

Influential Acts

BY ELIZABETH M. ECONOMOU



CELLIST JOSHUA ROMAN

JOSHUA ROMAN

With his sold-out solo debut concert at Town Hall last March, Joshua Roman has secured his place as something of a rock-'n'-roll icon amid Seattle's classical music set, drawing fans in droves. The 23-year-old wunderkind and principal cellist for the Seattle Symphony has been playing since he was 3. Aside from his enormous talent and star power, it's his unorthodox approach to classical music that sets him apart from his music-making colleagues. When he's not wowing crowds at Benaroya Hall, you might find Roman in a local club, such as the Triple Door, fusing jazz, rock or bluegrass with classical repertoire, or playing even farther afield. Still, the Oklahoma native finds time for others. In the summer of 2006, Roman and three younger siblings traveled to Uganda to perform classical repertoire in refugee camps.

DAVID BREWSTER

As publisher of the newly launched (in April) online newspaper Crosscut.com, David Brewster, founder of *Seattle Weekly* and creator of Town Hall, is blazing yet another trail. The Northwest-centric Web site offers up a mix of original news stories, commentary, blogs and content from mainstream media. Its egalitarian approach aspires to pro-

Agent Provocateur

GLENN KELMAN: CEO, ONLINE REAL ESTATE BROKER REDFIN

[real estate] When Seattle native Glenn Kelman relocated to Northern California in the early '90s, a Ballard bungalow could be had for less than \$200,000 and might sit unsold for weeks. When he returned in 2005, that same house might be snapped up in an hour and go for more than \$450,000. One real estate reality hadn't changed, however: Buying and selling agents were splitting the same commission.

While Seattle's real estate climate goes up and down, Kelman, the 36-year-old CEO of Redfin (redfin.com), the first online home brokerage, launched in 2004, wants to abolish the long sacrosanct 6 percent combined commission. For one thing, he thinks the work-to-reward ratio is out of whack. "People who search for a home on the Internet spend two weeks with an agent instead of seven [for those who don't look online], but the agent still makes the same money," he says. Buoyed by sunny media coverage of late, including a glowing *60 Minutes* piece this spring, the Pioneer Square-based company seems poised to rock the real estate world with its marriage of high-tech tools, such as its deep database that allows sellers to market their homes and buyers to search for homes online, and real live agents who handle negotiations and closings for a salary and a bonus. Under Kelman, a 1989 Interlake High grad who at 25 co-founded the San Francisco-based Plumtree Software (which netted \$42.5 million on the first day of its IPO), Redfin serves customers in Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston and Washington, D.C., and plans a nationwide expansion. Kelman sees Redfin as nothing short of revolutionary. "If we don't succeed, someone will. This is a permanent feature on the real estate landscape." *Scott Holter*

BIGGEST INFLUENCE: "Years ago, we had an idea to create a way for people to count calories that we envisioned as a Quicken for food. Let people track their Big Macs. And an old business partner of mine says, 'Why not aim bigger?' That always stuck with me, and that's what I was thinking about the day I joined Redfin."

CHANGE MAKER

HILARY STERN: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CASA LATINA

[immigration] Best known for its Belltown day-labor program that matches workers with homeowners and contractors, Casa Latina (casa-latina.org), which serves some 1,000 Hispanic immigrants every year (regardless of whether they are documented), found itself in the midst of a "NIMBY" fracas about two years ago after announcing plans to relocate operations to Rainier Valley. "Even before we reached an agreement on the site, the alarm was raised by some in the com-

munity.... It became really impassioned," recalls executive director Hilary Stern, one of the original founders of the group, which was created in 1993 to serve the educational and employment needs of Seattle's burgeoning Latino immigrant community. The issue became clouded by racially charged rhetoric (what Stern calls "fear of poor brown men standing on the corner not speaking English") typical of the national illegal-immigrant debate. Ultimately, after months of community mediation, Casa Latina passed on the property when a feasibility study revealed a building remodel (of the old Chubby & Tubby gardening store) would be too spendy.

