

E T H I C A L O U T L O O K

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Sunday Programs

(for details see page 5)

February 2

"Is This All There Is? Life's First Discoveries"

Dr. Khoren Arisian

Senior Leader

Joseph Marvel Presides

February 9

"Ethical Ambition Is Not An Oxymoron"

Derrick Bell

Professor of Law at NYU

Dr. Khoren Arisian Presides

February 16

"Toward Common Ground: The Humanist Quest and Its Personal Meaning"

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Muriel Berger Presides

February 23

"From State Shinto to Suicide Bombings: The Militarization of Religion"

Curt Collier

Leader at Riverdale/Yonkers Society

Dr. Charles H. Debrovner Presides

WQXR-FM (96.3)

Broadcasts

1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 7:30 am

February 2

"The Times Are Always Changing, So Must We! From Self-Culture to Ethical Culture"

Dr. Khoren Arisian

Senior Leader

February 16

"Season of Desire"

Anne Klaeyesen

Leader Intern

Leader Jean Somerville Kotkin Dies

On Saturday, January 4, after a brief illness, Jean Kotkin died. A long-time Leader of the American Ethical Union and for many years its Executive Director, Vice President of the American Humanist Association, and administrator of the Humanist Institute, Jean was a member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture since 1958, serving on many committees and the Board of Trustees.

She also served on the Board of Governors of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. A memorial will be held at the Society on Saturday, February 22, at 2:00 pm with a reception to follow in the Social Hall. A special March issue of *Ethical Outlook* will feature the life of Jean Somerville Kotkin.



February Happening

Meet the Author on Sunday, February 16. This author is our own Sarah E. Wright, novelist and poet, who will read from her acclaimed book, *This Child's Gonna Live*. Please see page 6 for details.

From the Leader's Desk

Dr. Khoren Arisian

Senior Leader

Of Flux and the Future



First of all, and most importantly, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to members and friends who honored me with your presence at my 70th birthday party at the Society on February 13. What with the lovely classical music for piano and violin featuring young gifted Alex Weill, accompanied on the piano by Gerry Ranck who, along with Anne Klaeyesen, had generously organized this event without notifying me so it would be a surprise (it wasn't!), backed up by other inevitable preparations by the staff with

Paula Sheldon's usual efficient supervision, virtually everything went off without a hitch. Somehow I ended up as my own master of ceremonies, being informally beckoned to the

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Ethical Culture: Who We Are

Richard Kiniry, Leader, Philadelphia Society

Dialogue, November 2002

Here is my description of Ethical Culture:

It is a humanistic, naturalistic, nontheistic, religious movement. Humanistic because we accept that human beings create and live in a human world of feelings, ideas, values, philosophies, groups, and religions. We live in a human-made cultural world. We don’t know what the ultimate meaning of the universe is, and as far as we can tell, it is only within our human world that anyone cares about ultimate meaning. We stay within our human world of relationships and are concerned with its joys and problems.

It is naturalistic because we don’t believe in the supernatural. If it is in our human experience, it is natural, part of the natural reality we inhabit. It may be weird or sublime, but it’s still natural.

It is nontheistic because we can’t prove God one-way or the other, and in fact, it doesn’t matter. With or without God the primary issue of our lives remains, how do we become the best persons we can become, and how can we make the most of our time on this earth?

It is religious because we deal with that part of the human experience that deals with meaning, purpose, and values—religion. I don’t like calling us a religion, even though the government says we are, because religion connotes dogma set in stone. We are an open-ended religious perspective. We worry about each person finding his or her own purpose and fulfillment in the evolving human world. So our limited dogma is open to change when the spirit moves it.

An Ethical Culture Society is a group of people looking for meaning and satisfaction in natural human experience. The group’s purpose is to help members have better lives by creative involvement with the hopes and struggles of others.

President's Notes

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh

Claiming Our Place in the World.

Karen Armstrong opens her book, *The Battle for God*, with the following words:

“One of the most startling developments of the late twentieth century has been the emergence within every major religious tradition of a militant piety



popularly known as “fundamentalism.” Its manifestations are sometimes shocking. Fundamentalists

have gunned down worshippers in a mosque, have killed doctors and nurses who work in abortion clinics, have shot their presidents, and have even toppled a powerful government. It is only a small minority of fundamentalists who commit such acts of terror, but even the most peaceful and law-abiding are perplexing, because they seem so adamantly opposed to many of the most positive values of modern society. Fundamentalists have no time for democracy, pluralism, religious toleration, peacekeeping, free speech, or the separation of church and state.”

