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FALL 2012



Seth & his daughter, Cora

## On Turning 40: Reflections on Walden 2012

By Seth Brenzel

Greetings from San Francisco! All of us here at Walden are excited to share this edition of *Recitative* with you, chock full of information about your favorite summer music school, festival and camp and news about members of the Walden and Junior Conservatory Camp (JCC) community.

Speaking of the community, what a terrific celebration of Walden and JCC history, friendships and camaraderie took place on the campus of the Dublin School at the Alumni Reunion in June! Many thanks to Bob Weaver, Tamar Bloch and Erin Quist for being our Reunion Co-Chairs, and to staff members Esther Landau, Brendon Randall-Myers, Marguerite Ladd and Jefferson Packer for all of their great work in organizing the Reunion. Thanks, too, to Carol Thomas

Downing, Sam Pluta, Caroline Mallonée-Huebner, Marguerite Ladd and Marshall Bessières for their leading of musical workshops. While at the moment we are not planning to have another on-campus reunion until 2017, we hope to see you at the many holiday parties, Alumni Composers Forums, and other events later this year and in the years to come. It's always wonderful to gather with fellow JCC and Walden School participants, no matter what the occasion!

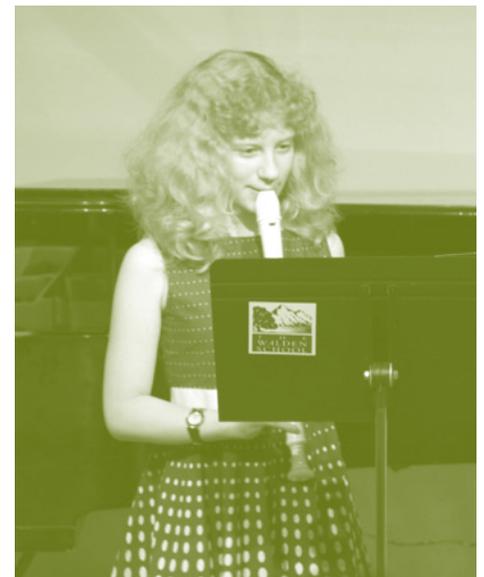
Also in June, Walden's Creative Musicians Retreat (CMR) ran for the second time. This inspiring weeklong workshop for adult musicians attracted 22 participants from around the country to participate in a week of musicianship, chorus, composition and camaraderie. Directed by senior Walden faculty member Caroline (Carrie) Mallonée-Huebner, the Retreat also featured classes in the morning, chorus before lunch, afternoon lessons, composition, Composers Forums and a concert by resident ensemble Wet Ink. James Mobberley, former member of Walden's Board and past Visiting Composer at the Young Musicians Program, was CMR's Composer-in-Residence. By our participants' accounts, it was a successful week, and I know I speak on behalf of all of the faculty and staff of the program in saying how wonderful it was to have our participants with us in 2012!

The Young Musicians Program had a tremendously successful year in 2012. 49 students from 17 states, Canada, India, Japan, Lithuania, and South Sudan joined 19 faculty and staff for a wonderful summer of creative music making. Classes included courses on Beethoven symphonies, musicianship, John Cage, AudioVision, Folk Traditions/String Quartets, computer musicianship, Score Reading and more! We had wonderful guest artists, including faculty member alumna Aurora Nealand and her band The Royal Roses, composers Jim Matheson and Eve Beglarian, Duo Prism, Yarn/Wire, Michael

Poll and the amazing septet of performers that are The Walden School Players. For John Cage's 100th Birthday, Sky Macklay and members of The Walden School Players organized a "Happening" that was a wonderful and unique event. Walden's choral concert was held at the Peterborough Town House and featured music written exclusively by female composers, including our own Festival Forum Moderator Eve Beglarian. Midway through the Program, we held our first-annual Open House, welcoming members of the surrounding Monadnock region onto campus to learn about The Walden School. This promises to be a terrific annual event.

Applications are now available for the Young Musicians Program 2013. I hope you'll spread the word about Walden's unique 5-week summer program for young, creative musicians, and I hope to see many of you at an upcoming event in your area.

Hooray for 40 years of creativity and community, and here's to another 40 years of Walden!



Francesca Hellerman, 2012 YMP Student

FALL 2012

FOR THE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE WALDEN SCHOOL AND JUNIOR CONSERVATORY CAMP

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Where Are They Now?

Eight recent alumni of Walden's Young Musicians Program (YMP) share what they're up to and how they got there.

