



David Brown

Oboist Alecia Lawyer says she was inspired to found Houston's River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO) in 2005 partly by her appearances in the salons of Paris, where performing was such an intimate experience that "people were practically sitting in my lap." ROCO now provides an intimate musical experience not only for adult Houstonians—with commentary and "gig stories" from the musicians—but for their children as well. A program called ROCO-rooters combines childcare during the 5 p.m. Saturday concerts with an innovative music education program at the performance venue, St. John the Divine Episcopal Church. Lawyer serves as both executive director and principal oboe at ROCO—she's pictured above performing the Bach double concerto with Concertmaster Brian Lewis—and has engaged a variety of prominent conductors to lead the 40-member professional ensemble. ROCO's fourth season will open on October 11, 2008, with JoAnn Falletta on the podium.



David Brown

Not Dead Yet

Ever since 2006, when the San Francisco Symphony performed the world premiere of *The Composer Is Dead* at a family concert, the children's piece has appeared on family programs throughout the U.S. and Canada. Now the news is in that HarperCollins will release *The Composer Is Dead* as a book and CD, featuring Lemony Snicket and the San Francisco Symphony, in February 2009. The humorous whodunit by composer Nathaniel Stookey and writer Lemony Snicket (aka Daniel Handler, author of the bestselling *Series of Unfortunate Events* children's books) tries to answer the question of why all composers are "dead." In the tradition of *Peter and the Wolf*, the piece introduces children to the instruments of the orchestra, all of them murder suspects. "Wherever there's a conductor," says Snicket, "there's a dead composer. Beethoven—dead! Bach—dead! ... Schubert—unfinished, but dead!"

Musical Chairs

At the League of American Orchestras, **STEPHEN ALTER** has been promoted to director of advertising and meetings.

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra has announced three staff appointments: **CARA ARNETT**, box-office manager; **MIKE DRUMMER**, group sales manager; and **ELIAS THOMAS**, director of finance.

The Abilene Philharmonic has appointed **LEANNE BALDWIN** executive director.

MARIETTA CHENG will step down as conductor and music director at the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes (Corning, N.Y.) at the end of this season.

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra has appointed **BRAHAM DEMBAR** principal percussion.

CARRIE DENNIS has been named principal viola at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, effective this September.

Two senior staff appointments have been announced by the Seattle Symphony: **ELENA DUBINEYS**, artistic administrator, and **NANCY GOSEN**, director of education.



Dennis

The Waltham (Mass.) Philharmonic Orchestra has appointed **PEYMAN FARZINPOUR** music director and conductor.

STEPHANIE FUNG has been named public relations associate and assistant to the president at the Vancouver (B.C.) Symphony Orchestra.

The Seattle Symphony has announced the appointment of **MAARVIN HAMLISCH** as principal pops conductor for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 seasons.

The San Diego Chamber Orchestra has named **TYLER RICHARDS HEWES** executive director.

At the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, **PAUL W. HOGLE** has been promoted to vice president for institutional advancement and learning, and **SUSAN MERRITT** to education advisor to the president.

CATHERINE HUGHES has been named box-office manager of the Santa Rosa Symphony.

The Greenville (S.C.) Symphony Association has appointed **KENNETH S. JOHNSON** executive director.

JOE KLUGER has joined the arts consulting firm of WolfBrown as associate principal.

The Akron Symphony Orchestra has appointed **CHRISTOPHER JAMES LEES** assistant conductor for the remainder of this season, and associate conductor for 2008-09.

LEONARD LINTON has been elected president of California's New West Symphony.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra has announced that **RUTH LIPPER** and **STEPHEN SICHAK JR.** have been elected co-chairs to succeed **VICTOR PARSONNET**. The orchestra has appointed **VICTORIA McCABE** communications and external affairs manager.

The Bangor Symphony Orchestra has announced the appointment of **SARAH S. P. MCCARTHY** as director of development and marketing, and **BONNIE COCHRANE** as manager of patron services.