



October 2017 Newsletter

The Burlingame Music Club celebrated the start of the 2017-18 season with a lovely, delicious afternoon tea. Our members and guests were welcomed by co-presidents Karen Hutchinson and Roz Koo and by our NFMCL liaison Naomi Sanchez.

Our keynote speaker was the delightful Ruby Pleasure, Professor of Voice Emeritus at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She had tales to tell. Ruby grew up on a farm in Tennessee. Her father bought a piano so his children could learn music, but it seemed that no one in the county would teach black children to play. They found a family friend who would give her piano lessons, and who baked wonderful Baby Ruth cookies. Ruby discovered that music education comes with benefits. When she went for a lesson, she got those cookies to eat. When she practiced, she didn't have to help wash the dishes.

But what Ruby loved best was singing. A voice teacher, 40 miles away, gave her voice lessons and kept her encouraged about her progress. She loved to sing and loved working with children, but she didn't want to perform and didn't want to be responsible for the training and career of others. That changed when she got the opportunity to sing with groups. She loved it! And she found that she loves sharing what she has learned and by singing, resulting in over 40 years of teaching singing to students from beginning to graduate level.

Now that she has retired, Ruby misses the creativity, challenges and opportunities of teaching, including meeting people from all over the world, who spoke different languages and cooked different foods, even with ginger - something she hadn't encountered growing up in Tennessee. She said that students have different ambitions, too. Some want to sing on center stage at the Met, and some just want to sing better. Now some are openly transgender men and women.

Ruby's reminders to us: Be open to possibilities, or you may miss out on your calling. Do what is authentic for you. There are many paths and many kinds of music, so go where your heart leads you. Teaching music is not just a job. It is helping students uncover the gifts they have. Her calling has been to help each of her students become the best that they can be. She makes them feel safe and free to be vulnerable. She reminds all that we are obligated to share what gifts we have, as it would be a tragedy for them to be lost. Music and music teachers can help bind the wounds of division and bring out what is common in all of us. What better way is there to heal the wounds than through music?

Then she sang us a song that could be her life's theme: "This Little Light of Mine". We sang along.

After that memorable moment we were given a delightful performance by Ruby Pleasure's student Jihao Tian, who grew up in Shenzhen, China. He attended an exclusive private high school in Michigan for his studies in Voice. Upon graduation, he was granted a scholarship from San Francisco Conservatory of Music for his college pursuits. He is currently a senior. In his rich baritone voice he sang selections from

Vaughan Williams's "Songs of Travel", E.W. Korngold's "Die Tote Stadt", Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Old Maid and the Thief", and four Chinese Folk Songs. His final Chinese song translates as "Teacher, I Am Missing You". It was another touching moment for our audience, and was warmly received.

We then had an opportunity to congratulate Dr. William Wellborn, whose piano student Andrew Lin won a first prize in BMC's competition.

We enjoyed sharing this wonderful day of music and friendship with you. Now we look forward to seeing you at our November 13, 2017 program, where the performing artist will be Rufus Olivier, Jr., principal bassoonist of the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet. He will present a program of Mozart, Vivaldi, Piazzola, Rachmaninov, and an arrangement of Wild Rose by MacDowell. He will also demonstrate how the bassoon works. And don't miss our holiday program and boutique on December 11, 2017, with songs by students from the Voice Studio of Edie Delegans.

Best wishes from Burlingame Music Club's Co-Presidents,

Roz Koo



Karen Hutchinson



The latest pictures from the October Tea event are now posted on the Burlingame Music Club's website, Be sure to check it out! <http://www.burlingamemusicclub.net>

We look forward to seeing you at upcoming BMC meetings, 1:00 PM on the second Monday of each month, November 2017 through May 2018, at 241 Park Road, Burlingame.

Suggestions? Comments? Contact us: Karen (pianokaren@gmail.com) or Roz (rozkoo@hotmail.com) or write to us at Burlingame Music Club, P.O. Box 8, San Mateo, CA 94401