A New First Violinist for the Lydians

by Na’ama Ansell

The latest addition to the Brandeis music scene is California born and bred Andrea Segar, who replaces recent retiree Daniel Stepner, first violinist of the Lydian Quartet for 29 years.

A graduate of the New England Conservatory where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees with honors, Andrea served on the faculty of the Conservatory’s K-12 Preparatory School, which offers lessons, classes, and performance opportunities to the community. She is also the recipient of a doctorate in Musical Arts from SUNY Stony Brook. Before joining the Lydians, she gave solo and chamber music performances in concert halls around the world.

Asked how she’d heard about the Lydian’s quest for a first violinist, Andrea says, “A Brandeis graduate friend of mine told me she’d seen the announcement that Daniel would be retiring.” She learned that the application process involved sending multiple recordings to the quartet’s three continuing members—Judy Eissenberg (second violinist), Mark Berger (violist), and Josh Gordon (cellist). Andrea was one of five finalists who were sent musical scores and invited to Brandeis to play with the other quartet members for two hours. “Her playing made me melt,” says cellist Gordon. “It was so luminous and expressive.” Andrea had made the grade.

One quartet member says, “There’s a mutual adjustment. We consider new ideas and are prepared to adopt those that work rather than sticking to previous interpretations. The sound of a quartet should always evolve.”

Although neither of her parents is a musician, Andrea came to music at an early age. “When I was little, I wanted to play the piano,” she says, “but I was told that my hands were too small.” Instead, when she was four years old, she was given a little violin with which she promptly fell in love, and she has concentrated on the violin ever since. Andrea played “fiddle music” as well as classical music in youth orchestras and at summer festivals. It was her festival performances that drew her to chamber music.

Brandeis’s association with the Lydian Quartet is unusual as it is one of only a small number of private liberal arts universities with a music ensemble in residence. (Continued on page 7)

The Lydian’s newest member, violinist Andrea Segar, looks forward to the group’s upcoming Brandeis concert on Sunday, October 29. (Online photo by Susan Wilson)
Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome 68 new members from 26 cities and towns to our BOLLI community. This term, we have 428 BOLLI members.

Acton: Diana Garfield
Boston: Sarah Carter, Richard Galler, Alfred Kaplan, Elinor Svenson
Brookline: Stuart Mushlin
Burlington: Jerrold Baum, Gloria Seeman
Cambridge: Debby Shapiro
Canton: Joan Halperin, Bernice Saxe, Sara Silberman
Chelmsford: Alan Fidler
Chestnut Hill: Paula Corman, Joyce Plotkin
Concord: Pat Kreckel, Marianne Zasa
Dover: Cris Aronson
Framingham: Barry Alpert, Doris Burke
Jamaica Plain: Jo-An Gladstone
Lexington: Raymond Gabler, Jon Palfreman
Lincoln: Joseph Burns
Medway: Kathleen Fennyery, Lisa Robinson

Milton: Susan Magocsi
Natick: Manny Abrams, Maxine Rosenthal
Needham: Edward Devereaux, Carol Fineblum, Aaron Goldberg, Marc Kahn, Elaine Sidel
Newton: Bella Caplan, Paul Dahlstrand, Caroline Essig, Thomas Hart, Robert Horlick, Ruth Horlick, Helen Kadish, Guy Moss, Melissa Powell, Ethel Segal, Mary Trageser, Joyce Weinberg, Susan Wertheim, Charles Winer
Sharon: Thomas D’Avanzo, Frances Goldberg
Sudbury: Lenore Goldstein
Waltham: Jane Givens, Carl Hultzen, Judy Hultzen, Geoff Kent, Hilary Kent, Jennifer Lent, Cheryl Muise, Joseph Muise
Watertown: Linda Allen
Wayland: Stephen Engler
Wellesley: Ken Dreyer, Victoria Gold
Westborough: Patsy Benincasa, Nora Hanley
Winchester: Linda Fossier, Judith Klein, Mel Klein

Canton Newcomers Bernice Saxe, Sara Silberman, and Joan Halperin (photo by Helen Abrams)

Diane Markowitz introduces her friend, new member Cris Aronson, to BOLLI (photo by Helen Abrams)
Bernstein with an Australian Accent

by Jack Curley

Brandeis Ph.D. recipient Craig Smith, a popular BOLLI history lecturer, did us a great service prior to his recent relocation to Missouri. He had the foresight to mention his BOLLI experience to his friend Georgia Luikens, a member of the Brandeis Music Department. In doing so, Craig passed the academic baton to a fellow scholar who has become an important part of BOLLI’s music curriculum. Georgia served as the instructor for the summer lecture series, “Four Nights at the Symphony,” and is currently the classroom leader for this semester’s “America’s First Maestro: Leonard Bernstein’s Music and Role in New York’s Cultural Life.”

