

JLNotes

Volume 1 December 2009



I hope you've enjoyed reading the November issue of JLNotes and many, many positive comments have made the task of finding time and preparing the December issue a lot easier. The newsletter is a great communication tool and I certainly would encourage and invite any comments and suggestions that you may have. In this issue of JLNotes you will find some interesting articles, especially the one on the topic of Scales (thank you to David Lakirovich for very important contribution), important information regarding violin competitions and festivals, RCM examinations dates and deadlines and some information about upcoming concerts in Toronto. You'll also read some interesting aspects of the life of a great Yehudi Menuhin, and find a recommended listening of various violin repertoires with links to YouTube and much more.

So, enjoy reading and hopefully the next instalment of JLNotes will appear this time next month.

Jacob Lakirovich

News from JVL Summer School for Performing Arts

The 2010 season of JVL SSPA **"Music in Summer" Festival** will commence on Thursday, July 8 and will conclude on Sunday, July 18. The website has now been up-dated and the registration is now open. I'd like to invite you to visit: www.MusicInSummer.com and to familiarize yourself with the new important information.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. Oleg Pokhanovski, a prizewinner of numerous international violin competitions, Associate Professor of Violin, String Area Coordinator at the Marcel A. Desautels Faculty of Music University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada, who will join the Faculty this season, and will no doubt bring a wealth of experience and fresh ideas to our violin and chamber music departments. Also from Winnipeg, I'd like to welcome Prof. Mikhail Pokhanovski, a member of the viola faculty of the Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba, Artist-in-Residence at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and one of the leading Canadian musicians. I also would like to introduce Mr. Dimitre Atanassov, an outstanding pedagogue, violinist and chamber musician. Mr. Atanassov performed with some of the most esteemed artists such as: Misha Maisky, Shlomo Mintz, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Ingrid Heabler, Antonio Meneses, Boris Belkin, and Regis Pasquier. He was a member of the State Philharmonic Orchestra in Sofia in his native Bulgaria, as well as a member of the Sao Paulo State Orchestra, in Brazil. David Lakirovich does not need an introduction. In all these years, his involvement, first as a student, then as faculty assistant, very positively influenced his artistic growth and development into a first class musician, and now he is joining us for the first time as a faculty member. After a number of years of absence from JVL SSPA, I would like to extend a very special welcome to Mr. Mischa Lakirovich, who finally made it possible to find the time in his very busy schedule in California as a soloist, a recording artist and a teacher to once again marvel us with his wonderful wit, great musicianship and excellent teaching. And of course I would also like to welcome back our outstanding cellist, Mr. Peter Cosbey, our very dear friends and very respected musicians Mary Fisher and Julian Fisher, Toronto School for Strings, Mr. Tymur Melnyk, Austrian virtuoso violinist, who in 2009 season captivated both students and faculty alike with his great performances, teaching style and conducting, Alina Mirzoev and Mikhail Mirzoev who are taking care of our preparatory division, Ms. Sharon Prater, internationally acclaimed soloist and chamber musician, Principal Cello of the Toronto Philharmonia, and a member of Ensemble Vivant, Mr. David Stone, a wonderful bassist and

composer, hugely popular Ms. Tina Torlone, Head of the Vocal Department and Director of the highly successful “Sing Out!” program, and finally Mr. Marc Widner, one of the foremost Canadian pianist and pedagogue.

This is a marvelous opportunity for children to explore the world of music and to have an incentive for continuous interest in music.

I would invite anyone who would like to share his or her JVL 2009 experience (any stories, funny or not so) to submit it to me for inclusion into the next edition of JLNNotes.

A Topic

When asked about his practice routine, Jascha Heifetz once said: “If I have three hours of practice, two goes to scales.” He was considered by many to be the greatest violinist of all time, and yet he practiced scales everyday, till the day he retired. From this, a very obvious yet simple question arises: why? Why did he practice scales everyday? Why practice scales at all?

A violinist is, in short, an athlete, a sportsman. Playing is not only a mental challenge, but also a very physical one. A violinist must be in shape at all times, otherwise there is no hope of surviving a grueling 45-minute Brahms Violin Concerto in front of an orchestra. He/she must have an unlimited amount of stamina. However, it’s not as simple as it may seem. Let’s take a runner, for example. Before each race, a runner spends hours warming up. This means stretching every possible muscle in their body. Or take a tennis player. Before each match, they also stretch, and take warm-up hits and swings with their racket. They cannot just wake up one day and expect to play a tennis match or run a 100-meter race without the initial warm-up; they would simply never succeed, not to mention it is very dangerous for their body. This applies directly to the violin. Scales are like stretches for the 100-meter runner, or practice swings for the tennis player. One’s fingers, arms, and various muscles in the body must be warmed up before the general practice begins. There are a lot of severe consequences for those who neglect to practice scales, and to warm-up everyday. For one, it becomes a health risk. There are countless reports of players who develop tendonitis in their arms, elbows and/or shoulders, due in large part to the lack of proper warm-up before playing or practicing. In terms of specific violin playing, the technique suffers greatly due to the lack of scale practice. More specifically: intonation. It’s very simple: practice scales everyday and you will have a solid intonation. And of course, the overall effectiveness of practicing diminishes greatly if scales aren’t practiced.