The basic premise of the book, which I highly recommend, is that fundamentalism is a reaction to the technological, industrial and scientific revolution of the past four or five hundred years. It is not altogether surprising if you think

about some of the massive changes that have unfolded in just the last 20 to 50 years. We have witnessed an explosion of mobility and communication capability that has the world moving faster and becoming more entwined than ever before. I have often thought that if globalization had a good side, it would be that we were bound to become more dependent on one another and therefore less likely to blow one another up, but the vulnerabilities and fear we have felt during the cold war have given way to a new vulnerability and fear. The new vulnerability and fear seem all the more dangerous, because the new actors on the stage are not large powers. They are small rogue groups and nations, they are loosely organized and hard to locate, and they are adept at using technology against the global village in a way that is, well, terrifying.

It is from the desire to validate and maintain what has come before and what is particular to our own place and time (in other words, anchor ourselves securely in what is known) that humanity frequently comes to grief... .

Joseph Campbell has identified four principal functions of mythology (religion) in his book *The Way of the Animal Powers*:

1. *“To waken and maintain in the individual a sense of wonder and participation in the mystery of this finally inscrutable universe, whether understood in Michelangelo’s way as an effect*

of the will of an anthropomorphic creator, or in the way of our modern physical scientists—and many of the leading oriental religious and philosophical systems—as the continuously created dynamic display of an absolutely transcendent, yet universally immanent ‘mysterium tremendum et fascinans,’ which is the ground at once of the whole spectacle and of oneself.”

2. *“...to fill every particle and quarter of the current cosmological image with its measure of this mystical import.”*

3. *To validate and maintain “whatever moral system and manner of life customs may be peculiar to the local culture.”*

4. *To conduct “individuals in harmony through the passages of human life...”*

It strikes me that of the four functions of myth (religion), the dangerous one, the one that leads inevitably to struggle, war and misery, is the third one. It is from the desire to validate and maintain what has come before and what is particular to our own place and time (in other words, anchor ourselves securely in what is known) that humanity frequently comes to grief on every level, because we live in an ever and evermore changing world. This is, it seems to me, an important aspect of Felix Adler’s construction of a new religion without dogma, believing in democratic principles and scientific inquiry and stressing action, based on our best understanding of history and the moment at hand, in the here

and now. It was meant to always be an open, progressive and evolving religion that invited individuals regardless of faith through its doors for worthwhile discussion and argument about, and action on, critical issues of the time.

I firmly believe that we must continue to open our doors to the community at large and present relevant and provocative programming. Additionally, I think we are challenged to continuously reinterpret our beliefs based on modern challenges. What, for instance, are we to make of things like human cloning? Our beliefs embrace science and progress, but the Raelians pursuit of human cloning as a means to immortality is deeply disturbing as a concept, whether or not they have succeeded in making a clone. Science and technology clearly are not good or bad in and of themselves, but with so many people that are willing to service bad ideas with them, it is not hard to see why there is a reactionary response.

We have a lot to offer to a world that has gotten caught up in bitter dispute over the validation and maintenance of traditional values and customs in the face of an inevitably progressing world. Our message is simple: we need to deal with each new human (and technological) complication in the here and now, through a process of learning and dialogue, and without the blinders of religious dogma. And each decision we make, each action we undertake, has to be based on respect for one another and for life in general.

May the New Year find us with renewed dedication to claiming our very relevant place in this world.

From the Leader's Desk

(continued from page 1)

front of Ceremonial Hall where several wonderful folks arose from their seats one by one to express kind words of praise and appreciation which moved me greatly, although I'm not sure that I deserved most of it! Be that as it may, I thank those who took the trouble to give advance thought to this part of the evening program and others who spoke spontaneously and yet others who later sent holiday cards and notes. I felt comfortable and relaxed, basking in the glow of emotional warmth born of the good feelings that came my way. Again let me confess how pleased I continue to be here at our Society at this particular juncture in its history and at this truly critical time in the history of our country.