Stern, 50, took it as a learning opportunity about the importance of commu-

vide a platform where the journalism of regular citizens will appear alongside that of professionals. Led by former *Weekly* managing editor Chuck Taylor, Crosscut.com is giving a voice to a wide range of local journalists, from columnist Knute Berger (former *Weekly* editor and current *Seattle* magazine editor-at-large) to former state Republican Party head Chris Vance. With no editorial page, Crosscut.com encourages many points of view. "It's like a lively dinner party," says Brewster, "where many voices weigh in with lots of cordial combat."



CROSSCUT'S DAVID BREWSTER

MICHAEL RAMOS

Since 2004, Michael Ramos, the director of social justice ministries at the Church Council of Greater Seattle, has been a prominent presence tackling a range of social issues, from ending homelessness to finding ways to turn low-wage jobs into living-wage jobs to defending the rights of all immigrants. His most recent cause: organizing the new sanctuary movement for undocumented immigrants facing deportation. So far, Ramos, 46, is encouraged by the local response. "[Seattle congregations] have organized to provide material and legal support to immigrants from various countries," says the New York native. "They're also considering publicly hosting immigrant families whose children could be separated from their families." The cause feeds into his personal belief that "no human being is illegal."

MARIA HINES

When restaurateur Maria Hines was 17 years old, she had an epiphany. "I was peeling carrots in a restaurant and couldn't

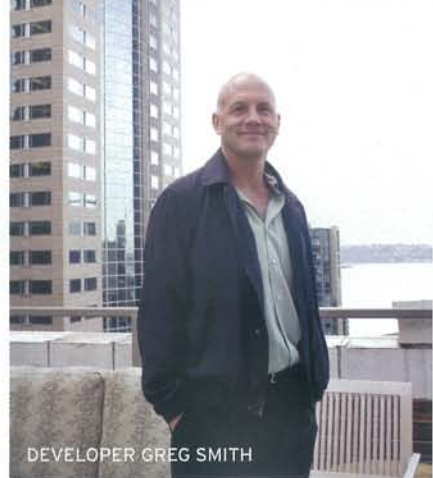
believe I was getting paid to cook," she says. "I knew then that was what I wanted to do for a living." Named one of *Food & Wines*' Best New Chefs in 2005, Hines, 35, has come a long way from doing kitchen prep work. The much-lauded former Earth & Ocean executive chef opened her own place last fall, the trend-setting Tilth (tilthrestaurant.com) in Wallingford, which has gained formal organic certification. Her commitment to local/seasonal/organic cuisine on her monthly changing menu is sure to spawn imitators. But few are likely to be able to replicate the tastes that come from her kitchen.

BOB ERNST

Success does indeed breed success—especially if you're Bob Ernst. The enormously successful University of Washington crew coach, now in his 34th year on the rowing staff there, led the varsity men to a second national championship title this past spring. After two decades at the helm of the men's team (he was also an assistant coach from 1974 to 1980) the resolute Ernst is back guiding the women's crew team, which in recent years has been downgraded from its once elite status. Here's hoping that the fiercely competitive oarsman—who led the varsity women to six national titles from 1980 to 1987—can work his Montlake magic on them once again.

KRISTIN ROWE-FINKBEINER

Since the launch of MomsRising (momsrising.org) on Mother's Day 2006, Kirkland resident Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, executive director, has seen the online organization she co-founded burgeon to more than 140,000 members. It's a clear indication that the grassroots organization, dedicated to building a more family-friendly America by mobilizing millions of mothers to promote issues such as maternity/paternity leave policies and flexible work hours, has hit a nerve. The co-author of *The Motherhood Manifesto* took her message to Capitol Hill last June, where she testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections on "Balancing Work and Family: What Policies Best Support American Families?" Rowe-Finkbeiner's cause



DEVELOPER GREG SMITH

GREEN GIANT

GREG SMITH: PRINCIPAL, URBAN VISIONS

[development] Cities like Copenhagen, which thrive without depending on cars, are models for Seattle real estate developer Greg Smith, 46, whose company, Urban Visions (urbanvisions.com), embraces sustainability and a philosophy that "what's good for the environment is good for business."

