

## Warwick Beacon - "A New Concert Series Comes to Rhode Island Next Year"

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**Tue, Jul 31 07** - St. Luke's Music on the Hill program is being given new life as a group of Rhode Island-bred professional musicians return home to perform. St. Luke's Episcopal Church has always been known as a beautiful concert setting and has been, for the last 33 years, offering to Ocean State audiences chamber music concerts by well-known classical artists. In 1974, St. Luke's music director, Priscilla Rigg, initiated the concept of a chamber music series as a natural outgrowth of an active church program. When a group of Rhode Island-bred musicians proposed a new, innovative way to perform Music on the Hill, Rigg enthusiastically agreed to try. John Mark Pellegrino, the assistant principal bassist of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and a performer for the Music on the Hill series, is spearheading the new Music on the Hill program. "The aspect of returning to the community is really important to me," said Pellegrino. The plan for the new concert series is to use St. Luke's as a home base and offer concerts at other venues throughout the state, such as Watch Hill, Shelter Harbor Inn and Federal Hill. No venues have been set up yet, but the plans are in motion. Concerts will not be the normal chamber music experience. Kristen Pellegrino, a violinist who is currently earning her Ph.D. at the University of Michigan and one of the core performers of the new program, said concerts could be a mixture of music and another element, such as a wine tasting, and all the concerts will be an educational experience, as the history of the music will be explained as well. Tickets for the concerts will be offered at a very low price and there might be a few free concerts as well. "We would like to donate 10 percent of the ticket sales to the Rhode Island Tomorrow Fund," said Pellegrino. The performers are all professional musicians who have come from Rhode Island or feel Rhode Island is their second home. These Rhode Island natives, Elisa Kohanski (cello, principal of the Wheeling Symphony), Christina Breindel (piano, Rhode Island College), Anne Marie Gabriele (oboe, Los Angeles Philharmonic), John Mark Pellegrino (bass, assistant principal of the Columbus Symphony), Paul Kushious (cello, Cleveland Orchestra), Deborah Tien Price (violin, New Century Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco), Jason Hardink (piano, Utah Symphony), Roland Pandolfi (horn, former principal horn of the St. Louis Symphony, now Professor of horn at Oberlin College) and Ron Leonard (cello, former principal of the Los Angeles Philharmonic) will make up the core ensemble of returning Rhode Islanders participating in Music On The Hill. Another aspect of the new program is an actual class for musicians. Many of the returning professional musicians have agreed to teach a master class for their respective instruments. High school or college students studying a classical instrument will be asked to audition through a tape or CD and whoever is chosen will have the chance to take a class with the professional musician for free. Pellegrino said this is just another way that the Music on the Hill will give back to the community. Pellegrino and the others will be applying for grants to support their plans and to keep the ticket prices low or non-existent. "If all goes well the concert series should be up and running next summer during the first few weeks of June," said Pellegrino.

