



THE
glissando

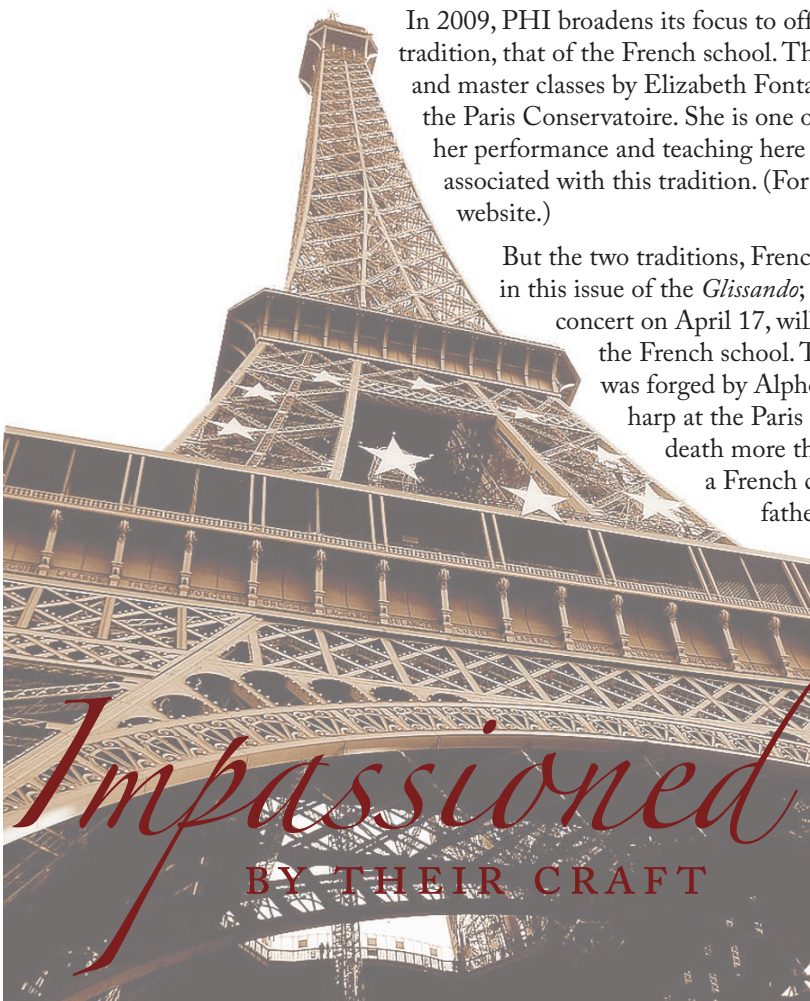
PACIFIC HARP INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2009 | VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

The French Conservatoire & the Foundations of the Modern Harp

PHI FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Alison Austin has often said that PHI is the United Nations of the harp, created with the purpose of bringing harpists of all types and backgrounds together. Our focus over the past year has been the works and legacy of Carlos Salzedo (d.1961), whose important contributions as a teacher, performer, and, especially, as a composer established the distinctly American harp traditions. His legacy is especially important here in the Pacific Northwest through the activities of some of his pupils (including Lynne Palmer, Susi Hussong, and Heidi Lehwalder) and, in turn, through the teaching and performing of their students.

In 2009, PHI broadens its focus to offer an array of experiences centering on another great harp tradition, that of the French school. The highlight of this year's events will be a performance and master classes by Elizabeth Fontan, whose career embodies the important traditions of the Paris Conservatoire. She is one of the last pupils of Marcel Tournier (1879-1951), and her performance and teaching here in Seattle will emphasize the repertoire and technique associated with this tradition. (For more information on her appearances here, check the PHI website.)

But the two traditions, French and American, are of course closely linked, as we'll see in this issue of the *Glissando*; the next issue, which will appear before Mme Fontan's concert on April 17, will explore some of the artistic and pedagogical emphases of the French school. The true link between the American and French schools was forged by Alphonse Hasselmans (1845-1912), who became professor of harp at the Paris Conservatoire in 1884 and who remained there until his death more than a quarter-century later. Although he eventually became a French citizen, he was born in Belgium to a musical family (his father was director of the Strasbourg Conservatory and his son and daughter were both musicians). Hasselmans was, by all accounts, a fearsomely demanding teacher; in reminiscences from many decades later, his pupils uniformly recall a stern and severely disciplined approach focusing above all on technique. His own compositions reinforced that focus. Lily Laskine (one of his pupils and harp professor at the Conservatoire from 1948 to 1958) said that his music was designed for teaching "the very essence of the instrument and natural fingering." Laskine later made several

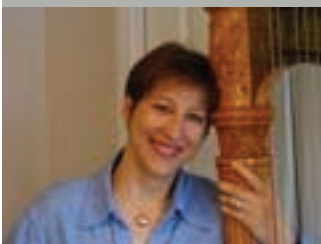


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LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

As I look back on the past two years and forward to the coming year, I am heartened and amazed at the wealth of talent in the Pacific Northwest. We have been able to draw such wonderful artists here, and I have been told over and over that the level of teaching and harp musicianship in our area is of the highest standard.

