



Performers for the chapter's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event are (from left) Irina Feoktistova, Pianist; Takaoki Onishi, Baritone; and Ola Rafalo, Mezzo Soprano.

## A Golden Celebration

THE BARRINGTON CHAPTER OF THE LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO TURNS 50

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 15 at the Medinah Country Club, members and guests of the Barrington and Northwest Suburban Chapter of the Lyric Opera of Chicago gathered for an outstanding musical program and luncheon celebration. Baritone Takaoki Onishi, Mezzo Soprano Ola Rafalo, and Pianist Irina Feoktistova offered one of the greatest programs in recent history for the chapter. Many of those who attended are from Barrington and Inverness.

In a Lyric Opera Chapter, opera lovers of all ages get together to enjoy lectures, musical performances, events, volunteer opportunities, and each other's company. Each Chapter is chartered with the dual purpose of providing educational programs in their communities and raising money to support community-engagement and educational programs at Lyric Opera of Chicago. To learn more about Lyric Chapters, visit [www.lyricopera.org](http://www.lyricopera.org).



Chapter President Mary Robins



Jamie and Judge John Curry



Dr. Mark and Susan Gibson



Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary are (from left) Mitsuo Matsuzawa, Naomi Matsuzawa, Motoko Lawrence, Alice Grogan, Barbara Long, and Yumiko Cole.



Chapter members (from left) Toni Savadel, Judy Larson, Walter Ahern, Judy Larson, Mary Robins, Beverly Bystricky, and Scott Wallace





Ron Velleuer conducts students at a rehearsal at Station Middle School.

## Encore!

AWARD-WINNING MUSIC TEACHER RON VELLEUER AND HIS WIFE HOLLY RUN BARRINGTON MUSIC INSTITUTE, FORMERLY SUZUKI MUSIC SCHOOL OF BARRINGTON, SHARING THE PROGRAM HE GREW UP PARTICIPATING IN WITH A NEW GENERATION OF STUDENTS

GROWING UP WITH A PIANO TEACHER for a mom, who gave lessons inside the family's Barrington home, Ron Velleuer was used to hearing classical piano repertoire from morning until night, falling asleep to the delicate notes and inevitable missteps that come with learning a challenging piece.

"Music was a way of life, as natural as the air you breathe," Velleuer said. Early on, he realized that music is an avenue for expression. "It speaks in a voice from the soul, in a language everyone can understand instantly," he said. "It's a chance to communicate from the heart, to take what's unspeakable and give it a voice. It includes a wide range of emotion, from joy to pathos, all expressed without having to say a word."

Velleuer runs Barrington Music Institute, formerly Suzuki Music School of Barrington, together with his wife Holly. The program gives kids opportunities outside of school to take private lessons—violin, viola, cello, bass, flute and piano are taught—and to participate in repertoire groups,

youth orchestras, chamber ensembles, and summer camps.

Repertoire groups are aged-based and allow children taking private lessons to play the pieces they are working on individually with a group of students, giving them the opportunity to learn from each other, benefit from repetition, and build skills over time, Velleuer said. Barrington Youth Symphony Orchestra (BYSO) is geared toward high school and advanced middle school students; and Prelude Orchestra serves as a stepping stone to BYSO for elementary and middle school students.

Members of Prelude Orchestra and BYSO rehearse at Barrington Middle School Station Campus for one hour and 15 minutes on Monday nights. "It fits into their life and does not own it," Velleuer said. Repertoire groups meet for 45 minutes, in the early evening, on Wednesdays at Village Church of Barrington. Private lessons take place at the Village Church, and in the homes of staff or students at pre-arranged times. "It's about

whatever works out conveniently for the students and teachers," he said.

### PERFORMANCES AND TOURING

Children perform at community concerts, recitals, and tours. Repertoire and symphony players have gone on tour to Israel and Ireland. In honor of BYSO's 10th anniversary, a tour of Italy in 2019 will place students before audiences in Florence, Venice, and Rome. For those who wish to join them on the trip, auditions for Prelude and BYSO will be held at Barrington Middle School Station Campus on Monday, May 21 at 7 p.m.

Barrington Music Institute's charity arm, Barrington Suzuki Strings, is a 501C3, not-for-profit organization that supports its public performances, tours, and scholarships. "We have a very generous board," he said. "We never want to leave out a student because of finances. We always figure out a way to make it happen for that student."

Music can be transformative and life-changing for children, Velleuer said. "It can open doors for them. They can make connections with other people. There's a lot of power in that. It's a lot of what Barrington Youth Symphony Orchestra is about, opportunities and creating experiences that are special and formative for them."

To become an accomplished musician takes patience and time, something kids in the electronic age of instant gratification are not used to, he said. "To achieve a level of excellence and understand what it takes to be excellent requires consistent hard work, over time. It doesn't happen instantaneously. You have to invest a lot of years in the bank of experience before you can draw on that return. When they get to the reward, it's special, very unique."