With at least five projects in Seattle's urban core, from the newly finished LEED-certified Reedo Building (an office/retail space that includes the Elysian Fields Brewery) near SoDo to a planned 14-story apartment building near the Pike Place Market (construction will begin in 2008), Smith hopes to "improve the urban built environment," making downtown Seattle a more beautiful and accessible place to live.

Smith's real estate roots go back to the 1860s, when his ancestors bought 400 acres in Alki from Doc Maynard, turning it into a farm and building the Alki Hotel (which became the Stockade Hotel), a weekend getaway for Seattleites. He first gained experience working for his father's real estate management company in the 1980s, and then, with his brother, started buying up downtown real estate. Says Smith: "I want to create sustainable neighborhoods where people can walk to work, and enjoy urban life and the environment that makes Seattle unique." *Shannon Borg*

BIGGEST INFLUENCE: "My mother and father provided me the foundation, encouragement and confidence to pursue my dreams, and [taught me] that nature, community and business are all equally important."

BREWSTER: COURTESY OF TOWN HALL; SMITH: HEATHER FASSIO



KING COUNTY EXEC RON SIMS

SIMS CITY

RON SIMS: KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE

[politics] "I love risk," says King County Executive Ron Sims. He says it the way a Starbucks addict expresses affection for the first triple grande of the day. Sims, 59, has been taking political risks for years, boldly bringing up controversial topics—a state income tax, road tolls, off-loading the King County airport—that could easily be political poison to others. He recently turned a controversial view into political lemonade: When the voters shot down the waterfront tunnel and the Alaskan Way Viaduct rebuild, Sims was there with support for a controversial surface option that most of his political peers had tried to steer around. That put Sims in the driver's seat as the man with the greenest plan to end the political gridlock.

Sims has continued to thrive, in part by pushing the environmental envelope in a region that prides itself on being green. While Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels has made headlines for getting U.S. mayors on board with the Kyoto Protocol, Sims is focused on the local region. In November 2006, he got a major tax passed to expand Metro bus service. This year he announced he was putting biodiesel in the tanks of those buses. By executive order he instituted new rules to limit the carbon footprint of new housing developments in unincorporated King County. Speaking of responsibility, Sims says, "You want your grandchildren to look back at you and smile." *Knute Berger*

BIGGEST INFLUENCE: "People who know me really well go to [my wife] Cayan if they have an issue... I can fall into parochialism very easily, and she pulls me out of that. She is a really powerful influence."



RACHEL CORRIE

POWER OF ART

RACHEL CORRIE:

(1979-2003)

EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE STUDENT AND ACTIVIST

[posthumous] She died in March 2003, but, in March 2007, Rachel Corrie once again commanded center stage. That's when the Seattle Repertory Theatre opened its doors to the West Coast debut of *My Name Is Rachel Corrie*, the controversial British-born play about the 23-year-old Olympia native, art student and activist crushed to death while volunteering as a human shield to prevent the Israeli military from bulldozing a Palestinian's home in the Gaza Strip. Like the Middle East conflict itself and the circumstances of this local American's death, the play, created from Corrie's own writings by actor Alan Rickman and journalist Katharine Viner, rouses passions. Productions in New York and Toronto were canceled due to concerns of anti-Semitism. Here, although unprecedented denunciatory ads, including one from the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, ran inside the playbill and protesters milled outside the theater, local reviews were enthusiastic and audience interest extended the play's run by two weeks. And regardless of one's point of view of Corrie's actions—those of an innocent victim or a provocative activist—or the play—moving portrayal or one-sided distortion—we applaud the Rep for exercising its right to nonviolent artistic expression. *Shannon O'Leary*



FOR A PERSONAL ESSAY ABOUT CORRIE BY THE PLAY'S DIRECTOR AND SEATTLE REP LITERARY MANAGER BRADEN ABRAHAM, VISIT SEATTLEMAG.COM

has gained the attention of at least one prominent politician, presidential candidate Barack Obama, who commented last year, "Despite all the rhetoric about being family friendly, we have structured a society that is decidedly unfriendly.... What's missing now is a movement.... That's why MomsRising is so important."