A native of Sydney, Australia, Georgia arrived at Brandeis in 2008 holding concurrent bachelor’s degrees in music and English from the University of New South Wales. She has since earned a master’s degree in musicology from Brandeis, where from 2008 to 2013 she held the Harry and Mildred Remis Endowed Fellowship for the Creative Arts. In 2014, Georgia was a recipient of the University Prize Instructorship for her work in teaching a range of courses examining the intersections among music history, musical theater and filmed musicals, American studies, and literature.

As a doctoral candidate, Georgia is writing her thesis on the choral works of Leonard Bernstein, a particular favorite. Bernstein has been a part of Georgia’s life since she was quite young. A violin player since the age of four, she was first exposed to his music by listening to “Serenade for Solo Violin, Strings, Harp and Percussion.” Another early memory finds her in the company of her grandmother, listening to Bernstein’s performances of Beethoven symphonies on vintage LP recordings.

When comparing the Boston and Sydney music scenes, Georgia notes the profusion of high quality professional and amateur performing groups in the greater Boston area. Her favorites include the Lydian Quartet and Far Cry, the resident chamber orchestra at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum’s Calderwood Hall. Georgia says that the richness of Boston’s music scene affords many musicians the opportunity to participate. She herself performs with the Brookline Symphony and previously performed with the MetroWest and Lowell House Opera Companies. The vibrancy of the local community contrasts with her experience in Sydney, where the number of professional and amateur companies is more limited. She notes that one reason for this may be that Australia lacks the culture of private philanthropy that supports many of our area’s musical groups.

Georgia has fostered her interest in the relationship between music and English literature by offering courses in musical theater through the Brandeis writing program. An example is “Shakespeare, Broadway, Hollywood,” which examined how musical elements of Shakespeare’s works were treated in contemporary theater and film.

Georgia enjoys leading a group of BOLLI seniors whose wide experience in diverse areas can be brought to bear on the subject matter. She notes that one member of her Bernstein class was in the audience for the “Trouble in Tahiti” world premiere here at Brandeis in 1952, while others attended numerous concerts conducted by the Maestro. She hopes to receive her Ph.D. as early as spring 2017 and would like to remain in the United States. Should our good fortune prevail, she will secure a position that will allow her to remain part of the BOLLI curriculum for many years to come.

Music Department Instructor Georgia Luikens in her Brandeis classroom. (Photo courtesy of Georgia)
Back to School Brunch

Our Welcome Back Brunch Spread

Sandy Miller-Jacobs and Sarah Carter

Avi Bernstein and Sandy Bornstein

Linda Braun, Rosalie Fink, and Liz Lieberman

Steve and Judy Messinger

Joanne Fortunato and Martha Berardino

Bernice Baran, Bette Lehman, and Clarice Cohen

Meryl Heier and Carole Grossman
Photos by Helen Abrams and Harris Traiger

Helen Abrams, Maxine Weintraub, Andy Thurnauer

Susan Bradford and Ellen Moskowitz

Bill Hollman and Harvey Lewis

Carl and Joyce Lazarus

Ruth Antonoff and Tamara Chernow

David Moskowitz and Steve Messinger

Matt Medeiros and Megan Curtis

The Welcome Back Scene
What do Waltham in eastern Massachusetts and Greenfield in the western part of the Commonwealth have in common? Both were the subjects of a five-month-long “Healthy Aging Study” recently conducted by Professor of Sociology Walter Leutz of the Heller School during his sabbatical year. The choice of towns for the study was simple: Leutz and his wife, Betsy (who served as his lead co-researcher), have residences in both. The study’s conclusion: both towns are supportive, friendly places where retired seniors can find meaning in their lives and be socially engaged.

Leutz was able to identify and recruit a group of 12 additional older-adult co-researchers to develop and conduct the study’s 30 interviews and 16 focus groups of seniors. He notes that the supporting municipal agency personnel, the co-researchers who conducted the surveys, and the seniors who participated in the focus groups all served as volunteers without compensation. (The Heller School contributed modest funding of $2500 to cover expenses.)

The co-researchers received two days of intensive training at the outset of the study. Among the volunteers was BOLLI member Emily Weidman, who moved to Waltham with her husband three years ago because of its proximity to Boston’s cultural and medical resources. Her participation as a study volunteer enabled her to learn “what was available to me as I age in Waltham.”

Leutz adopted the Community Based Participatory Action Research model of design when developing his study. This model differs from more traditional academic studies by involving the community early in the formulation of questions and objectives and, for this study, the collection and analysis of data. Leutz proudly asserts that this was “high quality research. We were hoping to find things that people in the towns could take action on, and I think that we succeeded.”

In assessing what the towns in the study had to offer seniors, Leutz first looked to the foundation of “safety net” services provided by federal programs (Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and federally subsidized housing), without which healthy aging would be very difficult for most seniors to achieve. The study then considered the contributions of the Commonwealth and of the towns themselves by evaluating opportunities for housing, employment, civic participation, transportation, recreation, and other community services, as well as access to information about the available services. The researchers also looked at the local TRIAD program, a partnership of the Police Department, Council on Aging, and AARP. TRIAD officers work to reduce criminal victimization (e.g., through scams), improve the quality of life, and enhance the delivery of law enforcement services for seniors, including assistance with health emergencies and fire alarm problems.