A certain recklessness (and restlessness) is abroad in the land, its apogee evident along 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. If 2002, shadowed by 2001, will be painfully remembered as one of the worst in American business history, the last three years taken together will go down mostly as an unmitigated bummer during which more often than not, stocks drifted lower, sometimes noisily, sometimes quietly: 3 consecutive down years for the Dow has happened only twice before in history. The giddy excesses of the prosperous, self-indulgent 1990s is still being wrung out of the economy, leaving a considerable residue of laid-off workers and high-end professionals seeking re-employment, most wondering what the future holds for them. Corporate malfeasance played out some more, the outrageous disconnect between execu-

tive performance and executive compensation remaining a plutocratic fixture on the democratic landscape: even at the 100 worst-performing companies in the S & P 500-stock index, 47 directors and executives walked away with \$5 million or more apiece—just in time for the December holiday shopping season which retailers reported as registering the worst growth in 30 years.

None of the above makes much of a dent in the sunny optimism of the present Administration, which, despite its hard-edged Republican pedigree, strongly believes that deficits don't matter; thus we can keep cutting taxes even if the result is accelerated national indebtedness and diminished revenues as Congress obsequiously increases the government's legal ability to borrow money whenever the White House cracks the whip. Meanwhile tolerance for dissenting views of all kinds keeps shrinking.

Tolerance in even the most open societies does not easily flourish in times of war or the preparation for it. In cultures that are in effect more or less monolithic, tolerance on any scale is barely evident, while it becomes a social necessity the more radically pluralistic a society happens to be. In European history, as rigid religious dogma began to wane by the late 17th and early 18th centuries in the face of rapid scientific, humanist and democratic advance, tolerance grew significantly.

At the moment of this writing (early January, 2003) the Administration's aforementioned dismissal of the importance of budget deficits is again glaringly on the horizon as it prepares to propose the total elimination of taxes on

corporate dividends paid to shareholders, the centerpiece of a roughly \$600 billion euphemistically disguised “economic stimulus” package, yet another boost for the plutocratic 5 percent of taxpayers who will receive over 50% of the consequent tax benefit. Meanwhile, we citizen spectators are also being assured by the prospect of a blitzkrieg—quick war with Iraq that in cost-benefit terms should be considered a bargain at an estimated cost of \$40-60 billion (which would be equivalent to a mere half of the total asset base of the Walton family owners of Wal-Mart stock). Ah well, where else but in America?

No wonder a third of the citizenry is vaguely yet earnestly looking for a better, more generously equitable, less unequal American vision. On Sunday, January 5th I proposed we inaugurate a series of well-conceived content-rich public forums (on weekday evenings) in an effort to affect public opinion toward the end of creating a widespread popular thirst for a fresh, broad progressive social/ethical movement. We need to affect the quality of the day, as Thoreau would characteristically put it, if not of American life and politics as well. Why not? Are we up to it? Let’s at least give it a go!

Sunday Morning Meetings

February 2—“Is This All There Is? Life’s First Discoveries”

Dr. Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader

The world as we know it is a vast ‘given’, but how—and when, and under what circumstances—we find our foot-

ing in it is an unending adventure, full of pitfalls and playfulness. However, some feel that this life, this earth, is not enough, they want more—why? This will not be a presentation about coming-of-age experiences so much as asking, when did we make our first discoveries about things that really mattered in our lives? When did we first realize that our family is something of a small political entity, and that we had to learn to keep our wits about us in relation to its members? When did we first strongly disagree with our parents, and if there was more than one child in the family, did birth order affect how we argued? When did we first get a glimpse of having a distinctive identity? When did we decide we needed to leave the home hearth, or linger there a bit longer? When did we first realize—as we viewed it from afar—that American politics can be a treacherous game, but that one could nonetheless maintain ethical equilibrium in that sphere and actually find it inspiring? How did we decide what life-work to pursue? Under what circumstances did we learn that there are no gods, only humans who create them, or did we opt instead for monotheism? When did we first become aware of our mortality, and did that awareness impact upon the way we chose to live on a day-to-day basis and the values we came to cherish? Above all, how do we see the future, and was there a distinct moment when we saw what we could contribute to the world’s betterment, and failed to do so, or, conversely, gave generously of ourselves and of our talent? What difference did that make to others and how did it enhance our ethical estimate of our personal worth and social value?