With all of that being said, how is one to practice scales? A lot of violin teachers agree that one-hour of scales everyday is sufficient. Of course there are those who stress two hours, or maybe even more, however one hour is adequate. In that one hour though, there is an intense warm-up agenda. It includes a thorough exercise of open strings (even though it is not part of the scale program, however still crucial to the warm-up), where one takes a metronome, and puts it to 60, and starts from 4 beats per bow, and ends on around 30. Of course this is the highest level, so depending on the violinist’s general level, the number can fluctuate. This exercise is a warm-up for many different areas of violin playing, but most specifically for general sound production and bow changes. “Open strings” can be practiced on any string, in any dynamic, even in any bow speed or contact point. It all depends on what area one wants to focus on. After that comes the scale. Students should practice one scale per day. Scales should be practiced in a lot of different bowings and rhythms. This also includes the practice of chromatic scales, and double stops, where one goes through thirds, sixths, octaves, fingered octaves and tenths. 3 octaves is the norm for scales, however keys such as G major/minor and A major/minor should be done in 4 octaves. Again, all of the above is subject to change, depending on the student’s level. It is imperative that one listens very intently to their intonation, especially in the practice of double stops. And finally, one concludes their warm-up routine with a set of arpeggios in the same key as the scale, usually with 3, 6, and/or 9 to a bow. There exist countless amounts of etudes and studies and technical exercises for the violin that one should practice after their warm-up with scales and open strings, however that is a whole other topic of discussion.

One of the beautiful things about scales is that they are so “versatile,” so to say. They could be used to address any technical aspect and area in violin playing. The challenge that a student faces is figuring out what the scale means to him/her, and what he/she wants to achieve from practicing that scale, that day, for that one hour. The target should change from day to day. For example, on day one, the focus is vibrato. So for that one hour of scale practice, the student should employ various vibrato exercises in the scale. On day two, the spotlight is on intonation. The student’s attention will be on playing everything perfectly in tune, practicing extremely slowly and listening to every little note. And on day three, the focal point will be on bow strokes. The attention will be on accuracy, speed, and precision of various bow strokes and rhythms. And as the days go on, so do the targets and focal points. So in general, the student has to decide for himself what he will use the scale for. To conclude, scales are to the violinist like vitamins are for the human body. Without them, how could one live? Not only do they build a solid violin technique, but also a rigid and firm discipline that is imperative for every aspiring violinist.

David Lakirovich

Point of view

Must all orchestral string sections sound the same?

Orchestras once boasted unmistakable musical identities, but an emotionally sanitised age has brought about a lamentable universality of sound, says Julian Haylock.

The encroaching universality of orchestral sound over the last quarter of a century, including the sad loss of all those intoxicating Franco–Russian string, brass and woodwind timbres, is one of the tragedies of the modern orchestral scene. It is incredible to think that as recently as the 1960s, André Cluytens in Paris and Yevgeny Svetlanov in Moscow were still luxuriating in a string sound whose glowing, sensual allure was counterbalanced by a thrilling, full-throated incandescence. Surely it can’t be too long before period-instrument ensembles turn their attention to recreating specifically the exotic timbres that were part and parcel of daily musical life for Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Ravel and Debussy.

Yet the single most lamentable feature of contemporary orchestral string sections is their lack of a strong, corporate identity. Admittedly, taking all levels of playing into account, from youth orchestras to the highest echelons of the profession, we are living in something of a technical golden age. Half a century ago, most provincial string players simply weren’t up to the virtuoso challenges set by the likes of Richard Strauss or even Tchaikovsky. Nowadays they take such things virtually in their stride. The level of string expertise is astonishing. If only this extended to musical personality.

Once upon a time the string section was considered the emotional powerhouse of an orchestra – its principal driving force. Yet even allowing for the period-performance movement’s scaling down of string presence in music from the 18th and early 19th centuries in particular, one is nowadays often at a loss to know what an orchestra’s individual ‘string sound’ really is.

Just half a century ago virtually every major orchestra had its own clearly identifiable string identity. In Cleveland, Georg Szell insisted upon unprecedented levels of unanimity across all parameters, resulting in a sound of almost regimental precision. Fritz Reiner working in Chicago was all about virtuoso élan and clarity, exchanging weight of sound for quicksilver agility. The ‘fabulous’ Philadelphians under Eugene Ormandy played like an army of Perlman, Primroses and Rostropovichs, producing an overwhelming sound of espressivo opulence.

The orchestras of Moscow and Leningrad cultivated a string sound of raw emotional intensity, unvarnished and intense. Karajan obtained a timbre of unparalleled beauty and richness in Berlin that was also capable of fearsome power and projection. The Vienna Philharmonic strings were like a Ferrari to Berlin’s Rolls-Royce – lithe and sophisticated but with an exhilaratingly dangerous, off-the-leash quality. Even in London there were profound differences between the Berlin Phil-like luxuriance of the London Philharmonic Orchestra strings,

compared with the high-wire brilliance of the London Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia's indomitable rigour under Klemperer.

Whether it is the emotionally sanitised age in which we live, a collective musical reaction against Romantic rhetoric, or simply because the modern breed of conductor no longer views a sonic or emotional collective identity as desirable, the differences between orchestras, while still discernible, have been eroded away to a remarkable degree within an astonishingly short period. There was a time when one had only to mention a conductor's name – from Mravinsky to Toscanini, from Solti to Jochum, from Kubelík to Furtwängler – to conjure up a totally unique string sound world in one's mind's ear. Nowadays, the sonic orchestral flames that once burned with such blinding iridescence have been reduced to a twilight glow.

(the Strad, November 2009)

News from Competitions

Congratulations to the following students for their participation and achievement of outstanding results in the Arts Richmond Hill Music Festival:

Daphne Chu	Two 3 rd place awards for grade 3
Nicolas Hung	3 rd place award for grade 5
Alison Kam	3 rd place award for grade 6
Yoni Katchan	1 st place award for grade 2
Clara Lo	
Julia Mirzoev	1 st place award in Age Achievement – Open Class, 2 nd and 3 rd place awards for grade 10
Daniel Temnik	1 st place award in Age Achievement – 16 years, 1 st and 2 nd place awards for grade 10
Alex Volkov	1 st place award in Age Achievement – 14 years, Two 1 st place awards for grade 10

Here are some dates and deadlines for RCM examinations and local competitions:

RCM Examinations

Registration Deadline: March 2, 2010

Theory Examinations: May 14 & 15, 2010

Practical Examinations: June 7 - 26, 2010

<http://www.rcmexaminations.org/>

2010 Kiwanis Music Festival

February 16 - February 27, 2010 Entry Deadline: too late!

