

# THE CANADIAN MUSIC TEACHER

## LE PROFESSEUR DE MUSIQUE CANADIEN



SPRING EDITION • 2008

### THE CANADIAN MUSIC TEACHER

#### LE PROFESSEUR DE MUSIQUE CANADIEN

Official Journal of The Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS  
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Founded 1935

EMPOWERING MUSICIANS: MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

#### EMPOWERING MUSICIANS: BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

### WELLNESS

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July 7-9, 2008 • New York City, New York

Join your colleagues from Canada and the United States for a three day wellness symposium hosted by Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations (CFMTA). This event will offer strategies to help attendees remain energized, inspired and enthusiastic in the classroom and performance.

#### FEATURED WELLNESS EXPERTS

##### MIND



Louise Mueller

##### BODY



Alan Trevis

##### SPIRIT



Carol MacSpivey



For more information on this exciting event, visit [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)  
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## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

### UPCOMING EDITIONS OF *The Canadian Music Teacher*

#### Canada Music Week® Edition 2008

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#### Winter Edition 2009

Publication: Jan. 2009 • Submission Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008

#### Spring Edition 2009

Publication: May 2009 • Submission Deadline: April 1, 2009

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*The official journal of the Canadian Music Teachers' Association is published 3 times a year by the CFMTA. Its purpose is to inform music teachers about the Association's activities, provide a forum for discussion and supply information of topical interest. Inclusion of items in this journal does not imply endorsement or approval by the CFMTA.*

### • THE CANADIAN MUSIC TEACHER FOR NON-MEMBERS •

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Please make the cheque payable to CFMTA.

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# GREETINGS FROM CFMTA



*"Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember;*

*Involve me and I will understand."*

- Chinese Proverb

Involvement is the key to any successful endeavor.

In this edition of the CMT, you are invited to be involved in the 'Empowering Musicians - Body, Mind and Spirit' seminar sponsored by the CFMTA and MTNA, taking place in New York, July 7-9, 2008.

"The Keyboard Companion", a fine pedagogical magazine, invites you to be involved in your continuing professional development, by benefiting from group rates offered to Canadian teachers.

Be involved in future professional development and fellowship by planning to "Go Maritime in 2009". July 8 - 11/2009 in Sackville NB will certainly be a CFMTA Convention you won't want to miss!

Involvement is increasing across the nation. Through the involved efforts of Pat Frehlich, we are pleased that the Young Artist Tours will now include the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. Bernadette Bullock, our invaluable Secretary Treasurer, has been involved in creating a data base of universities across the nation, resulting in their music departments being contacted and encouraged to join their provincial registered music teachers' associations.

CFMTA continues to be involved internationally. Pat Frehlich graciously attended the MTNA 2008 Conference in Denver, representing CFMTA's 3500 members. Her duties included attending events on behalf of the CFMTA and representing Canadian music teachers at the CFMTA booth.

CFMTA's will be recognized globally in a rather unique fashion this summer. Lorna Wanzel's paper, "Independent music teachers conducting collaborative practitioner inquiry" (research sharing the situated experiences of five independent music teachers all of whom are members of the NSRMTA and therefore also members of the CFMTA), has been chosen to be presented at the International Society for Music Education (ISME) at the Research Commission which will be held in Porto, Portugal on July 17th, 2008 and as a poster presentation at the ISME International Conference in Bologna, Italy a week later. The issue addressed was motivation and retention of private students in the independent music studio, a topic not only of interest to our members, but also to music educators in the international music scene.

Involvement is an essential element for success at all levels: in our own studios, how often as music teachers do we wonder why a student is not applying a concept that we have repeatedly explained to them? It is usually through involvement that the concept is best understood.

Involvement is an essential element for success at the local, provincial and national levels of our professional associations. Involvement implies commitment, active participation and interest, engagement and obligation.