By Esther Landau

The Joy of Making Our Own Music  
Roy Rabinovici (YMP '97-02)  
Idan Rabinovici (YMP '97-98)  
<http://www.joinacollective.com/>

Roy and Idan Rabinovici's band, Acollective, is described by indie music blog Fresh Deer Meat as a "Tel Aviv-born folk/blues hybrid that's currently taking over West London." The band has recently begun to tour the US, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In addition to playing in the band, the brothers are also involved in most of the non-musical aspects of the band – touring, booking, public relations, management, and royalties.

Walden definitely played its part in what they are doing now. "Something about Walden's educational experience profoundly affected us as creative beings, more than any other educational system we were a part of. Most important was the ideology that we were encouraged to find out for ourselves: the importance of critical analysis of your work and others' work in a constructive and respectful manner, stretching the confines of your artistic boundaries, and above all, the security to find your own voice and language."

The brothers experienced an interruption in their creative music-making. Idan got a degree in philosophy at Oxford and both fulfilled their mandatory military service

requirement in Israel. But they then returned to music, full throttle. Roy is currently studying music at the New School, and the band and their other activities keep them occupied. Music is fully a part of their lives "every day, all day, and even more than that when possible."

They write: "What was clear, from the start, is that despite reservations or difficulties that arise, the joy of making our own music and challenging ourselves critically and creatively were like oxygen - and no other 'career' or 'hobby' would scratch our itch. It's a never-ending process of learning, and for perfectionists like ourselves it's the most fitting - as perfection is never attained."

Finding the Simple, Pure Joy in What She's Doing  
Andrea Grody (YMP '05-07)  
<http://www.andreagrody.com/>

Just back from a run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, and having received a Master of Arts in Musical Theatre Musical Directing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Andrea Grody is settling into life in New York. She will soon begin work as a music assistant on the first Broadway production of *Rebecca*, a new musical drawn from the du Maurier novel of the same name. Her work will primarily entail keeping the score and parts updated throughout the rehearsal period. She will be busy for five or six weeks of rehearsal, followed by a period of tech rehearsals, which can be 12-hour days. When previews begin, she'll still be needed for daily rehearsals, but once the show opens, her work is done.

Originally, Andrea thought she was heading toward a career as a film composer, so she sought out a school that would provide

that training, and settled on Princeton. The summer after her freshman year she worked for a film composer and producer in Los Angeles, and while film's ability to combine a story and music appealed to her, the fit wasn't quite right. In her sophomore year, she realized that her passion was really musical theater, something she'd already been involved in for some time, so she majored in music and got a certificate in theater. Her senior thesis, "Strange Faces," is a musical about Asperger's Syndrome; it has received five sold-out performances, and work continues on bringing it to a wider audience.

Andrea talks about the role of music and creativity in her life: "Walden was so crucial to where I am now – Walden musicianship, the way I learned composition, the way we learned to look at any piece of music, new or otherwise, and just talk about it, and the way we incorporated music into everyday life as an expression of joy. I've thought a lot this year about my 'inner child,' how people are constantly trying to let out their inner child. But as an artist, your inner child is not inner but a crucial part of you. Children find the simple, pure joy in what they're doing, and I think the Walden curriculum and the Walden attitude is all about that. You don't have to act like a 5-year-old in every way, but if you can retain the way children let themselves get wrapped up in the joy of what they're doing, you'll be happier and more successful."

### I Should Just Do What I Love Michael Gilbert (YMP '98-02)

Michael's career ambitions are closely aligned to Walden's mission, specifically the part promoting a "lifelong commitment to creative expression." For Michael, this means that he is committed not only to nurturing his own creative expression as a songwriter, but also that of other artists. Currently living and working in Los Angeles, he spends time regularly developing his own material, but just as often, he'll attend open mics and, if he hears an artist he likes, he'll offer to record them.

He studied at the University of York, where he majored in physics. In physics, he found the ideas interesting but the schoolwork the opposite, so during his last year there he began to look ahead and think about alternatives. Throughout school, he'd spent much of his free time writing songs and recording himself and his friends in his dorm room, so his involvement in music had been fairly

continuous. A family friend he'd connected with that final year was a successful songwriter and so, with the economy tanking anyway, he decided to abandon physics and just do what he loved instead, enrolling the next year at the Los Angeles Recording School. When his songwriter friend was in town and needed extra help on recording sessions, he'd call on Michael to help out at his studio. "It was a really relaxed atmosphere; I got to help out on sessions with Jewel, Colbie Caillat, Keith Urban, John Legend, and Nelly Furtado. I also helped engineer some of the first Lana Del Rey album, 'Dark Paradise'."

