

2013

December

Pine Street Inn 12/16

- Before the concert I was trying my best to be in a good mood. After: I WAS in a good mood, as always when you gals play. THANK YOU! GOD BLESS AND MERRY CHRISTMAS
- You made my day. God bless and thanks! Ed
- Thank you for coming and here is a BIG SMILE!
- We are always very blessed to have you play for us. Your pieces are beautiful and we thank you very much. God bless you always and Have a Merry Christmas!!
- Loved the Christmas AND Jewish music!
- Before the concert I was feeling sad. After: I feel better...music is a God. Thanks.
- I enjoyed the concert very much. It was a great change from all the madness that goes on around here and helped the atmosphere. This kind of music does that.

Dimock 12/18

- This was an amazing experience. I'm so glad you guys came in and performed. I've heard classical music before but never live. IT really has something special. I appreciate classical music now after hearing it live and seeing it performed.
- I always enjoy when you take the time to come and play for us. Thank you.
- Thank You! It's my first night in the program and this was really nice!
- It was AWESOME!
- I was skeptical about this music. It was VERY SATISFYING and I am pleased!
- Loved it, thank you!

Shattuck 12/23

- Before the concert: I felt stressed and tired. Its real hard living with a lot of girls.
- After the concert: I felt better and I remember what Christmas is all about. Not presents, it's the people in your life. Coreen
- Hi, my name is Amir.
- Thanks for gifting us with such an invaluable and elegant present, as always. My brother Ibrahim Yaji was a classical pianist in Russia, a graduate of Moscow Conservatory. He passed away two months ago. I thank you for reminding me of him. Please look him up on YouTube, he played well, just like you.
- Silent Night made me happier. After the concert I will stay happy and go to sleep happy.
- Enjoyed the music, as always. Happy Holidays!
- I want to join you guys.
- One man abruptly left the room when guests were singing with us. His friend told me that this gentleman couldn't read the lyric sheets we had provided for the caroling. I was saddened to have caused him this discomfort; he did return and sang Joy to the World, the last carol. I was glad to learn he knew those words and felt comfortable joining the singers.

2013

November

Pine Street Inn November 7

-“It was fascinating to hear so many different beautiful different kinds of delicate sounds the violin can make. My shoulder was hurting when the concert started but now it doesn't hurt anymore the music healed it. .”

-How often do you come here to play here, because this is so relaxing and so beautiful, I p you come often.

-Quite a few of the women at Pine Street Inn said they will go to a free performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony Sunday at the Strand Theater in Dorchester.

-The audience was assembled and waiting for the concert to begin in Pine Street Women's Inn. Meanwhile, Rebecca was stuck in gridlock traffic so I decided to play the second movement of the Mozart by myself. When Rebecca arrived, we played it together, then asked the women which version they preferred. “Definitely the one with the viola, and it was fun to hear the differences.”

-“What year was the Martinu written?” 1949, why do you ask? “It sounded like it could reflect the dividing up of the country, after the war.” What a perceptive comment.

From surveys:

-Thanks!

-Music is the mystery inside the blood.

-I feel good; this is good for the mind.

-I am thankful that I can hear.

-Up to Jewish music was unusual; your Jewish music was wonderful.

-Good concert; I loved the history of the music.

-Today's Martinu sounded like a contemporary college; is this right? (We answered: “YES b/c that's what you think and hear!”)

-Third piece sounded Romantic.

-I did not know any of the pieces tonight, but I thought they were beautiful. I would like to thank you for your time. This was exactly what I needed after everything I go through all day long.

-It was very interesting. I never really listened to violins before.

-I like the plucking one.

Shattuck Shelter November 11

-The Shattuck Shelter audience, assembled in chairs and facing where we would perform, broke in to spontaneous applause and enthusiastic hoots as Rebecca and I entered the common room tonight.

-Questions tonight: What kind of wood are violins made of? What country is Mozart from? Is any of this music by Russian composers? The woman asking that question then told me she thought Mitzva, which is based on Jewish tunes, was by a Russian composer. Are you doing these concerts in lots of shelters do you get paid for this work? Because you should, you're working hard here.

-One of our regular listeners reminded me that he used to be a DJ and a singer. “When I get my apartment back I'm going to listen to lots of jazz; I really love jazz. But listening to this classical music makes you want to do right in your life.”

-Following the Mozart, someone asked, “Who wrote that, again?” A tall, thin gentleman standing at the back of the room piped up, “Wolfie” immediately after I said “Mozart.” Giggles followed, then a discussion of Mozart's name and nickname. “Mozart gave free concerts too, you know, said the man in the back. “It's an honor for us to do anything that Mozart did,” I replied.

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One man produced his phone to play a collection of ringtones for us. Turns out he has recorded several of our concerts and makes ringtones out of his favorite bits. He is carrying Shelter Music Boston music around with him all the time. I hope his phone will soon ring with a call announcing, "You've got housing!"

-He said he likes to remember the nice way he felt during the concert, the conversations we had about music, and every time his phone rings, he remembers this again. He particularly liked the marimba performances, which have resulted in a uniquely perky ring tone.

Survey comments:

-Made me feel privileged.

-I wanted to go to the Strand for the Beethoven's 9th. I really don't have nice enough clothes. F.J bed #34

-Mozart was sublime. Thank thee.

-Enjoyed your music; including the pieces that included the xylophone. Thanks again for the musical entertainment you've enlightened me with. I've loved the music so much that I've recorded it to my phone as a ringtone. James J.

-I like music. It is peace of mind.

-The music is relaxing and smoothing. Thank you and please come again.

-Okay, moody, decent day. This was a great way to end the night.

-Awesome. Any was to get to a concert at Symphony? How many people can sound like Mozart? Many people used Mozart (in their own work) Thank you for the education.

-I am so happy to hear your music. LOVE Shelter Music Boston!

-After the concert: motivated and happy!

-Love it! Love it!

-Muy contento

Hastings House November 12

-Following the concert, a staff person said, "One of the most wonderful things about the concerts is that the moms and the children sit together and cuddle while they listen. Or a mom holds the tiny hands of her dancing toddler as they both move to the beat of Mozart. Moms and kids are interacting in ways that we don't typically see them doing here. One young boy, around 4 years old, is "always off-the-wall high-energy, never sits still. Tonight he was silent, rapt, and cozy in his mother's lap while they both listened intently to classical music. It's amazing to see this happen!"

Dimock Center November 13

-A staff member said, "Before the concert, one of the women was complaining she didn't want to come, she has a job interview tomorrow, she doesn't want to be tired, thinks the concert will be boring." This woman had spoken right up after the first piece to say, "This music is so comforting and calming." At the end she said, "Thank you for blessing us with this beauty."

-Another staff member thanked me for speaking about trusting Rebecca when I revealed to the audience I had made a mistake during the performance. We try to use metaphors about relying on each other to play chamber music, trusting and respecting each other via our work together as we know the women in the Dimock problem are wrestling with these issues in their daily therapy groups. Demonstrating trust, reliance, with the energy of the music offers them a different perspective.

-"This is such a blessing I feel blessed and what you're doing is a blessing. Thank you so much.