February 9—“Ethical Ambition Is Not an Oxymoron”

Derrick Bell
Professor of Law at NYU

Striving to live ethically is a life goal of great value, one that can sometimes lead to success as the world defines it. A life lived ethically, though, is guaranteed to provide salvation of spirit, of mind, of soul. Derrick Bell, law professor and author of numerous books, is noted for having quit his tenured Harvard Law School position in protest against the school’s refusal to grant tenure to a black woman..

February 16—“Toward Common Ground: The Humanist Quest and Its Personal Meaning”

Dr. Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader

Howard Radest, one-time Head of the Ethical Culture and Fieldston Schools and first Dean of the Humanist Institute, is author of the more or less official history of the Ethical Movement in the United States, *Toward Common Ground*. In the January 2003 issue of *Harper’s* magazine appears a delightfully insightful and refreshingly original essay on, *Common Ground: Finding our way back to the Enlightenment* by Thomas de Zengotita, who teaches at the Dalton School in New York and is a *Harper’s* contributing editor. The common ground both authors assert is central to a sane and intelligent world is the universal humanism born of, and espoused by, the 18th century Enlightenment: looking forward to what could be, rather than back to earlier eras for authoritative sanctions; creating the modern

world; upholding humanity's capacity to find its own meaning in this life; establishing an enduring basis for democracy and civil liberties.

Ethical Culture could not have arisen but for this remarkable historical preface and paean to the nobility and responsibility of being human. This is our heritage and we would do well to re-examine and reassert its prominence for ourselves and others. And an appreciative nod to Voltaire!

February 23—"From State Shinto to Suicide Bombings: The Militarization of Religion"

Curt Collier

Leader, Riverdale/Yonkers Society

Religion can serve either as a positive force for life and harmony or as a curse of intolerance and an impetus for savagery. Within the living traditions of most religions lie both possibilities. What are the conditions which precipitate the change from peace to vengeance? We will focus this discussion on the transformation of pastoral Shinto religion prior to WWII into a justification for suicide bombings (kamikaze) towards the end of the war, and what lessons we can draw from this transformation in consideration of our world today.

Film Forum

Barbara Levenson

On February 21 the Ethical Culture Film Forum will present the acclaimed Dutch film *Antonia's Line*, winner of the 1995 Academy Award for best foreign language film. Raising questions about the meaning of spirituality, community, and family, it presents a

Save These Dates—

On March 9, at 11:30 am, we will present the **Ethical Humanist Award** to Senator Jim Jeffords, who courageously left the Republican Party when its policies became irreconcilable with his principles.

On March 29, at 4:30 pm, the Society will present its second annual **Spring Folk Music Concert** featuring the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus with special guests folk trio Stone Soup and singer/songwriter James Durst and hosted by folk legend and award-winning WNYC radio personality Oscar Brand! A celebration supper with the performers will take place following the concert and is open to all. Advance tickets for the concert and supper will be available for purchase in the cafeteria on Sundays during March, by mail and via the membership office. Stay tuned for more information to come!

compelling portrait of four generations of women from the 1940s to the 1990s. Join us to see this remarkable film and participate in the spirited discussion that is certain to follow. Doors open at 6:30 pm and the film begins at 7 pm. Admission: \$3.00 for members and \$4.00 for non-members. Popcorn and beverages are included.

Society's Meet the Author Program

Features One of Its Own: Sarah E. Wright

Joseph Marvel

On Sunday, February 16th, in an afternoon program at 1:30 pm in Room 514, **Sarah E. Wright**, novelist, poet, certified poetry therapist, and Society member will be our featured presenter for a selected reading from her acclaimed book, *This Child's Gonna Live*. The program will consist of a background presentation by Sarah of her experiences growing up in segregated oyster country on the Eastern Shore of Mary-

land, followed by a book reading and signing, and concluded by a follow-up discussion. In the foreword to the book Thulani Davis writes about the Black heroine, Mariah Upshur, "her determination to rescue her family at least from disease and starvation that are killing her children, if not from their whole way of life, a catch-as-catch-can blend of oystering, tenant farming, and day labor during the Great Depression." Sarah's works of power and poetic lyricism have been cited for many awards, and this year she again is the Chairwoman of the Pen & Brush Club's celebration of Black History Month on February 23rd. Join us for a lively interchange and a celebration of overcoming adversity, a life-affirming experience.