While he gained a great deal of the technical knowledge he needed in school, it didn't prepare him for how entrepreneurial he would need to be to build a career. "You need to be creative about where you want to fit into the business. It's tough: everyone wants to make money, so you have to think creatively and be persistent." He also notes, "Music is a business, and, just like any business, it's all about people. Being good with people is very important."

In the long term, Michael is not sure what lies ahead for him. He'd love to ultimately make a living from writing and recording songs and helping others do the same. Regardless, "Walden has made me more committed to ensuring I keep creative expression a part of my life, giving me the drive to just go for it, whether it's recording my music, recording others or learning any new creative skill."

### I Cannot Imagine Doing Anything Else

Sophie Coran (YMP '00-05)  
<http://www.reverbnation.com/sophiecoran>

Sophie Coran has always known that music is what she loves the most; there was never a question that it would be a huge part of her life. "My summers at Walden gave me a glimpse of something new, and at first it was hard to understand, especially since I was so young. During my time there I always wished for a 'year-round Walden' so that I could be in this inspiring community, learning about and writing music, and receiving so much love. Before Walden, I couldn't have imagined such a place of perfection. I always trace back the seed of all my musical accomplishments to Walden – it led me to Tanglewood, which led to the Manhattan School of Music, which led to

studying music abroad."

Having just graduated from the Manhattan School of Music in May, Sophie is now pursuing work as a singer-songwriter in New York. Sophie notes the importance of skills beyond the technical and artistic. "Social skills involve learning how to self-promote, to use social media to your advantage, and interacting with other musicians and potential supporters. Time management is another huge process, which I am learning about. I work well with goals in mind, but being out of school, I realize that not having an assignment or a deadline makes it a lot harder. Now I'm setting my own objectives and I'm trying to treat them like I did at school. It's hard, but I'm up for the challenge!"

Sophie's dream is to have a recording contract, to perform in concert halls, and at national and international festivals. "My goal is to have a financially stable, sustainable career as a musician." Sophie says that the skills she learned at Walden have helped her enormously in the conservatory and music environments. "Most importantly, Walden's creative approach to music making has helped me remember why I do what I do – because I love it, and I cannot imagine doing anything else."

### Combining Her Passions for Languages and Music

Ilana Rainero-de Haan (YMP '05-08)

Ilana is pursuing a Masters of Innovation and Organization of Culture and the Arts at the University of Bologna in Italy. When she graduates, her plan is to work in performing arts administration, possibly in Europe, so she can combine her passions for languages and music in a field that fascinates her.

Ilana's selection of her college grew out of discoveries she made at Walden. "I chose



Ilana Rainero-de Haan

Dickinson for its strong language programs, international focus, and study abroad options, but I also made sure that it had a good music department. I fell into my music major, mostly because attending Walden in high school had made me realize that I could study music without it feeling like work or diminishing my love for it. So, despite beginning college convinced I was going to major in International Studies, I declared music as my major almost immediately.”

That epiphany, that studying what she loved was more important than studying what she thought might be useful, ironically turned out to be fortuitous – and entirely practical. “During my junior year abroad, I decided to pursue a career in arts administration. After several internships, I realized that with this line of work I could use both music and languages, and I was unwilling to give up either of these passions.”

Up until she graduated in May, Ilana’s time was largely occupied with music-making. The next two years will be different: “I hope to continue to find time to compose for myself, but realistically I know that in the near future, I will be enjoying music instead of making it.” In the long term, though, Ilana’s commitment to creative expression will always be a part of her life and her work. “I see my future work in administration of the arts playing an important role in pushing forward creative expression, making it present in everyone’s life. I have various ideas of what I would like to do after I finish my Masters. Because there are so many different ways I could use my skills, and because I have learned that as much as I’d like to plan everything, there are many things in this field that I don’t even know exist yet, the only thing I can say for certain is that I will find a way to use my passions in my career. How I will do that is still a mystery.”

**An Accidental  
(and Reluctant) Freelancer  
Jeffrey Stanek (YMP '00-02)**  
<http://www.myspace.com/jeffstanek>

Jeff is a freelance musician in Madison, Wisconsin, his hometown. He plays piano for ballet classes and a church, accompanies music students, and is now in his third year of directing a choir for adults with disabilities, something he loves. He writes, “I’m much more focused on my instrument (piano, and from time to time also cello or harp) than on composition right now – I am actually working up an all-Brahms (!) solo recital for some time this year.” He has a few piano

students and coordinates, as he puts it, “a fledgling piano composition day-festival for kids.”

