In the Lydian Mode

by Phil Radoff

What do Beethoven, Charles Ives, and Mohammed Fairouz have in common? Each composer’s work is likely to show up in a concert by Brandeis’s own Lydian String Quartet. In residence at Brandeis since their formation in 1980, the Lydians exult in the freedom afforded by their Brandeis affiliation. Rather than confining their repertory to the top 40 audience favorites, explains first violinist Dan Stepner, the Quartet is free to explore a wide range of works by composers of diverse nationalities, eras, and musical genres. Stepner’s colleagues, Judy Eissenberg (second violin), Mary Ruth Ray (viola), and Joshua Gordon (cello), readily agree. Brandeis encourages the Quartet’s members to perform off-campus, which they do both individually and as a group, and they will soon be releasing a new recording of the late Beethoven quartets. The Brandeis community benefits from frequent on-campus concerts by this highly-regarded group, and music students have the opportunity to study with first-class performers on an individual basis.

The Quartet has had only two personnel changes in 30 years. Ray and Eissenberg were present at the creation; Stepner arrived in 1987 and Gordon in 2002.

With such a broad repertory, one might expect the Quartet to adopt different approaches to the warhorses of the quartet canon and to atonal 20th-century pieces. Not so, they insist. For each piece, they start by trying to understand what the composer intended and deciding how best to convey the musical ideas to the listener. Do they play Beethoven now the way they played 30 years ago? Probably not—but not because they strive for a different interpretation. Rather, they find, a fresh look at the music inevitably brings with it a subtly different understanding of the work, probably reflecting the greater maturity of the performers.

The Lydians look forward to an exciting future. They are particularly pleased that Brandeis faculty members Yui-Hui Chang, Eric chassislow, and David Rakowski have each agreed to compose a string quartet in honor of Pres. Fred Lawrence. The three new quartets will be featured in concerts starting next month. In addition, the Quartet will soon announce an international competition, the winner of which will be commissioned to compose a work to be performed by the group in 2013.

As part of the Brandeis commu-nity, BOLLI members can continue to enjoy on-campus performances by this splendid group.
Council News

by Bonnie Alpert

Joel Kamer remains as Council Chair and Myrna Cohen as Secretary. The new officers are Mike Segal (Chair-Elect) and Ed Finerty (Financial Liaison). Two task forces were appointed, one for marketing the BOLLI program, headed by Carol Fischman, and the second for considering a revised class time schedule, headed by Bob Lebowitz.

The annual meeting will be held on May 23rd.

Teaching is the profession that teaches all the other professions. Want to try it out? Proposals for Spring ’12 are due 11/25. If you intend to submit, let us know by 11/4. For more information, contact Alorie Parkhill at aloriebp@verizon.net

Curriculum Committee

The Banner wishes to announce some changes to our staff.

First, after eight years of hard work, our friend and colleague Tamara Chernow has decided to leave the Banner.

All of us on the Banner staff have valued Tamara's sharp eye, incisive commentary, and outside-the-box thinking. It was Tamara Chernow who introduced new columns such as Classroom Highlights, which showcased popular Study Group Leaders, and Let the Good Times Roll, which brought community points of interest worth visiting to the attention of our readers.

The job of chief editor is more than merely finding misspellings, typos, and grammatical errors. It is more than blue-pencilling words so that an article can fit on the page. The difficult aspect of the job is helping our authors make their point in a cogent manner. I am always delighted, but no longer surprised, when an author sees his article in print and calls me aside to say, “You make me look good.” The accolade rightly belongs to Tamara Chernow. We will miss her.

Tamara remains a friend to the Banner. In fact, she is the author of the article in this issue on the Alfred Hitchcock seminar run this past summer by Prof. Billy Flesch.

