

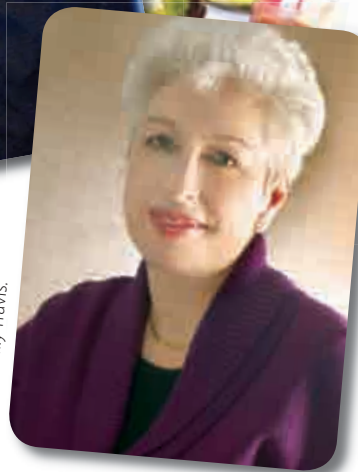
Edna Landau with students at the Colburn Conservatory of Music. Photo: Courtney Cohee.



Photo: Courtney Cohee.



Photo: Emily Travis.



How does one begin a performing career in today's incredibly competitive music world? A legendary manager tells all.

Getting Noticed *in the* 21st Century

By Edna Landau

Photo: Evan Spacht.



Photo: Courtney Cohee.



Charles Hamlen and Edna Landau, outside their upper west side office in 1981. Photo courtesy Edna Landau.



It was September 1979, and I was spending my first week of employment with Hamlen Management at the Western Alliance of Arts Administrators conference in Seattle. My mission was to get as many concert bookings as possible from a large group of presenters I had never met, for a list of artists that no one had ever heard of. Charles Hamlen and I had memorized the names and affiliations of all the conference attendees in advance. We parked ourselves on either side of the main elevator so that we could pounce on people as they exited and engage them in conversation without having to strain to read the small print on their name tags. The best way to get noticed? Perhaps not, but certainly memorable.

Emboldened by our strategy, I took things to the next step at a cocktail party. "Excuse me," I said to a Seattle presenter, "I have a problem. Perhaps you can help. You see, my parents live in Seattle and they don't really understand what I do. If you would book Carol Wincenc for a concert, they would certainly get the picture." The presenter smiled wryly and

took me to breakfast the next day. I got the concert and so began my career in artist management.

How did Hamlen/Landau Management grow from a staff of three in a one-room studio apartment to the largest international management agency? Hard work, blind faith, passion for the cause of promoting young artists, incessant networking and a vision that refused to be tarnished by naysayers. Our mission was to give excellent service to both artists and presenters. We exuded excitement about what we were doing and our energy was infectious. What we didn't have was money! We borrowed from everyone we could think of and networked our way to James Wolfensohn, who made the match with Mark McCormack and IMG in 1983. We never dreamt that Itzhak Perlman would adorn our roster three years later.

Fast forward to 2010. Having concluded a very happy and fulfilling 23-year tenure as managing director of IMG Artists in 2007, I am now entering my third year as director of career development at the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles. How wonderful it is to again be discovering and guiding young, gifted musicians with their whole professional lives ahead of them.

Surprisingly, the management playing field is much the same, with relatively few new companies. The tough reality

for today's emerging artists is that these companies are probably less likely to take a chance on an unknown than Charles and I were. Furthermore, they cannot hope for the kind of promotional support that a record company afforded in those days with long-term exclusive contracts. The likelihood of debut recitals being reviewed is likewise dramatically diminished. What impact does this have on today's young hopeful musicians?

The impact is significant, but also exciting. Instead of waiting to be discovered or favorably endorsed by the press, today's emerging artists have the opportunity to introduce themselves to their potential audience and build that audience in many meaningful and creative ways. With the myriad opportunities provided by the Internet, they can share news of their career via a personal Web site or Facebook page, distribute their own recordings, post samples of their work on YouTube, build and communicate regularly with their fan club, and possibly attract additional attention via a blog. The Internet offers a wealth of information on how to accomplish anything that could be relevant to building a career. Those wishing to embark on orchestral and teaching careers can consult Web sites acquainting them with job opportunities around the world and learn about a wide range of excellent training and professional development programs available to them.