Jeff knew in high school that he wanted to major in composition. He chose Indiana University, a large school that offered him numerous opportunities. “I didn’t know that my artistic focus would settle on solo and small chamber pieces, but the size of the school still meant that I could get involved in a million things, which I did and had a great time doing it.”

He returned home to Madison after graduation, and found that his best chance for employment was being a freelance musician. Freelancing was not something he ever sought out, though. “Actually I don’t want to be doing what I’m doing. I truly hate freelancing as a lifestyle. I am grateful to have opportunities every single day to use both my performance and creative skills at work, but even so, there’s little autonomy in most of what I do for pay, and the demands are relentless. And while the teaching part is very rewarding and meaningful to me, I am pretty new to it. For the time being I just try to be as engaging and informed as possible with my students and the choir.”

Teaching has proven to be Jeff’s favorite part of his work. “I’ve spent a lot of time in recent years thinking about the direction I want both my career and my music (not to be confused with one another, I’ve decided) to take, and it’s been a very slow process. The one thing that I consistently get excited about is teaching music. So I plan to really develop those skills, and five years from now I’m hoping I’ll have saved up enough to go back to school and have a Masters degree and more real experience in teaching.”

**Creativity Is in My Blood  
Eddie Cain Irvin (YMP '02)**  
<http://www.highfiveforlove.com>

Eddie Irvin lives with his wife in Nashville, where they are engagement and wedding photographers. Eddie also shoots music videos and wedding highlights films as well. After originally buying video equipment to produce his own music videos, Eddie discovered that he enjoyed being on the other side of the camera, too. “I find that I can combine my passion and talent with music with the visual side and create unique products. I just finished a wedding video where I shot, edited and color corrected the footage. I also wrote the song for the video and played all the instruments for it. So, it’s fun!”

Though he only attended for one summer, Eddie recalls: “Walden was a beautiful, wonderful time. It was a haven, a culture, a school, a brilliant idea. Here was a place where everyone I talked to understood music on a par with or better than me – every person educated and full of the love of music. I grew when I was at Walden. Walden was a big brick in my current foundation.”

After Walden, music continued to be a significant part of his life. Even though he majored in philosophy and religion at James Madison University, Eddie was actively involved in music-making throughout his time there, and he took great advantage of the resources at the school. The student-run record label there signed him for a few years and helped him organize shows.



Eddie Irvin

He wishes he had more time now to spend on music. “Ultimately it’s about focus and time management. I’m trying to do too much, and all too often my guitar sits on its stand. I’m staring at it right now, actually. So I think it’s wonderful when I can find jobs that force me to write, that force me to use a talent I want to use but just don’t make enough time for.”

He can’t stay away from music for too long, though. “Creativity is in my blood, and Walden absolutely fostered that. I find that the longer I stray from music, the more ornery I become! If I spend time with music and I create something, I feel like I can relax. This is something that will last until the day I die, I’m sure. I can’t wait to share musical creativity with my children (though no kids yet!), and I will absolutely keep writing, and not just because it helps my sanity. I don’t know where I see myself 5 years or 20 years from now, but I know that a guitar and a piano will definitely be close by.”



Amelia Lukas

## Community News and Goods

*The Walden School welcomes news and information from members of the Junior Conservatory Camp and Walden School communities to include in our newsletters. Please contact us on-line or send info to The Walden School, 31A 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94110. (Note: YMP=Young Musicians Program; TTI=Teacher Training Institute; CMR=Creative Musicians Retreat; JCC=Junior Conservatory Camp).*

Duo Fado, comprising singer **Melinda Becker** (TTI '04) and guitarist Thomas Walsh, has released a new promotional recording.

**Madeline (Biddle) Bersamina** (TTI '04-05, '08, '10; YMP Faculty '06-07) performed a vocal recital at Santa Clara University in October. The program featured the premiere of a work by **Marshall Bessières** (TTI '08; CMR '12; YMP Faculty '03-11; TTI Faculty '09-10; CMR Faculty '11).

In October **Eliza Brown** (YMP '00-02; TTI '07, '10; YMP Staff '04-05; YMP Faculty '08-09) attended the premiere of her new work on a concert presented by Network for New Music in Philadelphia.