At the CFMTA meeting tables, as it is at local and provincial levels, your provincial delegates are involved in fulfilling the Objects as stated (below) in the CFMTA Letters Patent:

- *To encourage and assist all movements designed to improve standards of music education and the training for teachers of music, to encourage and assist in the organization of music teachers' Associations in the provinces of Canada and to stimulate the acquisitions of all-round musicianship and wide general culture among those who intend to qualify as teachers;*
- *To encourage and promote the knowledge and appreciation of music among music teachers and the general public and in the schools and universities of Canada, and to encourage a definite ethical standard of professional conduct among teachers of music;*
- *To promote the extension of music credits in the schools and universities of Canada;*
- *To promote and maintain the status of professional music teachers in the community.*

As we approach the CFMTA meetings in July, please become involved by sharing with your provincial delegates ways that we can together continue to fulfill the CFMTA Objects. Your provincial delegates are your voice, and you are indeed whose interests they represent.

On behalf of the CFMTA Membership, I would like to thank the following for their years of involvement and enthusiastic service to CFMTA. : Archivist Doranne Cooper, Canada Music Week Convenor Ron Spadafore and Canadian Music Teacher Editor, Lore Ruschinsky. I wish them well as they move on to other endeavors.

I am constantly grateful for the involvement of all members, past and present, who have and continue to make the CFMTA the progressive and exciting association it is!

Wishing you a restful and rejuvenating summer!

PEGGY L'HOIR





## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Change is an inevitable part of life for each of us as individuals and in the larger world around us. Since my first CFMTA meeting in 1999 at the Fort Gary Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, many people have moved through the executive of the organization and changes have been made to reflect the changing times. Now it is time for me to make a change in my life so that I can return to putting more of my energies into what this is really all about – the teaching of music to the students.

I had my first insights into the workings of our national organization as the Canada Music Week co-ordinator. What a wonderful opportunity to meet people from across the country, all engaged in the common pursuit of furthering music education. The diversity of our wonderful country was evident as issues were discussed around the table. The move to the role of editor of The Canada Music Teacher in 2001 brought more learning opportunities and contacts with our advertisers who support our role as educators. Over the years I have been able to attend the conferences from coast to coast and to see how different parts of the country operate.

The highlights were the numerous interviews that I was able to conduct with Canadian musicians over the years. From the first one with Jamie Parker, to Angela Cheng, Martin Beaver, The Gryphon Trio, Bramwell Tovey, Ben Heppner, Remi Bouchard and Katherine Chi, they all enthusiastically shared their love of music making and music education.

Many thanks to all who submitted articles and reports, reviewed books and assisted in proofing. It was always interesting to read about things that our members were passionate about and to share their musical experiences. I strived for an attitude of openness and thus tried to publish all those submissions that I felt were relevant to our association. I appreciated the constructive comments I received from readers and very much I value the many friendships I made with like-minded people across the country.

As editor my motivation was always about providing relevant material for music teachers as they work tirelessly to share their skill and love of music with students. With all that we give our students, we need to have something to inspire us on a regular basis. It is my hope that there was some inspiration found in the articles and features that appeared in the last 6 years.

Thank you to the executive who supported me in my time as editor. I look forward to reading future issues of The Canadian Music Teacher when they arrive in my mailbox for inspiration, and to keep up with the wonderful things that are happening in our association and in music education across the country.

LORE RUSCHIENSKY

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

Take notice that the Annual General Meeting of the members of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations will be held at

**Stagewest All-Suite Hotel, Mississauga, Ontario on Sunday, July 6, 2008 from 9:00 am to 12:00**

Business to be conducted includes to: *Receive and consider the Financial Statements of the period ending.*

*Receive and relate the Provincial Reports. Appoint Auditors.*

*Transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.*

**The Executive and Delegates Meeting will be held on Saturday, July 5, 2008 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.**

## EMPOWERING MUSICIANS: BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

### NEW YORK CITY, JULY 7 - 9, 2008

If you like **music, art, theatre, dance, architecture** or **history** (and of course shopping) you may be interested in joining us for this three day educational travel trip!

The CFMTA together with the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) are proud to host a three day wellness symposium for our members!

**EMPOWERING MUSICIANS: BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT** will take place at the **Yamaha Artist Services Facility**, located at 689 Fifth Avenue, in the historic Aeolian Building in midtown Manhattan. **Three renowned clinicians** will offer **daily workshops** from 9:00

am to 12:30 pm. The remainder of each day will be free for your own personal activities. This trip offers an opportunity for professional development (making it tax deductible) along with personal independence in other daily activity planning! Please visit the MTNA website [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org) to register and view information on our stellar lineup of clinicians. Or register by telephone by calling the MTNA office at 1-888-512-5278.