Salon: Ethical Capitalism

Mary Domowicz

Our first meeting was a success! We will be breaking into smaller groups if we have more attendees in February.

If you have a desire for dialogue on issues relevant to you personally, join

us first Tuesdays as we explore ethical choices in everyday life and individual theories of existence. Come share how ethics impact your thoughts and actions in relationships, at the workplace, and as a citizen.

This month's topic is Ethical Capitalism: How does competition reconcile itself with fairness and justice?

Is it unethical to sell goods that people don't really need? Or to own stock in mainstream capitalist organizations that pressure workers to practice unethical behavior? How does the work we do impact the world? Tuesday, February 4, 7:00-8:30 pm, Room 514. Register with Ben Bean at (212) 874-5210, x113. Please bring friends who are not members, as lively debate is our goal! Topic for March: **Ethical Education.**

From the Archives

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

A Stone Unturned

The outdoor platform held some of New York City's leading citizens, most dressed in formal clothes and top hats. Mayor Seth Low, Jacob Schiff, the financier and philanthropist, Superintendent of Schools William H. Maxwell were there. So was Felix Adler. The scene had a patriotic flavor: An American flag was draped over the front rail of the platform, a garland festooned across it; a band played. But on that Saturday afternoon in November of 1902, people had gathered to commemorate a large block of stone then suspended in the air from heavy ropes and steadied by a single hand. It was the cornerstone

of the new Ethical Culture School building; its laying a cause for celebration and ceremony. The pioneering school was already twenty-five years old and its reputation secure. Now, it would have a suitable new home.

The Mayor, a college classmate of Adler's, was the first of the dignitaries to address the elegantly dressed audience standing before him. The Mayor noted that the school's innovations—kindergarten, and manual training—had become part of the public school system in the city, and manual training, accepted in schools in cities in the United States and Europe. Superintendent Maxwell was even more eloquent: "As long as the flowers bloom; as long as the trees put forth their leaves in that beautiful park your windows will overlook, so long may the Ethical Culture Society and its schools live to support the weak, to strengthen the strong, and to cast their genial influence over the budding lives of childhood."

Before Felix Adler spoke, letters of congratulation from leading New Yorkers, including the President of Columbia University, and a former New York City Mayor, were announced, and a silver trowel and mallet, a gift of the New York Society's Board of Trustees, were given to Dr. Adler. Adler struggled to contain his joy. The school, he noted, had come to stand for important values: moral elevation; a democratic mixing of rich and poor, Jew and Gentile; progressive education; and citizenship training.

Adler left the platform, the stone was lowered to the ground, men removed their hats, and Adler said, "Now, therefore, I declare this stone to be well and

truly laid; [it shall be] the symbol of that righteousness which is the true cornerstone...." A century later, the stone is still there, and the school, a beacon of creative education, grows brighter with each class it graduates.

Memorial for an Extradordinary Member: Barbara Riefle

Barbara had a rare form of cancer when she joined the Society in 1999. Never a person to cave in to adversity, she lived life to the full—to the end.

Orphaned in her teens, she went to work at 18 and attended Hunter College at night, graduating Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa. Barbara and her husband bought a small travel company, built it into a substantial business, and sold it to a performance improvement, marketing research, and travel company. Barbara ran the Northeast region of this company with great success. She became involved with the Center for Authentic Leadership, which she felt gave her the tools to create a trustful, ethical environment within which her employees could fulfill their highest potential.

Facing her illness, Barbara devoted herself to living life "fully, joyfully and mindfully; to continue to grow and develop as a person, to give of myself to others, and to continue on the quest of discovering my purpose in life."

Barbara's memorial service will take place Saturday, February 8, at 2:00 pm at the Society.

Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop: A Night of Joy

Larry R. Yates, Ph.D.

It was joyful! It was fun! It was unexpected. When I entered a dim Social Hall on Tuesday evening, December 17, I had already devised my excuse for departing early. At Maria Fridman's invitation, I was there to sample talents of homeless artists and then write this report. Earlier, I had torn myself away from a holiday party in our apartment building where lights burned brightly, wine flowed freely, and chopped liver spread easily on imported crackers. (Our building has gentrified.) In the Social Hall, there seemed to be more tables than people. However, two things impressed me upon entering: sumptuous sweets and professional musical instruments. The drum set alone could have come from the Village Vanguard. I wondered whether I might hear worthwhile music.