SUE RAHR

It's been three years since Sue Rahr took over the reins as King County's top cop from Dave Reichert—first as his handpicked interim successor and then as the winner in the 2005 King County sheriff's race. Reichert, who cracked the Green River serial murder case and is now a Republican U.S. Congressman, left a formidable legacy. For Rahr, part of that legacy was an internal investigation involving King County Sheriff's Deputy and vice cop George Daniel Ring, which included a controversial decision to let Ring retire with full benefits and pension. But Rahr, the first woman to hold the post of King County sheriff, has battled back from that storm. A 28-year veteran of the department and married mother of two, Rahr, 51, is focusing on her priorities: stamping out the methamphetamine problem, improving regional criminal justice resources and "reducing crime and the fear of crime."

DAVID GOLDSTEIN

David Goldstein's irreverent blog, *Horsesass.org*, has—according to its originator—"the straight poop on Washington politics and the press." The liberal scribe is best known for his 2003 state initiative to officially name Washington state's serial tax-rollback guy, Tim Eyman, a "horse's ass," which garnered a whopping 50,000 signatures. Although a judge tossed out the initiative, Goldstein managed to morph his campaign Web site into *Horsesass.org*, "the most influential political blog in Washington state, and one of the most widely read local political blogs in the nation" according to *The Huffington Post* (huffingtonpost.com). Among other things, it helped him land another mass-media platform: *The David Goldstein Show* airs on KIRO Radio (710

POWER PLAYER

FRANK CHOPP: SPEAKER OF THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[politics] Read Frank Chopp's press clips and you'll see him described as "kind," "ruthless," "moody" and "powerful." But no one, friend or foe, considers him irrelevant. This was the year the longtime Seattle Democrat (first elected in 1994)—the speaker of the state House of Representatives since 1999—landed in the public's awareness as a politico with real clout. For one, he made headlines by standing up to Mayor Greg Nickels and saying hizzoner's waterfront tunnel plan was too expensive. Seattle voters backed him up and handed the mayor a rare high-profile defeat.

More important, Chopp's work to rebuild his party's power base has gained momentum. After years of small gains, the Democrats picked up seven more House seats in 2006, giving the speaker the biggest majority he's had to pass key bills. (And, no harm to his personal power base, a bevy of legislative rookies now owe him their jobs.) Chopp, 54, pounds the bushes in rural and swing districts to recruit elect-



able Dems outside Seattle. He says, "A couple of times I got down on my knees and begged!" It's paid off. *Seattle Weekly* wrote that "Chopp's well-oiled operation isn't just a machine—it's a bulldozer."

The blue-collar Bremerton native is a progressive pragmatist with a touch of populist. He seems happiest driving his "bulldozer" to do nuts-and-bolts things like finding funding for all-day kindergarten, enacting mental-health parity and creating "opportunity grants" to help community college students get jobs. Forget the tunnel spat, he says. Passing health care for kids will eventually "help a million people." *Knute Berger*

BIGGEST INFLUENCE: "It's my parents. My mom and dad were heavily involved in public service.... And Franklin D. Roosevelt was almost a god because he cared about the average working family."

SCHOOLED FOR ACTION

CHARLES ROLLAND: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SEATTLE BRANCH OF COMMUNITY AND PARENTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