**Ann Callaway** (JCC '65-67; YMP Faculty '74-76, '78-84, '99) has been busy with premiere performances of her new song, new trio, and new opera presented throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Claire Chase** (Visiting Artist '05-09; '11) was named a MacArthur Fellow for her work as an "arts entrepreneur forging a new model

for the commissioning, recording, and live performance of contemporary music."

**Cyrus Chestnut** (YMP '77; Visiting Artist '06) is the pianist on a companion CD for Michael Feinstein's new book, *The Gershwins and Me*, published by Simon & Schuster.

**Shawn Crouch** (YMP '93-96; TTI '08; YMP Staff '97; YMP Faculty '09-00, '02, '05-07; CMR Faculty 2012) had his work, *The Light of Common Day*, performed by Seraphic Fire on a program in October.

Clarinetist **Benjamin Finland** (Visiting Artist '01-02) has joined the Dorian Wind Quintet.

The Virginia Symphony has released "An American Port of Call," a recording featuring the work of **Adolphus Hailstork** (Composer-in-Residence '03).

Wild Rumpus, the new music collective whose founding members include **Sophie Huet** (TTI '09), performed their second concert in June in San Francisco.

**Michael Johanson** (YMP '79-'86; YMP Faculty '89, '93, '95-96) has received commissions from the International Beethoven Project and the Northwest Horn Orchestra.

**Amelia Lukas's** (TTI '05-'06, YMP Visiting Artist '10, Administration '05-07) new music series, Ear Heart Music, has relocated to Roulette in Brooklyn, New York. The series is highlighted in the September 23rd issue of *The New York Times*.

**Charlie MacVeagh** (Board of Directors '99-'04, Board of Directors Emeriti '07-present) was honored as the 2012 recipient of Antioch University Graduate School's Horace Mann Community Service Award at a ceremony in Keene, New Hampshire. Several hundred Antioch faculty, alumni and friends gathered to recognize Charlie's many years of providing financial consultation and oversight to a wide range of non-profit organizations in the Monadnock region of New Hampshire. **Robin Kenney** (Board of Directors '04-'07, '10-present) and his wife Leslie were also in attendance.

**Caroline Mallonée** (YMP '87-92, TTI '07, YMP Faculty '98-'12, CMR Faculty '11-'12) won 2nd prize in the 2012 Iron Composers Competition at Baldwin-Wallace College. Her work *For John Cage on His 100th Birthday*, was performed and judged on

a public concert, broadcast on Cleveland classical radio. **Trevor Ward** (YMP '08-'10) was in the audience.

**Emil Margolis** (YMP '99-04; TTI '09; YMP Staff '06-07, '09, '12) ran into **Thomas Carr** (YMP '03-05; YMP Staff '08) in Boston recently. Thomas agreed to play piano on Emil's piece, *Evening Blend*, on Emil's Masters recital.

In October, **Teresa McCollough** (TTI '05; Visiting Artist '01) performed a program at Santa Clara University, honoring the 100th birthday of John Cage.

This fall, **Ned McGowan** (Visiting Artist '01-04, '10) saw the Dutch premieres of two works in Utrecht, Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

*The Wondrous Woman Within*, an opera by **Osnat Netzer** (TTI '07-08, YMP Faculty '08-11) was performed in November as part of the New York City Opera's VOX Contemporary American Opera Lab.

**Nat Osborn's** (YMP '00-03) band, fresh off of an East Coast tour in August that extended from Maine to Washington, D.C., performed at Rockwood Music Hall in New York City in September.

*A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff*, a "solo-show-with-backing-band" developed by **Alicia Jo Rabins** (YMP '88-93) was premiered at Joe's Pub in New York City in November. In attendance were **Nora Rabins** (YMP '95-99) and **Seth Brenzel** (YMP '85-90; TTI '08; staff and administration '94 – present)

**D. J. Sparr** (YMP '91; YMP Faculty '09-10) collaborated with conductor **Timothy Myers** (YMP Visiting Artist '12) in a concert of D. J.'s work presented by New Music Raleigh in September.

**Joan Tower** (YMP Composer-in-Residence '09) was feted for her birthday with a performance of her work at Symphony Space in New York City this fall as part of the New York Chamber Music Festival.

The Kronos Quartet will premiere a new commission from **Pamela Z** (Visiting Artist '11) in February in San Francisco.

Transitions:

**Rebekah Griffin Greene** (TTI '10, YMP Faculty '99, '01, '10-11) and her husband Terry Greene welcomed their baby boy, Kayden Lukas Greene to the world on August 11 at 3:59 am.



