing himself as a professional pianist. "It was like climbing a mountain. If you can't get up one way, you try another," he said. He commissioned several unique works, including Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*.

Although his family had converted to Christianity, they were of Jewish descent; and in the 1930s, when Austria came under Nazi control, Paul was forbidden to perform in public. He soon emigrated to the United States, leaving behind his sisters who refused to leave the family home. A good portion of their fortune was spent in bribes to assure their safety.

Paul remained in the States as a teacher and performer until his death in 1961.

We'll hear Ravel's work so closely associated with Paul Wittgenstein as performed by Orion Weiss on April 18.

Honors Band and the Left Hand | APRIL 18 | 7:30 P.M. | Performing Arts Center

Featuring an honor band with more than 60 local high school musicians!



ORION WEISS WE GO WAY BACK

Eric Benjamin

In the fall of, I believe, 1995 or '96, the Akron Youth Symphony held an annual competition for young pianists in the area to perform a movement of a concerto with the group on its spring concert. As conductor of the orchestra, I sat in on the auditions.

One of the contestants was Orion Weiss, then a sophomore from Lyndhurst. His performance of the first movement of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* was the winning entry, and I looked forward to the challenge of conducting the work with the youth orchestra.

I visited Orion at Cleveland Institute of Music to talk through the piece, and I have several vivid recollections about that meeting. The first was that Orion was an engaging, bright kid with a ready smile and lively sense of humor.

But I also recall something truly unique about Orion—his openness. He entertained and even welcomed ideas I had about the music, interpretation and phrasing. Not only that, but he could then realize them immediately. I had worked with prodigies before, but most young players who have the technical proficiency to play a piece such as that particular concerto only know how to play it one way—the way they learned it. Orion could flex, try out new ideas and entertain an alternate point of view and accept or reject it as part of a process. We had a marvelous conversation in which we explored the piece together. His wide-eyed enthusiasm for music continues to impress and inspire me.

We performed that movement of the Rachmaninoff together that spring, and the following New Year's Eve, I invited him to join the Akron Symphony to perform the final movement at a First Night concert in Akron. (We have yet to perform the second movement or the entire piece together. Hmm...I wonder when.)

The following summer, as I was planning the upcoming season for the Philharmonic, I invited him to learn the *Second Piano Concerto* by

Dmitri Shostakovich. I felt it was perfect for him—the composer wrote it as a present and career vehicle for his son, Maxim, upon his graduation from Moscow Conservatory. It is infused with youthful energy and rollicking good spirits, and the second movement is one of the most heartbreakingly lyrical movements for piano and orchestra. "It takes about twenty-five minutes to play, and you'll learn it in about thirty," I recall telling Orion. He agreed.

“His wide-eyed enthusiasm for music continues to impress and inspire me.”

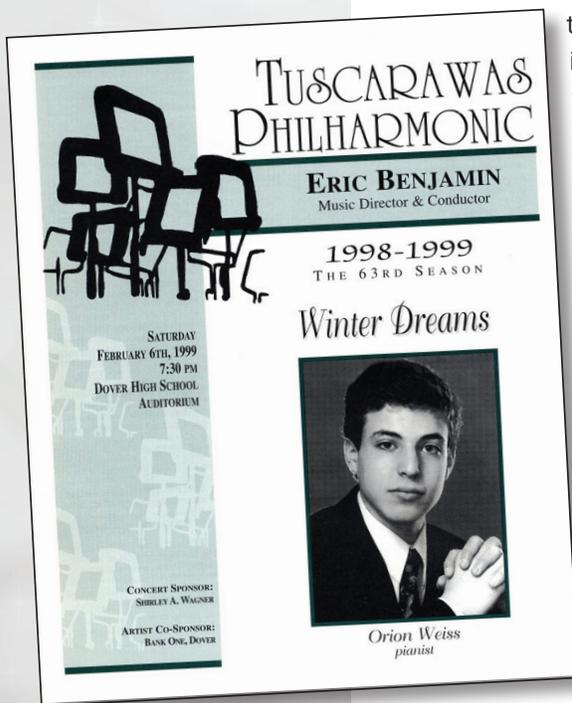
He came down to Dover to rehearse and perform with the orchestra. Our program was a little short, time-wise, and as we walked off stage together after the performance, the applause continued. "Last movement encore?" I asked, and I think he suggested that we just play the entire piece again. So, we walked back out on stage and did exactly that to tumultuous applause.

A few weeks later, Orion received a call from the Baltimore Symphony. The management had been calling around major players to see if anyone happened to know the Shostakovich concerto to substitute for an ailing Andre Watts. Orion's teacher at CIM had been contacted and recommended him, and he performed with the orchestra in a series of weekend concerts during his senior year. (His deliriously happy mother called me soon after to ask me what he should learn next!)

Orion went to Juilliard and set out on his career, and he returned to perform Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with us the next year. I have been eager to have him back again to play on the splendid Steinway in the new hall, but we were only able to schedule it this season.

I have seen Orion a few times since that Tchaik performance—we have met for dinner in New York, and a few summers ago I saw him perform the Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom. My sons and I went to greet him after that concert as he signed copies of his recently-released CD that included one of my favorites, the *Piano Sonata* by the American composer Elliott Carter.

I pointed this out to him and asked what prompted him to learn the piece. "You told me to," he replied.





