

JLNOTES

VOLUME 3 SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER 2010

Welcome back to a brand new school year! For many of you, this year will be the last year of your high school career. And next year will be the start of a new chapter of your “adult-lives”. Many of you will continue with music studies in universities and conservatories around the world. And some of you will pursue great professional careers in other areas. However, the music, I hope, will always be a very important part of your life. This year, Stephanie Nowakowski-Brown, Matthew Hui, Sylvie Kim, and Nathan Chia graduated and began their studies in universities. Stephanie, Matthew and Sylvie are studying in the prestigious University of Toronto. Stephanie is studying engineering, and both Matthew and Sylvie are in the science program. However, Nathan is continuing to study violin, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in performance degree at the Indiana State University, USA. I would like to wish all four of them great success with their studies!

When I look back at the last school year, I can say that I am very satisfied with the progress that all of my students have made and obtained tremendous results in the competitions and examinations. And they should be very proud of their accomplishments!

This past summer, as most of you probably know, was extremely busy with preparation for the very successful music camp that took place in July. Both, faculty members and the students alike, thoroughly enjoyed the experience. All students had the opportunity to flourish their skills as musicians, and successfully did so!

After a short two extremely enjoyable weeks in Italy, with my family, I am back now to start a new school year. Let's hope that all of us will have a great year ahead!

In this issue of JLNotes, you will find some interesting articles, especially the one about Alexandra Lakirovich's account of the events that took place in the JVL 2010 festival. As well as vital information regarding violin competitions and festivals, RCM examinations dates and deadlines and some information about upcoming concerts in Toronto. Also in this edition, you will read about the great Russian violinist and pedagogue Nelli Shkolnikova.

You will also find a recommended listening of various violin repertoires with links to YouTube. You could also read the interview with one of the leading Canadian Soprano Sondra Radvanovsky, and much more. So enjoy reading and hopefully the next instalment of JLNotes will appear this time next month. I certainly would encourage and invite any comments and suggestions that you may have.

I also would like to invite everyone to a concert on Saturday, October 23 at 8:00 pm. David Lakirovich will be performing Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra under direction of Ronald Royer. Also in the program Stravinsky's Fire Bird Suite and a world premier performance of Ronald Royer's new composition Exuberance. I am absolutely sure that you will enjoy very much this beautiful program. Those of you who would like to hear my live interview with Alexa Petrenko on the New Classical 96.3 FM radio station can do so on Tuesday, October 19 at 3:30 pm.

NEWS FROM JVL SUMMER SCHOOL FOR PERFORMING ARTS

The 2010 season of JVL Summer School for Performing Arts “Music in Summer” Festival was a great success. There were faculty and students from various parts of the world. The experience and skills that were developed during these 10 days will help all students not only to become better musicians, but also to appreciate the art of music.

The 2011 season is the 10th anniversary of JVL and to help celebrate this occasion, we will have many great new activities, surprises and hope to have back many of the faculty that have been a part of the festival for the last 10 years.

The 2011 season of JVL SSPA “Music in Summer” Festival will commence on Thursday, July 7 and will conclude on Sunday, July 17, 2011.

I hope that you will like the re-designed website as much as I do, and I would like to thank Mr. Gregory Karpinsky for his excellent ideas and skills in creating this new look. I also would like to thank Ms. Lena Karpinsky for her creativity and critical suggestions concerning the correct choice of colours. A special thanks to Ms. Catherine Lin for providing 5 DVD discs with a substantial videotaped material of some of our concerts in 2010.

The fully updated information regarding 2011 season will be posted on our website by mid-October. However the Video Archive for 2009 and 2010 is available on the www.MusicInSummer.com I hope that you will enjoy watching students and faculty performances, and if you do, please direct your relatives and friends through Facebook, Twitters or emails to our website.

JVL REFLECTION...

by Alexandra Lakirovich

JVL 2010. So many thoughts and memories come to mind when thinking of those 2 words. Upon reflecting on how the camp went this year, one thinks of meeting amazing new people, getting great lessons and invaluable musical experiences, and of course, the unforgettable feeling of exhaustion and dehydration that hits you right after the 5th or 6th day. Arriving at the Scarborough bus stop, the day was extremely humid. Seeing familiar and new faces is exciting, but also very scary. Of course there were a few late comers (not the Hershkops though-surprisingly!) as the bus was being boarded. Cesar, who came as far as Venezuela, got a bit confused and lost coming to Scarborough, so the bus had to drive to Finch Station to pick up the lost camper. Naturally, this caused us to arrive to Canadore College later than scheduled. During the 4 hour bus ride, it was the counselors, Alex Lakirovich's and Shoshana Hershkop's job to welcome everybody to Camp. The counselors tried to lighten the mood with fun icebreaker games and making sure that the campers felt comfortable to ask questions and seek advice from them for the next 10 days. When everyone arrived in their designated cabins, the tension became a bit lighter. People started making new friends with their cabin mates and familiarizing themselves to their new home.

The first day seemed to be going by slower than the rest. Maybe it was from the unbearable heat of the day. Or maybe it was because of the fact that first days in a new place is always the most nerve-racking for any kid. When everyone came to the Weaver Auditorium for the first official “brain washing” (whatever that means!) meeting, the Director, Jacob Lakirovich made everyone feel at home and welcomed us to what is without a doubt, going to be the best

10 days of everyone's year! For the very first night, there seemed to be no problem putting the kid's to sleep, as everyone was pretty exhausted from the long day.

Waking up at 7:30 am on Friday, July 9th seemed to be one of the hardest and most impossible tasks in the world. On top of that, there was the dreaded 30 minutes of stretching with the amazing Mr. Peter Cosbey (so that kind of made up for it).

