

Radiance Chamber Ensemble

Radiance Chamber Ensemble began in 2011, when violinist Michael Schneider reached out to the greater New Jersey musical community to begin a new string quartet. An early respondent was violinist Lea Karpman, who contacted cellist Oliver Shapiro and violist Peggy Reynolds. Early get-togethers proved somewhat difficult to arrange due to asynchronous schedules, and as an intermediate activity Michael and Oliver began working with pianist Joan Baldwin.



As scheduling difficulties started to smooth out, the five musicians were delighted to discover that all of them worked unusually well together, both personally and musically, in total as well as in any of the smaller permutations (duets, trios, and quartets) that were possible. Recently RCE has expanded to include guest artists.

Since then, RCE has performed in diverse venues through central and northern New Jersey, presenting well-rounded and varied programs to universally high acclaim.

Joan Baldwin (piano). Joan has a bachelor of Music from Brandeis University, with additional studies at Mannes College of Music. Her teachers have included Leonard Shure, Victor Rosenbaum, and Herbert Stessen. She recently retired from teaching elementary vocal music in Perth Amboy for the past 22 years. She now devotes full time to playing, performing, and grandchildren. She also serves as organist for the Dullenen Methodist Church. Memberships include the Plainfield Musical Club, the American Orff Schulwerk Association, and the National Association for Music Education. Joan continues to stay active in regional chamber music groups, including, of course, RCE.



Lea Karpman (violin). Lea began violin studies in Israel at age five and continued her studies after moving to the United States. Her teachers included Elliot Golub at the University of Chicago; Morris Gomberg at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University; Samuel Applebaum; and Baroque violinist Vita Wallace.

Lea has attended a variety of chamber and early music workshops, master classes and coaching sessions. These have included chamber music programs at Mannes College of Music/the New School, the Chamber Music Workshop at Lincoln Center and summer programs at Music Mountain, Vassar College and Dartmouth College.



She has performed with the baroque recorder ensemble, *Musica Dolce*, of the Highland Park Recorder Society; the Metropolitan Orchestra of New Jersey (*MONJ*), and the Society of Musical Arts (*SOMA*). She co-founded the New Jersey based *Radiance Chamber Ensemble*, which performs concerts in libraries, churches, synagogues and community centers. She also performs at the annual Guild for Early Music's Festival.

Lea maintains a private violin studio, Fourelle Music, and also teaches students at music schools Musika and Music & Arts.

Oliver Shapiro (cello). Oliver has been performing on and teaching cello for most of his life. Some of the groups with which he has performed include the Metropolitan Orchestra of NJ, Ridgewood Symphony's Project Symphony, Bloomfield Symphony, Society of Musical Arts, South Orange Symphony, Columbia-Barnard Symphony, the Essex County Summer Players Orchestra (which he founded and until recently served as Executive Director), and the 9/11 Benefit Orchestra (Stephen Stiller Tunnel to Towers Foundation). He has also performed with a number of pit orchestras for musical theater productions, as featured soloist for Holocaust Remembrance memorial events, and as Assisting Artist for the Young People's Philharmonic. In recent years he has also enjoyed providing cello tracks for indie song recordings for artists like Jimmy Destri and others.



Oliver sees private cello and piano students in his Caldwell studio, and teaches cello, piano, viola, and violin at Elefante Music in New Providence, NJ.



Peggy Reynolds (viola). Peggy is currently active in several North Jersey orchestras as a principal or section violinist, or violist, and also serves in various administrative capacities. She performs with the Society of Musical Arts (for which she was also a driving force in the orchestra's rejuvenation), the August Symphony Orchestra, Essex County Summer Players Orchestra, Metropolitan Orchestra of NJ, and the NJ Reading Orchestra. She also freelances in local musical productions, weddings and other events including more recently the back-up orchestra at Red Bank's Count Basie Theater.

Largely self-taught, Peggy studied violin pedagogy with Llewellyn Curtis in the Kearny public school system. She owes much of her musical career building to her late husband and mentor Herb Schultz.

Michael Schneider (violin). Michael Schneider began his violin studies at the age of 8. His first teacher was his father, followed by the head of the Haifa Music Conservatory, David Rothenberg. He played for several years with the Technion orchestra before moving to the United States. Michael has had a number of collaborations with a variety of performers, including a recent project with acclaimed pianist David Kaplan. In recent years he has expanded his activities in music education, taking on violin students. He joined the Plainfield Symphony Orchestra in 1973 and has been playing continuously in that group since. He has performed in a number of chamber groups over the years, most recently with RCE.