Sunny Balsam and Eliezer Margolis

*Sunny has been a full-time mother, a reading specialist, the owner of a mail order children's literature business, and is currently writing a young adult novel. Eliezer is a clinical psychologist/neuropsychologist specializing in rehabilitation. They are both amateur naturalists and are very involved with a prairie restoration project.*

## Donor Spotlight: Eliezer Margolis and Sunny Balsam

By Esther Landau

“Emil was always interested in sound – we just thought he was noisy!” Sunny Balsam and Eliezer Margolis found Walden when they were looking for the right summer music program for their son. While both parents have fairly traditional backgrounds in music (Sunny had piano lessons throughout her childhood, and Eliezer’s parents exposed him to years of Boston Symphony and New York Philharmonic concerts – and, much to his chagrin, accordion lessons), they knew they needed something different than the usual summer music camp for Emil (YMP ’99-04; TTI ’09; staff ’06-07, ’09; faculty ’12).

Emil’s older brother had studied piano for many years when the 6-year-old Emil declared that he “needed” piano lessons, too. For quite some time, Emil did not learn to read music. His teacher patiently guided him through learning by imitation and by ear. Sunny would learn to play all of Emil’s repertoire so he could then learn from her throughout the week. A very capable sight-reader, Sunny must have been grateful for her years of study, particularly when Emil selected Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata* to be his first project.

Sunny notes that Emil’s greatest challenge in his practicing was not altering the score; his urge to improvise was too great. His deviations were evident to her when she’d hear him practicing for his lessons. “That’s

not Scarlatti! Practice first, fool around later!” she’d call from the other end of the house. His improvisations eventually came to match each piece’s style to such a degree, though, that Sunny found herself calling out, “Is that Scarlatti?!” It was this well-crafted improvisation that led them to realize that they needed to find an outlet for Emil where he could compose his own music.

What Eliezer and Sunny found at Walden was more than a camp where Emil could develop as a musician and composer (and where he finally learned to read music!), but also a wonderful communal living experience. “This was as remarkable to me as the musicianship curriculum: the creation of a community experience for children,” Eliezer notes. “These students may not be the center of popularity the rest of the year, but at Walden they find a very accepting place. They just blossom and come out of themselves – they feel normal.” Sunny agrees, “At Walden, you hear the sound of children blossoming.”

And though Emil was an athlete at home, it was important for him to see that there was another world where sports prowess wasn’t everything. In fact, as Sunny notes, while Emil was quite comfortable socially at his school, “going to Walden gave him permission to be different.”

With a background in clinical psychology and neuropsychology, Eliezer has long been interested in the neuropsychology of the musical experience. He describes having a powerful response to the sound world of music, although he finds himself challenged dyslexically when trying to decode musical

notation. Sunny, as mentioned, is a strong sightreader. In addition, she has prodigious musical memory and can be plagued by musical “ear worms.”

After learning to read music at Walden, Emil was no longer reliant on Sunny to help him learn, and Eliezer could start taking him to his lessons. Over time, the lessons would be extended to include conversation about books and film; Emil’s teacher would listen to music with both of them and have philosophical discussions. Eliezer found that this led to his own musical growth; after Emil went to college, Eliezer began to study music theory and piano with the same teacher who had taught his sons. He soon discovered that he had the same difficulty sticking to the score that Emil had; he would end up improvising. He remains a great lover of all things musical; whenever he’s in the proximity of a musical instrument, he can’t resist picking it up, just for the pleasure of the sound.

Sunny and Eliezer were struck by the commitment and seriousness of the faculty at Walden. Emil’s first composition teacher impressed upon him the importance of notation; he had Emil use a collection of special writing implements – even a special brush for brushing away the eraser shavings! Emil felt he was engaged in the same grapho-motor activity as Mozart, and it thrilled him.

Eliezer and Sunny began to contribute to Walden because, in addition to seeing what a great environment it was for Emil, they found that it exemplified something they already cared deeply about. “Walden is a haven. It’s an uncommon thing to find communities like these – wherever they exist we need them to flourish, because the ripple effects are innumerable. It’s so vital and encouraging to see what is possible for humanity.” They wonder at this powerful mixture of music and community, saying, “There’s all this fascinating research into our paleolithic roots as creatures, and the fact that music may have preceded language. Music is so deep in us humans; it’s really not coincidental that at Walden, we have this cooperative community life, and that this community is organized around music.”