Naturally, many kids were very confused with the schedule for the first couple of days. There were some late orchestra arrivals, late and/or missed scheduled lessons and chamber music meetings. However, people started getting the hang of the schedule by the 3rd day. The first great activity in camp was on Saturday, July 10th. Jacob decided to host a soccer tournament. Luckily, this year there were no concussions to the head (Julia Mirzoev). The whole game turned out to be great fun, with many teachers exemplifying amazing soccer skills-Mr. Oleg Pokhanovski!

On the next day, the FIFA world cup was taking place all over the world. Thankfully, each teacher kindly dedicated the afternoon to be free for the whole camp to watch the big game on the projector screen! Even though Spain wrongfully won, it was very fun watching and rooting for the game with everyone as one big family.

Monday, July 12th. Scales Competition. Everywhere you look, you see nervous kids frantically repeating all their scales in hopes of winning the competition and the cash prize! Some kids even skipped the meals just to get a few more minutes of practicing time. The competition started. All the competitors played to the very best of their ability and it definitely showed! Every single camper that participated, should be proud of their hard work absolutely paying off. Congratulations to all the winners!

On Tuesday, July 13th there was a surprise trip to the local BOWLING ALLEY! Each camper was divided into groups and was allowed to play 2 games with their teams. The experience as a whole was a lot of fun, and gave us more opportunities to spend with our new friends and teachers.

After the excitement of the FIFA game and the bowling, the next few days suddenly became harder, as it was solely about the music. Wednesday, marked the beginning of concerts and recitals.

There were a total of four Music Through the Ages presentations throughout the season, held by the amazingly talented Ms. Clayton Scott. The show took the audience through amazing music history of operas, such as Aida and Magic Flute, and Romeo and Juliet Ballet. This provided fascinating information of music history at its finest!

As well, JVL was honoured in hosting Mr. Hratch and Artak Armeniuos, two of the most influential Canadian violin makers. The two workshops showed students the fine art of violin and bow making!

A funny memory that comes to mind when thinking about these 10 days was the prank that was pulled on Alex Volkov. The prankers were Alana Canann (the girl that made up the brilliant idea), Clarence Cheng (the boy that videotaped it all) and Leo Jarman (the boy that executed the prank). It was around the middle of the camp, and during dinner time, those 3 campers decided to be really funny, and wanted to pull a practical prank on a fellow friend. Although the whole prank was quite hilarious, there was property damage, and Alex ended up breaking a door. Let's just say pieing someone in the face and then running out the wrong door is probably not the best idea! (albeit, it was quite funny!)

At first, there were chamber music concerts, where every single chamber group performed their pieces that they practiced with their supervising teacher. Then, there were solo/duet performances and of course, the final orchestra concert by the end of the camp.

Ms. Janet Lopinski, a wonderful piano teacher and mother of the insanely talented Paulina Swierczek, held an amazingly informing Piano/Theory Workshop. The whole camp was invited to come, but it was mandatory for the pianists.

By the 6th or 7th day, the Music Theater group, taught by Mr. David Stone and Ms. Tina Torlone, already began stressing about finishing on time and making sure the kids will be ready to present an awesome performance by the end of the camp.

Mr. Stone and Ms. Torlone should be proud in the production that was put on this year. It was simply amazing, and probably the best one of all the years! It seems as though that the productions keep getting better and better with every year.

On Wednesday, July 14th JVL hosted its first ever Paganini Showcase where the faculty and kids joined together to perform various pieces by the great Italian composer and violinist. It was quite a success for the performers and this showcase will become an annual event.

Unfortunately, the camp is coming to a near end, and it is getting a bit harder to control the kids and put them in their cabins by 11:00pm. This is because everyone has already made friendships that will probably last a lifetime, and feel that they want to socialize after lights out. Luckily for them, there was 2 teachers on-call every night, as well as the amazing counselors that made sure that the kids were in bed.

On one of the nights, the same Clarence and Leo were even found on a roof, just “hanging out”. When asked what Clarence was doing on the roof, the response was merely “I’m exercising”. (Clarence, that is what stretching is for. Right, Peter?)

Overall, by the end of camp, everyone became so close and all the campers were begging for camp to be even longer. There is a tradition that the older kids have at camp. Basically, cabin 73 (Miriam, Shoshana, Alex, Mari, Stephanie and Sasha) wrote a song that reflects the last 10 days. The whole cabin taught it to every camper and it was performed at the last concert on Sunday, July 18th. Below, you can find the lyrics to the song that sums up what everyone’s camp experience was like. Speaking for everyone, JVL 2010 was definitely the best season that was ever held! Every camper made everlasting friendships, unbelievable memories, gained musical knowledge and experiences by working with amazing internationally acclaimed teachers, and survived 10 days that will never be forgotten! As written in the beautiful song, “JVL we learned so much this week we are one big family. We can’t imagine that we have to leave, Oh Jacob make camp longer please!”

Alexandra Lakirovich

A TOPIC

This essay by Karl Paulnack, the Music Department head at Boston Conservatory, is based on his speech to incoming freshmen.

MUSIC

“One of my parents’ deepest fears, I suspect, is that society would not properly value me as a musician, that I wouldn’t be appreciated. I had very good grades in high school, I was good in

science and math, and they imagined that as a doctor or a research chemist or an engineer, I might be more appreciated than I would be as a musician. I still remember my mother's remark when I announced my decision to apply to music school—she said, “you're WASTING your SAT scores.” On some level, I think, my parents were not sure themselves what the value of music was, what its purpose was. And they LOVED music, they listened to classical music all the time. They just weren't really clear about its function. So let me talk about that a little bit, because we live in a society that puts music in the “arts and entertainment” section of the newspaper, and serious music, the kind your kids are about to engage in, has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with entertainment, in fact it's the opposite of entertainment. Let me talk a little bit about music, and how it works.