<http://kiwanismusiconto.org/index.html>

Canadian Music Competition

April 29 - May 4, 2010 Toronto - First round Registration deadline: too late!

<http://www.cmcnational.com/en/>

Pickering GTA Music Festival

Festival Dates: January 16th - February 2, 2010 Entry Closing Date: too late!

http://www.pgtamf.ca/Pickering_GTA_Music_Festival/Welcome.html

Peel Music Festival

Dates for the 2010 Festival: March 22 to May 1 Deadline for registration is December 7, 2009

<http://www.peelmusicfestival.ca/Main.aspx>

Newmarket Lions Music and Dance Festival

Applications must be in by January 31.

Karen Barker, Administrator, Phone: 905 252-3203, Email: karen@zonas.ca

... and some international:

Pretoria, South Africa [5th Unisa International String Competition: violin, cello 2010](#)

Brescia, Italy ["Città di Brescia" International Violin Competition](#)

Genoa, Italy [53rd International Violin Competition "Premio Paganini"](#)

Leipzig, Germany [17th International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition](#)

Martigny, Switzerland [43rd Tibor Varga International Violin Competition](#)

Gorizia, Italy [29th International Violin Competition "Rodolfo Lipizer Prize"](#)

Naples, Italy [16th International Violin Competition Alberto Curci](#)

Helsinki, Finland [10th International Violin Competition "Jean Sibelius"](#)

Prague, Czech Republic [62nd Prague Spring International Music Competition](#)

Montreal, Canada [Montreal International Musical Competition \(MIMC\), Violin](#)

Oslo, Norway <http://www.menuhincompetition.org/index.html>

Salt Lake City, Utah, USA www.stradcompetition.org/music

Great Violinists: Yehudi Menuhin



JULIAN HAYLOCK examines the player whose openness and sincerity gave even lighter music a profound emotional resonance. The most musically gifted violin prodigy of his generation, Yehudi Menuhin was one of the defining figures in 20th-century culture. From jamming with Stephane Grappelli to conducting the Berlin Philharmonic with his feet, he devoted his life to breaking down musical barriers. Menuhin's first teacher was Sigmund Anker, an authoritarian figure who between 1921 and 1923 kept his young charge on a tight rein. Louis Persinger then took over and saw Menuhin through the remainder of his early prodigyhood. 'When I began it was pure instinct,' Menuhin later recalled. 'I had the knack, the gift, the will.' So important was Persinger to Menuhin that when the teacher moved from San Francisco to New York in 1925, the whole Menuhin family followed him. 'He demonstrated and I imitated,' was how Menuhin neatly encapsulated his lessons with

Persinger. The following year the family travelled to Europe, but when Ysaÿe (Persinger's teacher) offered to provide him with some firm technical discipline, Menuhin turned him down. 'Music was something very alive to me,' he later reflected, 'an essential means of expression, and I suspect that unending hours of work on dull material might well have blunted rather than polished my interpretation of it.' Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but the technical frailties Menuhin suffered from in later life might well have been avoided had he taken Ysaÿe's advice. However, in 1927 Menuhin began lessons with his hero George Enescu, with whom he struck up an instant rapport despite an age gap of 35 years: 'What I received from Enescu was the note transformed into vital message, the phrase given shape and meaning, the structure of music made vivid.' In 1929 and 1930 Menuhin also had a series of consultations with Adolph Busch. 'Without him,' he fondly

remembered, 'I would not have been able to understand and penetrate the spirit and heart of that music of mists and forests, of drama and contained passion.'

(the *Strad* November 2009)

Heifetz in Hollywood



Hollywood string players looked to Jascha Heifetz, Toscha Seidel and Gregor Piatigorsky for inspiration. 'Seidel had that gorgeous, beautiful romantic sound. Heifetz influenced so many people with that very electrified, personal sound. They worshipped the ground he walked on up in the hills there, living only a few minutes away,' recalls Glenn Dicterow. 'Heifetz was our god, growing up; there's never been anyone else like him. He had a fabulous technique and got a sound that I never heard again, so gorgeous,' agrees Dixie Blackstone. Heifetz was larger than life to most listeners, but in Hollywood he was also a neighbour with whom many of the studio violinists socialised and played chamber music. Most of the great studio violinists, in fact, enjoyed playing chamber music to replenish their classical batteries. Probably no one played with Heifetz more often among the Hollywood crowd than Virginia Majewski and 'Izzy' Baker, who remembers that it was Majewski, the principal violist at MGM known for frequently knitting afghans during the session breaks, who first invited him along for quartets at Heifetz's home, the group rounded out by cellist Gregor Piatigorsky. 'After we played, Heifetz engaged me as second violinist to record all kinds of things. It was very exciting to play with him: we'd sight-read and then rehearse it, and we had to play perfectly.' Jimmy Getzoff remembers Heifetz's dry and cutting wit. For example, the first time he was invited to a small dinner with six people, he thought he 'had gone to heaven'. During dinner Getzoff recalled to Heifetz that as a 16-year-old he had been soloist in the Beethoven Concerto with a youth orchestra. Heifetz and his wife, Florence, had been in the audience. 'I asked if he remembered being there. In an instant he said, "No, but you're better off that I don't!"'

Concert Calendar

Our **Annual Anniversary Concert** will be held on **Sunday, February 7** as usual on premises of Pro-Music, Conservatory of Music at: 5051 Hwy 7 East in Markham. More details in our January issue.

Here are the details of some Toronto concerts for November:

T A F E L M U S I K

Vivaldi: Four Seasons

Following his stunning Tafelmusik debut last September, violinist Stefano Montanari returns December 2 to 8 for performances of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Of his Tafelmusik debut last fall, *The Globe and Mail* declared, "Stefano Montanari ... electrified the musicians and had them playing as if their lives and happiness depended on every twitch of his volatile elbow, every swish of his bow..."