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Survey comments:

- The violin makes many sounds around different instruments. Also the violin sent me to another time.
- Thank you! Would like to hear a more recognizable piece; maybe Beethoven's 5th! Thanks.
- I'm very grateful for people like you all.
- I think you ladies are very talented.
- It was very good. I would like to hear it more and more, please. Thank you. Please keep doing what you do. Thanks!
- Thank you so much for taking your time to come play for us. It was great!! God Bless.
- Good job. That was amazing! So relaxing!
- Mozart: caterpillars turning into butterflies mingling with the bees in the flowers. Turn that frown upside down. Ballroom dancing Cinderella.
- Before: sad. After: good. It was great to see you come back to play. It's a lot of work to do what you are doing. Love to see you again. God Bless in your music. Thank you. You were awesome!
- I was excited to hear violins! Super happy violin time!
- It is amazing and gives me great appreciation for you and your instrument. The precision is incredible.

October

Shattuck Shelter, October 13

From surveys:

- I do love classical music above all of it. We do need some more of Beethoven's and Mozart numbers etc. coming into the holiday season.
- A bit depressed before but after Motivated! I © Music.
- Music is really soothing, relaxing, especially when you are in this shelter. I appreciate when you visit the Shattuck Shelter. Thank you and come again. Felix
- Your music brought inspiration.
- I'm very happy to see you hear again here in the shelter.
- Thank you from the bottom of my heart. God Bless
- I love live music. I knew I was in for a treat. I loved it...superb. Very good, very well played. Awesome. James
- After the Bertali, one shelter guest new to our concerts asked us how to spell the name of this composer. Immediately, he looked up Bertali on his iPhone, then asked the name of the second composer. Upon viewing a Cambini website on the phone, he showed us a list of the composer's compositions and wanted to know which one we would play.
- A man dressed in a work shirt announcing the name of an auto repair shop sat at the back of the room. His shirt also announced, "mechanic" over the left front pocket. I imagined this man spends his days fixing cars that will carry the owners to their homes. He returns to the homeless shelter daily, after repairing these cars. He listened intently, smiled and clapped, and reached out to shake my hand as I passed by on my way out after the performance. "Thank you," he said quietly, eyes to the floor.
- Steven said hello to us from Tammy, with whom he speaks every Sunday. She left the shelter in August and now has a home in Montana.

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A man new to our concerts piped up with, "I come from a very musical family. We've got people playing guitar, saxophone, trombone, and clarinet. I'm the singer. Hey, did you have trouble with a page turn in that last piece?" he asked Julia. "'Cause I saw the rest of you wait for her, cover her, support her. You gotta rely on each other, don't you?"

-This man is named James. He accompanied us to the door. "The concert meant a lot to me, and can you make it longer next time?" he asked.

-A soft-spoken man with kind eyes came up to me (Julia McK) at the Shattuck and warmly shook my hand and said the most sincere thank you for bringing music there. He said it really helped him to have music "in a place like this".

Crittenton Women's Union-Hastings House October 22

From surveys:

-Before the concert I felt overwhelmed; afterwards, calm and relaxed

-Wonderful! My son enjoyed dancing to your music. ☺! Fun, great job. Fascinating!!

-Before the concert I wasn't sure about this music. Afterwards I know that I'll come every time ya'll show up. I like the music, it's relaxing and soothing.

-One boy, probably about age 4, stood in front of the SMB trio conducting during the Cambini Trio! He asked to try a violin after the concert, told us he tries to write music, and he wants to go to concerts. We are thrilled to bring live music to this young person, and his mom.

-“Are you going to give lessons to the adults here?” asked one audience member at the conclusion of the concert. What a wonderful response to a chamber music concert in a shelter for homeless families? Immediately I started brainstorming about finding the pedagogical equivalent of Shelter Music Boston. A group of teachers could bring lessons to shelters, just as we bring concerts. Perhaps SMB will be able to add a teaching staff as we grow this organization.

Pine Street October 23: RED SOX game 1 of the 2013 World Series!

-As I was passing out post cards inviting shelter guests to an upcoming free performance of Beethoven 9, I had said hello to one of our regular listeners. Tonight she was seated at the back of the room. This woman usually smiles and chats with me, but when she looked up I saw only frustration on her face and she did not want to interact with me. During the concert she moved from the back of the room to the front. A smile crossed her face during the last piece on the concert. Though we didn't speak this evening, I have faith that the music was able to bring her out of the distress of her day, even if only for one piece. Relief is relief though; the music provided that for her.

-All week I have been inviting our audiences to the upcoming free B9 performance. My hope has been that as it is on a Sunday afternoon and free, those members of our audiences who often ask where and when they could hear classical music concerts would be able to attend and still return to the shelters ahead of the relentless evening bed lottery. Here at PSI Women's Inn one woman piped up that on Sundays the shelter guests have to check in by 3 to keep their bed, so they couldn't go to a 2PM concert. This prompted a discussion with a staff member of what the women could do to attend the concert and maintain their bed status. We all learned that IF the women let the staff know, sign up on a list of those who will attend the concert, they can keep their bed AND attend the concert. Yet another example of the challenges, invisible to most of us, of trying to connect with every day society when one is also dealing with homelessness.

-From a woman new to our concerts: "This music is SO beautiful. It is taking away all those problems I have out there (she pointed toward the shelter door) and I am able to relax. I think I can just sleep tonight, finally." She told me after the concert that she has 4 kids and 2 grandchildren. I could see some of the challenges she has faced in her life; much of her body is scarred from what looked like burn scars.

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From surveys:

-Before the concert, I felt okay because I had eaten. After I am calm and want to sleep. The Weeping Woman was my favorite.

-The music added a little more joy.

-Please do not wait to come back. It is very soothing.

-You brought joy to my night.

-In the Men's Inn a man with only one tooth in his mouth came up to ask if we know of Pablo Casals, the cellist for freedom? Every once in a while we are asked about Casals; it's good to know his values are still known and appreciated. Someone without a home may relate to Casals long exile, or simply may relate to the universality of his brilliant musicianship. This gentleman covered his survey with quips and references to musicians, such as: STOP THE VIOLENCE, BLESS THE VIOLINISTS AND VIOLIST!, BAROQUE=OUT OF MONET. He told me and wrote: I am thankful I can hear.

- "Do you know of Pablo Casals, the cellist of freedom?" As well, on a written survey he shared this: BAROQUE=OUT OF MONET. This man had but one tooth in his mouth and wanted to talk about Nathan Milstein, Jack Benny, and fiddlin'.

-Some of the men attending tonight's concert were hearing us for the first time and really had only shown up to get good seats to watch the first game of the 2013 World Series on the large flat screen TV in the dining hall. I think they surprised themselves as they became increasingly enthusiastic about the music, asked questions, and erupted into louder and louder applause after each piece. "I'm from St. Louis, so I'm not sure what to do about this game," I announced as we finished the concert with moments to spare before the opening pitch. This inspired some friendly booing, smiles, and a spark of playful connection. As the pre-game activity blared from the TV a number of the men came up to where we were packing up to shake hands and add their personal thanks for the concert. Their gratitude was sincere and made my day.

Surveys:

-My name is Keith P, and I just thought that I would let you know that I enjoy hearing you play, it reminds me of my sister. She used to play!! Thank you!!

-I never enjoyed violin music as much. You ladies are Incredible!