The first people to understand how music really works were the ancient Greeks. And this is going to fascinate you; the Greeks said that music and astronomy were two sides of the same coin. Astronomy was seen as the study of relationships between observable, permanent, external objects, and music was seen as the study of relationships between invisible, internal, hidden objects. Music has a way of finding the big, invisible moving pieces inside our hearts and souls and helping us figure out the position of things inside us. Let me give you some examples of how this works.

One of the most profound musical compositions of all time is the Quartet for the End of Time written by French composer Olivier Messiaen in 1940. Messiaen was 31 years old when France entered the war against Nazi Germany. He was captured by the Germans in June of 1940, sent across Germany in a cattle car and imprisoned in a concentration camp.

He was fortunate to find a sympathetic prison guard who gave him paper and a place to compose. There were three other musicians in the camp, a cellist, a violinist, and a clarinetist, and Messiaen wrote his quartet with these specific players in mind. It was performed in January 1941 for four thousand prisoners and guards in the prison camp. Today it is one of the most famous masterworks in the repertoire.

Given what we have since learned about life in the concentration camps, why would anyone in his right mind waste time and energy writing or playing music? There was barely enough energy on a good day to find food and water, to avoid a beating, to stay warm, to escape torture—why would anyone bother with music? And yet—from the camps, we have poetry, we have music, we have visual art; it wasn't just this one fanatic Messiaen; many, many people created art. Why? Well, in a place where people are only focused on survival, on the bare necessities, the obvious conclusion is that art must be, somehow, essential for life. The camps were without money, without hope, without commerce, without recreation, without basic respect, but they were not without art. Art is part of survival; art is part of the human spirit, an unquenchable expression of who we are. Art is one of the ways in which we say, “I am alive, and my life has meaning.”

In September 2001 I was a resident of Manhattan. That morning I reached a new understanding of my art and its relationship to the world. I sat down at the piano that morning at 10 AM to practice as was my daily routine; I did it by force of habit, without thinking about it. I lifted the cover on the keyboard, and opened my music, and put my hands on the keys and took my hands off the keys. And I sat there and thought, does this even matter? Isn't this completely irrelevant? Playing the piano right now, given what happened in this city yesterday, seems silly, absurd, irreverent, pointless. Why am I here? What place has a musician in this moment in time? Who needs a piano player right now? I was completely lost.

And then I, along with the rest of New York, went through the journey of getting through that week. I did not play the piano that day, and in fact I contemplated briefly whether I would ever want to play the piano again. And then I observed how we got through the day.

At least in my neighbourhood, we didn't shoot hoops or play Scrabble. We didn't play cards to pass the time, we didn't watch TV, we didn't shop, we most certainly did not go to the mall. The first organized activity that I saw in New York, that same day, was singing. People sang. People sang around fire houses, people sang "We Shall Overcome". Lots of people sang America the Beautiful. The first organized public event that I remember was the Brahms Requiem, later that week, at Lincoln Center, with the New York Philharmonic. The first organized public expression of grief, our first communal response to that historic event, was a concert. That was the beginning of a sense that life might go on. The US Military secured the airspace, but recovery was led by the arts, and by music in particular, that very night.

From these two experiences, I have come to understand that music is not part of "arts and entertainment" as the newspaper section would have us believe. It's not a luxury, a lavish thing that we fund from leftovers of our budgets, not a plaything or an amusement or a pass time. Music is a basic need of human survival. Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we can't with our minds.

Some of you may know Samuel Barber's heart wrenchingly beautiful piece Adagio for Strings. If you don't know it by that name, then some of you may know it as the background music which accompanied the Oliver Stone movie Platoon, a film about the Vietnam War. If you know that piece of music either way, you know it has the ability to crack your heart open like a walnut; it can make you cry over sadness you didn't know you had. Music can slip beneath our conscious reality to get at what's really going on inside us the way a good therapist does.

I bet that you have never been to a wedding where there was absolutely no music. There might have been only a little music, there might have been some really bad music, but I bet you there was some music. And something very predictable happens at weddings—people get all pent up with all kinds of emotions, and then there's some musical moment where the action of the wedding stops and someone sings or plays the flute or something. And even if the music is lame, even if the quality isn't good, predictably 30 or 40 percent of the people who are going to cry at a wedding cry a couple of moments after the music starts. Why? The Greeks. Music allows us to move around those big invisible pieces of ourselves and rearrange our insides so that we can express what we feel even when we can't talk about it. Can you imagine watching Indiana Jones or Superman or Star Wars with the dialogue but no music? What is it about the music swelling up at just the right moment in ET so that all the softies in the audience start crying at exactly the same moment? I guarantee you if you showed the movie with the music stripped out, it wouldn't happen that way. The Greeks: Music is the understanding of the relationship between invisible internal objects.

I'll give you one more example, the story of the most important concert of my life. I must tell you I have played a little less than a thousand concerts in my life so far. I have played in places that I thought were important. I like playing in Carnegie Hall; I enjoyed playing in Paris; it made me very happy to please the critics in St. Petersburg. I have played for people I thought were important; music critics of major newspapers, foreign heads of state. The most important concert of my entire life took place in a nursing home in Fargo, ND, about 4 years ago.

I was playing with a very dear friend of mine who is a violinist. We began, as we often do, with Aaron Copland's Sonata, which was written during World War II and dedicated to a young friend of Copland's, a young pilot who was shot down during the war. Now we often talk to our audiences about the pieces we are going to play rather than providing them with written program notes. But in this case, because we began the concert with this piece, we decided to talk about the piece later in the program and to just come out and play the music without explanation.

Midway through the piece, an elderly man seated in a wheelchair near the front of the concert hall began to weep. This man, whom I later met, was clearly a soldier—even in his 70's, it was clear from his buzz-cut hair, square jaw and general demeanour that he had spent a good deal of his life in the military. I thought it a little bit odd that someone would be moved to tears by that particular movement of that particular piece, but it wasn't the first time I've heard crying in a concert and we went on with the concert and finished the piece.

