

Musical Treasure Chest #31

[WMHT-FM Live Sun Dec 22 @ 6pm](#)

This week Rob Brown, WMHT-FM's Music Director, asked me to guest host with him a WMHT-FM Live performance of a recording from the Siena College Music Series dating from 2004. I inherited the Series from its founder Peter Haley, who developed a truly world class set of four annual concerts in the Siena College Chapel that featured some incredible performers and ensembles. Off the top of my head some of the musicians he brought that stand out include Hermann Prey (one of my favorite baritones of all time), Kevin McMillan (another fabulous baritone), Harolyn Blackwell, soprano; Aprile Milo, soprano and Pavlina Dokovska, piano (and a popular return artist on the Series). Holy Cow! What a roster! And what a legacy to live up to when Peter gave me the Series to run in 2000.

I was director of it until 2007 when the Series was discontinued. I tried to put my own stamp on it, including taking a few concerts off campus and combining with other musical organizations to increase the scope of what could be presented. In preparing for the WMHT broadcast, Rob nudged me to revisit the programs that I produced during my tenure. In retrospect, I am pretty proud of what the Series offered during those years: Anonymous 4 (at the now-raised St Patrick's in Watervliet), REBEL (at Troy Music Hall), Hesperus, and the Four Nations Ensemble. I established a Glimmerglass Opera Young Artist component, and we hosted Joseph Kaiser (he was still a baritone then, not having made the Kenneth Branagh 2006 *Magic Flute* film as a tenor yet!), Michael Slattery (simply one of the great early music tenors), and a production of Thomas Arne's opera *Alfred* with the entire cast drawn from Young Artists at Glimmerglass. We also did a series of great organists concerts in conjunction with the American Guild of Organists and presented Huw Lewis (and commissioned a new work for him to play by composer/organist Alfred Fedak) and Mary Preston. The Series also brought in some native Capital Region artists who have gone on to international music careers: Jonathan Chu, violin (who has been a member of both the Philadelphia Orchestra and Boston Symphony) and Clancy Newman, cello (who won the Naumburg International Competition and is a recipient of the prestigious Avery

Fisher Career Grant). And, one of the projects that is dearest to my heart, we presented a performance of the Shostakovich Symphony No 14 at the Troy Music Hall, with Phyllis Curtin, the soprano who sang the American premiere of the piece in 1971 in our audience!

Rob selected for this Sunday's WMHT Live broadcast an appearance by **violinist Monica Huggett and lutenist Richard Savino**. This performance was truly a great one. Monica is one of the world's leading baroque violinists, and she plays, not only with great virtuosity and command, but also with refulgent artistry and passion. The program encompasses wonderful repertory from the very early baroque to late classical, a veritable journey through the development of the violin sonata. Richard is an amazing partner, quietly virtuosic, supporting her playing in every way and yet not shrinking at all when the musical spotlight is on him. I remember this concert well, and the thrill of watching them play.

For today's listening I thought I would give you a taste of Monica and Richard together in a delicious musical offering of **Giuliani and Paganini**. You will have a chance to hear them play more of this repertory on the broadcast as well.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6KQto_BNg4