I got myself some raspberry tea and a plate of goodies, and then looked for a place to roost. Rather than intrude on clusters of friends, I sat down near the piano, a safe distance from those impressive drums. My table companions were a couple who introduced themselves as Elaine and Big Daddy. Without prompting, Elaine divulged that Big Daddy's real name is Eddie, which he does not like others to know. I asked Big Daddy whether his mother calls him "Edward." No, she calls him "Big Ragu," after her favorite spaghetti sauce.

Before I could make a metaphysical connection, the program started.

Our MC, Judith (Judy) Ginzberg, is also the light and force behind Unforgotten Voices. Her energy and vision have kept a frayed shoestring operation going since 1988. That vision is best expressed in her own words: "Unforgotten Voices recognizes the integrity and value, the extraordinary talent, the incisive and unique perceptions of people who find themselves without a home. We know it is these same people who can best tell their own story, advocate for themselves, and break the negative stereotypes of homeless people." While Judy and several performers expressed this message several times that evening, it was their own spirit that showed most eloquently the integrity and value of human beings.

An evening wasted with destitute, depressing strangers? Not so. I spent it with fellow humans who love life and who respect themselves and others.

The evening's anchor was the band, Deliverance, made up of formerly homeless musicians. Its leader and keyboard player is Ray Gant. Homeless himself at one time, Ray put out a call last year to shelters that he needed musicians for a gospel-jazz band. He was astounded at the talent, education, and experience of those who applied. Working closely with its members, he has shaped a band that plays harmoniously both softly and loudly. Apparently, they named their band to acknowledge their Lord for deliver-

ing them. We Ethical Culturists would likely credit their own strength, love of music, and talent for infecting us with their rejoicing.

For the first few numbers, I simply listened and took notes. But then Judy handed us rhythm gadgets, with me getting a tambourine, and I had to lay down my pen and make music. Though not Julliard-trained with that delicate instrument, I recalled how Carmen shook it in "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" and could imitate her a bit. The program, however, was gospel, not opera. My shaking was slightly shaky through "Everything's Going to Be All Right," particularly with the line "angels all around." However, I shook solidly in "We're Standing on Holy Ground." There was something vaguely familiar and reassuring about that song.

While Deliverance itself has fine vocalists, Judy invited other singers in the audience to take the microphone. Homeless or not, they performed superbly. Frank led off with several Nat King Cole classics but in his own style. He sang about roasting chestnuts on open fires and walking chilled babies back home. Chris followed with virtuoso piano playing and comic blues singing about his estranged family. The audience roared with laughter at a situation that they know well. Undersized but not outdone, Judy's 8-year-old son, Elan, played the Spiderman's theme on the piano and then told a kid joke so vividly gross that even my pastries turned unappetizing. The little showman has big talent. For an encore, he later played the shortest "Hallelujah Chorus" in its 260 years.

Carla, a poet and rap artist, slipped effortlessly from reciting a poem about revolution in alphabet city to a song about a police state. When Barnell sang “Previous Love,” the audience joined him in this gospel favorite and made the room glow with the warmth of a close family. He was followed by Hodya, a former shelter resident who is now a community leader in Harlem. After he sang the gospel song “Change Is Going to Come,” he performed a miracle! He made me like a rap song. He wrote and performed “Do You Know What Time It Is?” which even had me chanting the refrain. I marveled at the intricacies of its rhythms. And, finally Jerry led us in a rousing “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Actually, we ended with the aforementioned “Hallelujah Chorus” which was also delightfully anticlimactic for the first time ever.

An evening wasted with destitute, depressing strangers? Not so. I spent it with fellow humans who love life and who respect themselves and others. Also, they know how to have a darn good time! With some reluctance, I surrendered my tambourine and headed for the coat rack. The next time Unforgotten Voices has a concert at our Society, I want to be there. And, how are you with a tambourine?

New Year's Eve Strathmere Concert—A Review

Jon Liechty

Georg Philipp Telemann is one of the great under-appreciated composers of

the late 17th/early 18th centuries. Many people have heard work by him, but very few are intimately acquainted with more than a small number of his pieces.