Dimock Center October 24

Surveys:

-Have a better appreciation for the violin and viola. Thank you!

-I feel that you were great and you should try out for America's Got Talent!!

-Very calming and interesting.

-I did like the second song; it sounded happy to me. More upbeat and I think I hear a lot of "picking" of the strings which I like hearing. The last song was my favorite; I liked that it was all over the place.

-Very relaxing. You all have a lot of talent.

Rebecca reported some women said to her:

-La llorona is one of the most touching and beautiful pieces I've ever heard. I was crying by the end. I could hear the soul of the woman weeping.

-This song (La llorona) reminded me of when I was young and my dad was using. He listened to music like this, maybe it was even this exact song. When I heard this music I felt like I was back there, with him, with the music. It is all so sad and emotional.

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-JL reports: After this woman stated this we all, musicians and audience, had a conversation about how hearing music can take you to another time and place; the emotions of a piece of music you hear in the present can immediately thrust you to another time of your life, happy or sad, but very emotional. Without any words, just the music. This is all very powerful, said some of the audience members.

August

Shattuck Shelter August 12

-The SMB team waited for the bed lottery to be finished before starting the concert. During this time a man asked Jennie about the marimba and even tried to play a few notes. SMB musicians checked in with some of our regular audience members as we waited to play. SMB board president, Pam Hill, joined the audience.

-Steven told us that Tammy had moved to Montana, gotten a job, was living with a friend. Tammy had told us at our last concert that she was planning to do this, so we had a chance to say goodbye to her in July. Apparently, once Tammy arrived in Montana, Steven had interviewed the friend on the phone. When he learned that the friend knew Tammy's real name, significant details about her family, and other facts that only a long time true friend could know, Steven felt comfortable that she would be safe.

-After the concert Marissa spoke with a young man from Southern Sudan. He had only been at the Shattuck for three days. He said that he is working towards finding a regular job and then, with the help of the shelter, he will move into permanent housing. He seemed extremely determined. He shared how inspirational the concert was and how music connects you to some sort of spirit. He loves to sing and play drums but doesn't often listen to classical music so he enjoyed very much listening to this kind of music. He said it gave him peace.

Comments from the surveys:

-Before: "Had no idea." After: "I enjoyed it very much. It was very nice."

-Before: "Never had an idea of what was going on." After: "Very nice, peaceful, wonderful. Good luck!"

-Before: "I was in a bummed mood, now it feels better." After: "I was a very happy, joyful person."

-Before: "I was feeling okay before the concert." After: "I became more joyful after the concert." "I think y'all was very skillful."

- "Afterwards, I still have my problems. This was nice though. I liked it. Concert itself :)." This woman left her email as well.

-After: "Very pleasant!!! I do recommend you to come more often and spend more time. Classical music is the kind of music directly correlated to the language of mathematics and science. In addition to the cool of soul. Thank you very so much."

- "Too short." This woman was wondering why this concert was shorter than the others. She said that just when she was getting into it was over.

-Before: "Happy." After: "Happy."

- "Very nice concert, I'm happy. Thank you for coming."

- "Before the concert I was a little blue but after I felt full of someone."

Pine Street Women's Inn August 13

-The audience was smaller tonight,; were some of our regular listeners choosing the street due to the mild weather?

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-One regular audience member was very curious about the Farr, a piece for flute and marimba. She came forward after Jennie and Marissa finished playing to ask if she could look at the score, "What does a marimba part look like, anyway?" Following "Meditation" from Thais, she asked "What instruments was this piece originally written for? Did you have to arrange it for marimba?"

-A pregnant woman in the audience smiled and nodded along with the jazzy rhythms in the marimba, viola duo. Staff members were smiling as they leaned over the banister to hear this work by Nathan Shirley.

-Last month, one of our regular audience members asked if we could play "Meditation" from Thais. During tonight's concert, she was touched when Julie told her that we would play it, as a result of her request. She commented to the audience around her that this piece is very beautiful; another woman, who has previously spoken with SMB musicians quite extensively about opera, offered that "Meditation" is about a woman's spiritual enlightenment.

-An older woman and regular audience member was focused very intently throughout the concert, at times exhibiting a furrowed brow. She mentioned to Marissa that she plays the piano; a woman sitting close by commented that we should really hear her play, "She's amazing!"

- "What time period did Ravel compose?" piped up the woman who had been interested in seeing the Farr score. She continued, "Usually I try to relate politics and history to the piece in order to figure out why the composer writes what he writes. I couldn't quite figure it out with this piece." A conversation between the musicians and audience members about Why composers write what they do followed this comment.

-During the tango several women got up to dance. One woman shouted, "That was so fun! It makes you want to dance."

Comments from the surveys

-Before: "Felt sad." After: "It was great, I liked it."

- "Thank you all so much, it was lovely, you are all lovely. Thank you for thinking of us."

- "You ladies are so animated when you play in that it brings such a lovely visual aspect to the beautiful music you play. Thank you."

- "Very good! The flute was excellent."

- "Your music sounds like it's telling a story. Wonderful!"

- "I enjoyed the concert. It was very relaxing."

-Before: "I thought it would be sad depressing chamber music. I was not looking forward to it." After: "The up tempo music left me in a good mood. Good sounds, happy thoughts."

Pine Street Men's Inn August 13

-The bed lottery, along with a special barbecue for shelter guests, delayed the start of the concert.

-A regular concert goer, D. sat in the front row and asked us if we had listened to Jean Luc Ponty, as he has suggested we do last month. Once the music started, he was immediately focused. About the Farr he said, "It started so sad, like they were mourning someone's death possibly; then it was as if they lit up and moved on with a more positive outlook. Nice piece!"

-About Jennie's marimba playing, an audience member said, "She really gets into that thing, I like it!" Another added, "You gotta move around to play that marimba."

-One man, at the beginning of the concert, had ear buds in. By the end of the concert they were gone. He decided to listen to the live music and happily filled out a survey.

-Two men sitting in the front row smiled with recognition at "Meditation" from Thais.

Afterwards one said, "Oh yeah, that was beautiful! I don't know much classical music, but something like that sticks."

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One man asked Jennie, "How long did it take you to learn the marimba?" Another audience member then said, "The viola is so dramatic. I think it sets the tone for the violin's higher sound."

-Julie explained to the group that the marimba would take the place of the cello in the Ravel String Quartet. One audience member asked, while laughing, "How many instruments can you play?!"

-After the concert, a man who had heard us previously said, "That's what I like about classical music, it's SO passionate!"

-Another audience member confided that, "I need this kind of music. I love listening to opera and other music like this. I like this more than Top 40. Please continue to come back." While another commented, "It just keeps getting better and better."

-After listening to Shirley, a man said, "That was good; that was AMAZING!"

-One man shared with Jennie that he had hit rock bottom. He was going through a tough divorce and didn't know if he would get to see his kid. Just before the barbecue, he got a call that informed him he gets to visit his son for the first time. During our concert, he said he watched us and could feel our joy for the music, and it reminded him of how it felt when he feels joy for what he's engaged in.

Comments from the surveys:

-The same man who had ear buds in at the beginning of the concert wrote "I always enjoy when you come and play! Some of the selections (Shirley) were beyond my understanding.

-Thank you for your time and talent!"