Our theme for the coming year is "From France avec Amour" (with Love). Last year I asked our principal harpist of the Seattle Symphony, Valerie Muzzolini Gordon, who she would like to have join us for this year's Artist Residency. Without hesitation she said that she wanted to have her former teacher, Elizabeth Fontan, come as our guest artist. Valerie says that Madame Fontan was the greatest influence on her harp career; she began her studies with Madame Fontan in France and was her pupil for eleven years. We will thus be collaborating with and hosting this wonderful teacher and learning as much as we can about the rich tradition of the French School of harp over the coming year. The theme will carry into both of our Summer Sessions, where we will emphasize some of the great French literature for solo and chamber music. In the meantime, it is my privilege to offer you the next two issues of the *Glissando*, which will begin our discussions about our French heritage in the pedal harp community. Please read on and join us for our exciting concert on April 17th, 7:30pm at Benaroya Recital Hall in Seattle. There will be a master class sign up available at our website in the immediate future. If you are thinking of performing or auditing please sign up right away. In the meantime, *à bientôt!* ♪



ALISON AUSTIN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Looking forward to 2009

BILL AUSTIN | BOARD PRESIDENT

As we move forward into the ambitious year mapped out by our Artistic Director, Alison Austin, PHI is faced with the daunting challenge of funding these exciting and worthwhile projects at a time of unprecedented economic upheaval. Our young people have proven themselves to be ambassadors not only within the musical community but also in the community at large, as evidenced by their recent performance at Hero House and in the moving holiday concert benefiting Hopelink. In order to continue its commitment to excellence in education, performance, and outreach, PHI needs your ongoing support.

The generosity of our supporters has grown over the past three years in terms of both financial contributions and volunteer activities. Moving forward, we look for continuing support for our upcoming fundraiser in the spring and for our annual capital campaign in the fall. We are also working to build our scholarship fund, which will be used to support students at our Summer Sessions. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Pacific Harp Institute. ♪

2009 Summer Sessions

SESSION I: JULY 27 - AUGUST 1, 2009

ADVANCED SOLO & CHAMBER CAMP

In 2009, Judy Loman will be joining us for Summer Session I the last week of July at Bastyr University and will be presenting a recital open to the general public as well. Our theme is *In preparation for...* (preparing for auditions, competitions, recitals, and the like). Faculty for SSI includes Faye Seeman (Professor of Harp at Wheaton College), Janet Witman (founder of Brandywine Harps in Philadelphia), and Alison Austin (PHI Founder and Artistic Director).

SESSION II: AUGUST 3-8, 2009

BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE CAMP

The theme for SSII is *From France with Love*. Faculty for SSII includes Alison Austin, Faye Seeman, Elizabeth Volpe-Bligh (Principal Harpist of the Vancouver Symphony), and Ruth Mar (graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto).

APPLICATIONS WILL BE POSTED IN EARLY 2009 AT
[HTTP://WWW.PACIFICHARPINSTITUTE.ORG](http://www.pacificharpinstitute.org).