Dec. 2 @ 7:00 PM Dec. 3 - Dec. 5 @ 8:00 PM Dec. 6 @ 3:30 PM Trinity-St. Paul Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. | Tickets: \$20 - \$82 Phone: 416 964-6337 or order online by [clicking here](#)

Dec. 8 George Weston Hall, Toronto Centre For The Arts for tickets online [please click here](#)

Handel's Messiah

The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Orchestra in an intimate and uplifting performance of this baroque masterpiece - a profoundly moving experience in the style and spirit of Handel's own productions. This is one of Tafelmusik's most popular concerts, always drawing rave reviews from critics and patrons alike.

Dec. 16 - Dec. 19 @ 8:00 PM Trinity-St. Paul Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. | Tickets: \$39 - \$89 Phone: 416 964-6337 or order online by [clicking here](#)

Sing-Along Messiah

This festive sing-along with the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Orchestra, led by a feisty "Maestro Handel", is an annual tradition. The sheer joy you will feel as your voice joins a mass choir of 2,700 to sing the *Hallelujah Chorus* may be the best gift you receive this holiday season. Bring your own score, or purchase one at Massey Hall. Seating is general admission, by voice part, and non-singers are always welcome. A great outing for the whole family!

Sun. Dec. 20 @ 2:00 PM Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St. | Tickets: \$29 - \$39 Order online by [clicking here](#)

T O R O N T O S Y M P H O N Y O R C H E S T R A

Dvorak: New World Symphony

Bramwell Tovey, Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, leads the TSO in Dvorák's tribute to the Americas, Symphony No. 9. Maestro Tovey also conducts his own works, including a concerto for TSO Principal Trumpet Andrew McCandless.

Programme: Bramwell Tovey: *Urban Runway* Bramwell Tovey: *Trumpet Concerto (TSO Commission/World premiere)* Dvořák: *Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"*

Dec. 2 @ 8:00 PM Dec. 3 @ 8:00 PM Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$29 - \$128 Phone 416 597-7840 or to order online [please click](#)

A Christmas Carol

The Young People's holiday performance is a seasonal tradition for the whole family! Enjoy timeless Christmas favourites, including a pocket version of A Christmas Carol, complete with stage actors, a jolly narrator, and music! There will be an open house during intermission with free art activities from the Avenue Road Arts School in the lobby. Although Young People's Concerts are created especially for children ages 5-12. The TSO regrets but they cannot allow children under 2 years of age into any TSO concert.

Sun. Dec. 6 @ 3:00 PM Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$15 - \$59 Phone 416 597-7840 or to order online [please click](#)

Beethoven: Pastoral Symphony

Beethoven's famous symphony dedicated to the great outdoors. Celebrated composer Philip Glass also re-imagines Vivaldi's famous violin concertos in this uplifting concert.

Programme: Christopher Theofanidis: *Rainbow Body* (Dec. 9 only), Philip Glass: *The Four Seasons* (TSO Co-Commission/World Premiere), Beethoven: *Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral"*

Dec. 9 @ 8:00 PM Dec. 12 @ 7:30 PM Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$15 - \$59 Phone 416 597-7840 or to order online [please click](#)

Toronto's Favourite Messiah

It wouldn't be the holiday season without Handel's Messiah – performed with the matchless spirit of the TSO and the massed choral splendor of The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

Dec. 16, Dec. 18, Dec. 19, Dec. 20 & Dec. 21 Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$35 - \$99
Phone 416 597-7840 or to order online [please click](#)

Christmas With the Canadian Brass

Join the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Brass for a joyous programme of holiday classics, and sing along to your favourite carols.

Dec. 22 @ 8:00 PM Dec. 23 @ 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$28 - \$99
Phone 416 597-7840 or to order online [please click](#)

T O R O N T O O P E R E T T A T H E A T R E

Countess Maritza

A glorious operetta that rivals *The Merry Widow* and turns heads the world over with its mix of Viennese elegance and Hungarian passion! Starring Lara Ciekiewicz, Elizabeth DeGrazia, David Curry, Fred Love

Dec. 26, 29, 30 & 31, Jan. 2 @ 8:00 Dec. 27 & Jan. 3 @ 2:00 PM Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre For the Arts, 27 Front St. E. | Tickets: \$39 - \$78 Phone: 416 366-7723 or 1 800 708-6754 Order online by [clicking here](#)

R O Y T H O M S O N H A L L

Bravissimo! Opera's Greatest Hits

Bravissimo! Opera's Greatest Hits! returns for the 3rd consecutive year to Roy Thomson Hall with an all new program of beloved arias, duets and overtures from the world's most popular operas. This year's showcase of irresistible melodies is on New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31 at 7:00 p.m., and features an international cast of six opera stars who are joined by the 78-member Opera Canada Symphony under the direction of the eminent Austrian conductor Roberto Paternostro.

The guest artists, all enjoying spectacular careers on major opera stages around the world, are American soprano Sarah Jane McMahon, French soprano Susan Neves, Russian mezzo-soprano Elena Bocharova, Portuguese tenor Bruno Ribeiro, American tenor Carl Tanner, and Serbian baritone Nikola Mijailovic. Maestro Paternostro, who was an assistant to the late Herbert von Karajan in Berlin, is General Music Director of the Staatstheater Kassel and Musical Adviser to the Israel Chamber Orchestra. He has also guest conducted opera and orchestral performances throughout Europe for more than two decades, beginning with the famed 1985 Opera for Africa gala at the Arena in Verona, Italy. The enchanting program includes favorite selections from *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *The Magic Flute* – and much more. Rick Phillips, well-known Canadian broadcaster, writer and lecturer in the world of opera, will narrate the performance.

