

On That note

Karen Bentley Pollick World-Class Violinist Lands

By Corey Colombin

Down a sleepy country road in Evergreen, a house is taking shape, destined to be the dream retirement abode for a hardworking man. A mandatory requirement for the architect is a state-of-the-art music room, a dream landing spot for his wife, Karen Bentley Pollick, an extremely busy world-class performer of the violin, viola, and hardangerfele (a Norwegian nine-stringed folk instrument).

The move to Evergreen won't mark the official retirement for Karen, make no mistake. For many years to come, her quiet home will serve as a welcome resting spot between far-flung travels — a place to regroup, to practice, to teach, and to plot her next musical project.

Musical projects for Karen Bentley Pollick are varied, often employing composers, accompanying performers, and the collaborative efforts of fellow musicians. Sometimes a project culminates in the record-

ing of a CD under her own label, Ariel Ventures, and at other times, a performance. Still other efforts will result in a benefit to uplift a cause.

Eager to share her gift through performing, Karen's Evergreen debut is slated to be a recital with Russian pianist Ivan Sokolov on Saturday, November 5th at Church of the Hills. Ivan Sokolov is a world-class pianist and composer and a repeat collaborator with Pollick, and together, the music they make transforms a mere listening experience into a soul-stirring event.

"I'm embarking on a new chapter of my life in Evergreen," Pollick shares, "with ears, eyes, and all other senses open to experience, create, and collaborate with artists, dancers, musicians, poets, young musicians, and any others who may cross my path. The possibilities for sharing and learning are especially kinetic at the high altitude, which fuels and inspires my daily preparations for the next iteration in my journey."

Karen's journey began at the tender age of five, when she was directed to study the piano. In elementary school in her hometown of Palo Alto, California, she was encouraged by a uniquely supportive musical program, which propelled her headlong into joining the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra. At age 12, she acted as an apprentice teacher to fellow students, all enrolled in a unique lateral learning program, which utilized a five-tier youth orchestra. Higher education found her at Indiana

University, studying music on scholarship, and by her early 20s, right on schedule, she headed to New York City to pursue her musical dreams. There she settled in Greenwich Village and made her presence known as a freelance musician, where she auditioned and was promptly accepted into the performing circuit. Karen performed with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and countless other highly recognized orchestras. And along with her sister, an accomplished viola player, she is part of the proud alumni of the New York String Orchestra that performs annually at Carnegie Hall during the winter holidays.

Now, don't allow the list of Karen Bentley Pollick's accomplishments to mislead you into thinking that she limits herself to venues and compositions that prompt polite clapping in gloved hands from well-mannered audiences in formal wear. Not this violinist, whose sense of humor rivals her talent. Recently, Karen performed in Loveland at Sunrise Ranch in an outdoor festival. She dressed for the occasion (casually) and played for the folks at sunset. Her piece of choice: "Duetto con Bobik," which means duet with the dog. The backstory is that her beagle was such a reliable howler that she could actually measure its pitch. The beagle showed up on her doorstep the same day that Ian Sokolov arrived from Moscow, which is how he came to be named Bobik (Bobik is to Russians what Fido is to Americans). Bobik demonstrated



Karen Bentley Pollick.
Photo by Sylvia Michiels

this howling, on-cue behavior in the middle of a recording session with Alabama composer Brian C. Moon, at which point he created a composition to accompany it and coined it "Duetto con Bobik." Another tribute to this musical pooch is Karen's rendition of Benedikt Brydern's *Bebop for Beagles*, highly viewed on YouTube. I suppose it lends credence to Karen's openness to all collaborators, since the beagle literally walked into her studio after being misplaced during a storm, was welcomed, adopted, and ultimately became a recording star.

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Angels Among Us

by Nancy Dykeman

There have been times in recent years when many women in the Evergreen area have become angels through the Angel Fund and their generous financial help to support women who have struggled with the loss of a spouse, a child, a job, a home, or a car. The local organization Women of

Evergreen Businesses (WEB) is a 20-member organization devoted to the promotion and success of women-owned businesses through community support and outreach. They donate money, supplies, and time to many individuals, families, and charitable organizations in Evergreen, Conifer, and our surrounding mountain communities. Their Angel Fund provides the money to make things happen.