When we came out to play the next piece on the program, we decided to talk about both the first and second pieces, and we described the circumstances in which the Copland was written and mentioned its dedication to a downed pilot. The man in the front of the audience became so disturbed that he had to leave the auditorium. I honestly figured that we would not see him again, but he did come backstage afterwards, tears and all, to explain himself.

What he told us was this: "During World War II, I was a pilot, and I was in an aerial combat situation where one of my team's planes was hit. I watched my friend bail out, and watched his parachute open, but the Japanese planes which had engaged us returned and machine gunned across the parachute chords so as to separate the parachute from the pilot, and I watched my friend drop away into the ocean, realizing that he was lost. I have not thought about this for many years, but during that first piece of music you played, this memory returned to me so vividly that it was as though I was reliving it. I didn't understand why this was happening, why now, but then when you came out to explain that this piece of music was written to commemorate a lost pilot, it was a little more than I could handle. How does the music do that? How did it find those feelings and those memories in me?"

Remember the Greeks: music is the study of invisible relationships between internal objects. This concert in Fargo was the most important work I have ever done. For me to play for this old soldier and help him connect, somehow, with Aaron Copland, and to connect their memories of their lost friends, to help him remember and mourn his friend, this is my work. This is why music matters.

What follows is part of the talk I will give to this year's freshman class when I welcome them a few days from now. The responsibility I will charge your sons and daughters with is this:

"If we were a medical school, and you were here as a med student practicing appendectomies, you'd take your work very seriously because you would imagine that some night at two AM someone is going to waltz into your emergency room and you're going to have to save their life. Well, my friends, someday at 8 PM [or 9 am or 11 am] someone is going to walk into your concert hall [or sanctuary] and bring you a mind that is confused, a heart that is overwhelmed, a soul that is weary. Whether they go out whole again will depend partly on how well you do your craft.

You're not here to become an entertainer, and you don't have to sell yourself. The truth is you don't have anything to sell; being a musician isn't about dispensing a product, like selling used

Chevies. I'm not an entertainer; I'm a lot closer to a paramedic, a firefighter, a rescue worker. You're here to become a sort of therapist for the human soul, a spiritual version of a chiropractor, physical therapist, someone who works with our insides to see if they get things to line up, to see if we can come into harmony with ourselves and be healthy and happy and well.

Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, I expect you not only to master music; I expect you to save the planet. If there is a future wave of wellness on this planet, of harmony, of peace, of an end to war, of mutual understanding, of equality, of fairness, I don't expect it will come from a government, a military force or a corporation. If there is a future of peace for humankind, if there is to be an understanding of how these invisible, internal things should fit together, I expect it will come from the artists, because that's what we do. As in the concentration camp and the evening of 9/11, the artists are the ones who might be able to help us with our internal, invisible lives."

-Karl Paulnack

POINT OF VIEW

FAMILY MATTERS

Finding the right level of involvement in your child's instrumental practice can be a tricky balancing act. OLIVER GLEDHILL offers parents some strategic guidance.

When your child's teacher ends each lesson with a reminder to practise, do you really understand what this means? How best can you support practising? How involved should you be either in practising or in the lessons? Here I shall try to offer some practical advice, drawing on the findings of the available research evidence.

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ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE

First of all, you need to be able to tell the difference between practising and simply playing. Practising is characterised by three main differences: it often needs to be slow, divided into small sections, and it should be analytical or questioning.

ROUTINE AND ENVIRONMENT

Once you and your child understand what practising is, you can help enormously by establishing a routine. The first element of this is one of attitude, instilling from the outset that your child's instrumental learning will be a long-term commitment to a valued activity, possibly for life. Research by the Australian Gary McPherson (2000) found that the shorter the period of time that children expect to continue learning an instrument, the less they achieve and the sooner they give up.

You may find that choosing a regular time of day for practising helps your child build a pattern of familiarity and normality. Earlier in the day or after a nap, your child might be fresher. Of course, getting ready for school may make early morning practice difficult to achieve, and, as the teenage years approach, the need for a lie-in may seem all the more important, which is perhaps why a recent study (J.R. Austin and M.H. Berg, 2006) found that in the US only seven per cent of instrumental students aged eleven to twelve practised early in the morning. They

found that 'distributed' practice - spreading it out across the week or into more than one session on the same day - can help motivation. Grace Rubin-Rabson's 1940 study found that distributed practice can also help with memorising, though the benefits of such distribution favoured learners who are less able; those who are more able may cope better with mass cramming.

However you organise the practising routine, do not worry that you will have to set aside large amounts of time: twelve to fifteen minutes per day is quite sufficient for success in the early stages, rising to an hour by the teenage years, except for the highest achievers at music school level, who tend to begin to exceed an hour by the age of eleven.

Give some thought to the practice -environment: ensure a comfortable temperature, the right-sized chair and a music stand. Reduce distractions from siblings, pets or the television. A good habit to encourage is washing hands to avoid touching the instrument with sticky fingers.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Once you clearly have in mind the three main elements of practising, and have given thought to the practising routine and -environment, you may be wondering whether to sit in on your child's practice, and if so, whether you should sit quietly, as a supportive presence helping to ease the loneliness of the practice situation, or whether you should get actively involved.

Research evidence on the effectiveness of parental supervision of practice is mixed. J.P. Brokaw (1983) suggested that a parent supervising home practice improves the child's musical achievement, but neither S.A. O'Neill (1996) nor S.F. Zdzinski (1996) found this to be the case in their studies. If you are going to be involved in practice, the crucial factor seems to be that you should get clear feedback from the teacher on each lesson, or sit in and observe the lessons -yourself. That way you can see the teacher modelling practice strategies and observe how the teacher relates with your child during the often stressful or frustrating learning process. You will then be better equipped to carry through a consistent approach at home.

As a parent, you do not need to -understand all the technical terms -associated with playing your child's -instrument, but instead you can pick up cues and prompts from the teacher to help give reminders during practice.