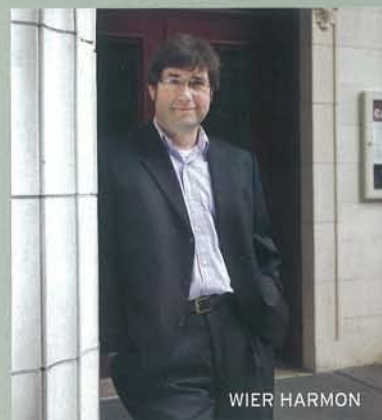
[education] When Seattle parents began protesting proposed school closures in the spring of 2005, they found a leader in 55-year-old Charles Rolland, who galvanized widespread support against the closures through the grassroots group Community for Public Education. As a result, the initial plan to close 10 schools was scuttled. That achieved, his next goal is nothing less than building Seattle Public Schools into a world-class educational system. Deputy chief of staff for former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice and former chair of the state Democratic Party, Rolland is now executive director for the Seattle branch of Community and Parents for Public Schools (CPPS), formed in 2006 and an offshoot of the original group. Rolland (whose three children graduated from Seattle public schools) is committed to helping make Seattle's public schools are places where all kids can achieve. School closures are one component of dealing with the district's financial crisis "but they must accompany measures to make the district fiscally sound and provide academic achievement for all students. The original plan failed that means test." The Chicago native adds, "The most pressing issues facing Seattle Public Schools are funding, parental involvement and leadership." It's the latter area where he's leaving perhaps his biggest mark. *Elizabeth M. Economou*

BIGGEST INFLUENCE: "My hero and role model was my mother. She taught by example what unconditional love is and about my responsibility to be actively engaged in the world to make it a better place."

AM), Saturdays and Sundays from 7 to 10 p.m. When he's not blogging or broadcasting, the co-founder of TaxSanity.org devotes his time to promoting tax reform.

WIER HARMAN

Town Hall executive director Wier Harmon, 40, isn't reinventing the wheel, but he's definitely adding more options. Harmon is fine-tuning the programming at Seattle's grand cultural and literary venue—where previous programming attracted a solid but mature to classical music offerings, heady science lectures and civic discussions. Since assuming the top job, previously held by Town Hall founder David Brewster, a year ago, Harmon has also produced programming for young audiences and families, including a family concert series featuring artists such as the Talking Vegetables and Koto World, among others. "We're a very open place," says Harmon. Commenting on the variety of talent he's attracted, he says, "I'm always kind of slack-jawed when Barack Obama and Lemony Snicket [Daniel Handler] actually show up on the same night."



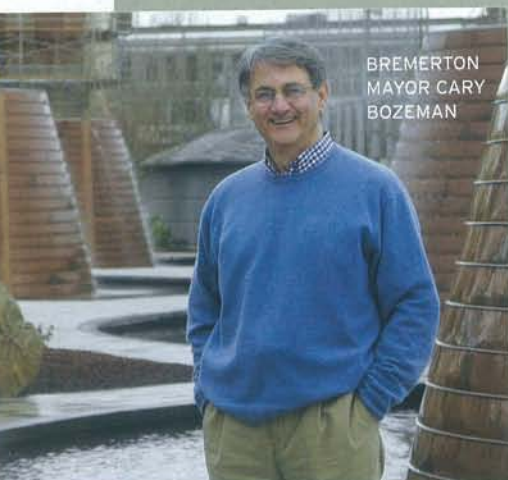
ROBERT NELLAMS

Assuming the post in January held for nearly two decades by Virginia Anderson leaves Robert Nellams, 51, with big shoes to fill. As the new director of Seattle Center (he served as deputy director from 1998), he faces some heady challenges. Notable are the topsy-turvy futures of the Seattle SuperSonics and the Seattle Storm; carrying out the master plan of the Century 21 Committee—a mayor-appointed task force—for

the future of the Center (assuming it's approved by the mayor, City Council and voters), including possible changes to Memorial Stadium and turning over Mercer Arena to the Seattle Opera; and juggling the needs of more than 30 resident organizations. The Emerald City native, however, appears undaunted. Nellams hopes to modernize the campus and make it more relevant to teens and young adults. But his main overarching philosophy, he says, "is to make Seattle Center the region's top gathering place for a diverse mix of residents and visitors alike."