Thurs. Dec. 31 @ 7:00 PM Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St. | Tickets: \$69.50 - \$29.50

N A T I O N A L B A L L E T O F C A N A D A

The Nutcracker

A cherished holiday classic, The National Ballet of Canada's *The Nutcracker* is a tradition for children and adults alike. Set in 19th-century Russia, *The Nutcracker* takes audiences on a magical journey through the glittering world of the Snow Queen to the opulent splendour of the Sugar Plum Fairy's palace. James Kudelka's breathtaking version of *The Nutcracker* is one of Toronto's favourite holiday traditions. Be sure to watch for local celebrities making guest appearances as Canon Dolls. Dec. 12 - Dec. 30 Four Seasons Centre For the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. (at University) Tickets: range from \$20 - \$210

HARBOURFRONT CONTEMPORARY DANCE SEASON

Ballet Creole – Soulful Messiah

Celebrating 20 years of forging new territories and new pathways for blacks in dance, Ballet Creole and artistic director Patrick Parson are committed to presenting diverse contemporary dance expressions drawing from African and Caribbean traditions. *Soulful Messiah* is a contemporary dance interpretation of Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*. This soulful rendition, infused with R&B, joyously blends Handel's *Messiah* and the voices of legendary black singers, resulting in a cornucopia of tap, popular and African-Caribbean dance movements; a tour de force with undeniable holiday appeal.

Dec. 11 - Dec. 13 Fleck Dance Theatre, 3rd floor Queens Quay Terminal | Tickets: \$20 - \$45 Phone: 416 973-4000 or online by [clicking here](#)

Canadian Children's Dance Theatre:

WinterSong

Wintersong has warmed the hearts of family audiences for 22 years with its breathtaking tapestry of seasonal dance. Celebrate the holidays with some of Canada's most exciting choreographers, dancers and musicians inspired by the world's rich solstice traditions.

Dec. 18 & Dec. 19 Fleck Dance Theatre, 3rd floor Queens Quay Terminal | Tickets: \$15 - \$28 Phone: 416 973-4000 or online by [clicking here](#)

PRINCESS OF WALES THEATRE

The Sound Of Music

The North American Premiere of the Andrew Lloyd Webber and David Lans smash-hit new London production of *The Sound Of Music* will be the anchor show of the 2008-09 Mirvish Subscription season. with the lead role of Maria in the Canadian production cast by the public through a national primetime television series that will air on CBC Television in the spring. With music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse (suggested by *The Trapp Family Singers* by Maria Augusta Trapp), *The Sound Of Music* is one of the most beloved musicals of all time. The film adaptation of the original 1959 Broadway production won five Academy Awards, including Best Picture in 1965. The score touches the hearts of all ages and brims over with some of the most memorable songs ever performed on the musical stage including *My Favorite Things*, *Do-Re-Mi*, *Edelweiss*, *Climb Evry Mountain*, *Sixteen Going On Seventeen*, *The Lonely Goatherd* and of course the glorious title song *The Sound of Music*.

Held Over Until Jan. 3, 2010 Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St. W. | Tickets: \$30 - \$94 Phone: 416-872-1212 or 1-800-461-3333 For online ticket ordering, please click here www.ticketking.com

CANON THEATRE

Fiddler On the Roof

"Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as...as a fiddler on the roof" says Tevye the humble milkman from the village of Anatevka. And so begins a tale of love and laughter, devotion and defiance, wit and wisdom and the enduring strength of family and tradition. The Tony-winning musical that has captured the hearts of people all over the world with its universal appeal, returns to Toronto in an all-new and very special production. Launching a new "tradition" Harvey Fierstein replaces Topol in the North American tour of the TONY award winning musical *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*. Chaim Topol, regrettably informed the show's producers he would have to leave the production due to a shoulder injury requiring emergency long-term treatment. At the story's close, the villagers of Anatevka are forced to leave their homes and even the sturdy mores that have guided everyday life begin to crumble. Paradoxically, it is the enforced loss of the rigid

traditions and home life that Tevye has tried so tenaciously to preserve that leads the family to reconcile and draw closer still.

Dec. 8 - Jan. 10 Canon Theatre, 244 Victoria St. | Tickets: \$75 - \$225 Phone: 416-872-1212 or 1 800 461-3333 or order online by [clicking here](#)

Some funny stories

Musicians on a sinking ship

A violist and a cellist were standing on a sinking ship together. "Help!" cried the cellist, "I can't swim!" "Don't worry," said the violist, "just fake it."

Make me a better musician

There once was a violist playing in the Winnipeg Symphony. He wasn't that wonderful a player, so he sat at the back of the section. One day, he was cleaning out his attic and discovered an old lamp. He gave it a rub and out popped a genie. "For letting me out of my lamp, I'll grant you three wishes!" he said. The violist thought for a moment and replied, "Make me a far better musician than I am now." The genie told him that this would be done. He was to go to sleep and in the morning, he would be a much better musician. The next day, he woke up to find himself the principal violist of the symphony. Well, this was just great, he thought! But he knew he could do better. He rubbed the lamp again and out popped the genie. "You have two more wishes!" he said. "I want you to make me a better musician than I am even now!" Once again, the genie told him to go to bed and when he woke up, it would be so. When the violist awoke, he found he was now the principal violist of the Berlin Philharmonic. Well, the violist thought this was pretty grand, but knew he could do better yet. He rubbed on the lamp again and once more out came the genie. "This is your last wish." the genie said. "I want you to make me yet a better musician still!" Yet again, he was told to go to sleep. The next morning, he woke up to find himself back in Winnipeg, sitting in the last desk of the second violin section.

The insane conductor

A violist comes home late at night to discover fire trucks, police cars, and a smoking crater where his house used to be. The chief of police comes over to him and tells him, "While you were out, the conductor came to your house, killed your family, and burned the house down." The violist replied, "You're kidding! The conductor came to my house?"

Some more viola stories...

If you throw a violist and a soprano off a cliff, which one would hit the ground first?

Who cares?

How do you keep your violin from getting stolen?

Put it in a viola case.