- "Thank you for coming. Last week I found out I have HIV and also that one of my good friends is dying. I'm not going to say I'm feeling perfectly happy but you definitely have improved my day if not week."

-Before: "Angry, upset, disappointed." After: "Calm, meditative, relaxed, at peace." "Music is a very strong, mood altering genre. True music more so, something very melodic rather than the popular stuff of today. The fact that it was evident, the emotion and passion you put into the music puts so much more into the performance."

-Before: "I was feeling just OK. I had a bit of a headache and some joint pain." After: "I was pain free and rejuvenated. Classical music heals!"

- "Beautiful, I hope you will do it again."

- "very moving, well played. I hope you will come back."

- "I thought playing the sax was hard."

- "Thank you very much. Great blending of the marimba to the cello pieces."

- "Thanks for your lovely concert."

Dimock Center August 14

-Many women had questions about the marimba and Jennie's iPad page-turner. One audience member asked, "What's at the end of your mallets?" Another was curious about the mute on Julia's violin.

-After Farr a woman calmly said, "That was beautiful."

-A woman leaned over and asked Marissa "Do you play piccolo too? I used to play flute and piccolo in high school. I liked your piece, good job!"

-During "Meditation" many audience members had their eyes closed, relaxing, while others tried to peer around to see all the instruments. One audience member whom we had not seen before stared intently at Julie as she played.

-After "Meditation" one woman piped up, "I noticed you had pencil markings in your music. What do those marks tell you?" This sparked a conversation about how musicians learn and interpret music.

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-Another regular audience member added, "It's great to see Jennie play because you can feel the music through her facial expressions and body language."

Comments from the surveys:

-Next to the happy face for 'after' the concert "Infinity to the infinite power. This was very uplifting."

- "Really uplifting concert, thank you!"

- "I loved to hear the different types of music. It made me relaxed and I'm a little more at peace."

- "You have enriched my stay. God bless, thanks."

- "I enjoy this very much! Very interesting."

- "Enjoyed it very much, loved all the pieces."

- "Thank you for coming. It was very relaxing and interesting."

- Before: "Really was unsure, not totally looking forward to it." After: "Feel very relaxed. Loved the music, would love to see this again."

- Before: "Looking forward to it." After: "Very good beautiful music."

- "The music was great and emotional. Thank you for playing for us and lifting our spirits in a tough time in our lives!"

- "Thank you for coming again."

- "Once again that was unbelievable, I really lived when you all played together."

- Before: "I was curious to how you would sound." After: "I felt calm, uplifting your music is very soothing and smooth sounding."

- "I've never heard any classical music before but you guys were awesome."

- "Your music is very inspiring and very good."

- Before: "Excited to hear the different instruments." After: "I think all of you were great. Very inspiring."

- "Thank you for coming. I wish I could play an instrument. Now I want to go to a classical concert. I love how you played in perfect synchronization. This music is therapeutic and it really uplifted my spirits." This woman drew a halo of stars above her smiley face.

- "I loved the concert and I felt very happy listening to the different rhythms, thank you."

- "I very much enjoyed this concert... I appreciate music in all styles. My favorite style of music is hip-hop so I like the bongos, marimba, and also drums. Basically I love the beat for dancing because I love to dance. Thank you, god bless you all."

- "It was great."

- "I felt 'blah' before the concert and I feel great after listening. The music is very soothing."

Crittenton Women's Center August 15

-The toddlers at Hastings House were running and yelling through the room as we set up for the concert; the moment the music started all became still.

-During the piece by Nathan Shirley one boy, probably 3-4 years old, was spinning and dancing with glee.

-One three-year old boy, who had been quite anxious at the beginning of the concert, settled down in the lap of SMB Intern Marissa. Between pieces he said that he wanted to go home; when the musicians played he rested in her lap and relaxed. Wide eyes revealed his attention to the music.

- "I want to know more about that instrument in the back," said one woman while pointing to the marimba.

-A new audience member said, "I love classical music from Bach to Mozart to Stravinsky. I played clarinet and French horn in school."

2013

-Rebecca brought her violin to this concert so she could give a mini violin lesson to one of our audience members who would like to learn the violin. This young woman was quite nicely dressed and her hands were decorated with alternating turquoise and lavender nails. Rebecca gently let her know that to play the violin, the nails would have to go, at least on the left hand. Immediately, the young woman whipped them off and the lesson proceeded! The new violin student was able to make a warm sound while drawing the bow across all four open strings and was immediately able to correct the pitch when placing her fingers on the strings. She spoke about ordering a violin on eBay! "I really want to learn how to play this instrument," she exclaimed. All the while, her new born slept in a nearby stroller.

Comments from the surveys:

- "I felt better after the concert, thank you."
- "I believe it was the second or third piece I enjoyed."
- "Thank you!"
- "Good job!"

July

Pine Street Women's Inn, July 8, 2013

-The room was very quiet throughout the concert and the women did not have too many comments. Instead they were calm, focusing completely on the music and relaxing after a long day.

Comments during the concert:

- When Julie commented on the silence in the audience the woman replied, "We're enjoying the performance, just relaxing."
- One woman said "I liked the ending to that piece, it was very lively."
- One woman inquired about a French piece she had heard before and wanted them to play.
- "Violin is hard work!"

Comments from the surveys:

- "Very good, thank you."
- "Had a great time relaxing."
- "Awesome, I really enjoyed the concert. It made my day. I love music, thank you!"

Pine Street Men's Inn

-One man was dancing along to the music using his arms. It was clear that he got the mood and feel of the pieces being played. Another asked if he could have any literature about SMB. Everyone was very helpful and invested in the concert.

Comments during the concert:

- One man said, "It sounded like a really bad story with a sad ending."
- Another shouted, "Well done. You're a professional!"
- One man exclaimed, "I wanna know how you do that!"
- One commented jokingly, "I've heard you long enough, that's not your best."
- Another man said, "Keep it coming. It is not often that we just take time to listen. It calms me down."
- One man commented about the Biber. "How can you hold one note so long while playing others notes at the same time?"

Comments from the surveys:

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- “Bring some snacks.”
- “A good idea. Do you ever play Vivaldi or Paganini?”
- “When I saw you guys with the violin it makes my day because I love to hear the sound of violin - is my favorite instrument. P.S. Keep coming. God bless. Jose.”
- “I LOVED the music! It was very touching and soothing. My mood was a bit down before you guys started to play. But as soon as you strummed the first string, that mood changed. Thank you for having us as an audience. I myself am grateful for your time and hospitality. God bless and never change the music in those loving hearts.”
- “Excellent performance.”
- “Loved it as usual.”
- Before: “Tired of being homeless.” After: “Happy my day was brightened by your musical talents.”

July 9th Crittenton Women's Union

-SMB was very happy to see our young audience members again after deciding with Crittenton that it was beneficial to have both the mothers and the children listening to the concert. During the concert, the mothers were calm and relaxed listening to the music while the children either sat with them or happily danced around the room. After this concert the SMB members were discussing a way to bring lessons and instruments to the women. This could open a whole new door for SMB. One idea is to use music education students as volunteers as they are always looking for experience.

