Peter Slowik, head of the string department at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Artistic Director for Credo Chamber Music, has an international reputation as a leading artist-teacher of string playing at the highest level. He has been a featured performer and teacher at five International Viola Congresses, has performed as viola soloist throughout the United States, and recently presented master classes in China, Australia, and New Zealand.

His viola students have won prizes in numerous competitions and perform in such major American orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and National Symphony, and hold university appointments throughout the country.

Peter will offer Monteux participants a variety of professional development opportunities this year. These will include mock auditions; chamber music, strings, and solo master classes; orchestral audition preparation classes; and interactive sessions with conductors and ensembles to help them “learn the language” of string players, enhancing their vocabulary of techniques and terminology.

Ruth Ochs is now in her sixth season as music director of the Princeton University Sinfonia, and in her third season as music director of the Westminster Community Orchestra, also based in Princeton. Both ensembles have grown significantly under her leadership. Ruth is also resident conductor for the Westminster Conservatory of Music’s faculty concert series. Previously she was music director of the Austin Philharmonic and conducted the top ensembles of the University of Texas String Project. Also a diversified musician, Ruth has performed as pianist and cellist throughout the United States and in Europe. Ruth holds degrees in music from Harvard University and the University of Texas at Austin. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in musicology at Princeton University.

Ruth Ochs studied as a conducting fellow at The Pierre Monteux School for six summers under the tutelage of Maestro Michael Jinbo, during which time she also served as orchestra assistant and librarian. As the Conducting Associate, Ruth will assist Maestro Jinbo and offer participants individual professional development guidance on selected technique and performance matters.

Foundation Receives Thomas Bequest

Late last fall, the Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation received a bequest in the amount of $120,000 from two of its long-time contributors and concertgoers, Joseph B. Thomas IV (1917-2007) and Etel Thomas (1925-2008). Our board, staff, and friends will feel the loss of both “Tommy” and Etel for many ensuing seasons, but the Thomas legacy will help keep their memories alive well into the future.

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We apologize for any errors.

The Thomas’ were not only enthusiastic supporters of the Foundation, but musicians in their own right. Tommy began his musical “career” on the accordion, then graduated to the piano, flute, recorder, classical guitar, and, at age 87, to the violin. Etel also played the piano and flute.

Tommy and Etel had long associations with many other local music organizations including the MDI Chamber Festival, MDI Arts Committee, Surrey Opera Company, and the Arcady Music Festival. Often seen at high school plays, recitals, and contra dances, the Thomas’ were strong supporters of all the arts, with interests ranging from professional to amateur productions.

Tommy was a New Yorker by birth, an architect by profession, and an avid skier and pilot. He is survived by two sons and a daughter from his first marriage. Danish-born Etel, was trained as a nurse and later served with British Intelligence. The couple married in 1955.

Tommy and Etel were world travelers, Continued on Page 3

In memoriam

Gretchen Snedeker (1983-2008)

It was with great sadness that we learned of the recent untimely death of Gretchen Snedeker (horn, 2005) on April 10 while driving to Colgate University where she taught as an adjunct professor.

Gretchen was close to a number of Monteux musicians and beloved by many others. Gretchen Snedeker was within weeks of earning her masters degree at Eastman School of Music when she died. We at the Pierre Monteux School offer our sincere condolences to her parents, Kathy and John; to her fiancé, Adam Smith; and...
When I think back to the five summers that I spent in Hancock, I immediately think of how invaluable that time was, not only to my development as a conductor, but also to me as a person. What an incredible opportunity it was to stand in front of a great orchestra several times a week and be immersed in such practical learning of a difficult craft. I’ll never forget the first time I took the podium on a cold June night (yes, I meant cold in June!) in my first summer there. While I was, of course, a nervous wreck, there was something about that stage, the encouraging look of the members in the orchestra, the incredibly insightful words of Maestro Jinbo (right away!), and just the whole aura of a room that had so many special memories already created long before I got there, that I couldn’t help but feel welcomed and right at home. What makes the Monteux School so unique from all the other educational experiences I’ve had is that I still felt the same way five summers later! That’s why I continued to come back again and again.

I vividly recall the end of the first week of my first summer at the school, when I had already watched the Maestro help 20 different conductors in 20 different ways, giving each of us exactly what we needed, whether it was a simple technique correction, or breaking a bad habit (we all have those), or getting us to dig deeper in the music, or opening up our ears and hearts to something in the score, or most importantly, opening up our ears and our awareness of our own selves, our OWN hearts and souls. I was thrilled and overwhelmed, and little did I know then that it was just the beginning.

Over the next five summers, I learned so much about conducting, people skills, preparation, humility, leading, and — a great deal about myself. I discovered who I was during my time in Maine. Maestro Jinbo has many gifts as a teacher, but his greatest strength is getting us to dive deeply into who we are, to have strong reasons for our convictions, and to use our unique personalities, our own strengths, to become the best musicians and conductors we can become. I find myself constantly using lessons learned at the Monteux School with my youth orchestra musicians and professional orchestras I’ve conducted. I know without a doubt that if Maestro Monteux were with us today, he would be so proud of what his “summer school in Hancock” has now become.

Continued from Page 2

visiting 53 countries, and Tommy’s association with Maine began with his mother’s move to Somesville when he was a young boy. Passionate about the beauty of the area, the importance of sustaining it, and the opportunities offered by alternative energy options, he and Etel decided to move to MDI on a permanent basis in 1965.

To acknowledge the significance of the Thomas bequest to our efforts to provide one of the best orchestral training opportunities available for early career conductors and instrumentalists, we are pleased to add their names as the first to appear in our list of contributors in the new category of “Pioneer.” Although we are unable to personally express to our dear friends and benefactors — Tommy and Etel Thomas — the great sense of gratitude we feel upon receiving their bequest, we are confident that their memory will live on in the opportunities their gift will provide to the many fine conductors and instrumentalists who take part in the Monteux School experience in years to come.

In Memoriam

Gretchen Snedecker ('05)
(1983-2008)

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Gretchen was close to a number of Monteux musicians and beloved by many others. Monteux School offer our sincere condolences to her parents, Kathy and John; to her fiance, Adam Smith; and to her mentor at Eastman, Peter Kurau.

At the Podium: Jason Seber

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Sunday Symphony Concerts  ■ June 22 – July 27  ■  5 pm
Wednesday Chamber Music  ■ June 25 – July 23  ■  7:30 pm
FREE Children’s Concert
— Peter and the Wolf —
Monday, July 14  ■  10:00 a.m.

The Forest Studio, off US Highway 1 in the Village of Hancock
www.monteuxschool.org  422-3280  admin@monteuxschool.org