The Strathmere Ensemble's New Years Eve concert was a welcome opportunity to appreciate the scope of Telemann's art. Two cantatas, a concerto, a trio sonata, a quartet and selections from a *Singspiel* delighted a sizeable audience and showed something of the range of Telemann's ability.

A Trio Sonata in F Major for flute, viola, bassoon and continuo showed a playful conversation between the three instruments. In the outer movements the bassoon was more in the background; flutist Alan Cox and violist Louise Schulman traded off in light-fingered dialogue. The middle movement saw the bassoon emerge as an independent voice in its own right; Martin Kuuskmann ably brought out the lyrical qualities of the part.

Secular cantatas of the baroque are sometimes overlooked in favor of their religious counterparts. This is unfortunate, and Mary Westbrook's performance of Telemann's Canary Cantata showed us why. The cantata tells the story of a man who has discovered the body of his pet canary, and proceeds through laments and farewells to the beloved companion to curses against the bird's evil murderer: the cat. Westbrook's excellent diction portrayed the various emotions in fine detail. Flutist Alan Cox shone, giving us the memory of the canary's lovely song.

Telemann's Viola Concerto in G Major provided an excellent vehicle for

Louise Schulman's talent. A slow first movement, pensive, lyrical or stately by turns, gave way to an allegro with lively arpeggio figures and nimble passage-work. An impassioned and flowing third movement was followed by a flashy Presto with a foot-tapping rhythm. The evident joy of the players, moving to the beat with verve and flair, added to the pleasure of the music.

The Concerto in D Major for horn, strings and continuo was a rare treat in more than one way. RJ Kelley's mellifluous playing was a delight, and the chance to hear his beautiful Alexander descant horn was another. The descant horn is designed differently than the standard model French horn, with somewhat less “plumbing” and a different flare to the bell, and the beguiling sounds throughout its range were perfect for this music, from the agile grace of the first movement to the graceful, flowing dance in the second and the rollicking triple time of the third.

Another cantata, this one a religious work entitled “Kein Vogel” (“No Bird (can fly so high as the eagle)”) again showed off the versatile vocal talents of Mary Westbrook. The central message of the text is that we all have special talents, and will be held to account on Judgment Day for the way we have used what we have been given. Alan Cox's flute became again a tuneful bird, this time a sweet-voiced nightingale in the first aria's middle section.

The *Singspiel* was a German musical play, entirely comparable to the Broadway musical, combining spoken

dialogue with musical numbers. In a representative selection from *Miriways*, Mary Westbrook gave voice to passionate outrage, singing the part of a jilted lover.

The final number of the evening was a Quartet in D minor for flute, violin, bassoon and continuo from Telemann's *Tafelmusik* collection. There were considerably more than four players on the stage; Gerald Ranck jokingly referred to "our big-band arrangement" of the quartet. This was due to the use of several instruments to play the continuo part. The continuo in Baroque music functions as the rhythm section, and includes the bass line, plus chords to fill out the texture, and various degrees of ornamentation. It's common for several instruments to play this part together, each adding its own particular character. In this performance, the continuo was brilliantly performed on the harpsichord (Gerald Ranck), lute (Bill Zito), cello (Ariane Lallemand), and cittern (Louise Schulman).

Also worthy of mention is the zestful violin playing of Mitsuru Tsubota and Mayuki Fukuhara, who brought out Telemann's often-demanding parts with élan and verve.

ACTIVITIES

February Calendar

- Ethics for Children*
Sundays, 11:00 am
- Morning Meetings*
Sundays, 11:30 am
- Shelter*
Sundays-Thursday, 7:30 pm
- Newsletter Deadline*
Monday, February 3
- Support Group*
Fridays, 6:30 pm
- Tai Chi*
Saturday, February 1, 11:00 am
- WQXR-FM (96.3)*
Sunday, February 2 & 16, 7:30 am
- Board of Trustees*
Monday, February 3, 6:00 pm
- Salon: Consequences of Ethical Choices*
Tuesday, February 4, 7:00 pm
- Men's Group*
Wednesday, February 5, 6:00 pm
- Barbara Riefle's Memorial*
Saturday, February 8, 2:00 pm
- Caring Committee*
Monday, February 10, 5:00 pm
- Women's Group*
Tuesday, February 11, 6:00 pm
- Society offices closed*
Monday, February 17
- Membership Committee*
Wednesday, February 19, 6:00 pm