Eliezer and Sunny continue to contribute to Walden because because of the kind of organic social community Walden provides every summer. “Undoubtedly the musical aspect of Walden is what defines it for most people, but for us the thing that makes it worth supporting is the social program, and the values that are so enshrined in the culture – tolerance and intergenerational respect.”



Joel Hobbs (CMR '11-12)

## Walden's Creative Musician's Retreat and Me

By Joel Hobbs

I am a composer. In 2008 at 45 years of age, I started saying it out loud. I had business cards printed. Positive affirmations. Say it and it will be so. Words are magic, yes?

I imagined myself as a working composer, though my inner critic objected – not convinced I had the right stuff. Then I attended the Walden School's Creative Musician's Retreat (CMR) – twice.

Having written too many pieces that languished in a dusty old box, what first drew me to CMR was the chance to get a piece performed by a notable ensemble and to get precious feedback.

So with a combination of pride and trepidation, I brought my new piece to CMR. Throughout the week, I received patient and insightful guidance, my piece was rehearsed, and I stayed up late making a boatload of revisions. After an intensive week, I experienced the thrilling premiere of my best composition to date.

Further, I was inspired by the amazing quality and diversity of music created by all the participants and presented at multiple concerts and master classes throughout the week. By conversing with my new, like-minded colleagues, I better understood my work and myself.

Fast forward to 2012. Since attending CMR in 2011, I had performed with the Austin Symphony Orchestra, released my debut solo CD, and premiered several new chamber pieces. Most of this wouldn't have happened without the added confidence and experience I had harvested at CMR. I had hit a new stride.

This year, I brought another freshly minted piece to CMR. I expected to be up late revising my piece again—but not so. Sure I got some excellent feedback, but the news was better this year. In hindsight, I realize that I was more prepared with a better piece because of the skills I had picked up last year.

Much of that experience came to me in ways that I hadn't expected:

**Community**—The Walden faculty and staff are expert and accessible. They are masterful in fostering a collaborative and spirited community. I had some eureka moments interacting with other participants.

**Experiential Approach**—The musician-ship curriculum, really the entire approach, emphasizes learning by doing. While I pride myself on theoretical knowledge, the musicianship classes enabled me to see things in new ways and better connect my thinking, playing and writing.

**Chorus**—As a reluctant singer, I was skeptical at first about all participants being expected to sing in chorus. My fears were quickly allayed. Chorus is an amazing opportunity to unite all the talent at the retreat and work in melodious community. Experiential approach, community. A pattern emerges?

**A la Carte Opportunities**—I enjoyed the flexibility to keep a light schedule or fill up my time with electives, master classes, concerts, jam sessions, and private lessons. The faculty and staff went to great lengths to discover and meet my individual needs and those of each participant.

So if you want to be inspired by new ideas, explore your own music in new ways, and join in a vibrant community, I recommend you attend the next CMR. I hope to see you there!

As I write this, I've started an ambitious new project, *Opus Twelve*, to write a collection of new music for mandolin ensemble. As for my inner critic—he's still doing just fine. But he asks better questions now.

I am a happy composer.

## Walden's Board of Directors: Transitions

By Seth Brenzel

The Walden School is guided and led by an all-volunteer Board of Directors that ensures the School furthers its mission and vision, accomplishes its goals, and continues to provide the inspiring and rigorous music training that has been a hallmark of Walden since its founding in 1972.

For the past several years, the Board has been ably led by John O'Meara, a Walden parent (his daughter Caroline attended the Young Musicians Program), donor, and husband of Junior Conservatory Camp alumna Mary Anne O'Meara, herself a former Walden Board member. During John's tenure as Board Chair, Walden launched the Creative Musicians Retreat and completed its second strategic plan. Fortunately for Walden, John is remaining on the Board and now serves as the organization's Treasurer.

Taking over as Chair is Andrew Jacobs, a Walden alumnus, who had previously served the Board as Vice-Chair. All of us at Walden are looking forward to Andrew's leadership as Walden moves into its next phase of development and growth. Rounding out the leadership of the Board for its 2012-2013 year are Vice-Chairs Noël Theodosiou and Corty Fongler, and Laura Mehiel, who continues as Secretary.

Joining Walden's Board in 2012 is Jeff Nick, father of Walden alumna Julia Nick. As President of Camden Catholic High School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Jeff serves as the school's chief executive officer, with oversight for the school's personnel, budget, business affairs, and strategic planning, as well as educational and development programs.