Does this mean they no longer need a manager? Not quite. Anyone aspiring to an active performing career in prestigious venues in major cities (with the exception of orchestral players) will, at some point, need to pique the interest of a management to secure the desired engagements or hire an experienced personal representative with connections. However, such young musicians represent a relatively small percentage of today's graduates and there are many other meaningful ways to pursue a performing career. The most important thing for all young musicians is to ask themselves: What makes me special? What is my passion? In what do I excel? Once they have identified what is truly meaningful to them, their chances for success will be greatly enhanced.

The next step will involve strategic thinking as to what will help a particular musician or ensemble stand out in a crowded field. This might entail unusual programming, interesting collaborations with other artists (perhaps of other genres), commissioning new works, creating a concert series or festival, performing in untraditional venues, pursuing

new avenues of outreach or founding a non-profit organization to make their particular passion a reality. (Interesting role models would include Matt Haimovitz, Rachel Barton Pine, eighth blackbird, Imani Winds, the Kronos, Calder, Pacifica, Chiara, and Del Sol quartets, and Fifth House Ensemble in Chicago.) Then they will need to network with everyone they know and everyone they can get to, so as to learn from their experience and gain their support. Throughout this time, they should take advantage of every opportunity to perform. The confidence and experience gained from each performance is invaluable and no one can predict who will be in the audience. They should also take advantage of all online career advice and grant resource material, such

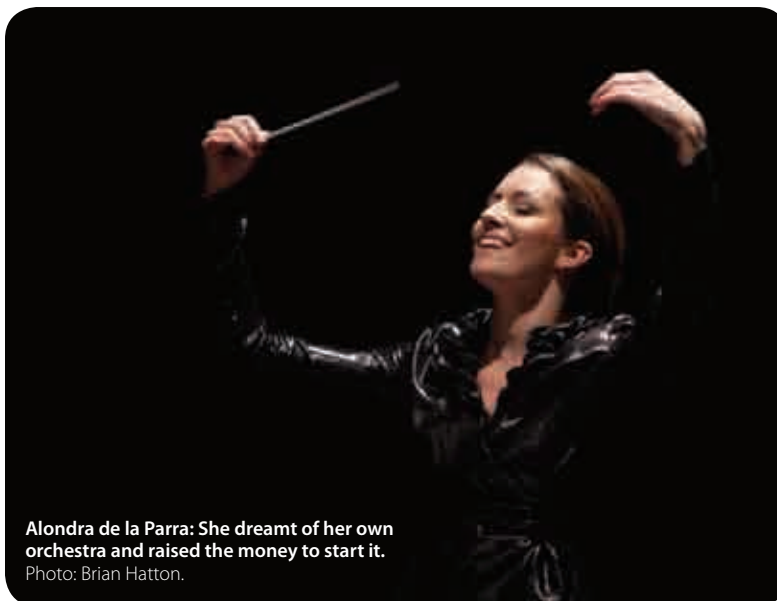
as Chamber Music America's e-newsletter and "First Tuesdays," New England Conservatory's "Bridge Worldwide Music Connection," Rice University's "Navigating Music Careers," and Eastman's polyphonic.org. They should consider applying for special performance training programs, such as Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society II and the Carnegie Hall Professional Workshops.

I have spent considerable time over the last few years doing interviews with young artists and ensembles who regularly crop up on concert series, asking what obstacles

they faced early on, how they kept themselves going, and what proved to be their "big break." Here are some revelations that fascinated me:

◆ *Conductor Alondra de la Parra successfully obtained \$50,000 in sponsorship for an orchestra that she had dreamt about but that didn't exist at the time! She subsequently formed the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas and raised over a*

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Alondra de la Parra: She dreamt of her own orchestra and raised the money to start it.
Photo: Brian Hatton.

million dollars from the same source. Her resourcefulness and mission to introduce audiences to new music and musicians from the Americas quickly established her as an artist to watch.

♦ Many of Simone Dinnerstein's early concerts were for the Piatigorsky Foundation, including the first-ever classical music concert in the Louisiana State Prison system. Simone had a passion for Bach's Goldberg Variations and wanted to record them. She raised the money from three donors and then sent the first five tracks to managers and record companies. Several were interested in hearing her perform it live so she organized a New York recital. Funding for that came from an "angel" in Israel who had heard about Simone from a friend who attended a house concert of hers. When he heard an audio clip of hers on Astral Artists' Web site, he was so moved that he even bought her gown!