- Film Forum*
Friday, February 21, 7:00 pm
- Jean Kotkin's Memorial*
Saturday, February 22, 2:00 pm
- Social Service Board*
Monday, February 24, 6:30 pm
- Ethical Action Committee*
Thursday, February 27, 6:00 pm

Reading Programs

- Great Books Discussion Series*
Wednesday, February 5, 7:30 pm
Shaw, Caesar and Cleopatra
- Ethical Culture Retirement Activities*
Wednesday, February 12, 3:00 pm
Amy Tan, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*
- Great Books Discussion Series –
Fiftieth Anniversary Series*
The Evil and The Guilty
Wednesday, February 19, 7:30 pm
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of
the Ancient Mariner*

Sundays at the Society

Mornings:

- Feb. 2 Leaders' Writings 10:15 am
- Feb. 9 Colloquy 10:30 am
- Feb. 16 Poetry 10:30 am
- Feb. 23 Yoga Meditation 10:30 am

Afternoon Programs:

- Feb. 2 Ethics in the News 1:30 pm
- Feb. 9 Ethics Study 1:30 pm
- Feb. 16 Orientation 1:00 pm
- Meet the Author 1:30 pm
- Feb. 23 Film 1:30 pm

Our Ethical Family

News of Members

Beth Goldberg has started up a new home-baked dog treats business called "Latka's De-licious Dog Treats." Her website is at <http://www.de-licioustreats.com>.

We extend our sympathy to **Barbara Litke**, whose mother recently died at the age of 103.

Our Extended Ethical Family

David Reis, a member of the Essex County Ethical Society, has been certi-

fied as a Leader by the AEU board. Our congrats! **Annabelle Glasser**, a Queens Society member and former president of the AEU, is gravely ill. Sad news, indeed, for those of us who know Annabelle.

February 2003

(Office hours for the month: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7:30 am – WQXR-FM (96.3)</p> <p>9:00 am – All Committee Meeting</p> <p>10:15 am – Leaders' Writings</p> <p>11:00 am – Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:30 am – Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 pm – Cafeteria</p> <p>1:30 pm – Ethics in the News</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>March 2003 Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>6:00 pm – Board of Trustees</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>7:00 pm – Salon: Consequences of Ethical Choices</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:00 pm – Men's Group</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p> <p>7:30 pm – Great Books</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p>	<p>11:00 am – Tai Chi</p>	<p>11:00 am – Tai Chi</p>
<p>9:00 am – Membership Growth</p> <p>10:30 am – Colloquy</p> <p>11:00 am – Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:30 am – Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 pm – Cafeteria</p> <p>1:30 pm – Ethics Study</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>5:00 pm – Caring Committee</p> <p>6:00 pm – Executive Committee</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>3:00 pm – ECRA</p>	<p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p>	<p>2:00 pm – Barbara Rieflé's Memorial</p>	<p>2:00 pm – Barbara Rieflé's Memorial</p>
<p>7:30 am – WQXR-FM (96.3)</p> <p>10:30 am – Poetry</p> <p>11:00 am – Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:30 am – Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 pm – Cafeteria</p> <p>1:00 pm – Orientation</p> <p>1:30 pm – Meet the Author</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>Society Offices Closed</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:00 pm – Membership Committee</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p> <p>7:30 pm – The Evil & The Guilty</p>	<p>6:00 pm – Membership Committee</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p> <p>7:00 pm – Film Forum</p>	<p>2:00 pm – Jean Kotkin's Memorial</p>	<p>2:00 pm – Jean Kotkin's Memorial</p>
<p>10:30 am – Yoga Meditation</p> <p>11:00 am – Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:30 am – Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 pm – Cafeteria</p> <p>1:30 pm – Film</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Social Service Board</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:00 pm – Ethical Action Committee</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:00 pm – Ethical Action Committee</p> <p>7:30 pm – Shelter</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p>	<p>6:30 pm – Support Group</p>

Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and philosophical movement in which people share a core of common values: the worth of each individual, ethics as central to our lives, eliciting the best from each other and doing good in the world.

We seek truth as a growing, changing body of knowledge based on experience, reason and scientific observation, and seek to use it in support of human well-being.

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