



Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Oakland alumna to play legendary violin

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Jazz violinist Regina Carter has earned many accolades since graduating from Oakland University with a BA in music in 1985. Her numerous recordings include sessions with first-rate jazz artists such as Max Roach, Wynton Marsalis, Oliver Lake and Kenny Barron. Ken Burns sought her warm, lush tone when creating the soundtrack for his documentary "The Civil War." Carter also received a Grammy nomination for her solo on "Fragile," a composition written by Sting and performed with Barron on his 2001 release "Freefall."

What might be Carter's highest honor will come Monday, Nov. 3, when she performs at the Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York using the violin formerly owned by the legendary classical violinist Nicolò Paganini (1782-1840).

The violin is known among classical musicians as "the cannon" for its booming sound. Performing with this instrument is a special honor reserved for only the most celebrated musicians. Paganini was a supremely gifted artist whose incredible talent was rumored to have come from the devil. Upon Paganini's death in 1840, the violin was bequeathed to the city of Genoa, Italy, where it resides with its own set of bodyguards and caretaker.

Carter made history in December 2001 when she became the first black nonclassical musician to play the Paganini violin during a concert in Genoa. Though hard core classical music critics initially attacked Carter for using the instrument to play jazz, her performances earned many accolades. She received standing ovations in the sold-out auditorium for her rendition of jazz standards such as "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" and Billie Holiday's "Don't Explain."

Carter told "Down Beat" magazine that playing Paganini's violin was a thrill beyond belief.

"That was the most exciting thing that's happened in my musical life," she said. "Maybe even in my entire life. For me, that's my Grammy. I made history. It was a huge deal and very personal."

Carter returned to Genoa shortly after her performance to record the album "Paganini: After a Dream," which was released to critical acclaim last April.

The Paganini violin will travel to New York for the first time in three years for the Nov. 3 concert. The last time the violin came to America, it was greeted as if it were itself a celebrity. When it was carried on stage at Lincoln Center, it received a standing ovation even before a note was struck.

Carter's discography also includes four other recordings as a leader, including "Motor City Moments," an exceptional example of string virtuosity inspired by her hometown of Detroit. She will perform in Michigan on Tuesday, Nov. 4, at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. On Monday, Nov. 10, she will be honored with an International Achievement award at the 18th annual **ArtServe Michigan Governor's Awards for Arts & Culture** to be held in Detroit at the Max M. Fisher Music Center.

On Thursday, Jan. 29, Carter will join the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the Max M. Fisher Music Center for a performance of Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" with conductor and violinist Christoph Poppen. OU Alumni Association members and friends are invited to a reception, which starts at 5:30 p.m., and a dinner at 7 p.m., followed by the 8 p.m. performance. To attend, contact Jamie Simek in Alumni Relations at (248) 370-3700, ext 113, or e-mail ruark@oakland.edu.

For more information on Carter, including a complete touring schedule, discography, interviews, photos, sound clips and more, visit her [artist profile page](#) on the Verve Records Web site.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, October 28, 2003
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Tuesday, October 28, 2003
Article Start Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2003