*The fee for this three day symposium is \$150.00 US per person. Limit of 140, so register early!*

Canadian pianist **Alan Fraser** has created a new approach to piano technique that accesses the innate structure and function of the human hand to replace tension and over-relaxation with effective hand activation. His book and DVD, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, presents this new approach in detail, with an extensive series of exercise to align one's skeleton, enrich one's sound, increase virtuosity, and eliminate the danger of injury before it ever arises.

For more information, go to <http://alanfraser.net>



**Carol Montparker** has been enjoying a dual career as pianist and writer. Montparker majored in music at Queens College, where she won the Orchestral Society Award, granted to the "most outstanding instrumentalist on campus." She gave her New York debut recital at Carnegie Recital Hall in 1976, about which Donal Henahan of the *The New York Times* wrote "a splendid debut by a pianist who starts where others leave off", and has since appeared in solo and chamber recitals across the country. Ms. Montparker's CD's, *Pinnogarden I and II*, recorded in live concert, have been praised by artists and critics including Harold C. Schonberg; Michael Kimmelman of *The New York Times*, called her "a real artist, whose playing is unfailingly graceful and affecting." As senior editor of *Clavier* for fifteen years, Montparker interviewed world-famous artists for feature stories, reviewed concerts and books.

For more information, go to <http://www.montparker.com/about.html>



**Louise Montello** is an internationally known authority on music and wellness and award-winning author of "Essential Musical Intelligence: Using Music as Your Path to Healing, Creativity and Radiant Wholeness". Dr. Montello conducted clinical research on the use of an integrative music therapy approach to treating and preventing musicians' stress-related disorders in the Department of Psychology at New York University for over ten years. In an effort to bring her ground-breaking music therapy-based prevention program to the musical community, Dr. Montello co-founded a not-for-profit organization, Musicians' Wellness, Inc. To serve performers in a more systematic and effective way, over the last four years, Louise has been developing training materials to assist students and trainees in mastering the Performance Wellness/ Essential Musical Intelligence techniques.

For more information, go to <http://www.performancewellness.org/about.html>

NEW WAVE

TRAVEL INFORMATION

NEW WAVE

BILL ANDREWS at NEW WAVE TRAVEL will be pleased to assist CFMTA and MTNA attendees with the following:

• Hotel Reservations (for accommodations within walking distance of the event) • Airline tickets • Transfers • Travel insurance

FOR ALL YOUR TRAVEL NEEDS please contact Bill directly at 1-800-463-1512 (ext.224) or email [wandrews@newwavetravel.net](mailto:wandrews@newwavetravel.net)

## EMPOWERING MUSICIANS: BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

# WELLNESS

S Y M P O S I U M

July 7-9, 2008 • New York City, New York

Join your colleagues from Canada and the United States for a three day wellness symposium. Hosted by Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations (CFMTA), this event will offer strategies to help attendees remain energized, injury-free and enthusiastic teachers and performers.

### FEATURED WELLNESS EXPERTS

#### MIND



Louise Montello

#### BODY



Alan Fraser

#### SPIRIT



Carol Montparker

To maintain an intimate learning setting, enrollment is limited to 140 registrants.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER, VISIT [WWW.MTNA.ORG](http://WWW.MTNA.ORG)**



## MEMORIAL FOUNDATION DONATIONS INVITED

Donations to this Foundation give family, friends, students and colleagues opportunity to express appreciation and to honour deceased CFMTA/FCAPM members. Donor individuals and organizations will be listed in subsequent editions of The Canadian Music Teacher.

### CFMTA Memorial Scholarship Foundation

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Please make donations payable to CFMTA. A receipt for Income Tax purposes will be issued for a donation of \$50.00 or more from the office of the Secretary Treasurer, Bernadette Bullock, 501 - 368 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1T4

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

At the Executive Meeting held in Toronto on Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 the decision was made to form a new Professional Development and Research Committee.