From April 13-27, 2015, the Tuscarawas Philharmonic will host its
ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION,
 our main fund-raising event of the season

Businesses and friends of the orchestra have contributed a wide range of items for this year's auction, everything from household items and collectibles to vacation packages, sporting events and gift certificates to local establishments. Preview items today, and follow the fun!

Some of the items available to bid on:

- Stylish estate items
- Schoolhouse Winery
- Mark's Place whirlpool pedicure
- OV Harvest gift basket
- books
- artwork
- Cleveland Indians tickets
- Keim Lumber gift card

Auction link at www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org

**ACCEPTING REGISTRATIONS FOR
 THE TUSCARAWAS PHILHARMONIC PERFORMING ARTS CAMP**

Registration forms are now being accepted for the Philharmonic's summer music program for young musicians to be held June 15-18.

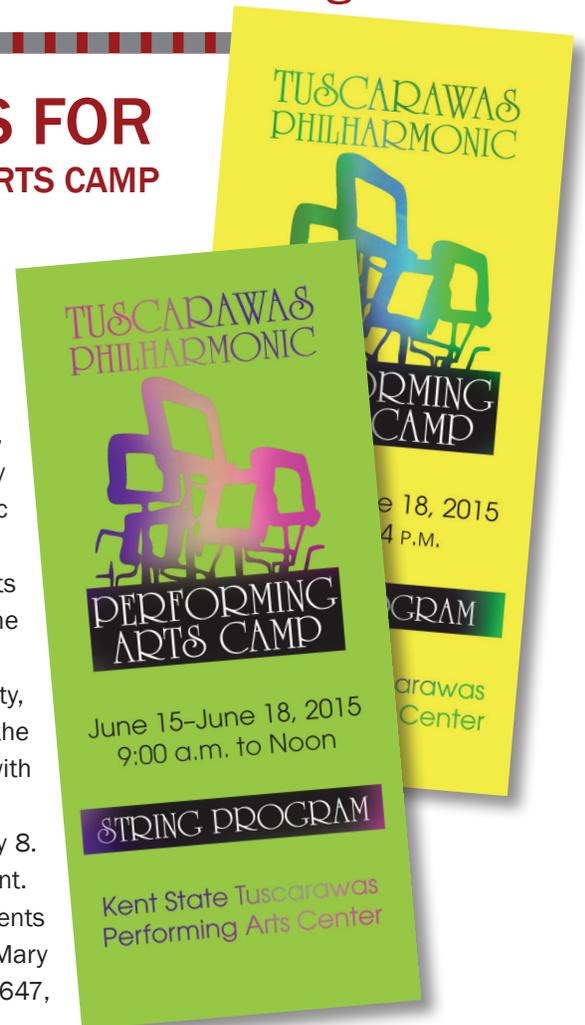
Cellist Mary Cooper is the coordinator for the string program, which will be held from 9 a.m. to noon and will be open to string players beginning orchestra through 12th grade. The band program, open to students who have completed the 6th, 7th or 8th grades in the 2014-2015 school year, will follow in the afternoon, operating from 1 to 4 p.m. Joan Wenzel, retired music educator with the Dover City Schools and percussion specialist, is the coordinator of this portion of the music camp.

Eric Benjamin will be on staff for the week, directing both groups of students in orchestral and band settings, and he will direct a free concert on stage at the Performing Arts Center on Thursday June 18.

With the help of a generous grant from the Tuscarawas Valley Heritage Society, the program will be staffed by music educators and performing members of the Philharmonic serving as instrument specialists who will provide each student with personalized instruction on his or her instrument.

The cost of the four-day event is \$95, and the deadline for registering is May 8. However, parents who register their students by April 15 will receive a \$10 discount.

Brochures are available for download at www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org. Parents interested in enrolling their young musicians may also contact the coordinators. Mary Cooper—330-243-4122, marypatricecooper@gmail.com; Joan Wenzel—330-204-5647, wenzelj@roadrunner.com.



June 6

*In A Spectacular Collaboration,
the PAC and the Philharmonic present*
**Franc D'Ambrosio's
BROADWAY**

The Philharmonic will wrap up its season with a not-to-be-missed special performance by the orchestra and the exciting American singer and actor best known as the "World's Longest Running Phantom"
—Franc D'Ambrosio's BROADWAY!



HONORS BAND BY THE NUMBERS

The 2015 edition of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Honors Band is one for the record books. On April 18, **61** students will join the orchestra's wind and percussion sections for a memorable performance. The students will come together from **7** different high schools—Dover, Garaway, Indian Valley, Fairless, Newcomerstown, Sandy Valley, Strasburg; by concert time, they will have logged in **4** rehearsals, including a special rehearsal with personalized instruction. And consider this—by the time a band student graduates from high school, having begun learning an instrument in the fifth grade, he or she will have logged in approximately **1,500** hours of band rehearsal in regularly scheduled class-time alone. This doesn't count extra rehearsals, concerts, trips, private practice or private lessons. And they have done all of this on top of a full schedule that includes school work, sports, jobs and time with family and friends. Applause, please.

We are honored to work with these students from the Tuscarawas Valley, and we look forward to many opportunities to participate in their development as life-long lovers of music.

- Tuscarawas Philharmonic • P.O. Box 406 • New Philadelphia, OH 44663 • 330.364.1843
- www.TuscarawasPhilharmonic.org • State of the Art editor: Robyn Martins
- Performing at the Kent State Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center • Box Office—330.308.6400