



## FACULTY CENTER

## Intimate Affairs

*A duet finds the biggest kicks often come from the smallest crowds.*

Entertainers from Pearl Jam to Perry Como typically want to perform before big crowds in big cities. Fred and Rebecca Karpoff felt much the same way before their recent musical tour through Western Europe and Africa. Much to their surprise, the duo—he a concert pianist, she a lyric soprano—found their smaller shows far more memorable.

At a small-town performance in Luxembourg, a church choir raised money to rent a piano and many of the townspeople not only attended the concert but helped arrange a reception. "They were just excited to have an event," recalls Rebecca. "We found concerts in the bigger cities less fun because the audiences were used to them."

In the African country of Ghana, the Karpoffs arrived at a modest concert hall only to find an unplayable piano—the humid conditions in which it was stored had destroyed the quality of the instrument. A desperate search uncovered only an electric piano, a circumstance most concert pianists would consider unacceptable. Worse, a power outage hit just before the concert was to begin. After waiting 45 minutes for the electricity to be restored, the Karpoffs played as planned before a particularly enthusiastic audience.

"I was playing my second piece, which gets kind of frantic near the end," says Fred. "As I reached this sort of climactic section, somebody let out a whopping cry and started to clap. Others started to join in. At the end they all let loose. That would never happen in the United States."

"In Ghana, they don't have concerts in the sense that we do," says Rebecca. "Here, people sit quietly and behave themselves and the performers bow when they're finished. In Ghana, music is a participatory event. It's fun. Any response is welcome. Earlier, as we sat and watched a performance that was presented for us, we could feel the energy. When the audience was excited by something, they let everyone know. They made noise, they moved, and the performer got more excited and the energy kept building. I thought to myself, 'I really like this.'"



STEVE SARTORI

Classical musicians Rebecca and Fred Karpoff traveled abroad last summer for a series of concerts and classes. Fred returned with a new outlook toward his teaching at SU: "I try to remind students why they're studying music. I hope it's because they love the music."

**F**red Karpoff is chairman of the keyboard department and director of the ensemble arts program in Syracuse University's School of Music. Rebecca is studying for a doctoral degree in voice at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. They were selected by the United States Information Agency (USIA) as one of 12 musical duos to perform concerts and conduct advanced classes for music students abroad last summer.

The Karpoffs impressed the USIA judges with not only their talents as classical musicians, says USIA official Jill Johanssen, but by the "variety in their program and the fact they could perform pieces in other languages." It was also noted that their good sense of humor and flexibility would serve them well in remote locales.

In addition to visiting Luxembourg and Ghana, the Karpoffs traveled to Germany, Belgium, Zimbabwe, and Ireland for a program created to promote international goodwill. Their experiences abroad as artistic ambassadors prompted the Karpoffs to reexamine their roles as both performers and teachers.

"As an undergraduate, I never once thought about sharing music in a way that invited other people to take part, to experience the joy that I feel. I always thought in terms of 'I perform, you listen,'" says Rebecca. "Now I think we must find ways to include other people. A musician may have talent, but talent is only worth something if you share it in a way that lights other people's fires."

Fred returned to campus this fall with a fresh outlook toward teaching and students.

"I have some students who are fabulously talented, but usually they are so serious or so concerned with getting things absolutely right," he says. "I try to remind students why they are studying music. I hope it's because they love the music and must speak through it. Too often students listen to recordings that are technically perfect, but that has very little to do with actual music making. They really need to experience life to understand their music." —ANDREA C. MARSH

## RESEARCH NOTEBOOK

- ***Social Work Professor Honored.*** Alejandro Garcia, a Syracuse University professor of social work since 1978, has received the 1994 University Scholar/Teacher of the Year Award. It was only the latest of several honors for Garcia. SU part-time students selected him as the University's Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 1993 and the Central New York Division of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) named him the 1994 Central New York Social Worker of the Year. That chapter of the NASW also honored Garcia in July with its Lifetime Achievement Award on the basis of his professional contributions and his work as an advocate for social justice.

Garcia's career dates back to the late sixties, when he participated in Cesar Chavez's California farm workers' movement and co-founded the Sacramento chapter of the Chicano Social Worker Organization. More recently, he was appointed chairman of the gerontology concentration in the School of Social Work's graduate program. "Alejandro's efforts both inside and outside the classroom have consistently brought respect and prestige to the profession and the school," says William L. Pollard, dean of the School of Social Work.



- ***South Africa-Bound.*** Robert Branch, an assistant professor of instructional design, development, and evaluation in the School of Education, recently received a Fulbright scholarship to teach and study in South Africa for a year. Beginning in January, he will conduct research in visual literacy, teach instructional design, and lecture at the University of Natal in Durban. Durban is north of Botswana, where Branch co-founded Botswana Polytechnic's department of education in 1983. This time he plans to help create a master of education program in resource development at Natal.
- ***New Bioengineering Lab.*** With the aid of a \$93,033 grant from the National Science Foundation, the Department of Bioengineering has built a state-of-the-art biomechanics lab in the basement of Link Hall. The lab will support the nation's only undergraduate program offering a three-course sequence focused on skeletomuscular biomechanics. Students will use the lab's equipment to measure, among other things, the effects of artificial hip implants on femurs, explore properties and designs of orthopedic devices, and study the mechanics of motion. The students will also collaborate with SU's Department of Athletics in using the Motion Analysis System of the United States Olympic Committee to enhance the performance of SU's student-athletes.