...and not so funny:

Fight between the musicians

At a concert hall one night, the stage manager comes across an oboe player and a viola player having a fight. He breaks the fight up and asks what the fight was about. The oboe player says, "He broke my reed! I was just about to play my big solo when he broke my reed!" "Well?" says the stage manager to the viola player. "What do you say to that?" In umbrage, the viola player replies, "He undid two of my strings but he won't tell me which ones!"

This month's birthdays

December

Alexandra	17
Ali	8
Leo	14
Lea	12

Happy birthday to all of you!

Have lots of fun with Music!

The origin of Violin

The **violin** is a bowed string instrument with four strings usually tuned in perfect fifths. It is the smallest and highest-pitched member of the violin family of string instruments, which also includes the viola and cello.

The violin is sometimes informally called a fiddle, regardless of the type of music played on it. The word "violin" comes from the Middle Latin word *vitula*, meaning "stringed instrument"; this word is also believed to be the source of the Germanic "fiddle". The violin, while it has ancient origins, acquired most of its modern characteristics in 16th-century Italy, with some further modifications occurring in the 18th century. Violinists and collectors particularly prize the instruments made by the Gasparo da Salò, Giovanni Paolo Maggini, Stradivari, Guarneri and Amati families from the 16th to the 18th century in Brescia and Cremona and by Jacob Steiner in Austria.

A person who makes or repairs violins is called a luthier, or simply a violinmaker. The parts of a violin are usually made from different types of wood (although electric violins may not be made of wood at all, since their sound may not be dependent on specific acoustic characteristics of the instrument's construction), and it is generally strung with gut, nylon/steel composite, or steel strings.

Someone who plays the violin is called a violinist or a fiddler. The violinist produces sound by drawing a bow across one or more strings (which may be stopped by the fingers of the other hand to produce a full range of pitches), by plucking the strings (with either hand), or by a variety of other techniques. The violin is played by musicians in a wide variety of musical genres, including Baroque music, classical, jazz, folk music, pop-punk and rock and roll. The violin has come to be played in many non-western music cultures all over the world. The earliest stringed instruments were mostly plucked (e.g. the Greek lyre). Bowed instruments may have originated in the equestrian cultures of Central Asia, an example being the Kobyz or kyl-kobyz is an ancient Kazakh string instrument or Mongolian instrument Morin huur.

Turkic and Mongolian horsemen from Inner Asia were probably the world's earliest fiddlers. Their two-stringed upright fiddles were strung with horsehair strings, played with horsehair bows, and often feature a carved horse's head at the end of the neck. ... The violins, violas, and cellos we play today, and whose bows are still strung with horsehair, are a legacy of the nomads. It is believed that these instruments eventually spread to China, India, the Byzantine Empire and the Middle East, where they developed into instruments such as the erhu in China, the rebab in the Middle East, the bowed Byzantine lyra and the esraj in India. The violin in its present form emerged in early 16th-Century Northern Italy, where the port towns of Venice and Genoa maintained extensive ties to central Asia through the trade routes of the Silk Road. The modern European violin evolved from various bowed stringed instruments, which were brought from the Middle East and the Byzantine Empire. Most likely the first makers of violins borrowed from three types of current instruments: the rebec, in use since the 10th century (itself derived from the Byzantine lyra and the Arabic *rebab*), the Renaissance fiddle, and the *lira da braccio* (derived from the Byzantine *lira* . One of the earliest explicit descriptions of the instrument, including

it's tuning, was in the *Epitome musical* by Jambe de Fer, published in Lyon in 1556. By this time, the violin had already begun to spread throughout Europe. The oldest documented violin to have four strings, like the modern violin, is supposed to have been constructed in 1555 by Andrea Amati, but the date is very doubtful. (Other violins, documented significantly earlier, only had three strings and were called "violetta".) The violin immediately became very popular; both among street musicians and the nobility, illustrated by the fact that the French king Charles IX ordered Amati to construct 24 violins for him in 1560. The oldest surviving violin, dated inside, is from this set, and is known as the "Charles IX," made in Cremona c. 1560. The finest Renaissance carved and decorated violin in the world is the Gasparo da Salò (1574 c.) owned by Ferdinand II, Archduke of Austria and later, from 1841, by the Norwegian virtuoso Ole Bull, who used it for forty years and thousands of concerts, for his very powerful and beautiful tone, similar to those of a Guarneri. It is now in the Vestlandske Kustindustrimuseum in Bergen (Norway). "The Messiah" or "Le Messie" (also known as the "Salabue") made by Antonio Stradivari in 1716 remains pristine, never having been used. It is now located in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford.

The most famous violin makers (luthiers) between the 16th century and the 18th century include:

- The school of Brescia, beginning in the late 14 with liras, violettas, violas and active in the field of the violin in the first half of 16th century:
- The Dalla Corna family, active 1510 - 1560 in Brescia and Venezia, Italy
- The Micheli family, active 1530 - 1615 in Brescia
- The Inverardi family active 1550 - 1580 in Brescia
- The Bertolotti Gasparo da Salò family, active 1530 - 1615 in Salò and Brescia
- Gio Paolo Maggini, active 1600 - 1630 in Brescia
- The school of Cremona, beginning in the half of 16 century with violas and violone and in the field of violin in the second half of 16 century
- The Amati family, active 1500-1740 in Cremona, Italy
- The Guarneri family, active 1626-1744 in Cremona
- The Stradivari family, active 1644-1737 in Cremona

Significant changes occurred in the construction of the violin in the 18th century, particularly in the length and angle of the neck, as well as a heavier bass bar. The majority of old instruments have undergone these modifications, and hence are in a significantly different state than when they left the hands of their makers, doubtless with differences in sound and response. But these instruments in their present condition set the standard for perfection in violin craftsmanship and sound, and violin makers all over the world try to come as close to this ideal as possible.