♦ Time for Three was relatively unknown on the night when two members of the ensemble were performing with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann Music Center and the power failed. They spontaneously volunteered to entertain the audience until electricity was restored. The story was immediately released by the Associated Press, earning them the recognition that their creative programming and hard work hadn't yielded up to that point.

♦ While still at Oberlin, flutist Claire Chase, applied for and received a grant from the Theodore Presser Foundation to commission five new pieces for the millennium. Not long



Simone Dinnerstein:
Her passion was to record Bach's Goldberg Variations.
Photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco.

may not have been enough to initially secure them a manager, it would seem that their undeniable creativity and initiative enriched their profiles and made them more attractive. Managers have an easier time securing engagements if an unknown artist has an interesting story.

What is the significance of all this for today's educational institutions? It is the realization that excellent musical training will only take students so far. They must be presented with inspiring role models who can verbalize and demonstrate how they achieved success. They



Time for Three: When the lights failed, this trio's career lit up. Photo: Journey Group.

after, she was instrumental in co-founding the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Over the past 10 years, she has given the world premieres of over 100 new works for the flute, many of them written expressly for her.

All of these artists have management today. While their abundant talent and high level of accomplishment still

*Managers have an easier time securing engagements if an unknown artist has an interesting story....
Excellent musical training will take students only so far.*

must be taught a wide variety of skills that will enable them to succeed as the individual businesses that they are. Robert Sirota, President of Manhattan School of Music, speaks about the need to "create individualized toolboxes for students." Happily, in the past decade, there has been a proliferation of courses and workshops at most conservatories and music schools, developed to stimulate entrepreneurship and to teach students the skills they need to stand on their own feet

during the difficult years that usually separate graduation and the beginning of a formal career. At the Colburn School and at Bard College Conservatory, students must secure an off-campus performance and handle all of the arrangements themselves.

A number of schools have established entrepreneurship centers, most recently Manhattan School of Music and the New England Conservatory. Major universities have offered music students courses that bring together arts and business school faculty, in order to help them articulate their personal vision and take first steps to launch their dream projects. At the University of Michigan, this approach spawned a student-run venture, Arts Enterprise, which now has seven chapters around the country. Founded by two bassoon players, Nathaniel Zeisler and Mark Clague, it heightens students' awareness and feeling of empowerment to find new avenues of expression for their performance skills and creativity, while having an introduction to existing successful business models. Arts Enterprise mobilized a group of students who traveled to New Orleans, where they engaged in various outreach projects designed to aid the artist community in recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. At schools including Oberlin and Eastman, special creativity and initiative grants encourage students to undertake innovative projects with potential long-term impact.

What role does individuality play in the life of an aspiring orchestral musician? Isn't the goal to simply perform the required audition excerpts to perfection? Even if that is enough to secure a job, today's orchestras expect their players to perform in outreach situations and chamber ensembles and to interact with donors at post-concert receptions. Fortunately, orchestral players can avail themselves of a number of fine training programs such as the New World Symphony, the National Orchestral Institute, and the National Repertory Orchestra, all of which emphasize the extra-musical responsibilities of an orchestral musician.

Now comes an overarching question: With artists doing everything they can to gain visibility, will concert presenters actually notice them? Do they need to enter a competition in hopes of winning a top prize? If they can perform well under stress and are ready for the prizes afforded to them, the answer for some may be yes. Christopher Beach, president of the La Jolla Music Society, presents a sold-out Discovery Series of three concerts, consisting solely of first-prize winners. However, he also spends considerable time scouting and presenting other extraordinary young talents, as do Leila



Claire Chase:
A co-founder
of ICE, she has
given over
100 world
premieres
for flute.
Photo: Janette
Beckman.



The Arts Enterprise team poses in front of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans' French Quarter.
Photo: Emily Weingarten.



