



Friday, January 30, 2004

## OU alumna performs with Detroit Symphony

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Though unassuming and soft-spoken, **Regina Carter** speaks volumes with her Stradivarius. The OU alumna and Detroit native, who has broken new artistic ground at the international level by incorporating the violin with jazz music, enthralled the audience on Jan. 29 at the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** with her performance of the violin concerto "Four Sisters." Carter's performance was preceded by an **Oakland University Alumni Association** reception and dinner at Detroit's Max M. Fisher Music Center. Alumni who attended the event clearly were awed by her artistry and proud of her accomplishments.

"Carter's performance is very exciting for Oakland University and for the city of Detroit," said David Kramer, CAS '73, information systems director for Independence Township. "This is a great event and a very nice way to bring OU alumni together. Seeing Regina become so successful in her field makes you feel very proud of her and OU."

Carter was able to take a few minutes from her schedule to meet with alumni at the reception and give some remarks and answer questions from the audience at the dinner.

"Oakland University really helped mould me into the jazz musician I am today, and what I hope to become," Carter said at the reception. "Being a violinist, it's sort of odd for me to fit into the jazz idiom, but my teachers at OU never looked at it as 'odd.' The faculty were very open-minded and got me on the right path. They were not only great teachers of music but also taught me about the richness of many different cultures."

Surprisingly, Carter said she was somewhat anxious about her upcoming performance as she addressed alumni at the dinner.

"Knowing that there's love in this room (from OU alumni) makes me a little less nervous," Carter said. "It's a pretty naked feeling when you're onstage as a soloist."

She also spoke of realizing her dream of playing onstage with the DSO and made direct reference to her mother, Grace Carter, who also was in attendance.

"I'm grateful for OU's support, and above all, the support of my mother," Carter said. "She was my taxi cab service when I was growing up. She drove me down to the DSO many times, and as a child, I always envisioned myself being a soloist with the orchestra. Thanks, mom, for being totally supportive of me. It's because of you that I'm able to realize my dreams."

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." Last November, she performed at the Lincoln Center in New York using the violin formerly owned by the legendary classical violinist Nicolò Paganini. She also used the violin on her current CD, "Paganini: After a Dream."

The Jan. 29 performance of "Four Sisters" marked the first time Carter had performed a full-fledged violin concerto. The composition is an homage to Aretha Franklin, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holliday and Sarah Vaughn. Composer David Schiff, a highly regarded music critic who also teaches at Reed College in Portland, Ore., wrote the piece as a concerto in the jazz idiom. Its only previous performance was its 1997 premiere in Cambridge, England.

Carter spent months rehearsing "Four Sisters," which has 24 pages of written music. Despite its complexities, her DSO performance was sensitive, fluid and enrapturing. At its conclusion, conductor Christoph Poppen led Carter back onstage to thunderous applause, where she received a bouquet of roses and a warm greeting from Schiff.

Carter's DSO performance also is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 30; Saturday, Jan. 31; and Sunday, Feb. 1. For performance and ticket information, visit the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** Web site. 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.

Visit the **Oakland University Alumni Association** Web site to learn more about alumni news, events, activities and the benefits of membership.

**SUMMARY**

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