“When I thought there wasn’t anywhere to turn, I was contacted and the WEB members offered love and support from the angels in their group. My husband was so ill and the bills hadn’t been paid, but before our power was shut off, I received a generous check from WEB to carry us through.” This statement is one of many that express the feelings of women who needed help and the angels of WEB offered it, willingly. Another local woman comments, “I lost my job and couldn’t pay the car payment, which left me

unable to search for new employment. The women of WEB offered to pay the car payments for two months and I was able to find new work. Without them, I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to drive to the interview.”

To increase their ability to reach more women and families in need, the members of WEB have partnered with Evergreen Christian Outreach (EChO) for a special event to help individuals and families in our mountain community find hope and promise for tomorrow. “We’re so excited about this joint event because we’ve seen a significant increase in the number of requests from women and families for assistance, and the funds raised will help us help more people in this area,” said Sharon Smith, Executive Director of EChO. These two organizations are conducting a special evening called Angels Unite on Wednesday, September 21st, 6 pm to 9 pm at The Meadows at Marshdale-Grandview Terrace for an evening of music, food, and fun.

There will be donated gifts for the silent auction to raise Angel Funds. Catering will be by In Good Taste and music will be by George Noble. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased at the EChO office on Highway 74 in Evergreen, at the Wild Bird Store in Bergen Park on Castle Court, and Mountain View Physical Therapy in Bergen Village. Susanne Robert, Chairperson of the event, can be reached at (303-358-1702) to make donations to the silent auction or cash donations toward women in need in your community.

The members of WEB are constantly looking for opportunities to reach out and help our mountain area community with special financial needs. In addition, we are looking for women in business who want to join our organization. If you know of someone who could benefit from our help, please contact one of our members at www.womenofevergreenbusinesses.com. We will strive to help wherever we can. ☞



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Karen starts each day with Bach, who is her favorite composer. “I can’t live without Bach,” she says. And she does dabble in the classics of her formal training, but it’s in the innovative, avant-garde compositions where she truly shines. Karen strives for pieces that exude passion and depth of interpretation, and indeed, she has a knack for pairing with just that musician or composer who facilitates an energetic and transcending performance or recording.

On the differences between recording and live performance, Karen says, “There’s a synergy in a live performance that is difficult to replicate in the recording studio. As I perform, I can feel the audience acutely listening and having an experience en masse. Their collective energy propels me to reach higher and dig deeper in the music with more intensity. I usually invite a few special friends into the recording studio to sit in the booth to remind me that my focal point of projection extends beyond playing into the microphone.”

Karen’s favorite performance to date was at Stanford University. A group of New Guinea sculpture artists returned during a week of festivities to celebrate the unveiling of their work in a newly landscaped garden on campus. Four tribes were present, all who had toiled to create sculptures on-site. Karen organized a tribute performance to celebrate their accomplishment. During the performance, the people of the tribes danced under the stars and a full moon amid their beautiful sculptures, creating a magical evening that awakened all the senses.

And now that she’s put her lot in with our small town, Karen has future plans for all of the musical elements that mark her life. She enjoys working with dancers and hopes to work with Denver area ballet troupes. She loves working with youthful talent and so intends to teach both violin and viola, once her music room is complete. She will continue to travel far and wide for the many concerts

she’s booked for, and she will continue to record under her Ariel Ventures label.

“Ariel Ventures is committed to capturing the essence of live performance of contemporary music through audio and video recording. There is an abundance of fantastic music generated by living composers, and we select a cross-section of the repertoire to record using criteria that include connectivity with the audience and performers, clever compositional devices, innovative and sonorous textures, and memorable themes and gestures that entice the listener into repeated hearings.”

Karen Bentley Pollick has accomplished so much, but like any tireless musician, composer, and performer, she, too, has a bucket list. She describes the item at the top. “Ivan Sokolov wrote a 45-minute piano quartet in three movements in 2010 that is a masterpiece of thematic development over a long timespan, with his harmonic and gestural fingerprints permeating the entire composition. My dream is to share his piano quartet next season with audiences in Colorado along with his seven-movement string trio from 2009 to culminate our third recording together.”

As far as Karen Bentley Pollick’s career, there is much to see, hear, and follow. The best way to keep up with the details of her musical life is to check out her Web site, www.kbentley.com, which also links to her YouTube recordings. Also on Ms. Pollick’s Web site is a detailed listing of her performance schedule, upcoming events, and everything you need to know about CDs under her recording label, Ariel Ventures.

A world-class violinist has landed right here in Evergreen. Welcome, Karen Bentley Pollick. May your musical dreams take flight. ☞

If you are a local musician, or know of someone who is, and would like to be showcased in “On That Note,” please contact Corey Colombin at Coreycolombin105@msn.com.