For example, it may be useful to remember a prompt such as 'Wasn't that supposed to be the third finger over on the D string?' simply as a form of words, even if you have not fully absorbed its meaning. If you choose to become actively involved in practice supervision, most studies show that your child is likely to be weaned off such involvement between the ages of about eleven and thirteen.

My own research has found that some parents make a conscious decision not to be involved in lessons, believing that the one-to-one confidential pupil-teacher relationship helps build character and personality in the child through freedom of communication and rapport, and that this outweighs any benefits gained from the parent being present.

PRACTISING STRATEGIES

If you are going to be actively involved in practising with your child, there are some very useful strategies to adopt, or to help your child to adopt, to make practice more effective, so saving time and increasing the rate of progress.

Let's look again at the three characteristics of practising: slow, in small sections, and analytical and questioning. If you can encourage your child to practise slowly, this will allow time for both recognition and discrimination of errors: recognising an error means knowing that something has gone wrong, but discriminating means knowing exactly what was wrong, and this clarity will help to put it right next time.

If you can encourage the choice of small, manageable sections or sub-goals to work on, this will help greatly to focus attention. Several studies have consistently found that, left to their own devices, children as novice learners most often play through a piece from beginning to end without stopping. Try to resist the temptation to encourage your child to practise just the nice tunes or to play the whole piece through too often simply because this gives you pleasure as a listener.

You can help the development of an analytical or questioning approach to practising by asking questions about the music or about an error made, but be careful to let your child reach the answer heuristically - through assisted self-discovery. Learning through self-discovery is more meaningful to the child and so the knowledge gained will be better retained. Prompting your child with the answer too often will tend to cause emotional friction. Try a no matter how long they take.

A specific area where you can encourage analytical questions in string playing concerns tuning and finger placement. Beginners devote most attention to decoding notes on the page: with just a handful of notes learnt, a different line or space up or down is seen to equal a certain finger number. Often beginners do not notice whether the 'correct' finger is in the right place on the string (in tune), or even if it is on the right string at all. Hearing accuracy of tuning usually develops later, as aural connections between notes gradually become learnt patterns, or schemata. Meanwhile, other musical concepts - rhythmic accuracy, dynamics, structure and phrasing, and expressivity - all fall increasingly far down the list of priorities. You may be aware of some of these more complex elements, and if so you can help focus your child's attention on one or two, while trying not to overload them with ideas.

Encouraging your child to memorise is one of the best ways to help take the notes off the page and release 'cognitive capacity' for thinking about all these aspects of music. Musical memory is built up in four ways: aurally (through the sound), -visually (through the appearance on the page or on the instrument), kinaesthetically (through the feel of the movements on the instrument, such as getting used to the feel of a long-distance shift) and analytically (through questioning).

Two practical ways in which you might learn to highlight analytical features for your child are using exit and entrance points, and 'chunking'. For example, if a phrase ends on a B and, after a bar's rest, the next phrase begins on a D a minor 3rd up, you could help your child to notice that interval connection as an aide-mémoire. Similarly, you may be able to highlight where a fingering or bowing pattern is copied in sequence (or has one recognisable difference). Noticing such patterns leads to the idea of 'chunking', or linking small patterns of notes into small meaningful units. If you look for chunking patterns with your child, it helps make the piece seem a lot shorter and simpler.

Close observation of similarities and differences in chunking leads on to another strategy that you may find helpful: variability, or encouraging your child to practise in different ways - perhaps experimenting with variations in bowing patterns or rhythms. The doctoral study of Fiona Pacey (1993) showed that variability can be effective in string players' learning. On a larger scale, and probably with help and advice from the teacher, you might vary the pieces being practised. However, some children, at certain stages, like to focus on limited areas, or perhaps one piece, and this too may provide valuable material for a more in-depth holistic approach.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING

As well as providing a comfortable physical environment in the way that the practice room is set out, try to keep in mind your child's psychological comfort. Though at times it may be difficult, try to resist getting irritated or annoyed if your child seems slow to catch on or

wanders in attention. Gaining new knowledge with imagination - which simply means making associative links, like links in a chain, and building these up into patterns - means leaving behind, to some extent, what the child already knows and what feels safe and familiar, in order to make a leap into the unknown. A calm, safe, non-judgemental and supportive atmosphere is needed to feel free to imagine.

In this kind of risk-taking necessary to get to the next stage in their practice, some children will exhibit what Carol Dweck (1986) called 'mastery' behaviour, seeing their own progress as cumulative and in small steps. Many, however, will experience periods of more 'helpless' behaviour, not wanting to attempt the next stage for fear that it will prove too difficult and overwhelming. You may recognise a tendency towards a mastery or helpless learning trait in your own child, which can help you show understanding in support of your child's learning. It is important to remember that children showing helpless behaviour are not less able; in fact, Dweck (2000) found that some 'helpless' children are among the brightest and most skilled.

THE ROLE OF REWARDS AND FUN

While your child is learning to take risks and going through this step-by-step and cumulative process, you will find that you need to offer lots of encouragement and praise, especially in the early stages, before the successful connections of flowing melodies provide their own - motivation. How you offer this praise is important: it will not be helpful in the long run if you praise every attempt as 'Wow!', 'Lovely!' and 'Wonderful!'. We know that it is better to direct praise towards what Jere E. Brophy and Thomas L. Good (1974) call 'learning goals' and Bret P. Smith (2005) has termed 'task goals', rather than towards 'performance' or 'ego goals'. This means identifying what was good about the playing and how it has improved, praising this progress and achievement and so encouraging the development of intrinsic motivation, rather than setting up a system where the child gets praised for less understandable reasons.