To this day, instruments from the "Golden Age" of violin making, especially those made by Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù, are the most sought-after instruments by both collectors and performers. The current record amount paid for a Stradivari violin was \$3,544,000.00 at an auction on May 16, 2006. All Stradivari violins have unique names; the most expensive Stradivari violin is known as the "Hammer", referring to the first owner named Christian Hammer. It was made in 1707.

(from Wikipedia)

Featured Artist

Yehudi Menuhin, Baron Menuhin, OM, KBE (April 22, 1916 – March 12, 1999) was a violinist and conductor who spent most of his performing career in the United Kingdom. He was born to Jewish parents in the United States, but became a citizen of Switzerland in 1970, and of the United Kingdom in 1985. He is commonly considered one of the twentieth century's greatest violin virtuosos.

Yehudi Menuhin was born in New York City, New York, to Belorussian Jewish parents from what is now Belarus. His sisters were the concert pianist and human rights worker Hephzibah Menuhin and the pianist, painter, and poet Yaltah Menuhin. Through his father Moshe Menuhin, a former rabbinical student and anti-Zionist writer, Menuhin was descended from a distinguished rabbinical dynasty.

Menuhin began violin instruction at age three under violinist Sigmund Anker; his parents had wanted Louis Persinger to be his teacher, but Persinger refused. He displayed extraordinary talents at an early age. His first solo violin performance was at the age of seven with the San Francisco Symphony in 1923. Persinger then agreed to take Menuhin as a student. When the Menuhins went to Paris, Persinger suggested Yehudi go to his own teacher, Eugène Ysaÿe. He did have one lesson with Ysaÿe, but did not like his method or the fact that he was very old. Instead, he went to the Romanian composer and violinist George Enescu, after which he made several recordings with his sister Hephzibah. He was also a student of Adolf Busch. When a child and an adolescent, his fame was phenomenal. In 1929 he played in Berlin, under Bruno Walter's baton, three concerti by Bach, Brahms and Beethoven. In 1932, he recorded Edward Elgar's Violin Concerto in B minor for HMV in London, with the composer himself conducting.

World War II musician

Yehudi Menuhin performed for allied soldiers during World War II, and went with the composer Benjamin Britten to perform for inmates of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, after its liberation in April 1945. He returned to Germany in 1947 to perform with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler as an act of reconciliation, becoming the first Jewish musician to do so following the Holocaust. He said to critics within the Jewish community that he wanted to rehabilitate Germany's music and spirit. After building early success on richly romantic and tonally opulent performances, he experienced considerable physical and artistic difficulties caused by overwork during the war as well as unfocused and unstructured early training. Careful practice and study combined with meditation and yoga helped him overcome many of these problems. His profound and considered musical interpretations are nearly universally acclaimed. When he finally resumed recording, he was known for practicing by deconstructing music phrases one note at a time.

He and Louis Kentner (his second wife Diana's brother-in-law) gave the first performance of William Walton's Violin Sonata, at Zürich on 30 September 1949.

Menuhin continued to perform to an advanced age, becoming known for profound interpretations of an austere quality, as well as for his explorations of music outside the classical realm.

World interactions

Menuhin credited the German-Jewish philosopher Constantin Brunner with providing him with "a theoretical framework within which I could fit the events and experiences of life"

In 1952, Menuhin met and befriended the influential yogi B. K. S. Iyengar before he had come to prominence outside India. Menuhin arranged for Iyengar to teach abroad in London, Switzerland, Paris and elsewhere. This was the first time that many Westerners had been exposed to yoga.

Following his role as a member of the awards jury at the 1955 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, Menuhin secured a Rockefeller Foundation grant for the financially-strapped Grand Prize winner at the event, Argentine violinist Alberto Lysy. Menuhin made Lysy his first and only personal student, and the two toured extensively throughout the concert halls of Europe. The young protégé later established the International Menuhin Music Academy in Gstaad, in his honor.

Menuhin made several recordings with the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, who had been criticized for conducting in Germany during the Nazi era. Menuhin defended Furtwängler, noting that the conductor had helped a number of Jewish musicians to flee Nazi Germany.

In 1962 he established the Yehudi Menuhin School in Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey. He also established the music program at the Nueva School in Hillsborough, California sometime around then. In 1965 he received an honorary knighthood. In the same year, Australian composer Malcolm Williamson wrote a violin concerto for Menuhin. He performed the concerto many times and recorded it at its premiere at the Bath Festival in 1965.

Menuhin also had a long association with Ravi Shankar, which began with their 1966 album *East Meets West*. He also worked with famous jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli in the 1970s on *Jalousie*, an album of pop music of the 1930s arranged in chamber style.

In 1977, at the Edinburgh Festival, he premiered Priaulx Rainier's violin concerto *Due Canti e Finale*, a work he had commissioned from her. He also commissioned her last work, *Wildlife Celebration*, which he performed in aid of Gerald Durrell's Wildlife Conservation Trust.

In 1983, he and Robert Masters founded the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists. Now one of the world's leading competition for young violinists, many of its prizewinners have gone on to become some of today's most exciting violinists. Among them are Tasmin Little, Nikolaj Znaider, Ilya Gringolts, Julia Fischer, Daishin Kashimoto and Lara St. John.

In 1991 he was awarded the prestigious Wolf Prize by the Israeli Government. In the Israeli Knesset he gave an acceptance speech, in which he criticised Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank with these words,

"This wasteful governing by fear, by contempt for the basic dignities of life, this steady asphyxiation of a dependent people, should be the very last means to be adopted by those who themselves know too well the awful significance, the unforgettable suffering of such an existence. It is unworthy of my great people, the Jews, who have striven to abide by a code of moral rectitude for some 5,000 years, who can create and achieve a society for themselves such as we see around us but can yet deny the sharing of its great qualities and benefits to those dwelling amongst them."