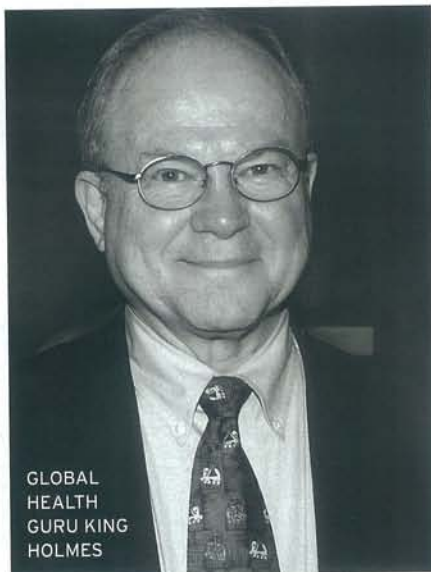
CARY BOZEMAN

Now in his second term as mayor of Bremerton, Cary Bozeman, 66, the former three-term mayor of Bellevue cred-



BREMERTON
MAYOR CARY
BOZEMAN

ited with taking a key role in the creation of Bellevue's 16-acre downtown park—has spearheaded the largest renovation the Navy town has seen since World War II. Part of his success is seeing opportunities where others don't. With Bozeman at the helm, \$300 million invested over the last five years has paved the way for downtown Bremerton's renaissance, including a revitalized waterfront that had been underutilized for years as a parking lot. Today, a mix of new projects, including a \$60 million hotel/conference center located in the waterfront's Harborside district, a \$30 million government building and condominium development, are breathing new life into Kitsap County's most urban city.



GLOBAL
HEALTH
GURU KING
HOLMES

MEDICINE MAN

KING KENNARD HOLMES:
FOUNDING CHAIR, UNIVERSITY
OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT
OF GLOBAL HEALTH

[health] His list of titles is staggering: Founding director of the University of Washington's Center for AIDS and STD. Principal investigator of the UW's International Training and Education Center on HIV. Chief of Infectious Diseases at Harborview Medical Center. And now, William H. Foege Chair of the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington.

King Holmes hadn't planned on becoming an internationally renowned expert in infectious diseases. The Minnesota native was

a Navy epidemiologist during the Vietnam War when he was assigned to find a cure for penicillin-resistant gonorrhea. His treatment of combining penicillin with the drug Probenecid proved 100 percent effective, and the success led to his specialty in sexually transmitted diseases. "This was the onset of the sexual revolution and introduction of oral contraception," recalls Holmes, "and there was a need for research in this area." In 1989, when there was a worldwide need for AIDS research, Holmes founded the UW's Center for AIDS and STD, now a leading research and training institution with 265 faculty members and \$65 million in funding. As head of the UW's new Department of Global Health (depts.washington.edu/deptgh), launched in 2006 and funded in part by a Gates Foundation grant, Holmes' charge is large: to unite far-flung institutions, researchers, organizations, businesses and communities to improve health around the world. It's just the sort of mega-mission he's suited for. "HIV kills over 3 million people a year," he says, "mostly in developing countries. One of the greatest satisfactions in this job has been to see how much can be done to improve health with modest resources and smart people."

Susan Nakagawa

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: "All along I've had strong role models and mentors...people like Marvin Turk and Robert Petersdorff, incredible figures in medicine, who have provided both guidance and inspiration."

The Most Influential Panel

Our thanks go out to the influential individuals who joined *Seattle* magazine staff on our 2007 selection panel. They were invaluable in determining this year's power list: Knute Berger, *Seattle* magazine editor at large and Crosscut.com columnist; Dana Bos, a founder of the Three Imaginary Girls indie-pop Web site (threeimaginarygirls.com); Trish Millines Dziko, co-founder and executive director, Technology Access Foundation; Jean Godden, Seattle City Council member; Sherry Grindeland, *The Seattle Times'* Eastside columnist; Ed Lazowska, Bill & Melinda Gates Chair of Computer Science & Engineering, University of Washington; Peter Steinbrueck, Seattle City Councilmember; and Lawrence R. Robinson, M.D., vice dean for clinical affairs, Health Sciences Center, University of Washington. 5