If the reasons for praise given are unclear, your child may develop a desire simply to please you, or to win rewards such as sweets, stickers, football shirts, outings and other such extrinsic motivators. However, don't be too hard on yourself, because Mark Lepper and his colleagues (1973) found that with a long-term activity such as music learning, with lots of delayed gratification, it may be necessary to keep a child engaged through extrinsic motivational rewards.

Finally an issue that, from a teacher's perspective, crops up fairly regularly when a child's instrumental interest may be waning: a parent often making requests for more fun in the lessons or for more jazzy pieces to be set for practice. Try, as the parent, to remember that motivation for practising increases or reduces according to a complex mix of influences. What children expect to get out of the activity of music, how useful it is thought to be for the future, and how much it is valued, will be balanced against how much effort is perceived to be required to produce worthwhile results. This is called 'expectancy-value' theory. Also important to children is having a strong 'self-efficacy' belief: that they think they are 'good' at playing and feel confident in their knowledge

and skills. There are -complicated motivational issues at work here, and they are often not helpfully solved with a quick-fix solution.

(The Strad)

NEWS FROM EXAMINATIONS AND COMPETITIONS

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

RCM EXAMINATIONS

Winter Session Registration Deadline: November 2, 2010

Theory Examinations: December 10 & 11, 2010

Practical Examinations: January 17 - 29, 2011

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

ARTS RICHMOND HILL MUSIC FESTIVAL 2010

November 26-28, 2010

Registration deadline: October 8, 2010

<http://www.artsrichmondhill.ca/page.php?id=1864>

CANADIAN MUSIC COMPETITION

April - May (TBC), 2011 Toronto - First round

Registration deadline: mid-November

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

KIWANIS MUSIC FESTIVAL

February 22 - March 4, 2011

Registration deadline: November 8, 2010

<http://kiwanismusictoronto.org/>

PEEL MUSIC FESTIVAL

Dates for the 2010 Festival: March 21 to April 30, 2011

Registration deadline: December 6, 2010

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

NEWMARKET LIONS MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL

Dates and deadlines T.B.C

Karen Barker, Administrator,

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

INTERVIEW WITH SONDRA RADVANOVSKY AT THE NEW CLASSICAL 96.3 FM

Wednesday, March 17, 2010 La Scena Musicale

Soprano Sondra Radvanovsky is Canada's - and Toronto's - best kept secret. I say that because the internationally renowned soprano sings in all the important opera houses of the world, yet hardly ever in her adopted country of Canada. The American-born Radvanovsky is married to a Canadian, Duncan Lear, who is also her business manager. They have been living near Toronto for quite some years now. Yet the only time she has sung in Toronto was a brief appearance in LUNA, an opera concert during the Luminato Festival three years ago. But things are going to change. This Saturday March 20 8 pm, Radvanovsky and the Russian baritone sensation Dmitri Hvorostovsky will give an opera concert at Roy Thomson Hall. This is part of a tour sponsored by Show One Productions that will take them to Montreal and New York. They have sung together in many opera productions, but particularly in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*. They will reprise the opera at the Arena di Verona this coming summer. This fall, Radvanovsky will be making a belated COC debut, as *Aida*, which will also be her role debut. An authentic "Verdi soprano", Radvanovsky has a dark-hued and sumptuous soprano of beauty and power, with a remarkable range, from mezzo lows to a high E-natural. She is also capable of a full range of dynamics, from honeyed *mezza voce* to knock 'em dead *fortissimos*. I have heard Regine Crespin and Gwyneth Jones live, two legendary sopranos known for the huge sounds they made. Judging by yesterday's concert that Radvanovsky gave at the New Classical 96.3 FM, our Sondra has them beat in the volume department, and beautiful too!

For an hour, Radvanovsky sang a very generous recital of six arias, including four very substantial pieces. She began with 'Tacea la notte placida' from *Il Trovatore*. Hearing that vibrant, dark-timbred soprano up close was thrilling. She followed by "Tu che le vanita", Elisabetta's last act aria from *Don Carlo*, which she just sang in Paris last week. This long, 7 minute aria requires a true *grandi voce* and Radvanovsky has it in spades. The third aria was 'Ernani, involami', complete with the vocal fireworks, followed by Amelia's 'Morro, ma prima di grazia' from *Ballo*, a role she is going to tackle next season. She then surprised us with the chestnut, 'O mio babbino caro' - not something in her repertoire, but of course one of the most recognizable arias. It was amazing to hear her huge voice singing this essentially soubrette piece! Her last piece was an even bigger surprise, a song made famous by Canada-born Deanna Durbin, "Beneath the Lights of Home", a sentimental piece sung with great feeling by Radvanovsky. In between, she chatted with the host Alexa Petrenko. After the concert, I had a chance of interviewing the soprano. She is a completely delightful person, very down to earth with no trace of the diva. Here is a transcript of our interview:

JS: Is it true that you started your career at the age of eleven? What were you singing at that age?

SR: I was singing a lot of Italian art songs. I did my first opera as a smoke girl in *Carmen*, at 13! It was in a little town in Richmond, Indiana.

JS: Have you always had this dark timbre in your sound?

SR: Yes, I have. Actually my voice developed very early. I started as a mezzo...that's where the colour came from. Maybe it's also the Czech part of my heritage. My father is Czech and my mom Danish.

JS: Can you still speak Czech?

SR: Yes, a little.

JS: Where did you do your vocal studies?

SR: I went to USC and UCLA, as a theatre major. I also studied privately with Martial Singher when I was at UCLA.

JS: You also studied with Ruth Falcon?

SR: Yes, for fourteen years - I left her two years ago.

JS: What about Diana Soviero? Do you still work with her?

SR: Yes, I work with her on and off - it's just hard to find the time. I work mostly with my coach in New York: I've been with him now for sixteen years. I basically know how to sing...I just need a set of ears to tell me if something is right or not.

JS: You said your voice changed drastically the last year and a half....can you explain?

SR: When a singer is forty, the voice starts to deepen and grow...it is a maturity thing that singers go through. I'm learning about my voice...