In 1997 Yehudi Menuhin and Ian Stoutzker founded the charity Live Music Now, the largest outreach music project in the UK. Live Music Now pays and trains professional musicians to work in the community, bringing joy and comfort to those who rarely get an opportunity to hear or see live music performance. Menuhin's pupils included Nigel Kennedy, Hungarian violist Csaba Erdelyi and violist Paul Coletti. Arguably the most famous of Menuhin's violins is the *Lord Wilton Guarneri del Gesù* made in 1742. In the 1980s Menuhin wrote and oversaw the creation of a "Music Guides" series of books; each covered musical instruments, with one on the human voice. Menuhin wrote some, while different authors edited others.

Later career

Menuhin regularly returned to the San Francisco Bay Area, sometimes performing with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. One of the more memorable later performances was of Elgar's Violin Concerto, which Menuhin had recorded with the composer in 1932. On 22 April 1978 along with Stéphane Grappelli, Yehudi played *Pick Yourself Up*, taken from the *Menuhin & Grappelli Play Berlin, Kern, Porter and Rodgers & Hart* album as the interval act at the 23rd Eurovision Song Contest for TFI. The performance came direct from the studios of TFI and not that of the venue (Palais des Congrès) from where the contest was held. He also hosted the PBS telecast of the gala opening concert of the orchestra from Davies Symphony Hall in September 1980.

During the 1970s, '80s and '90s, he made jazz recordings with Stéphane Grappelli, classical recordings with L. Subramaniam and albums of Eastern music with the great sitarist Ravi Shankar. In 1983 he founded the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists in Folkestone, Kent. His recording contract with EMI

lasted almost 70 years and is the longest in the history of the music industry. He made his first recording at age 13 in November 1929, and his last in 1999 at age 82. In total he recorded over 300 works for EMI, both as a violinist and as a conductor. In 1990 he was the first conductor for the Asian Youth Orchestra which toured around Asia, including Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong with Julian Lloyd Webber and a group of young talented musicians from all over Asia.

Personal life

Yehudi Menuhin was married twice. He first married Nola Nicholas, daughter of an Australian industrialist, and sister of Hephzibah Menuhin's first husband Lindsay Nicholas. They had two children, Krov and Zamira. Following their divorce in 1947, he married the British ballerina and actress Diana Gould, whose mother was the pianist Evelyn Suart (who had played with artists such as Eugène Ysaÿe and Karel Halíř), and whose stepfather was Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt. Menuhin and Gould had two sons, Gerard and Jeremy, a pianist. Another child died shortly after birth.

The name *Yehudi* means 'Jew' in Hebrew. In an interview published in October 2004, he recounted to *New Internationalist* magazine the story of his name: it is a variation of the name Yehudah, a name given by Jacob, and one of the tribes of Israel. It means "Thanks to God".

Obligated to find an apartment of their own, my parents searched the neighbourhood and chose one within walking distance of the park. Showing them out after they had viewed it, the landlady said: "And you'll be glad to know I don't take Jews." Her mistake made clear to her, the antisemitic landlady was renounced, and another apartment found. But her blunder left its mark. Back on the street my mother made a vow. Her unborn baby would have a label proclaiming his race to the world. He would be called "The Jew." A picture of Menuhin as a child is sometimes used as part of a Thematic Apperception Test.

Lord Menuhin died in Berlin, Germany following a brief illness, from complications of bronchitis.

Soon after his death, the Royal Academy of Music acquired the Yehudi Menuhin Archive, one of the most comprehensive collections ever assembled by an individual musician.

Violins

Menuhin used a number of famous violins including the *Giovanni Bussetto* (Giovanni Bussetto 1680), the *Giovanni Grancino* 1695, the *Guarneri filius Andrea* 1703, the *Soil Stradivarius*, the *Prince Khevenhüller* 1733 *Stradivari*, the *Guarneri del Gesù* 1739, and the *Lord Wilton* 1742 *Guarneri del Gesù*.

Awards and honours

1965 Yehudi Menuhin was awarded the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh, Scotland

In 1965, while he was still an American citizen, he was made an honorary Knight of the Order of the British Empire. This entitled him to use the postnominal letters KBE, but not to style himself Sir Yehudi. After Menuhin gained British citizenship in 1985, his knighthood was upgraded to a substantive one, and he became Sir Yehudi Menuhin KBE.

1968 got the Nehru award

1972 awarded the Léonie Sonning Music Prize (Denmark)

1983 nominated as president of the Elgar Society

1986 Kennedy Center Honors

In 1987 he was appointed a member of the Order of Merit

In 1987 his recording of Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85 with Julian Lloyd Webber won the BRIT Award for Best British Classical Recording. The recording was also chosen by BBC Music Magazine as the finest version ever recorded.

In 1990 he was awarded the Glenn Gould Prize in recognition of his lifetime of contributions.

In 1993 he was made a life peer, as Lord Menuhin of Stoke d'Abernon in the County of Surrey.

He was awarded honorary doctorates by 20 universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews and Vrije Universiteit Brussel

In the European Parliament in Brussels, the room in which concerts and performances are held is called the "Yehudi Menuhin Space"

He was a Freeman of the cities of Edinburgh, Bath, Reims and Warsaw

He held the Gold Medals of the cities of Paris, New York and Jerusalem

In 1992 he was announced as an Ambassador of Goodwill by UNESCO.

(from Wikipedia)

Recommended listening

Menuhin - Wieniawski Scherzo Tarantelle

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8K53QCdS20>

Stephane Grappelli & Yehudi Menuhin BBC Live "Jealousy"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV0lcFyXUWs>

Glenn Gould on Recording - Yehudi Menuhin Music of Man

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VHIMessq0>

... and of course Heifetz!

Mendelssohn Concerto by Heifetz 1949 Violin First Movement

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw7EGTjrYSs>

Finale

You can download this edition of JLNotes with direct links to various sites referred above from our websites:

- www.lakirovich.com
- www.musicinsummer.com

Should you have any comments or suggestions please send me e-mail at:

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...or call on: 905-882-7499, 416-735-7499

I would like to wish a happy Holidays Season to all of my wonderful students and their families, and a very healthy and successful New Year!