Taking over Tamara's role on the Banner, beginning with this issue, will be co-editor Carole Grossman. Carole has worked alongside Tamara for six years. Naomi Schmidt will assume the role of co-editor with Carole. Joining the Banner, also with this issue, will be Susan Posner. Susan broadens our capabilities with her computer expertise. — Richard Glantz, publisher

The BOLLI Banner is published by the Banner Editorial Committee:

Carole Grossman, Co-Editor
Richard Glantz, Publisher
Susan Posner, Archivist
Phil Radoff, Staff Writer
Naomi Schmidt, Co-Editor
Andy Thurnauer, Secretary

Len Heier, photographer
Bonnie Alpert, Council liaison

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Rapaporte Seminars: The Summer Intensives

Islamic Republic of Iran
by Dianne Hoaglin

Understanding Iran’s current political situation and trying to gauge its impact internationally pose challenges for even experienced observers in the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East. During an informative, interactive, and lively Rapaporte Seminar in June, Dr. Naghmeh Sohrabi of the Crown Center helped participants to place these issues in their historical context.

The current political structure and surrounding culture have roots in the 1953 coup, which overthrew a popular leader and led to the subsequent rule of the Shah. The revolution of 1979 brought about the formation of the Islamic Republic with Khomeini as Supreme Leader until his death in 1989, while the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and a reconstruction period in the 1990s led to the election of reformers in 1997 and 2001. This was followed by Ahmadinejad’s entry into national politics in 2005 and the rigged election of 2009. Dr. Sohrabi led the participants through this fascinating but complex web of influences in presenting the Iranian government’s organization and ambiguities and its interaction with the world community. The depth and breadth of her knowledge and her explanations, often enlivened with anecdotes, were extraordinary.

During the latter part of the week, Dr. Sohrabi focused on Iran’s society and culture, particularly the role of women, as well as questions about its pursuit of nuclear enrichment, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s current political position, and how the Arab Spring is affecting Iran. Dr. Sohrabi encouraged questions, which she answered with thoroughness, expertise, and humor. She even provided an extensive book list to guide participants in their future reading about Iran.

Understanding Contemporary Art
by Carol Fischman

A tour of the exhibit Regarding Painting at the Rose Art Museum by the exhibit’s curator, museum Director of Academic Programs Dabney Hailey, began a lively seminar exploring contemporary art. Hailey used the works of contemporary artists represented in the Rose Museum collection as a starting point. On day one the class had a chance to get up close to the museum’s works by De Kooning, Motherwell, Johns, Lichtenstein, Warhol, and others. Looking at Lichtenstein’s painting based on a cartoon and Warhol’s print of a news wire photograph, raised the question, “Is this Art?”

To help find answers to questions like this, Hailey asked the class to practice “looking.” She guided the class with questions such as:

- “What is going on here?”
- “What do you see that makes you think that?”
- “What else can you find?”
- “What is the artist trying to show us?”
- “How did the artist create this work?”

The answers to these questions prompted a great variety of emotional and intellectual reactions to the works being viewed. While not every piece evoked an “I love it” response, what evolved over the week was a way of trying to understand and appreciate contemporary art by looking at each work from the standpoint of its social/political context, the artist’s intent, the artistic gesture, and its aesthetic.

The genres of contemporary art included in the course were post-WW II Abstract Expressionism as well as Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Graffiti Art, Representational Art, Performance Art, Video Art, and Photography.

The enthusiastic reactions from class participants can be summed up by Linda Laredo, who said, “This class has deepened my perception of contemporary art. Hailey’s method of teaching-by-looking allows you to hear what other people see and opens you up to seeing more.”

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September 2011
ANNUAL MEETING

by Naomi Schmidt

Flowers on each table, a BOLLI slide show, and an array of food greeted the approximately 150 attendees at this year’s annual meeting in May. After a half hour of “schmoozing,” the official program began with a tribute to Mary Ann Sliwa, in which Sharon conveyed our appreciation for all that she has contributed to the program over the past few years. A standing ovation by the audience expressed the sincere gratitude felt by all of us.