Comments during the concert:

- One woman asked eagerly if “the musicians give out classes? I've played a bit of guitar but not much and I've always wanted to learn more music. I love it.”
- In response to Julie's question about anyone playing an instrument one woman shyly raised her hand and said, “Yes, I play piano.”
- Someone shouted “That's Biber baby.”
- One woman inquired, “How often do you break your bow strings?”

Comments from the surveys:

- “I was a little nervous about my daughter's behavior but I survived. The violin captured my daughter's attention and hopefully she can play one day.”
- “I loved it! Please come back.” -Gabriela
- “I enjoyed being in the concert.”
- Before: “Feeling depressed and didn't want to be bothered.” After: “Felt good, put my mind at ease and relaxed me as well!” -Juanita

Concert 4 July 10th Shattuck Shelter

- The bed lottery ended at 7:15 PM. Many people had to leave the shelter as it was pouring rain outside.
- There was one man who was at Shattuck last month too. Last month he was sitting in the front row, very enthusiastic, and had lots of comments. He even came up to me to say hello. If I am remembering correctly, he was the man who kept telling everyone one to be quiet and pay attention to the concert. This month he sat in back with a sullen look on his face. Clearly, something was wrong. We hope that the concert brought him some comfort.

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Comments during the concert:

-One guests stated that, "It sounds pretty intense with lots of ups and downs. I didn't know so many notes could come out of that instrument. I have a newfound respect for the violin because you always hear instruments in large groups but you never realize what they can do on their own. I also enjoyed the other pieces with the different harmonies playing off each other."

-Another asked, "What is the difference between the fiddle and the violin? Which came first?"

A different guest asked. "What is your bow string made out of? Do they break a lot? What is the other instrument called?"

-One person commented, "That last duet was a good one. I liked it a lot! It intertwined just right."

-One guests said, "Your music reminds me of 102.5 FM. I used to listen to it all the time. You guys are professional sounding and play like 102.5 FM. When I was a young adult I listened to Stravinsky, Beethoven, Mozart, etc. My life was pretty tough, and the music soothed and calmed the savage beast in me. I am open to all kinds of music."

Comments from the surveys:

- "Love it all up."

- "Thanks for taking the time to share."

- "Good stuff."

- "Extra special! Did not sound like a funeral. Get a laptop and play ballet."

- "It's amazing. Love the experience. No better way to end the day!"

July 11th Dimock Center

-There were many new women in the audience who spoke up with a lot of questions and comments.

Comments during the concert:

-One woman said, "It reminds me of the Nutcracker. It tells a story."

-Another commented, "I felt like I was on Titanic."

-One woman who was taking this time to relax stated that "It sounds like mellow music. You can just sit and listen to it. Do people dance to classical music?"

-Someone else said that "It reminds me of an old fashion ball in Europe with fancy gowns and romance. I've worked at Symphony Hall so music is right up my alley."

-One woman said "I would like to know how long you've been playing the violin? Did someone teach you?"

-Another stated, "It reminds me of cartoons like Micky Mouse or Tom and Jerry."

-One woman commented, "I think it's funny because people have preconceived notions about going to a concert but you never know what you're going to get. Music has ups and downs. One minute you're hard and the next you're soft. It portrays all kinds of emotion which relates to everyone and life in general. Music is like a trip through history as you hear all different periods and styles."

-Someone asked, "Have you played with the Boston Pops or Aerosmith?"

-Another woman brought up a question about the title of a piece. "I'm curious, what does 'bewegt' mean?"

-When we were talking about direction in music, a woman commented, "It's kind of like a book or a movie. A movie puts the image out there, but with a book you have to form your own ideas about what's going on."

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- A woman commented, "I thought it was really cool when you played in the plucking style. I've never heard that before."
- While shaking Julie's hand: "I'm shaking the hand of a professional. Wow, I can't believe it."
- Comments from the surveys:
 - "Absolutely amazing. Thank you for dedicating your time. I was miserable before I came tonight but now I'm so happy. With God's help I'll be here next month. Thank you. XOXOXO."
 - "Great show!"
 - "I think you are very talented but this isn't my type of music."
 - "You both are very talented and I really enjoyed the presentation. Thank you for coming!"
 - "Thank you for coming. I thought you ladies were very talented. I just don't like this type of music."
 - "You guys are very talented. Thanks for coming."
 - "God bless your talent."
 - "I love classical music!! Thank you."
 - "It was great!"
 - "Great job! Thank you!"
 - "Great!"
 - "I enjoyed this, it was educational as well. Thank you!"
 - "I always enjoy the concerts. I miss Julia."
 - "The concert was very interesting. Thank you for coming, hope to see you again."
 - "Awesome concert. Thank you for your time."
 - "Awesome! Thank you."
 - "Thank you! Relaxing, wish I could hear it before going to sleep."
 - Before: "Not sure what to expect." After: "Beautiful and serene music. You two are great."

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June

Dimock Center June 6

- During this concert great discussions unfolded between the musicians and the women.
- Jennie explained that the Colgrass is about all the complexity of a long relationship, including silence and experimental sounds, and in fact is a son's evocation of his relationship with his father. "The piece lasts about ten minutes, but covers a lot of territory," she concluded. Julia added, "Sounds like a whole lifetime to me," and one of the wise women in the audience replied, "After ten minutes whatever they say is the same anyway!" She nodded to those around her who smiled in agreement.
- "This was awesome. So glad I got to see you ladies play in such an intimate setting. Thank you!"
- "Good job... Thank you."
- "Enjoyed it very much, thank you!"
- "Great Job! Awesome!"
- "Uplifting! Very powerful! Thank you all."
- "Absolutely wonderful."
- "I loved the tango with the marimba because of the bass. The whole concert was awesome as usual!"
- "Wonderful, wish I could hear more!" -Nicole
- "Loved it especially the Piazzolla! Thank you."
- "Enjoyed the concert very much."
- "Very interesting! Very informative, thank you!"
- "Loved the marimba and the mix of instruments."
- "Every month I look forward to enjoying a small part of my new life with you folks. Thanks again." -Patty
- "I think Jennie is a great addition to the concert. Absolutely incredible. Thank you."
- "I always enjoy the concerts. Please come back!"
- "Thank you for coming, it was a nice treat and something different."
- "This was my first live classical music concert and I enjoyed it very much. It was very unique. Take care."
- "It was great and thanks for coming. Had a nice evening tonight." -Tanya.

Shattuck Shelter June 5

- We were greeted by familiar faces, and made new SMB friends. This concert marked the beginning of our fourth year of concerts at Shattuck!
- Daniel said to Julie, "I'm glad you came back!" Another man chimed in, smiling "I missed you!" Daniel then replied with a big smile saying even louder, "I missed you the most!"
- The Shattuck audience, devoid of preconceived notions about what classical music is "supposed" to sound like, was open and receptive to the unconventional and experimental sounds of the Colgrass, perhaps even more so than a conventional concert audience.
- Comments from the Shattuck audience:
 - "I think you ladies are extremely talented and you're all beautiful. And whatever you guys play is very soothing for the soul."
 - "The music was great."
 - "You are a great gift. I feel much better"

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- “Thanks, you rock.”
- “Every life, love, hope.”
- “Please bring the marimba back!”
- “Loved all the music pieces.”
- “I really liked the music especially the end song with the fast rhythm.”
- “I loved it all!”
- Before the concert: “Classical music has been my love! I had a hard day before coming to this concert.” After the concert: “ I have felt very calm within. The Concert has been much, much moving with the addition of the organ type instrument!”