Finally, in July, the school and Board bid farewell to three outstanding directors: David Callan, Arno Drucker and Leslie Stephens. While we'll miss their presence on the Board, we trust that they won't be too far away. We are grateful for their service; Walden is the better for each of their contributions to Walden's Board of Directors. Thank you, all!



Reunion Dance

## Reunion Report:

By Esther Landau

From the arrival of the first alumnus on June 22 to the departure of the last car to the Manchester airport on June 25, the spirit of the Walden and Junior Conservatory Camp communities shone bright on the campus of the Dublin School. 64 alumni/ae, spouses and children gathered for a weekend in June to reminisce and make music together, to dance and hike and share memories. Here were some highlights:

- The weekend schedule included a rambunctious dance led by Sam Pluta, with music by Cross Country and other alumni.
- We took a hike up Mount Monadnock (the thunderstorm waited until we were all back down!)
- Chorus and workshops led by Walden faculty on musicianship, film scoring, computer music and symmetry in music were all a big hit.
- 16 alumni performed in a recital with repertoire ranging from Chopin to American folk music.
- A slide show included photos from every decade of The Walden School and Junior Conservatory Camp; we saw the video Ron Nelson had sent us for the last reunion in 2007.

- 9 alumni had works presented in a Composers Forum with Tamar Bloch and Marshall Bessières moderating.
- JCC alumni spoke with Flora Cushman (Grace Cushman’s daughter) via Skype.

For more photos, go to [www.waldenschool.org/reunion](http://www.waldenschool.org/reunion). For additional treats (sound files and programs from the Alumni Recital and Composers Forum) visit [www.handoverhand.org](http://www.handoverhand.org), the website for alumni of The Walden School and Junior Conservatory Camp. If you haven’t registered yet, it’s easy to sign up; let us know if you need help.



Danielle Oberdier and Cara Haxo

## Dissolving Bands -

Sky Macklay’s Commission for the Lexington Symphony

By Esther Landau

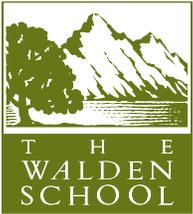
On September 23, the Lexington Symphony in Massachusetts, as part of the 300-year anniversary of the town, performed the premiere of *Dissolving Bands*, a newly commissioned work by Walden faculty member, Sky Macklay. The composer was present, along with Walden Executive Director Seth Brenzel, and about a dozen other members of the Walden community.

Sky traces her initial inspiration for the piece to scenes she encountered in New England over her summers at Walden. “I remembered decrepit graveyards, humble churches, and historic government buildings. These places sparked ideas of what life would feel and sound like in the nascent United States at a time of instability and revolutionary energy. Musically, I channeled the emotions that the Massachusetts colonists may have felt before the eruption of the Revolutionary War, beginning with rapidly changing instrumental choirs ascending in staccato clusters of unpredictable turbulence and ever-mounting tension. Later sections express uncertainty, fortitude, and the calm, open space of unknown future possibilities.”

This opportunity was created when the Lexington Symphony selected The Walden School to help celebrate the town’s momentous anniversary. Walden chose Sky from the alumni community to write the commemorative work. Walden was honored to have been a part of the event and to have partnered with this excellent orchestra. And Sky was delighted, too. She adds: “It felt absolutely exhilarating to hear my piece performed!”

*“Musically, I channeled the emotions that the Massachusetts colonists may have felt before the eruption of the Revolutionary War.”*

— SKY MACKLAY



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## Walden Community Holiday Gatherings: Food, Music, Good Cheer!

Sunday, December 9 in New York City

Friday, December 28 in San Francisco

Saturday, December 29 in Baltimore

Email [events@waldenschool.org](mailto:events@waldenschool.org) for more details.



## Do You Wish You Were Getting Walden's Emails?

If you've been missing InterNetzo (our e-newsletter), event invitations and other emailed materials from us, and you want to receive these messages from Walden, we want your email address! Please email us at [newsletter@waldenschool.org](mailto:newsletter@waldenschool.org) and let us know your email address, along with your preferences. Want to get invitations to events in your area? Want to receive news and special listening treats from Walden? Want to get your appeal letters by email? Want to only receive personal messages? Just let us know. If we don't have your email address, be the first to send it to us and you'll receive a Walden water bottle!

[WWW.WALDENSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.WALDENSCHOOL.ORG)



FOR THE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, PARENTS AND FRIENDS  
OF THE WALDEN SCHOOL AND JUNIOR CONSERVATORY CAMP  
FALL 2012