Joel Kamer then thanked retiring Council members, Neil Bernstein, Beth Davis, and Bob Pill, and introduced the three newly elected Council members, Bonnie Alpert, Carol Fischman, and Ed Finerty. The standing committee reports that followed brought us up to date on the past year’s accomplishments of the Curriculum Committee, Study Group Support Committee, Membership Committee, Lunch and Learn Committee, and the new Gift Funds Committee.

The report that garnered the most questions was that of Mike Segal, Financial Liaison, in which he showed us the FY 2011 budget for the year ending June 30, and the proposed FY 2012 budget, which covers the next academic year. Total revenue is expected to be $374,835, of which $296,035 will come from tuition and fees, $57,000 will be drawn from the Endowment Fund, and $21,800 will come from other income sources. Mike noted that drawing from the Endowment Fund is necessary now that we no longer have revenue from the Osher or Werner Dannhauser funds. Both Mike and Myra Snyder, chair of the Gift Funds Committee, stressed how important it is to keep the Endowment Fund growing from its current value of $1,300,000 to our goal of $2,000,000.

Joel Kamer’s Council Chair report reviewed all the positive changes that have taken place this year, including the move to our own facility at Turner Street, the addition of a third day of classes, the start of Enhancement activities, the fact that our endowment is no longer “under water,” and the support for BOLLI expressed by new Brandeis President, Fred Lawrence.

Finally, during the Q&A period that concluded the meeting, questions centered on plans for increasing BOLLI membership numbers and the possibility of a revised schedule that would eliminate an 8:30 start to the day. Regarding membership, the answer is that we are currently at an equilibrium that is close to our capacity, and that although we continue to try to attract new members to balance out those who leave and to bring up the Spring semester numbers, we need to think carefully about how many members we want to have without losing our BOLLI “conviviality.”

As the meeting ended, we wished each other a pleasant summer and looked forward to the Rapaporte seminars and other activities that will be taking place before we meet again for classes in September.

Gift Funds Committee

On Sept. 21st, we will hold our first Parlor Meeting of the year, hosted by Bob and Helen Lebowitz with SGL Carol Shedd doing a teaching to kick off the meeting. We are delighted to report that the word is spreading about Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA). Among member leaders who have taken advantage of the CGA are Ron and Sandi Levy, Joel and Jane Kamer, and Barry and Elizabeth David. We plan to run a campaign during the Fall semester by letter and follow-up phone calls. If you have any questions, please contact Myra Snyder at Bailey-sny@comcast.net.
Hitchcock Up Close

by Tamara Chernow

BOLLI’s favorite Shakespeare professor treated us to a change of pace this summer when he led a Rapaporte Seminar focusing on the films of Alfred Hitchcock. For six years Billy Flesch has challenged and delighted BOLLI members with his knowledge of Shakespeare’s plays and, by popular demand, returned this August to introduce us to Hitchcock’s vision in his long career as a director.

Hitchcock’s career spanned the years from 1922 to 1976 during which time he directed 67 films and two television series. He began directing silent movies, continued through black-and-white “talkies,” and finally to color film and wider screen “Vista-Vision.” From the 1930’s until 1968 he became adept at getting around the Hayes Code, a set of industry moral censorship guidelines.

We learned about cinematography techniques, the director’s role in movies, and behind-the-scenes “tricks” that resulted in edge-of-the-seat moments for viewers. Hitchcock’s films combine entertainment, quirkiness, surprise and scariness, often with some comic moments added. Billy focused on the film North by Northwest but included scenes from The Thirty-nine Steps and Notorious. He compared Hitchcock’s visual intelligence to that of a great painter and his storytelling genius to that of Shakespeare.

Hitchcock has been quoted as saying that movies are “the drama in life with the dull bits left out”—but perhaps that statement should be amended to include “and some extra perilous bits thrown in.”

Billy’s wide ranging knowledge of his topic and the members’ eager participation combined to make a very satisfying experience. We are now looking forward to his next seminar in January on Shakespeare’s The Life and Death of Richard III.