Pine Street Men's Inn June 4

-While SMB musicians transported the marimba from the Women's Inn to the Men's Inn the instrument got stuck in a doorway deep in the hallways between the Inns! Pine Street staff members assisted Jennie in the very loud and complicated process of disassembling parts of the instrument to get it through the door. The marimba transport delayed the start of the Men's Inn concert so, on the spot, the program was reorganized: the trio of 2 violins and viola started the concert with “La Folia”.

One man excitedly asked, just before “La Folia”, “Is there going to be any Beethoven or Mozart?!”

This same man exclaimed after hearing the Geminiani, “My brain is going to explode, thank you, seriously.” This particular man explained to us how he has dreamed of attending Berklee College of Music. He added that after listening to this concert he was revitalized and encouraged to pursue his dreams.

Comments from the Pine Street Men's Inn audience:

- “Oh! My! God! An amazing performance that conveyed deep emotion from start to finish. I almost cried. Would love to see and hear more.” -Philip.
- “Breath taking, awesome, come back soon. I could see the entire parent-child song.”
- “Inspirational, very entertaining, deep, moving, soothing, gratifying!”
- “Before the visit by the lovely orchestra I was rather depressed, with a slight mood of sorrow, and anguish. After the performance my heart was risen and my soul awakened. This was truly a heavenly experience for me. Thank you. Very happy.”
- “I loved the Beethoven song! -J.”
- “I was reminded of how music can heal and calm the wild beast that lives in some of us that are wounded and in pain. I'm not as depressed as I was before. I was reminded of when I had a music collection, which included Vivaldi Four Seasons. One of my favorites. You string players should try to listen to Jean Luc Ponte's Cosmic Messenger.”

Pine Street Women's Inn June 4

-The women at Pine Street Inn were fascinated with the marimba. They too asked how one woman sets it up all by herself.

-One woman asked, “Do you play soprano notes?” This engendered a conversation about the high voice of the violin, the viola alto voice, the size difference of the instruments. This woman noticed that one violin plays higher notes than the other, which intrigued her. She is a singer, a soprano.

-After the concert one young woman expressed how much she enjoyed the concert. She stated, “I love music, it brings out emotions and feeling. It's so relaxing.”

-Another woman added, “I was miserable when I came in here tonight, had no idea what was going on but heard that marimba playing. I feel completely different now, so much better,

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kind of hopeful even. Thanks for coming, wow!"

-Julie had a conversation with one woman who remembered SMB from the Kitty Dukakis Treatment Center. Julie asked her how she's been doing? She smiled and reported, "Still sober! It's really hard, every single day, but I'm doing it." She asked many questions about the marimba, how it was built, how did Jennie manage to transport it all by herself? This gave us an opportunity to tell the story of the women at Hastings House being thrilled that one woman could get a huge marimba all over the place, by herself! This conversation inspired another woman, sitting nearby, to ask if Julie had ever played out of state? The woman was thrilled to learn that Julie had performed in most of the US, abroad, and even in a Hollywood movie.

Comments from the Pine Street Women's Inn audience:

- "I did not know what to expect."

- "I love it, it was my first time, if made me feel happy."

- "Very sad" before the concert. "Now I am happy" after the concert.

- "I was having an awful day; I'm usually a very happy person but was very down. Your music helped me very much. Thank you!! Susie."

- "Thank you for the music, it's for the soul."

- "Very good! Thank you."

- "Very beautiful and uplifting. Thank you very much!"

- "Can we get tickets to a symphony or where you all will be playing?"

- "Divine elements in music and of sound!" Many thanks! Early in life I studied the piano with a fine piano teacher in the state of Massachusetts until age 16 yrs. old etc."

Crittenton Women's Union-Hastings House June 3 FIRST CONCERT

-We arrived thirty minutes early to set up Jennie's marimba. We found a number of excited moms with their children, already waiting to hear the music. They wanted to get good seats for the show! The concert went well; it was Shelter Music Boston's first concert with young children in the audience (all under the age of three). During the performance children were dancing everywhere and the moms asked many questions about the music.

-In response to the solo marimba piece, "Michi" one woman stated, "It reminds me of watching a really suspenseful movie. It sounds like a movie song."

-One woman was curious, "How many men does it take to set up the marimba?" Jennie responded with a fist in the air "One woman!" The whole room lit up with excited cheering and comments, "Wonder woman!" and "We don't need men!" and "Yeah, you go girl!"

Comments from the Hastings House audience:

-Before I "Was feeling a bit rushed and overwhelmed. Anxious. My son was aggravated as well. I loved the music, calmed my son and me; he loved it and danced to it as well. Can't wait for the next concert. Want to know where I can find further info about music."

- "I really like it. You should come more often."

-Before: "a little tired" after "refreshed"

- "I didn't feel comfortable at first. After the concert I felt content."

- "I do love it!! Good job girls. My daughter was dancing."

- "Exceptional music."

- "I always thought instruments were not that good, but I like it. Good job!"

- "It was very relaxing music. And it clears your mind."

- "Me gusto la musica me encanto."

- "Great job! Come back! I enjoyed your concert and my baby did too. A++."

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May

Shattuck Shelter May 2

-Rebecca's Comments: Mostly men attended this concert. I think I saw only one woman. The men were extremely attentive and appreciative, and it was pretty quiet in the room. Lots of people came up to us afterwards to shake our hands and say thank you.

Guest's comments:

-I enjoyed and loved the concert.

-Before concert: A soul full of joy on battled grounds...

-After the concert:... as your duet strums and strikes chords in my life, light shines through these stone walls for flight...

-Before concert: emotional roller coaster

-After the concert: Two thumbs up...good to zone in and out and truly relax

-Before concert: very low

-After the concert: joyous music helped lessen sad mood. Thanx

-Muy bueno, excelente! (Very good, excellent!)

-Before concert: not too happy

-After the concert: made mood improve. Would love to hear stuff more upbeat.

-I had a nice time. Come back soon!

Dimock Center May 1

-Rebecca's Comments: Before the Janeczek, we talked about the angry style of the music and the dissonance that they would be hearing. We weren't sure if they would like it, but one woman said something like, "When I was on the streets I felt a lot of anger. I still feel a lot of anger now, but I don't feel alone." We discussed anger more and I asked them why they thought a composer would write such an angry sounding piece. The answer they gave: to express his emotions. INDEED! We talked about ways of expressing anger in a safe way and that by writing, playing, or listening to music like this is a very safe way to express and get in touch with this emotion.

Guests' Comments:

-We also played two chords for them, a 7th and a 3rd and had them experience the tension in the one chord and relaxation in the other Love ya'!!!

-Excellent

-I thought it was very beautiful.

-I really enjoyed this. Please come again.

-Very good.

-That was amazing. It made me feel good and happy. Keep coming. I like the music.

-At first I really didn't have an open mind, and by the end I was very entertained and pleased.

Thank you.

-Very good!

-It was great hearing classical music. I was a ballerina when I was younger.

-My 6th time [hearing SMB]. YEAH!!!

-Thank you guys for your time. You both were great. It was beautiful. Thank you again.