THE GLISSANDO

A PUBLICATION OF THE PACIFIC HARP INSTITUTE

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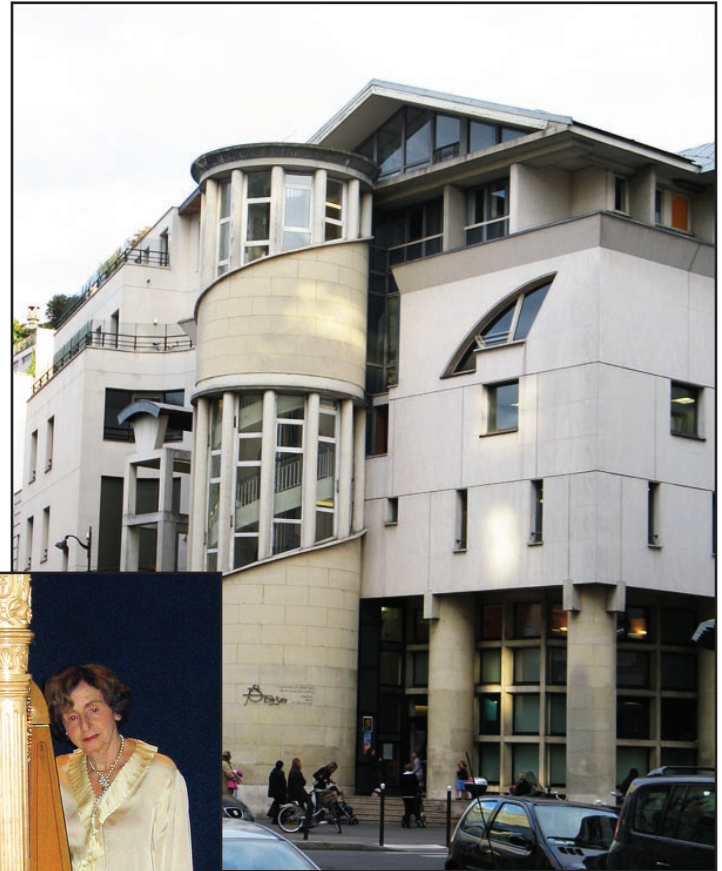
recordings of Hasselmans' compositions, as did some of his other students. Another of his students, Pierre Jamet, recalled working through all of the concertos by Bochsá and Parish Alvars with his teacher, saying that it was only much later that he "realized the necessity of studying those old concertos which are the basis of our technique." (Hasselmans himself had studied with a student of Parish Alvars.) His students also recalled the lovely sound Hasselmans produced on the instrument, describing, as Laskine put it, his "astonishing sonority" that was "at the same time full and mellow."

Hasselmans' pupils included most of the great performers and teachers of the twentieth century. In her well known book *Harps and Harpists*, Roslyn Rensch calls this group of pupils a veritable *Who's Who* of renowned harpists. The list includes Marcel Tournier, Marcel Grandjany, and of course Carlos Salzedo. Hasselmans' immediate successor at the Conservatoire was Marcel Tournier who, in his own harp treatise, credits Hasselmans with expanding the possibilities of the instrument. As Tournier wrote, Hasselmans "enlightened the composers of his generation in a masterly way." Later, Tournier would tell his students, "It isn't my 'school' . . . it's the method of the Hasselmans school."

Tournier began his harp studies privately with Hasselmans at age sixteen and entered his class at the Conservatoire two years later. His family background was both modest and musical

(two of his brothers also attended the Conservatoire), and his student Jacqueline Borot believed that his early professional positions as harpist at the Opéra Comique and the Paris Opéra were probably taken out of financial necessity. At the Conservatoire Tournier not only took the Premier Prix in harp studies (1899), but also won second Grand Prix de Rome for composition; in fact, another of his students, Lucile Johnson Rosenbloom (who also studied with Salzedo), said that Tournier's true love was composition, not performance. This was echoed by Jacqueline Borot, who said that although Tournier was a superb player and certainly could have been a great soloist, he preferred to contribute to the harp repertoire through his compositions. He, like Salzedo, was close to many of the most modern composers of his time, especially Debussy and Ravel, and he greatly admired Grandjany's compositions. Unlike Hasselmans, who wrote only for solo harp, Tournier's work spans many genres and styles. It was probably the range of his compositional activities that caused him to be appointed as Hasselmans' successor. As his student Gérard Devos put it, Tournier was truly a *musicien complet*.

Tournier shared Hasselmans' emphasis on technique in his teaching, focusing on works by Bochsá, Dizi, and Parish Alvars, but his pupils recalled a less imposing personality, strict yet supportive. Devos described his teacher as somewhat



**ABOVE: THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE.
LEFT: ELIZABETH FONTAN, PHI'S 2009
ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE.**

cold and formal with his students at the Conservatoire, but outside the classroom as much more relaxed, "impassioned by his craft, by the harp, by music." Devos continued, saying that "when we went to his home, after finishing a piece, he would explain the interpretation, and that was fascinating! He was a completely different man—extremely warm." Lucile Johnson Rosenbloom stressed that Tournier gauged his teaching based on the individual requirements of each student: "He would see what were each person's possibilities, and he would bring out their individual talents. He thought more about tone and interpretation than

anything else." Borot echoed these impressions, saying that if students had technical problems, Tournier would, as he said, "put them on a regimen" of exercises à la Hasselmans, but when he had students whose technique was good, "when he sensed that they had possibilities, he was thrilling: he transformed you!"

It is from this long and exacting tradition that our guest artist, Elizabeth Fontan, comes, and in our next issue, we'll explore her background and her long performing and teaching career. ♪

A bibliography for this article is available online at <http://www.pacificharpinstitute.org/press/newsletter/>.