Alumni College

by Carole Grossman

Would you like to relive the college classroom experience without required reading, papers, or exams? Twenty-two BOLLI members were among the two hundred Brandeis alumni, parents, guests, and National Committee members fortunate enough to do that for one day, on June 10, at Brandeis University’s annual Alumni College. A selection of four classes was available to each participant from among the eight hour-long sessions prepared by Brandeis faculty members. Topics included areas in the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences, with examples ranging from a participatory workshop in dance and movement to a talk by a serious novelist who decided to write popular fiction under a pseudonym, and from a discussion of ways to ensure high-performance health care to a description of new methods of teaching Biology. Also available were sessions on creative civic-problem solving, Kenya after colonialism, Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews, and the roots of globalization. Spirited question and answer periods followed each program, as well as book signings and sales.

Intellectual stimulation was enhanced by culinary treats in the form of a wonderful buffet breakfast and a choice of gourmet boxed lunches. These breaks provided opportunities to discuss the programs, socialize, and visit the BOLLI information table to learn about our program from Ilana and Membership Committee volunteers. Gifts of a Brandeis pen and notebook will serve as reminders of an exciting time. At only $35 per person for the entire day, this event is the best bargain in town, and I advise you to watch for the announcement of Alumni College in 2012!
Introducing Erin Clark Zaremba

By Naomi Schmidt

By the time you read this article, some of you will already have met Erin Clark Zaremba, who has joined Sharon and Ilana as our third staff member. I had the pleasure of interviewing Erin for the Banner so that we can introduce her to the rest of you.

A native of Maine, Erin is a graduate of Merrimack College in North Andover, where she also received a Master’s degree in Education. In addition to working at BOLLI, she is currently teaching two on-line courses in Early Childhood Development at the University of Maine. As different as these two activities may appear—covering both ends of the life spectrum—there is a similarity in that her on-line students are also mature adults.

Erin has already gotten a bit of the flavor of BOLLI by sitting in on a New Yorker discussion session and attending two of our summer enhancement activities, and is impressed with the high level of discussion, as well as collegiality of our membership. She appreciates the fact that all of our courses are what the SGLs love to teach, as they are on topics that they are passionate about, something that unfortunately is not always the case in higher education, where teaching assignments are often made by a dean or department head.

In case you are curious about Erin’s last name and email address, she recently acquired the name “Zaremba,” returning from her honeymoon a few days before being asked to come in for a job interview. We wish her congratulations on her marriage and look forward to getting to know more about her as the semester progresses.

Hebrew Conversation Group (Chug Ivri)

Shalom everyone. Since this past April, a group of BOLLI members has been meeting on the second Monday of each month to converse in Hebrew. Members exchange stories, jokes, discuss leading current events, and read aloud from Israeli newspapers, short stories, and novels. While the fluency level varies, members help each other in understanding and learning new words and expressions. At every meeting there is a solid group of at least twelve people who look forward to getting together to speak and improve their Hebrew. New members are always welcome; if you are interested in joining but are hesitant, just come and see for yourself. The Hebrew Discussion Group (Chug Ivri) meets year-long, including the winter intersession and summer. The next meetings are scheduled for Sept. 19, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, and Dec. 12 at 10 A.M.

BOLLI Scene-iors

Cast for Love of One’s Neighbor by Leonid Andreyev, performed May 3:


Front row: Judy Blatt, Pete Reider, Becky Meyers.

Not shown: Leonora Feeney

photo by Ilana Levine
Who Are Our New Members?

We include the list of towns where people are from to help old friends find each other.