-Loved it!

-Before concert: I was mediocre

-After the concert: Now I feel full of life!

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Pine Street Inn April 30

-Rebecca's comments: One man told me that he liked having acoustic instruments and wanted to make sure that we wouldn't add drums or other very loud instruments to the ensemble. He liked the quality and timbre of our instruments.

-At Pine Street, the audiences were a little smaller than usual, but everyone that attended was very attentive and quiet. In the Men's Inn the room is very, very live so I used this as an opportunity to talk about acoustics and asked that everyone be especially careful to stay quiet while we were playing. It worked like a charm! We had a very focused audience.

Guests' Comments:

-I think it is absolutely wonderful that you guys are giving this place some culture through beautiful music. Please continue to share the wonderful gifts God has graced you with. Thank You and God -Bless.

-Great music! Thank you!

-Very relaxing. Please come back. God Bless!!

-First time I heard. It was wonderful.

-Before concert: Blah!!!!!!!

-After the concert: very relaxing. Thank you for your time. I enjoyed your show very much.

-Very good! Educational and info I did not know. Keep coming, please.

-As usual, excellent selection, beautifully played.

-Excellent performance. Thank you

-Rebecca's comments: One man told me that he liked having acoustic instruments and wanted to make sure that we wouldn't add drums or other very loud instruments to the ensemble. He liked the quality and timbre of our instruments.

March-April

Shattuck Shelter, April 1

-“The music sounds relaxing and soothing. THANK YOU.”

-“My soul always shines—and brighter with your concert as a flower grows from your melody, beyond these stone walls. Thank you.” Alexis

-“Muy divertido” Jose

-“Great!” Ed

-“I am now happy. Come back again.”

-“No gimmicks. Real music. Get composers to come.” Dan

-Dan liked the story of how the Bulgarian Folk Tune came to be on tonight's concert. I found a performance of the Bulgarian Folk Tune on YouTube and liked the piece so much I searched to find a printed copy of the music. Ultimately, I met the woman who had arranged the piece for violin and viola. Dan was pleased that she had given me a copy to perform on shelter concerts, as he too liked the piece quite a bit. He asked, "Could she come talk about the music next time you play it?" As she is a Boston musician, I hope she might even be able to come and play it herself! This conversation gave me an opportunity to tell Dan about "The Composer Project" I have in mind. Shelter Music Boston will commission local composers to write pieces for the shelter concerts, then the composers will come to the performances to speak about their music with the shelter audiences. Dan really liked this idea. He wants to know what classical music being written now sounds like. Just this week, I've had conversations with Oliver Caplan, a Boston composer, about writing for the shelter concerts. Hopefully, Dan will be in permanent housing by the time the first commission

2013

Pine Street Women's Inn, March 28

- “Before the concert I was tired and now I feel relaxed. I loved the music and enjoyed it, like this type of musical instrumental.”
- “It was very soothing.”
- “The room is different as soon as you arrive!” -Andrea
- “Very educational/ it's good to learn about classical music. This helps the stress of having to be in a shelter.”
- “I've rarely heard 2 such good performers. I hope you come again! You have inspired me to practice.”
- “We all enjoyed the music—it's a nice diversion. It also gives those who are more knowledgeable an opportunity to share that with the rest of us working in comments, etc. about the composers and instruments is also nice.”
- “Thank you ladies.”
- One of our regular audience members mentioned that the Sibelius Duo reminded her of the music of the French composer, Gabriel Fauré. Another regular, who had just tonight told us that she played the sitar as a child, offered that perhaps the two composers were contemporaries. This sparked a discussion between musicians and shelter guests about how different works of art and music written during the same time period can have artistic similarities. A third woman offered to look up the dates of both composers, on her iPhone, to see if indeed they were contemporaries. Upon learning that the two composers were contemporaries, we had a discussion about how both lived through the First World War and Sibelius lived through both World Wars. I told the women how he had been so disturbed by WWII that he wasn't able to compose much after the war. Our final work on the concert was by the Hungarian composer Laszlo Weiner, a Jewish composer who perished in the Holocaust. This evening's concert proved to be more than a history lesson. As we packed up, the woman who mentioned Fauré told Rebecca that there have been a number of deaths and considerable distress in the shelter in recent weeks. The concert, she said, soothed some of that pain and allowed the women some peace, for a few minutes.

Pine Street Inn Men's Inn, March 28

- “Keep practicing you ladies sound wonderful. Thank you” - R
- “This concert was excellent, but the people in this place don't always show respect. Congratulations for giving me that for life. (Sorry for my bad writing of English I'm Mexican, muchas gracias.” -Adrian G
- “Wow! Amazing performance. Love the sound you all have. You honor that the music goes around...Thank you ladies. I am from Mississippi state! Love Boston. Beautiful! Love to catch the wagon of good music. Mississippi love the groove.””
- “I would've loved to play a game of chess, with you ladies playing live. I didn't know you were coming. I just loved it.” -Antoine M
- “I felt like the last piece was like someone was searching for something or someone. It spoke to me because I am also searching for someone. After being hit by a car in San Diego, I came back to Boston to find my family. I had a case of amnesia (memory loss). I truly enjoyed your concert!” -Dale C
- “[Before the concert] I was not good but fair. Now I am really happy. Thank you for the music” -Richard L.
- “I love it live. LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT!”
- “Please come back.”
- “THANK!” -Tim M.

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-“ACCEPTABLE!”

-“Thank you I really appreciate that you come here to perform and sorry that not everyone can be quiet. I wish staff would keep the people who are talking out. Thank you again.”

-Bobby R.

-“Keep up the good work!”

-Dale, whose comment is above, also spoke to me at length about the Weiner. He wanted to know if the composer had a story in mind when writing the piece? Dale heard his own story of searching, finding nothing, making useful discoveries while continuing to search, especially in the final movement and was comforted to learn that someone somewhere, in this case the composer Weiner, could tell that story too.

Dimock Center, March 27

-Before: “Meh. Life sucks. I only like pop music.” After: “Yay! Violin!”

-“I love music and you two were excellent. I enjoyed it very much. I also play piano so I understood it.”

-Before: “I was average not happy or sad just so!” After: I felt more alive it’s nice to really appreciate live classical music. Just loved it!”

-“I really enjoyed you taking time out of yours to make me feel better. I did have some things to say! So all I will say is I enjoyed myself. I liked the dramatics and sadness/happiness within the stories of the music. Keep up the great job.” -Tiffany D.

-“I enjoyed listening to you guys come together, it sounded great.”

-“I thoroughly enjoyed the concert—maybe next time a little more modern.”

-“I think tonight, an awful lot of us had seen you play before so we didn’t have new questions.

-I really like when you play lesser known pieces by composers that we all know—like the Mozart piece from tonight. It’s new but also familiar. Thank you.”

-“Before I felt happy. After I had felt happy as well.”

-“I appreciated hearing! I felt some of the music was a mystery—I thought of 1940’s and I really did enjoy listening. Thank you very much. Respectfully, Nelly B.”

-“I’ve never listened to this type of music before, but I like it very much! It’s good for meditation/ me time. Thank you.” -JB

-“I wanna hear 1812 overture next time! And something from Fantasia. Thank you ladies!!”