Ron Velleuer and his sons (from left) Adam, Josh, and Andrew



*Young string performers play at Barrington's White House, Nov. 2017.*



*Repertoire performance by young string students.*

## FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER

Velleuer spent his childhood and teenage years mastering the piano, trumpet, and violin with multiple private teachers. He studied violin with Suzuki Music School of Barrington, under the tutelage of its founder, Marianela McCammon. Suzuki instruction, named after its creator, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, emphasizes starting children on an instrument as early as age three, before they learn to read, Velleuer said. "It's learning by ear and rote, referred to as 'the mother tongue method,' like learning to listen and speak before you learn to read." He noted that young children's brains are more malleable than older kids. Therefore, the younger a child starts learning to play an instrument, the further skilled they are likely to become at it.

"A misnomer about Suzuki is kids never learn to read music," he said. "That's not true. The first thing kids focus on is good position. They learn to play in tune, play songs by memory, to listen and play before they learn how to read." Traditional instruction is not "super-focused on starting children at 3 years old," he said. With the traditional method, learning to read music is emphasized earlier in the process. "Students can start at any age, at any time," he said. "A good teacher uses a hybrid approach, takes the best elements of both to give kids what they need."

## LAUNCHING A YOUTH ORCHESTRA

In 2009, Velleuer returned to the Suzuki Music School of Barrington to launch the Barrington Youth Orchestra. By then, McCammon had long

retired—Betty Mueller took her place—and Velleuer had become an accomplished high school orchestra director, with master's degrees from Northern Illinois University in Music Education and Voice, as well as Education Administration. He also racked up honors. Velleuer has been nominated three times for a "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" award and was named "My Most Inspirational Teacher" in 2006 by the Distinguished Citizens Society of Greater Chicago. Plus, he had his own experiences to draw on performing in orchestras, bands, and singing professionally.

"When students study with Ron Velleuer—whether privately or in a larger ensemble, orchestra or band—there is a quiet sense of confidence that kids feel under his tutelage. I have seen it year after year," says Peggy Crawford, retired founder of the Barrington Children's Choir. "Working together in schools throughout the district and within our own private organizations, I reveled at his timeless efforts toward our combined musical presentations. Ron's special gift to children is quiet growth, one with room to take chances on something that may or may not be successful...He allows for kids to experiment with defeat. And because of his confidence in them—and the chances they take—they always become winners because they 'tried.' And those chances make them amazing! It is a special quality, to have someone hold such extreme confidence in the hundreds of artists he teaches, daily and year after year, is one not seen in most professions. We are lucky to have Ron Velleuer

and all he brings to our community."

Velleuer's motivation for launching a youth symphony at the Suzuki School was to become more involved with his sons, Adam and Josh, who took lessons there. "I helped coach their baseball and football teams and thought, why don't I do something for them I have expertise in?" He and Holly's other children, Rachel and Andrew, are also musical. Once Velleuer added wind and percussion instruments, the orchestra became a symphony; resulting in the name change to Barrington Youth Symphony Orchestra.

The following summer, Velleuer added Barrington Summer String Camp to the school's programming. In 2015, he and Holly took over the Suzuki Music School of Barrington from Mueller, who retired. They changed the name to Barrington Music Institute, a rebranding indicative of its combining the best of Suzuki and traditional instruction to bring out optimal performance in students. The couple does it all while working full-time—he is orchestra director at Deerfield High School and she teaches music at St. Mark's Day School in Barrington Hills—thanks to their highly qualified staff of music teachers. Two of them happen to be former students of Ron's; and another is his mother, Helen.

"I was a part of the Barrington Music Institute for the better part of 10 years," said Shelby Sanders, 21, a freelance musician, producer, and vocalist. "I played cello and sang in many events organized by Ron Velleuer and his team. Playing in the orchestra allowed me to tap into the full potential of who I am not only as a musician, but also as



an individual. I was taught to be good for myself, in order to be good for others. I learned so many valuable lessons alongside some of the most fun and challenging music I've ever taken on. I would not be the musician I am today without BMI."

Slade Stone, 24, an art director, trained at the school throughout her youth. Now she teaches there. "Anyone can be passionate about music, and anyone can be passionate about teaching," she said. "Ron is passionate about both. He doesn't care if you're a superstar protégée musician or you can't tell an oboe from an elbow. He treats everyone with respect and tries his hardest to make sure you'll enjoy your time in his classes."

Visit [www.barringtonmusicinstitute.org](http://www.barringtonmusicinstitute.org) to learn more. To support the not-for-profit organization, make checks payable to Barrington Suzuki Strings, P.O. Box 68, Barrington, IL, 60011.

*Melanie Kalmar is a freelance writer specializing in business and human-interest features. When she's not writing, she enjoys spending time with her family.*



*The Barrington Youth Symphony performs in Dublin, Ireland.*



Jonathan Silver (on left) and Scott Perlman (in front, right) review a scene from the filming of "Andover".