Andover
Norman Ginsberg

Jamaica Plain
Gloria Ricles
Robert Ricles
Barbara Stein

Newton
Carol Bard
Dixie Borus
Myrna Franzblau

Wellesley
James Conley
Mary Dalton
Gail Rubin
Harriet Warshaw

Arlington
Monique Frank
Muriel Landenburg

Lexington
Mark Allimansky
Jacob Azerrad
Shelby Kashket
Harriet Noble
John Rudy

Sharon
Miriam Blankstein

West Roxbury
Joan Neisser

Auburndale
Howard Rhodes

Sudbury
Lewis Feder
Jeffrey Levine

Westborough
Mark Tepitsky

Cambridge
Sabina Harris

Lincoln
Laurence Bender
Ruth Bender

West
Linda Cheren
Shirley Gelda

Chestnut Hill
William Brehm
Melvin Klayman
Palma Spunt
Bette Winer

Natick
Bernice Cohen
Brenda Nagel
Ira Nagel
Marilyn Porter
Joan Sherizen
Sanford Sherizen
Karen Wagner

Waban
Joan Klivens
Elizabeth Lieberman
Didier Thomas
Susan Thomas

Westwood
Jennifer Eastman

Dedham
Sandra Tocman

Waltham
Laurel Brody
Mary Ann Byrnes
Cecily Feldman
Wallace Feldman
Barbara Goldberger
Cleo Messinger

Winchester
Jerry Shapiro
Reva Shapiro

Framingham
Barbara Gainsboro
Susan Mann
Shifra Rosoff

Wayland
Lorraine Low
Ivan Lubash

Groton
Alexander Woodie

Needham
Marilyn Brooks
David Granovsky
Joanne Kahalas

Who Are Our New Committee Chairs?

Council Chair Joel Kamer appointed Neil Bernstein and Steve Messinger to head up the new Enhancement Committee and Richard Mansfield to chair the Membership Committee.
SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER
For pricing and tickets, call 781-736-3400

Sun., Sept. 25 (7 P.M.)
Dinosaur Annex “Dissolving Boundaries”
Much of today’s contemporary music has become a genuine blend of various styles and genres: classical, vernacular, pop, jazz, non-Western, etc. A leading exponent in new music, Dinosaur Annex will present a program showcasing some fine examples of such amalgams. Works by David Sanford, Derek Bermel, Gabriela Ortiz, and Mario Lavista.

Sat., Oct. 1 (8 P.M.)
Bob Nieske 4
Music by Chants
Bob Nieske, bass
Phil Grenadier, trumpet and flugelhorn
Jon Hazilla, percussion
Dave Tronzo, slide guitar and gizmos

Wed., Oct. 12 (noon)
Lydian String Quartet
Mozart Quartet in D Maj., K. 499
John Harbison Quartet No. 2
This event will take place in the Mandel Center for the Humanities

Sat., Oct. 15 (8 P.M. concert; 7 P.M. lecture)
Lydian String Quartet
Judith Gordon, guest pianist
Mozart Quartet in D Maj., K.499
John Harbison Quarter No. 2
Amy Beach Piano Quintet
David Rakowski In8*

ROSE ART MUSEUM
Beginning Thu. Oct. 27
The Rose Art Museum is excited to celebrate its 50th anniversary with two exhibitions.

1961-62: Art at the Origins
Works of art from the permanent collection created during the first full year of the museum’s existence—academic year 1961-62—a pivotal period in American and art history

Collecting Stories
Celebrates the subsequent acquisition history—bold purchases and notable gifts that have shaped the museum

GOLDMAN-SCHWARTZ ART CENTER
Wed. Sept. 21 (5–7 P.M.)
Opening Reception
New Work from Abroad and Home
Members of the class of 2012 who studied abroad this summer, with support from the Brandeis Arts Council and the Remis Fund, exhibit new work.

WOMEN’S STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER
Through Sept. 23
Floors and Ceilings
Juried exhibition of original work by nine Brandeis students exploring gender

Oct. 11–Dec. 20
Embodied
Laurie Kaplowitz, painter
Stacy Latt Savage, sculptor
Kaplowitz paints iconic heads of women, adorned with the flora and fauna of the earth, that reference a universal impulse to ornament oneself.
Savage’s figurative sculptures are stripped of all embellishment and adornment to expose an underlying emotional core.