JS: Does that mean Norma is beckoning?

SR: Yes it does! I have three contracts for it, maybe even four...It'll be in 2012. I did Lucrezia Borgia a year ago and it's a really good step into Norma. I also have the three Queens (Donizetti's Maria Stuarda, Roberto Devereux, and Anna Bolena) slated. I'll be doing them together in one place...can't say where yet, but it's in a very large opera house (laughs). I'll then be doing them separately around the world....

JS: I'm so looking forward to your Aida....

SR: It's a role that has scared me for the longest time, I must say. There is so much tradition associated with this opera...

JS: With your high pianissimos it'll be perfect...

SR: What scares me more is the first aria, 'Ritorna vincitor' - it's so dramatic and so easy to get caught up in the drama as opposed to staying calm. Yes, I'm excited but a little nervous!

JS: Would you say the Trovatore Leonora is your signature role?

SR: Absolutely! I've done it hundreds of times.

JS: What about Elena in Vespri?

SR: Oh I do love sing Vespri! You get to show off so much of your voice - I throw in the high E-natural at the end of the Bolero. She has three really great arias...

JS: It's not done very often, is it?

SR: I think it's because it is such a big production, and it really requires some sincere, honest, true Verdi singers to carry it off. I'll be doing it in Torino in March 2011.

JS: Who had the biggest influence on you when you were growing up and studying to be an opera singer?

SR: The biggest influence was Placido Domingo. I saw him on TV singing in Tosca at the Arena di Verona when I was eleven. I said to my mom - 'I want to do that!' The first recording I bought

was La forza del destino with Leontyne Price, Domingo and Sherrill Milnes. I listened to Price and I thought - oh, where did this voice come from?! It's so beautiful, like molten lava, the chocolaty warm sound. Then I found Maria Callas! Domingo, Price and Callas had the biggest influence on me. I was very lucky to find and be attracted to voices that are similar to mine too!

JS: What do you love most about your work, as an opera singer?

SR: I love to sing, I really do. It sounds cheesy and simple, but the thrill of standing on stage emoting, telling the story to the audience, capturing them for three hours, transporting them to a different world, having people forget their worries for three hours...for me, the visceral feeling of singing - there's nothing like it in the world! And I get paid to do it...

JS: Do you still study? Do you vocalize every day?

SR: Yes, studying - it's a constant, ongoing thing. During the opera season I vocalize every day, but in the summer time, I like to take time off. We sing such heavy music, I need a rest in the summer. I try to take three months off, but things sneak in. I'll go to Vienna for a Verdi Requiem, and then I go to Verona to sing Trovatore with Dmitri. I sang there six years ago. I was doing 'D'amour sull'ali rose', and a shooting star went across the sky - you think, where else in the world can you have this...

JS: Now, what do you NOT like about your profession?

SR: (Big laughs) The travelling! For me, travelling, and being away from home is difficult. Luckily, my husband travels with me, so I bring part of my home with me. It's become such a hassle after 9/11. Just simple things like taking a bottle of water on the plane, being body checked...you feel so violated. Just the hassle of it.

JS: Have you ever missed an engagement because of this?

SR: No, thank goodness! But I've missed a plane because of it. That part of it is tough...missing birthdays, weddings, anniversaries. You really get to know who are your real, dear friends. Unfortunately, they often have to come travel to you. But you make it work. The good thing is you know when you are going to be home. I have my schedule for the next 6 or 7 years - I'm booked to 2016-17, so I know when I'll have a free week to go to the Bahamas!

JS: How many performances do you sing a year?

SR: It depends, maybe 40 operas. Including concert, it's maybe up to 50, 55.

JS: If you do have spare time, what do you enjoy doing?

SR: Sitting at home (laughs) I'm a real homebody...sitting at home and having friends over. It's such a simple joy. We have a new house we bought in September and I haven't seen the flowers grow yet. We have ten acres, trees, pond...I love going into the garden.

JS: Do you enjoy your life here in Canada?

SR: I do, I really love it! We live right by the forks of the Credit now...walking down there right by the river. Canada is breathtaking...this area is spectacular, and the people are so nice.

JS: When you are not learning music, not studying, what do you listen to?

SR: A lot of pop music...I just bought Barbra Streisand's CD - she's a good friend of ours. I also like Josh Groban... he's also a friend of ours. Love Billy Joel, 80's music... of my generation. It's fun, easy listening.

A short 2 minute video clip of the Radvanovsky concert at The New Classical 96.3 FM can be found on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8TXGwy8xl8>

CONCERT CALENDAR

The Scarborough Philharmonic and the Rotary club of North Scarborough present:

RUSSIAN FIREWORKS

Stravinsky's romantic Firebird suite, dance music from Tchaikovsky's operas and Tchaikovsky's virtuosic Violin Concerto featuring SPO Young Artist David Lakirovich.

Saturday, October 23 - 8:00 pm

Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute, 3663 Danforth Avenue, Toronto

Tickets: \$30 adults, \$25 seniors, \$10 youth

Please join the special fundraising reception with refreshments, live music, door prizes, and a special guest speaker at 6:15 pm (reception tickets are extra).