## Once Andover

BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS SCOTT PERLMAN  
RELEASES HIS FIRST FEATURE LENGTH FILM

SCOTT PERLMAN SHARED some of his experiences surrounding the making of his first film, a feature-length comedy/drama/romance story that he also wrote. Quintessential Barrington spoke with Perlman between his coast to coast film festival travels.

**QB: What does it take to become a filmmaker?**

**SP:** I'd say persistence and positivity. Making "Andover" was the hardest thing I've done in my professional life. There were a lot of times when I thought it wasn't going to happen, and it was easy to get discouraged. But, I found that when I was optimistic and proactive, good things happened.

**QB: When did you realize this was your dream?**

**SP:** Ever since I was a little kid, I loved movies. In my junior year of high school, my English teacher showed us the movie, "The Purple Rose of Cairo". It was the first time I enjoyed being in school. After college, I became a stand-up comic, and that was a great introduction to the entertainment business. I loved traveling the country and performing, but

I realized I enjoyed the writing aspect of comedy more than performing, so I focused on writing. I wrote a note to myself that I would write, direct, and write the music for a feature film by the time I was 30 and kept it in my wallet. I got everything right except the time frame.

**QB: What did you study at college, and did it help with the art of making a film, or, is this a whole new direction for you?**

**SP:** I studied psychology and creative writing at the University of Iowa. Iowa has an amazing creative writing department, and my teachers were incredibly supportive of my work. They gave me the confidence to go down this road.

**QB: You worked at M. J. Miller & Co. in Barrington while in high school and then college. What lessons did you learn from its owner, Mike Miller?**

**SP:** Mike has been a mentor and a father figure to me. He is one of the most generous, and helpful people I have ever met. I don't think I would have

graduated from college if not for Mike's support and influence, and it was in college that I discovered my love of writing. What impressed me the most about Mike was that he didn't have 'customers', he had tons and tons of friends who all bought jewelry from him because they respect and trust him.

**QB: Tell us about the highs and lows of making your first feature-length film.**

**SP:** The first screening of the movie was a high. It was at the Director's Guild Theatre in Los Angeles. The room was packed, and they had to turn people away. It felt like the culmination of my life's work had been realized. As far as a low... We found a town just outside LA that worked perfectly, it had an insurance office, town square, even an art fair. It was a dream. Were able to shoot in their library, we just had to be out before they opened at noon, which was fine because we needed to take advantage of the other great spots. With one shot left, the clock struck noon. Rather than letting us finish, we got the boot. Not just out of the library, out of the whole town. Jonathan Silverman [the male lead in the film] said in his lifetime of filming this was a first. In their defense, we did agree to be out by noon. At the time I was horrified, I thought my movie had died, but it all worked out, we found other places to shoot and made up for the lost time. If you look carefully, you can see that a one of the library scenes is shot in two different locations.

**QB: How did the idea of the story for "Andover" come to you? Are there any subtle themes behind the cloning concept in the story?**

**SP:** When I was in high school, my dad died, and I would fantasize about being able to bring him back. That, and my love of movies like "Groundhog Day", are what shaped the story. "Andover" is



Scott Perlman and an actor on set.





Don't miss the June 2 and June 3 matinee showing of "Andover" at the Catlow Theater in Barrington at 116 West Main Street. The matinees run from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

about the process of losing someone you love and trying to move on. The main character, Adam, who is played brilliantly by Jonathan Silverman (from "Weekend at Bernie's") goes through some extremes in hopes of putting off dealing with the inevitable.

**QB:** *Did you have to pitch the idea to anyone, such as the actors, to gain their buy-in?*

**SP:** I pitched the movie hundreds of times. To investors, actors, the cinematographer. Every step of the way I had to sell the idea. I've got my elevator pitch down to a T.

**QB:** *How will "Andover" be distributed?*

**SP:** Andover will have a limited theatrical release, opening in May at a theatre in Los Angeles, and will be available late July on home video through Gravitas Ventures.

**QB:** *What industry awards have you won so far?*

**SP:** "Andover" won Best Picture, the Audience Choice Award, and Best Actress at the Orlando Film Festival; and Best Actor at the Boston Science Fiction Film Festival. In addition, I was nominated for best screenplay and best director at the Orlando Film Festival. I also won an Emmy for the Fox Sports one-hour special "Make 'em Forget"; a Promax award for WB's "The Mummy", and a Page International Screenwriting Gold Prize for "Kate and Edith".

**QB:** *What has to happen for you to consider this film a commercial success?*

**SP:** My goal is for the movie to be profitable for everyone who was involved with it. Outside of money, I recently was at the Phoenix Film Festival and I met a man who saw the movie at the Las Cruces Film Festival in New Mexico and enjoyed the movie so much, he drove to Phoenix to see it again. In that moment, I felt like it was already a success. 