February

Pine Street Women’s Inn, February 14

-Thank you for your professional musicianship. It was most enjoyable. I would have loved to have heard more.

-Before I felt like crying. Concert was very therapeutic. After, I still feel like crying but laughter is included.

-Your music is so lovely. Yes, I was bummed out before the concert. But happily, I will be leaving Pine St Inn in 1 week and I am a pianist and music is the #1 reason I want to get my life back in order. You were so inspirational!

-In the Men’s Inn a young man smiled broadly while cheerfully thanking us for the concert. He told us that his mother had sent him a photograph of us playing on the ladies side of the Pine Street Inn. He was so excited to hear us play. He spends his day at St. Francis House, nights at Pine Street; he’s a homeless young man who moves from shelter to shelter day and night. He wrote,

-Great concert! You really motivated me to learn to play. Great selections. Spot on timing.

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Excellent performance, and that's a real critique. Phillip

-Leo wrote: I thought the music was wonderful. Violin was never my favorite, however, upon hearing your renditions, I must reconsider what I must be missing. The instrument is magical, emotionally lifting and leading to other emotions we may not desire to express publically.

Five stars from me. You guys ruled the music like a troika!

-Leo also asked to have the names of the pieces written down so he could search for them, listen more.

Dimock Center, February 13

Questions tonight:

-“Is there special care of the instruments and the horsehair?”

-“What is rosin made of?”

-“Is there a difference in the way violins are made now from early times?”

-“Do you get paid for playing these concerts? Do you play other places?”

-Finding out that one of the musicians plays in the Boston Pops inspired clapping and smiles of approval.

-The Fuchs Terzetto inspired, “That was HOT!”

-“I notice the different strokes, the longer strokes...picturing a wagon train out west...” said one listener after Ashokan Farewell.

From the written comments:

-Viola's SICK! I love when she fingerpicks.

-Before the concert, I was feeling stuck in a bad mood because I'm waiting to move on Friday to a halfway house. After the concert, I feel so much happier, so much emotion. It was uplifting and beautiful.

-Before the concert I was feeling scared, facing some things. After I feel hopeful. God is good thru music, thru you. Nicole

-Musicians from heaven. Angie

-Awesome. Makes me think.

-I felt a little peace of mind and good spirits.

Shattuck Shelter, February 11

-Thank you so much for the sun of sound in a dreary gloomy place.

-My soul is always shining, even with adversities, but having your concert has made it much brighter...thank you. Alexis

-Another fine, fine performance by three very talented ladies. Please come back real, real soon. Daniel

-This is the second time that I heard you play. What a way to end an evening with you coming by to play for us again and entertaining us with your lovely music. Peace and blessings. I thank you.

-Daniel wanted to know if we play 21st century music and what would it sound like. This question revives the plans for the Composer Project—commissioning local composers to write for the shelter concerts and bringing the composers to the concerts to speak with shelter guests about the music.

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January

Pine Street Women's Inn, January 17

-The Women's Inn was calm this evening; calm here means some critical mass of the women in the common space generally sit down for a whole movement of a work. It also means fewer women walk in front of the musicians while we are playing, and in general there is less movement during the concert. But as we play in the only large common space at the Inn, women must move through during performances. They need to stuff their belongings back into a locker, use the bathroom, or speak to a staff member about a problem in their lives.

-After the Rolla Duo one of our regular listeners said, "It transports us all to Europe, very elegant." -During the opening of the Reger Solo Viola Suite, a woman seated in the front row had a heated discussion with herself; by the third movement she was whispering, and on the final exclamatory note of the piece, she rose up and strode away energetically. I hoped the performance helped her through what she had been wrestling with and her departure meant she had reached a conclusion to that challenge.

-A woman who described herself as a former professional flutist told us of her attempts to assist her friend who suffers from substance abuse. The friend has many health problems and the flutist feared the staff would not let them stay the night, but she felt the music had calmed the staff, and perhaps all would be well as the evening proceeded. She wrote this for us: "The gift of classical music performed live is so much like the scriptural revelation of: The Healing Balm of Gilead. For my friend who suffers with substance abuse, the gift of classical music is nourishing to her soul. Thank you."

Pine Street Men's Inn, January 17

-We had a large audience in the Men's Inn as well. After the first movement of the Weiner one man yelled, "This is HOT. This is NASTY. This is SICK. I never heard anything like this; now I am a believer. This is going straight into my soul. You got me!" He proceeded to become increasingly excited after the second movement, with similar comments. During the third movement, while the viola provided a solid foundation for the violin to soar to some of the highest notes of the entire piece he yelled,

"Tell her, yeah, TELL HER!" After the concert he came forward to shake my hand and say, "This music is for my heart. Thank you."

-Another man asked if Weiner had studied composition with Bartok and upon learning that Kodaly had been Weiner's teacher, said, "Another great Hungarian composer."

Boston Healthcare for Homeless Program, January 16

-Between each piece one gentleman struggled to ask specific questions. He wanted to know how we musicians thought the performance of each piece went, could we let go of thinking about anything technical and just let the music out, did we hear stories in the music, could we put our hearts and souls into performing if we didn't like what we were playing? He described the third movement of the Weiner as a funeral procession with the very high note at the end representing a mourner placing a flower on a grave. We were thrilled to have inspired his thinking and conversation with us.

Dimock Center January 15

- "I really enjoyed the music and the education on instruments and music. Thank you very much for coming."

- "I love hearing you play. It is very relaxing."

- "The musical experience put me in a fabulous mood!"

- "Thank you for sharing your gifts with us."

2013

Shattuck Shelter January 14

-One man told us, in spite of the challenge of hearing the Rolla in a room that was more noisy

than usual, that it reminded him of attending the opera in Germany when he was in the service. "Are you going to play any Wagner?" he asked.

-Joseph, for the first time ever, spoke directly to us. In response to information about Rolla he said, "So this is like a history lesson, a history of the violin, a history of music. Ok, history of music." This man spoke to no one at all when we started the concerts in May 2010; this was great progress.

-The Reger Solo Viola Suite catapulted the hubbub into rapt attention and calm. This lasted until the final note of the final piece on the concert, when many listeners jumped up to thank us, ask questions about Telemann, about the baroque bow, and to look at the printed music.

-One of our regular listeners told us that due to the fact that his sister was in the ICU out of state and that he was on probation, he couldn't go visit her. His own health problems, and the death of the mother of his children were also "...bumming me out," he said. "When the concert started I was really down, but the music relaxed me, helped me to chill out, get a break from all of these problems."

-Mark, who has heard us three times, used the words, "therapeutic" and "blessing" repeatedly while thanking us. "People are on edge here, there is a lot of noise, there are a lot of drunk people in here, it's always chaotic. When you start your music, everything in here calms down. The staff calms down. It's really hard to sleep here but the night of your concerts some people go to bed early. They're calm and they don't harass others."

-The staff social worker exclaimed, "This is where music belongs! This place is totally different now!" This was her first experience of a Shelter Music Boston concert.

-"It's amazing that we have access to this music and it is free! These people here would not hear this music if you didn't bring it right here to us. This is my third time hearing you and it just keeps getting better, each time. Looking forward to next the performance." Daniel

- "I like it!" Kenny

- "Loved the performance, PLEASE keep coming."