The new-music group ACME performs at Le Poisson Rouge. Nadia Sirota (center), violist of the group, hosts a radio program on New York's WQXR devoted to contemporary music. Photo: Tristan Cook.



The Academy provides student teachers in the New York City schools. Academy Fellow Brad Balliett has a room of bassoon fans at P.S. 315 in Brooklyn. Photo: Stefan Cohen.

Getz, founder of the Vancouver Recital Society, and Neale Perl, president of the Washington Performing Arts Society. Both also try to attend the Finals of the Young Concert Artists Auditions, to acquaint themselves with the highly promising young talents chosen by their jury. They are not deterred by the challenge of attracting an audience for an unknown artist, having developed a solid bond of trust with their audience and excitement over the joy of discovery. They are always on the lookout for attractive new, intimate venues, suitable for showcasing younger talent. In Washington, D.C., Neale Perl recently started an Encore Series to present artists returning after stellar debuts. At Pepperdine University, Rebecca Carson makes a point of presenting an artist each year who doesn't have management but who caught her eye from among the hundreds of press kits she receives. Ruth Felt, founder of San Francisco Performances, presents two "gift concerts" to subscribers each year, showcasing emerging young artists. (In 2000, it was Lang Lang.) All find YouTube to be a valuable resource, so musicians should take great care to ensure that they are represented at their best.

Since a good number of presenters look to Young Concert Artists, Concert Artists Guild, and Astral Artists to introduce them-

selves to stars of tomorrow, aspiring soloists and chamber ensembles should consider auditioning for these organizations, which also provide professional engagements, outreach training, and career advice at reduced or no commission. They should also give special consideration to where they spend their summers since so many industry professionals visit summer festivals and opera apprentice programs to discover new talent. They should familiarize themselves with series around the country that have a record of presenting emerging talent such as Wolf Trap's "Discovery Series at the Barns," William Jewell College in Kansas City, the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts in

Chicago, the Gilmore Rising Stars Series in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and the Miami International Piano Festival, and not be reticent about writing to presenters directly.

To be truthful, I think there is room for many more concert and orchestra presenters to take a chance on young emerging artists, with the potential for taking pride later on in saying "we engaged them before they were famous." In looking at orchestra seasons around the country, I was particularly taken with the Baltimore Symphony's subscription series, which chooses to introduce its audience to a large number of charismatic young performers, instead of a steady cavalcade of stars. Surely this should be part of



Midori and students perform Mozart at the Kartini Emergency School, outside Jakarta, Indonesia, for students who cannot afford to attend public school, 2008. Photo: T. Oda.

any orchestra's mission, regardless of size or budget. Perhaps more orchestras might also consider a subscription concert entirely dedicated to concertos performed by emerging artists or winners of auditions held for local conservatory and music-school students. Or why not feature such artists in pre-concerts, the way Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival does? Finally, why not give an audience a voice in selecting a group of appealing young artists? Presenters, more likely non-orchestral, could e-mail their subscribers a list of artists they are excited about, accompanied by YouTube clips. Subscribers would vote for their top three or four choices to comprise this "People's Choice Series." Anyone who voted would be invited to receptions with the artists following the concerts.

What of our responsibility to the thousands of students with performance degrees who may not aspire to full-time performing careers, or who wish to apply their artistic gifts to improving our society? We must acquaint them with the excellent teaching artist/professional development opportunities throughout the country and to special programs such as The Academy, jointly sponsored by Carnegie Hall, the Weill Institute, and The Juilliard School. We should encourage them to apply for all hands-on opportunities to teach others while still in school, such as Juilliard's Morse Fellowships and Colburn students' mentoring of young players in the Expo Youth Orchestra, part of the El Sistema-inspired Youth Orchestra LA program. Colburn's President, Sel Kardan, stresses the significance of this program which, in his words, "reinforces the importance of assuming civic responsibility from the very beginning of our students' Colburn experience." In the future, some might choose to apply to the Abreu Fellows Program at New England Conservatory, which offers training to graduate-level musicians in developing the skills needed to direct music-education centers internationally.

