

New Member Profile: Sarah Bob, Aaron Trant and Family

Over the years, the media has hailed concert pianist Sarah Bob as a "Sumptuous and Eloquent" artist (*Boston Globe*) and as "a trailblazer when it comes to championing the works of modern composers and combining art media in the process" (*Northeast Performer*). The number of accolades attributed to her musical gifts is seemingly endless. Sarah's artistic successes run the gamut, from local venues to national and international ones. Her musical accomplishments include the top prizewinner of the International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition in 2001, the Grant recipient of the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust for New Music, the recipient of the St. Botolph Club Foundations 2005 Grant-in-Aid Award and the "prestigious" Outstanding Alumni Award from the New England Conservatory. She is also a piano teacher, the founding artistic director of the New Gallery Concert Series and the recent creator of "The Nasty Co-operative," whose mission is to raise monies for social activist organizations while simultaneously offering a "safe space" for community dialogue and performance.

Yet, when asked what she holds as her greatest accomplishment to date, Sarah responds without hesitation: "While 'Outstanding Alumni Award' from the New England Conservatory holds a special place in my heart, my greatest distinction is being a mom to my children-our son, Leo (age 8), and our daughter, Ivy (age 3)."

Sarah and her family exude music. Sarah's husband, Aaron Trant, is a professional percussionist, composer and improviser who performs, widely, in settings ranging from orchestral, jazz, avant garde and rock. Described as an "engaging" composer and a "sure, adept, and nuanced" percussionist by *The Boston Music Intelligencer*, Aaron is a sought-after and widely acclaimed musician in the Boston area. He is also a respected teacher at several local

music schools, including The Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Gordon College and New England Conservatory Preparatory Division.

And the apples do not fall far from the proverbial tree. While their son, Leo, is not presently interested in formal lessons, Sarah explains that "everything about Leo IS music." Leo composes his own music, often recording his scores on his mother's old I-pod. Sarah adds, "To my son, everything can be turned into a song, a dance a rhythm. Music is his." Leo is presently in the beginnings of creating a movie, in which he plans on writing both the narrative and the accompanying melodies.

The couples' daughter, Ivy, loves doing dramatic renditions of songs from the movie "Trolls" and donning sunglasses and dancing in the kitchen while listening to recordings by Twisted Sister. Her mother shares that "Ivy is also curious about how things work and I imagine that as soon as she realizes that she can have music (or engineering) lessons, she will ask for them."

The family lives in Jamaica Plain with their beloved 10 year old border collie-beagle mix dog, Ramona, who is seen as much a part of the family as the human members. Sarah passionately emphasizes her love for Ramona, whom she and Aaron delight in taking on dog walks, explaining "I love her so much it actually hurts."

Sarah's father's parents fled to America from Poland in the 1930's. Multiple of her Grandfather's siblings and a number of other family members perished in the Holocaust. Sarah was raised in a Reform Jewish family in New Jersey She became a bat mitzvah and then, in her undergraduate years at Ann Arbor, only tangentially connected with Hillel. Sarah left Ann Arbor after graduating, for a master's program at the New England Conservatory where she met Aaron, who had come east, for the same graduate program, from Oregon.

Aaron was raised without any religion. He identifies as an agnostic while simultaneously incredibly supportive of Sarah's Jewish exploration and decision to join HBT. For both Sarah and Aaron one of the appeals of HBT is the rich welcome they feel as an interfaith family. Aaron both respects and values his wife's wishes to expose their children to their Jewish culture and traditions. He is interested and curious about Judaism while clear that he needs to speak his "non-religious" truth to his children when asked questions.

Sarah finds herself on a spiritual journey. Something very deep and emotional stirred in her center when she first attended a service at HBT. She explains she found herself, "caught off guard, " adding, "I didn't expect to feel so deeply how much my Judaism meant to me. I suddenly felt part of a tribe again." Sarah shares why they, as a couple, chose HBT. "It was the temple's reputation as a diverse and welcoming community, my need to have the freedom to feel how I want about my own spirituality without pressure or shame, and the role of the Chaverim School, as a spiritual home for our children, where they can learn and feel comfortable with their Jewish traditions and culture." It is an added bonus that Sarah feels inspired by Rabbi's Penzner's sermons and spiritually buoyed as a member of both the educational and religious communities.

In addition to their respective musical gifts, this lovely family has infused HBT with the richness of diversity that makes our community so strong and vibrant.

Written by Serena Shapiro