



# TARMAC

Newspaper of the Chaminade Flyers

Chaminade High School, 340 Jackson Avenue, Mineola, New York 11501-2441

(516) 742-5555

<http://www.chaminade-hs.org>

est. 1934

TARMAC ONLINE

NOVEMBER 2009

## **“It’s Only the Hardest Piece Ever”** *But for Violinist Anton Polezhayev, It Was “No Big Deal”*

by Dan Carter '10

**T**he piece I will now attempt to play is a very challenging violin composition,” said a tall, distinguished-looking musician clothed in black and speaking with a heavy Russian accent. “It’s very difficult, but I’ll do my best.”

For violinist Anton Polezhayev, doing “my best” turned out to be nothing short of perfection.

Most students attending the assembly had come to Darby Auditorium apathetic at best about the cultural assembly scheduled at the last minute for the Senior Class. Once they heard Polezhayev play, however, they were amazed and quite enthusiastic about the rest of the performance.

Some seniors – 108, to be exact – were so impressed with the performance that they joined a Facebook group entitled “Anton Polezhayev – It’s Only the Hardest Piece Ever, NBD [No Big Deal].” The violinist’s virtuosity, contrasted to his evident humility, had obviously captured the imagination of the Senior Class.

The concert took place on Wednesday, November 4, during a Morning Assembly period and featured violinist Anton Polezhayev of the North Shore Symphony Orchestra. It was offered in conjunction with the new Advanced Music program for seniors that began this year.

Polezhayev graduated from the Moscow Conservatory of Music and has played with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. He has also been the recipient of numerous awards, including a gold medal won in 1997 at the International Violin Competition of Pierre Lantier in Paris, France.

Polezhayev began the short concert by performing Paganini’s “Caprice No. 13,” a very difficult piece more commonly known as “Devil’s Laughter.” Other selections he played included Sarasate’s “Gypsy Airs” and a well-known piece called “Meditation” by Massenet.

Senior Greg Dick, currently the first-chair violin in Chaminade’s String Orchestra, was impressed with Polezhayev’s performance.

“His technical skill was only surpassed by his ability to play with feeling, which is something incredibly hard when you’re playing such challenging pieces. I was able to learn a great deal simply from watching his technique,” said Greg.

At the end of his performance, Polezhayev conducted a fairly lengthy question-and-answer session. Asked about the history of his own violin, Polezhayev explained that it was a hybrid of parts originating from several different time periods.

The back of the violin, Polezhayev believed, was in the neighborhood of 200 years old, while the “belly,” he estimated, was crafted in the last 100 years.

Mrs. Sally Zehnter, the instructor for the new Advanced Music program and a colleague of Mr. Polezhayev, spoke highly of both his musical ability and his unassuming personality.

“Anton is an extraordinary musician who has refined his skills after countless hours of practice, but he still manages to remain humble – a trait very rarely found in musicians with his level of talent,” she said.

Polezhayev was able to perform at Chaminade because of a generous grant donated to the North Shore Symphony Orchestra. The grant allows him to visit schools as part of an educational outreach program tailored for each institution.

His contribution to Chaminade’s music program also included a workshop for the String Orchestra on “Vivaldi’s Concerto for Four Violins.”

Mrs. Zehnter was very enthusiastic about the performance, saying, “It’s been ten years since we were lucky enough to have a musician of this caliber perform at Chaminade. It was truly a phenomenal experience for all involved.”



**Virtuoso Violinist: Musician Anton Polezhayev performs for the senior class.**