In the past five years, Midori's International Community Engagement Program has taken musicians selected through auditions to Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia to play chamber music in hospitals, orphanages, and schools for the disabled. As Joseph Polisi, president of The Juilliard



From June 21 to July 5, 2010, Sing for Hope took music to the streets with Play Me, I'm Yours, a public art project by British artist Luke Jerram. Sixty pianos were brought to New York City's parks and public spaces to be played by all who passed by. Photo: Sing for Hope.

We must educate our students to believe that their dreams can become a reality and that their passion is critical to the future of arts appreciation, regardless of their career path.

School, has said: "The profession is looking for multifaceted people who can be articulate beyond their instrument in spoken word or action." We must educate our students to believe that their dreams can become a reality and that their passion is critical to the future of arts appreciation, regardless

of their particular career path. I am particularly inspired by the following examples:

◆ While maintaining active performing careers, sopranos and Juilliard graduates Camille Zamora and Monica Yunus still devote much time to Sing for Hope, an organization they founded that mobilizes more than 600 professional artists of all types in volunteer service programs benefiting schools, hospitals, and communities.

◆ Margo Tatgenhorst Drakos, a cellist with a B.M. degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and former member of the American String Quartet, is chief operating officer and co-founder of instantcore.com, a popular classical-music platform providing 21st-century tools for artists and arts organizations to harness the power of the Internet. She is passionate about helping them gain the exposure they deserve.

◆ Violist Nadia Sirota, a Juilliard graduate, active freelancer, and co-founder of the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, has a mission of "always bringing new music to new audiences." Her latest vehicle is "Nadia Sirota on Q2," a weekday show devoted to contemporary music on WQXR's (NY) new Internet radio stream.

◆ Pianist Yana Reznik, a graduate of USC and the Colburn Conservatory, upon hearing that the owner of the Hermosa Beach (CA) Comedy and Magic Club wanted to offer classical music in



(right) David Handler and Justin Kantor, founders of Le Poisson Rouge.

(above) New York's informal concert venue Le Poisson Rouge, jammed to the rafters for a Steve Reich concert. Photo: ©npetitpierre.

the lounge, introduced herself and shortly thereafter became artistic director of "Classical Live at the Lounge," weekly concerts that attract a broad variety of younger and more established artists.

♦ Pianist Andrew Russo, who holds degrees from Juilliard and is an educator as well as active performer, largely in the area of new music, was a 2010 candidate for New York State Senate.

♦ The runaway success of New York's Le Poisson Rouge as an alternate venue for music and the visual arts is attributable to the vision and determination of two Manhattan School of Music graduates, composer/violinist David Handler and cellist Justin Kantor, who dreamt of reaching a broader more receptive audience in a less formal concert environment. Armed with business skills gained at New York University and a conviction that investors would buy into their passion, they enlisted the services of visionary programmer Ronen Givony and succeeded in achieving their dream of making accessible and relevant the music to which they felt an almost religious devotion, while substantially contributing to cultural life in New York City.

These excellent role models, and so many more, serve as evidence that today's graduates have a rich array of choices, all

of which can include performance as an essential ingredient as well as an opportunity to improve our world. The path may not be clear from the start, but industry awareness, hard work, serious networking, a willingness to take risks, and maintaining an optimistic attitude are sure to make a huge difference.

When I left IMG Artists, I had no idea what my next step would be. Everything I have learned since then was accomplished through voracious exploration of the Internet and one-on-one meetings with artists and industry professionals. I hope that I serve as an effective example for my students: As I help them navigate their way along their career path, I am teaching them the very same techniques that have allowed me to achieve recognition and derive great joy from two very fulfilling careers in the arts. ●

Edna Landau had the inestimable pleasure of building and developing the careers of innumerable young (and established) artists during her 23-year tenure at IMG Artists. She is now passing on her experience as director of career development at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles.

Editor's note: Readers will discover even more of Ms. Landau's insight and enthusiasm by checking out the complete version of her illuminating essay on Musicalamerica.com.