WELLNESS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The Seattle Public Library (SPL), King County Libraries (KCL), and the University of Washington Libraries (UW) all have materials about both programs. Here are a few resources written specifically for musicians:

- Alcantara, Pedro de. *Indirect Procedures: A Musician's Guide to the Alexander Technique*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. (Available at SPL and UW)
- Conable, Barbara. *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body: The Practical Application of Body Mapping to Making Music*. Portland, Oregon: Andover Press, 2000. (Available at UW; focuses on the Alexander Technique)
- Plonka, Lavinia. "Playing Music 'The Feldenkrais Way': An Interview with Aliza Stewart, GCFP." Available online at http://www.feldenkrais.com/method/article/playing_music_the_feldenkrais_way/
- Spire, Mary. "The Feldenkrais Method: An Interview with Anat Baniel." Available online at <http://www.sciandmed.com/mppa/journal-viewer.aspx?issue=1138&article=1390&action=1> ♪

SAVE THE DATES!

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009 | 7:30PM

**ELIZABETH FONTAN
IN RECITAL**

The legendary French harpist presents a recital at Benaroya Recital Hall in Seattle as part of PHI's Artist Residency program.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009 | 7:00PM

JUDY LOMAN IN RECITAL

World renowned harpist presents a solo recital at Bastyr University in Kenmore as part of Pacific Harp Institute's 2009 Summer Sessions.

**VISIT WWW.PACIFICHARPINSTITUTE.ORG
FOR UPDATES AND MORE INFORMATION!**

Nicholas Bochsa: Rogue Harpist

Both Hasselmans and Tournier always assigned the works of **Nicholas Charles Bochsa (1789-1856)**, a performer, composer, and teacher of the harp widely known throughout Europe. Bochsa wrote a number of large-scale works (operas, ballets, even a requiem) in addition to many works for harp and a standard harp method, and he was important in exploring the artistic possibilities of the newly developed Erard double-action harp in his concert career. Nevertheless, it is his personal life that has attracted the most attention. Bochsa gained early fame as a somewhat facile but popular composer, a favorite at the French court, but unfortunately he chose to augment his income through forgery, fabricating the signatures of important people on documents authorizing him to receive large sums of money. When he finally had to beat a hasty retreat from France, he fortified himself financially with a still less-savory theft, absconding not only with the box office receipts of his final advertised concert there, but taking the furs that had been deposited in the cloakroom by his wealthy female fans. He was tried and convicted in absentia in Paris, where his punishment was to include a large fine, a prison term, and the requirement that he was to be branded with the letters T.F., for *travaux forcés* (forced labor). In spite of this, he was somehow able to resume his career as a teacher in England (Parish Alvars was one of his important students), and he held positions at the Royal Academy of Music and the King's Theater. He also married while in England, which would have been fairly unremarkable apart from the fact that he seems not to have divorced his French wife. Events subsequently caught up with Bochsa yet again, and he fled, touring throughout the world with the English singer Anna Bishop. He died in Australia, where Bishop erected a monument to him.

Bochsa's eventful life is described in an unusually complete article in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (available on-line at the University of Washington and in print in regional libraries in King County; the article is particularly remarkable because the authoritative *New Grove* does not have a separate biographical article about Tournier, perhaps signaling a somewhat less-than-scholarly interest in criminal affairs); see also the article by Jane Weidensaul, "Bochsa: A Biographical Sketch," *American Harp Journal* 2, no. 4 (1970): 4-7. ♪

Musicians' Wellness: Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method

DEBORAH L. PIERCE | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE AND THE Feldenkrais Method are two mind/body programs that many musicians have found to be effective in helping them stay in shape, move more intentionally, and assist with injury prevention.

Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) was an actor and musician who developed his healing technique after having experienced serious vocal problems. He experimented on himself until he found a method that changed unhealthy habitual postures. He found that integration of mind and body was the key to healing his voice and creating a healthy flow of energy and breathing. His technique has been used by actors and musicians for over a century. Training in the technique is offered both in class settings and in private lessons.

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-84) was a scientist as well as a jujitsu and judo practitioner who developed his method from looking at the relationships between movement and consciousness. The method has been utilized by many musicians and performing artists to use their bodies more

effectively while performing. His method is divided into two types of lessons: Awareness Through Movement lessons, which usually take place in a group setting; and Functional Integration lessons, which are tailored to the individual.

Although many books have been written outlining the philosophy and practice of both programs, most people find it beneficial to work with a practitioner who can guide you through the processes. There are two organizations dedicated to the promotion and study of the Alexander Technique: Alexander Technique International (ATI) (<http://www.ati-net.com>) and the American Society for Alexander Technique (AmSAT) (<http://www.alexandertech.org>). Both sites include lists of teachers, online articles, and information on workshops, and both organizations have a certification program for their teachers. The Feldenkrais Guild of North American (<http://www.feldenkrais.com/>) also certifies their practitioners. Their web site includes general information on the method along with lists of practitioners, workshops and events, and lists of related resources, including an online newsletter.

SEE WELLNESS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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