

# Emphasizing layers

## Chamber group performs Saturday in Rhinebeck

By PHILIP H. FARBER  
Correspondent

**"STRATA"** means "layers," and the chamber music trio Strata, who will be making their first area appearance at the Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck on Saturday evening, offers music that emphasizes the layers.

The three most obvious layers of Strata are the members, clarinetist Nathan Williams, pianist Audrey Andrist, and violinist James Stern. The three first met while studying music at the Julliard School in the late 1980s. "We were all in the Julliard doctoral program at approximately the same time," James Stern explains. "I finished my coursework two years before Audrey and Nathan, but Audrey and I met at Julliard, began dating, and soon became engaged to be married. Meanwhile, I moved to Cleveland to teach at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Audrey staying in New York to finish her doctoral coursework. There she met Nathan, who was also beginning his doctoral coursework at the same time as her. Audrey and I really hit off playing together, as well as personally, and Audrey and Nathan also really hit it off playing together. Eventually we got all three of us together."

**ALL THREE MUSICIANS** have won numerous awards and honors and have been featured soloists with major symphonies.

Nathan Williams, hailed for his outstanding musicality and flawless technique, received honors from the International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition, the Eastman Concerto Competition, the International Clarinet Competition, and the Naumburg International Competition, among others. An associate professor at East Carolina University, Williams is



Strata, from left to right, Nathan Williams, Audrey Andrist and James Stern, will perform at the Church of the Messiah, 47 Montgomery St., Rhinebeck, on Saturday at 8 p.m.

principal clarinetist for the Winston-Salem Symphony.

Pianist Audrey Andrist is the 1994 first prize winner of the San Antonio International Keyboard Competition and the winner of the Eckhardt-Gramatte Competition. She has appeared as soloist with the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, the Julliard Orchestra, and the CBC Vancouver Symphony, among others, and performed in such presti-

gious venues as Merkin Hall, Steinway Hall, and the Place des Arts in Montreal.

James Stern has played violin and viola as soloist and chamber musician in major halls throughout North America, including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and the Library of Congress. Originally from Woodstock, he has appeared locally as soloist with the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, in

addition to his appearances across the country. He is presently Associate Professor of Violin at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

**MUSICALLY**, the layers can be combined in many different ways.

"One thing that we all have in common in our musical personalities is that we all love counterpoint," Stern says. "Audrey is a marvelous Bach player. The music of Bach has so many layers to it and so many independent parts. Audrey is able to play three independent parts with such remarkable clarity that you can really hear all the parts ... Nathan and I, the instruments we play are single line instruments, but each of us is particularly sensitive to the interaction of horizontal layers in music. We do like to bring this out in all the music that we play. So a name that implies the presence of horizontal layers seems particularly appropriate for us. In addition to that, it fits with the idea that in our programming, we often add on and remove layers by having mixed programs of trio and duos and

ern or non-standard, by including the duos on the program, we're able to include some more standard repertoire of the great literature. There's so much great literature for violin and piano, for example, and for clarinet and piano as well."

**THE PROGRAM** that Strata will perform in Rhinebeck will feature "Trio" by Aram Khachaturian, a selection from "Eight Pieces" by Max Bruch, "Suite" by Darius Milhaud, and Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale)."

"When we perform in Rhinebeck, we will be performing all trios and we will be performing fairly standard repertoire," Stern explains. "This is unusual for us in that way. Even so, there's a lot of variety. Everything that we're playing is from the 20th century but in vastly different styles. The music by Max Bruch was written in 1910, but very much in the 19th century Germanic tradition. The Stravinsky music from "L'Histoire du Soldat" has some neo-classic elements to it and some elements from American ragtime and jazz. The music by Milhaud (has) some early 20th century French nationalism with a hint of Latin rhythms. The piece by Khachaturian has the sound of Armenian folk melody in it. So even though this is a program of all trios and some of the most standard music written for this combination, there's still an extraordinary amount of variety."

The program was suggested in part by Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society director Kurt Grishman, who recruited the group for the performance after hearing their new CD, "Strata." "We have just recently released our first commercial CD on Arizona University Recordings," Stern says. "It contains some of the repertoire that we are going to be performing in Rhinebeck. When it was released we set about sending out to various presenters and managers to see if we could drum up some interest, and we did. Mr. Grishman, who runs the series, responded to us and was very enthusiastic about the CD. In fact, he specifically requested that we play several of the numbers that are on the CD."

### If you go

**WHAT:** The Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society will present Strata  
**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday  
**WHERE:** Church of the Messiah, 47 Montgomery, Rhinebeck  
**ADMISSION:** \$12, \$5 for students, and children under 13 are free  
**FOR DETAILS:** Call (845) 876-2870

Alice Tully Hall, and the Library of Congress. Originally from Woodstock, he has appeared locally as soloist with the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, in