

Treetops Chamber Music Society

Oskar Espina Ruiz  
Artistic and Executive Director  
presents

# Opening Night

## Virtuoso Duos and Trios

With an Art Exhibit by Louis Schanker

The Treetops Studio in Stamford was artist Louis Schanker's working studio during the last 20 years of his life. The building has a lovely setting in the woods, and hearing music in the space, with prints and watercolors of musicians created by Schanker, made for a powerful experience, a blending of sonic and visual delights.

**Stamford Advocate** Jeffrey Johnson



Trio

Louis Schanker, 1937



Schanker at Treetops Studio, 1980

***Lyrical Abstraction***

***Louis Schanker at Treetops CMS***

***September 14 & 21, 2008***

In October of 2006 the Treetops Chamber Music Society (Treetops CMS) under the direction of Oskar Espina-Ruiz began a new life for the Treetops Studio on the former estate of the 1930's Blues singer Libby Holman and the artist Louis Schanker.

Louis Schanker and Libby Holman were married in 1959. The Studio was Louis Schanker's main work site until his death in 1981. Libby Holman, who introduced the songs, "House of the Rising Sun" and "Moaning Low," held glamorous parties at Treetops that attracted many political and entertainment celebrities. Her final wish was that Treetops be used as parkland and a cultural center. Fortunately Treetops has been protected as *open space* thanks to the efforts of a broad coalition of concerned people.

Louis Schanker was an artist and supervisor in the Graphics and Mural divisions of the **WPA** in New York City and was involved in several artist movements of the 30's, 40's and 50's. *Schanker's is an art which is important in understanding the development of the second wave of American abstraction which culminated in Abstract Expressionism.* (1981, Susan Fillin Yeh, art historian.) For over 20 years Schanker was a professor at the New School for Social Research and Bard College. He worked in watercolors, prints, oils and sculpture. In his 1964 book, **About Prints**, Stanley Hayter, artist and author, states, "*From Louis Schanker's example the great development of the color woodcut in America chiefly stems.*" Schanker's works can be found in many major museums including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and The Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. It is especially appropriate that Schanker's former studio is the venue for the Treetops Chamber Music Society as he loved music and nature, both of which are reflected in his artwork.

For more information go to [www.treetopscms.org/](http://www.treetopscms.org/) [www.LouisSchanker.info](http://www.LouisSchanker.info)



Lou Siegel, nephew of Louis Schanker, discusses the displayed artwork and relates some personal memories of the Libby Holman, Louis Schanker, era at Treetops.