For more information please visit www.spo.ca

For tickets please call 416-429-0007

Here are the details of some Toronto concert organizations' websites:

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

<http://tso.ca/Home.aspx>

Canadian Opera Company

<http://www.coc.ca/performancesandtickets.aspx>

National Ballet of Canada

<http://www.ballet.ca/performances/season1011/>

Roy Thomson Hall

<http://www.roythomson.com/>

Royal Conservatory Concerts

<http://performance.rcmusic.ca/viewallconcerts?date=all+months&filter=all+performance+categories&page=1>

Tafel Music Baroque Orchestra

<http://www.tafelmusik.org/concerts/index.htm>

SOME MUSIC QUOTATIONS:

Music is enough for a lifetime, but a lifetime is never enough for music
-Sergei Rachmaninoff

A painter paints pictures on canvas. But musicians paint their pictures on silence.
-Leopold Stokowski

Without music life would be a mistake.
-Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons. You will find it is to the soul what a water bath is to the body.
-Oliver Wendell Holmes

If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music.
-Gustav Mahler

SOME FUNNY STORIES:

A violinist noticed at the end of each rehearsal break, one of the violists would look at the inside flap of his jacket before he sat down to resume rehearsal. This continued for several decades, and the violinist became quite curious about it. One day, during hot weather, the violist took off his jacket and went off on break. The violinist waited until everyone was off the platform, looked around, and sneaked over to the jacket. He pulled back the flap and saw a little note pinned on the inside. It read: ``viola left hand, bow right."

A viola player decides that he's had enough of being a viola player--unappreciated, all those silly jokes. So he decides to change instruments. He goes into a shop, and says, ``I want to buy a violin." The man behind the counter looks at him for a moment, and then says, ``You must be a viola player." The viola player is astonished, and says, ``Well, yes, I am. But how did you know?" ``Well, sir, this is a fish-and-chip shop."

A viola player went to a piano recital. After the performance he went up to the pianist and said, ``You know, I particularly liked that piece you played last--the one that started with a long trill." The pianist said, ``Huh? I didn't play any pieces that started with trills." The viola player said, ``You know--[he hums the opening bars of Fur Elise.]"

A violist in an orchestra was crying and screaming at the oboe player sitting directly behind him. The conductor asked, ``What are you so upset about?" The violist replied "The oboist reached over and turned one of the pegs on my viola and now it's all out of tune!" The conductor asked ``Don't you think you're overreacting?" The violist replied ``I'm not overreacting! He won't tell me which one!"

...and not so funny:

JETSTAR UNDER FIRE OVER BROKEN VIOLIN

Violinist battles airline for compensation after instrument is damaged

From the Sydney Morning Herald

Changes to airline policies may force musicians to either buy a separate seat for their instrument or take the risk of putting it in the cargo hold.

Zoe Bloomfield, a violin player and teacher, is battling Jetstar for compensation over claims her \$7000 violin was damaged after she was forced to put it in the cargo hold - at a cost of \$80 - on a flight from Hobart to Sydney last month. The violin, which she normally carried as hand luggage without any problems, arrived in Sydney sporting a 10-centimetre crack that she believes was caused by "downward pressure from something falling on it".

The repair estimate is \$2200 - the violin is not insured - and Jetstar has so far refused to pay.

SOME FUNNY VIDEOS:

We Will Survive: Igudesman & Joo + Kremer & Kremerata

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl-PloJWbSk>

Where is the Remote Control?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_LV6dWcFaw&feature=related

THESE MONTHS' BIRTHDAYS:

SEPTEMBER

Clarence 20

Nicolas 15

Vicky 19

OCTOBER

Daphne	12
Jonathan	13
Julia	14
Lauren	15
Michelle	11
Sean	20

Happy birthday to all of you!

Have lots of fun with Music!

FEATURED ARTIST

Nelli Shkolnikova 1928-2010

The great Russian violinist and pedagogue died earlier this year. Curt Thompson, one of her former students, looks back on her life and examines her teaching methods

In February of this year, violinist Nelli Shkolnikova died of cancer at the age of 81 in Melbourne, Australia. Although she had lost the use of her right arm and her ability to speak near the end of her life, she continued to finger parts with her left hand as she listened to recordings. Her eyes maintained their expressiveness and she communicated using them as clearly as she had always.

I am one of dozens of students who owe her an enormous debt of gratitude. She taught me from 1988 to 1994, and in 2003 I was able to ask her about her teaching methods when I served as her sabbatical replacement at Indiana University.



A life in music

Born on 8 July 1928 in Zolotonosha, Ukraine, Nelli Shkolnikova began to play at the age of four. After her family relocated to a suburb of Moscow, the five-year-old Nelli had lessons with Lillia Kossodo, a pupil of Leopold Auer. At the age of eight she performed her first concerto with orchestra, and the next year began studying with Yuri Yankelevich. In 1953, while still a student of Yankelevich, Shkolnikova was selected for participation in the Long-Thibaud Competition in Paris. Her triumph there as first-prize winner simultaneously launched her international performing career and established Yankelevich's reputation as a pre-eminent pedagogue. Students flocked to him, and went on to win virtually every major international violin competition, including the Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Paganini and Queen Elisabeth contests.

Regarded by many as the best female Soviet violinist, Shkolnikova performed with major orchestras throughout the Soviet Union, Europe, the US, Asia and Australia. Her golden tone, precision, taste and clean playing were demonstrative of the very highest standards of the Russian school. Her recordings, which were recently made available many years after they were seized by Soviet authorities, are phenomenal. Violinist Ilya Kaler, gold medallist of the Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and Paganini competitions in the 1980s, recalls her performance of the Beethoven Concerto in Moscow when he was a boy: 'It was the biggest and most beautiful sound you can imagine, and probably the greatest Beethoven I have ever heard.' Some years

later, while preparing for the 1981 Paganini Competition, Kaler also remembers playing Paganini's 18th Caprice for her: 'She picked up my violin and tossed off the caprice with a quality, precision, musicality and elegance that stunned me. She was talking to me while playing and making suggestions - truly, a mind-blowing experience.'

RECOMMENDED LISTENING:

Nelli Shkolnikova : Tchaikovsky Violin concerto in D

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-5LJloy8xM>

... and of course Heifetz!

Tchaikovsky Serenade Melancolique

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KT7m31MZBk8>

FINALE

You can read this edition of JLNotes with direct links to various sites referred above from our website: <http://musicinsummer.blogspot.com/>

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

jvl@lakirovich.com ...or call on: 905-882-7499, 416-735-7499

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