Leutz found “a lot to like in these towns.” Greenfield, a town of only 19,000, has seen better days economically. For seniors, it has “walkability,” a downtown with good shopping, good transportation, 14% of its housing affordable (including senior subsidized housing), outdoor spaces for recreation, and a senior center where social participation is encouraged. Some recommendations were made for improvements, like replacing curbs downtown for disabled walkers and building a new senior center. A local steering group made up of the mayor, heads of the United Way, the YMCA, the senior center, and others is now studying the recommendations.

Waltham, much larger (62,000) and more diverse, is a city with large immigrant populations, some of whom are non-English-speaking. It is experiencing a renaissance as more high-tech companies and
Healthy Aging continued...

employees locate here. Waltham’s lively downtown features subsidized housing and is very walkable, and the senior center has strong programming. Recommended improvements include sidewalks, benches at bus stops, and “social transportation” so that seniors can visit friends and get to movies and shopping. Leutz notes that services for the disabled, the house-bound, and immigrants are limited, particularly for non-English-speaking communities. He asks, “How can we better connect with folks who are left out?”

Leutz observes that seniors provide immense value to the towns in which they live, particularly through volunteering and assuming leadership roles in many civic and service organizations. This value bodes well for the future: In 2030, older adults will constitute 20% of the U.S. population—“a silver tsunami,” as some call it.

For more information on the project, go to https://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/ and click on the related link in the Blog section.

Lydians continued...

The advantages of such an arrangement include position on the Music Department faculty and the availability of a permanent venue for the ensemble, whose affordably priced performances draw strong attendance from the surrounding community. In recognition of Waltham’s ethnically diverse population, the quartet has delighted local students with concerts featuring music of their homelands. Lydian members hope to expand this type of community outreach. Asked what appeals to her about the quartet, Andrea says that being a member gives her a unique opportunity to teach, perform, tour, and participate in many on- and off-campus collaborations.

Andrea and her husband, Michael Dobrinski, principal trumpet of the Sarasota Orchestra in Florida and a regular substitute with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, share a home in Belmont. Do they perform together? Not on a regular basis, but Andrea would “like to commission violin and trumpet works so that we could have some repertoire to perform.” When asked to list her favorite composers, she says that “Beethoven and Bartók made amazing contributions to the string quartet repertoire.”

In December, the Lydian Quartet will depart for Taiwan, piquing two of Andrea’s interests: traveling and learning a new language. The quartet has been invited to the Taipei National University of the Arts for a two-week residency and a chamber music workshop. Before the Lydians leave, we will have a chance to enjoy their October 29 concert at the Slosberg Music Center. They will perform works by Mozart, Bartók, Yu-Hui Chang (chair of the Brandeis Music Department), and Ravel.

Professor of Sociology Walter Leutz and BOLLI member Emily Weidman (photos provided by subjects)
Upcoming Campus Events
Compiled by Nancy Alimansky

**SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER**

**Lydian String Quartet.** Second violinist Judith Eissenberg, violist Mark Berger, and cellist Joshua Gordon welcome new first violinist Andrea Segar to the legendary quartet. Sunday, October 29 at 8 p.m. (Pre-concert talk at 7 p.m.) Tickets $15.

**Ensemble Musicatreize.** Known for linking the past to the present, Musicatreize is a vocal and instrumental ensemble based in Marseille, France. The program includes the U.S. premiere of a newly commissioned work by Eric Chasalow as well as music of François París and Alexandros Markeas. Saturday, November 12 at 8 p.m. Free admission.

**SPINGOLD THEATER CENTER - LAURIE THEATER**

**Big Love.** Directed by Rebecca Bradshaw. In Charles Mee's modern re-making of one of the western world's oldest plays--*The Danaids* by Aeschylus--fifty brides and their fifty grooms raise issues of gender, politics, love, and violence as they await their wedding day in a villa on the coast of Italy. October 20-23. Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m.; 2 p.m. matinees, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets $15.

**Martyr.** Directed by Dmitry Troyanovsky. Religious fundamentalism, tolerance and teenage angst clash in this darkly funny, timely play by one of Germany’s most prominent playwrights, Marius von Mayenburg. November 17-20. Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m.; 2 p.m. matinees, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets $15.

**WOMEN’S STUDY RESEARCH CENTER - KNIZNICK GALLERY**

**Fool for Thought.** Performance artist Pat Oleszko makes a spectacle of herself—and doesn't mind if you laugh. With elaborate handmade costumes and props, she utilizes the body as armature for ideas in an array of lampoons that call her audience to action. From the personal to the political, her performances and installations ceremoniously exorcise through humor. November 21 through March 3. Free admission.

**AT SCHOOLS, CAMPUSES EVERYWHERE...**

**VOTE!** The United States of America sponsors this electrifying event to be held in multiple venues all over this nation on November 8 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. This riveting drama by “The Founding Fathers” hosts a dynamic cast of characters in competition for a grueling position as Head of State. Admission is free (but the cost of non-participation is high).