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Academy Art Museum Music at Noon Continues to Grow

Over 20 years ago, Academy Art Museum trustee emeritus Paul Makosky of St. Michaels, then a Museum volunteer with his wife Linda, was asked to revive the Academy Art Museum's Concert Series. Performance space was limited following the 1990 Academy renovation/expansion to the Healy and Lederer Galleries: acoustics were more than a challenge with the galleries' hard walls and even harder wood floors. Drawing on his experience with the Eastern Shore Chamber Music Festival, Makosky called on his contacts with the Peabody Conservatory to bring young, talented musicians to Easton who would play for affordable fees.

He comments, "Chamber music appeals to me because of the intimacy of the experience with the musicians and their music. I enjoy being part of the interactive experience rather than as a spectator in a large hall with a full orchestra."

The Museum's popular "Music at Noon" series began in 1991 with a chamber ensemble or voice performance together with lunch, once a month from October through March each year along with a family oriented, modestly priced program on a late January Sunday afternoon. By the mid 90s, a growing waiting list for the Music at Noon series prompted the offering of the Twilight Dinner Concerts, featuring Broadway music, operetta and Flamenco or Spanish guitar. Again, the goal was to offer reasonably priced concerts presenting a variety of musical fare.

Moving into the Museum's newly constructed performance space in 2001 provided a welcome change. Today, the Music at Noon Series continues to have a waiting list for new subscribers while the Twilight concerts have grown to include cold weather Sunday afternoon programs. Makosky winds down his role as concert coordinator this spring, commenting, "This has been an enjoyable 20 years for me. I have been fortunate to have the support of a number of dedicated volunteers serving on the Performing Arts

Committee led by four gifted committee chairwomen, coupled with very strong, imaginative Museum staff backup. They have provided consistency to the program, making it all possible.” He adds, “I am both pleased and relieved to pass the torch to Denise Nathanson, knowing that she will bring fresh energy and ideas to the program.”

Denise Nathanson became interested in the Museum’s Music at Noon Series as a performing cellist. Although living with her husband Mitch in Oxford, she has performed chamber music extensively throughout Maryland. Denise comments, “This is a rare opportunity to be the Museum’s performing arts coordinator and to inherit such a successful concert series. I hope to build on the success that has already occurred.”

Most recently, Denise was a faculty member at Hood College. She was also a member of the Hood College Chamber Players and performed with them at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center in NYC. Since leaving Hood, she continues to appear as a guest artist. She has been the principal cellist with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra and Summer Opera Theatre Company (DC) and associate principal for the Annapolis Orchestra. Locally, she performed, organized and funded performances at local churches and the Oxford Community Center. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Florida State University and a master’s degree from Catholic University of America.

In addition to performing chamber music, Denise is passionate about educating others about it. She has remained active in both in-school and outreach education in the public and private schools throughout Maryland. She is also a needlepoint instructor at the Museum and is offering two classes at the Museum this spring.

Among the changes Denise hopes to implement in the fall of 2011 to the Museum’s performing arts program are the addition of a “Music and Tea” series, featuring a concert along with high tea, and a Lecture Series on Music. For further information about the Museum’s upcoming lectures concerts, visit [www.academyartmuseum.org](http://www.academyartmuseum.org) or call 410-822-2787.

**CUTLINE: Pictured left to right are Denise Nathanson of Oxford and Paul Makosky of St. Michaels. Makosky is passing the torch to Nathanson as the new Performing Arts Coordinator at the Academy Art Museum.**