This Committee is in its early stages and we would like to hear from as many members as possible with regard to what you think the CFMTA could do to help facilitate professional development and assist in teacher/researcher projects across the nation.

Please contact Lorna Wanzel, Chair of the Committee either by email or snail mail with your ideas.  
[lwanzel@hfx.eastlink.ca](mailto:lwanzel@hfx.eastlink.ca) • 6158 Lawrence Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3L 1J6. • Phone 902 423 8908.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas you would like to contribute for consideration by the Professional Development and Research Committee (PDRC)*

\_\_\_\_\_



**Go Maritime in 2009!**

**CFMTA—FCAPM CONVENTION**

**July 8—11, 2009**

**Mount Allison University**

**Sackville, New Brunswick**

**Join us for professional enrichment in a picturesque, small town setting. You won't want to miss ...**

**Artist Concert** featuring Jasper Wood, violin and Edmund Dawe, piano

**Masterclasses** in string, voice, piano and choral

**Workshops and Clinics** on a variety of topics including composition, voice and piano repertoire, studio management, new publications, and much more — something for everyone!

**Trade show** an opportunity to shop at our vendors' displays

**2009 CFMTA-FCAPM Piano Competition** support your provincial competitor

**2009 CFMTA-FCAPM Annual General Meeting**

For more information, contact Barbara Long, Host Coordinator  
506.375.6752 or waybar@xplornet.com

**While in New Brunswick, plan on spending a few extra days to enjoy our beautiful province**

**DID YOU KNOW? .....**

New Brunswick is the largest of Canada's three Maritime provinces. From Sackville, you could access any one of 5 scenic drives that take in 3 distinct coastlines. You could experience the highest tides on earth, the longest covered bridge in the world, one of the oldest mountain ranges on earth, the home of the first chocolate and nut candy bar, and some of the warmest salt water beaches north of Virginia. During the month of July, you might also take in one of our many summer music festivals including the Baie de Chaleur International Chamber Music Festival and the Lameque International Baroque Festival.

**So plan to .... GO MARITIME IN 2009!**



# NATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION REGULATIONS

## REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE CFMTA-FCAPM NATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

SACKVILLE, NB at Mount Allison University, July 9 - 10, 2009

1. THE NATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION IS LIMITED TO COMPETITORS STUDYING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL OR LOWER AS OF THE DATE OF APPLICATION.
2. Competitors in the CFMTA National Semi-final competition must present a program consisting of the following:
  - One Canadian Solo Composition
  - One complete solo composition from the Classical or Baroque period.
  - A variety of shorter works to form a well-balanced program.

At the provincial level, it is highly recommended to follow these guidelines. To be eligible for the Marek Jablonski prize, the program must include a work by Chopin. The Chopin winner and the Canadian winner will be decided at the semi-final round. No changes to the repertoire list after May 15, 2009.

3. Three finalists will be selected from the semi-final competition to proceed to the final competition. Each finalist may repeat only ONE selection from the semi-final program. Time limit: minimum 30 minutes, maximum 45 minutes.
4. Competitors must be no more than 24 years of age as of January 1st, 2009. They must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants. Students under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a chaperone, at the students' expense.
5. COMPETITORS MUST BE STUDENTS OF AN RMT AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION.
6. Each provincial association will be responsible for the financial expenses incurred during the selection of its competitor. Each provincial association may choose, by audition or otherwise, ONE competitor who will represent that province.
7. Each provincial association will be responsible for the expense of its competitors' travel, as prorated by CFMTA, to and from Sackville, New Brunswick. Associations are strongly encouraged to solicit corporate sponsorship.
8. Applications must be received by the convenor, Heather Blakley, on or before May 1, 2009. Send applications to: Heather Blakley, 611 Addie Crescent, Saskatoon, SK S7N 3K6  
Email: [hblakley@sasktel.net](mailto:hblakley@sasktel.net)  
A registration fee of \$100.00, made out to CFMTA, is paid by each province and MUST accompany each application. Late applications will NOT be accepted under any circumstances.



# NATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

## APPLICATION FORM

### CFMTA - FCAPM PIANO COMPETITION

Sackville, NB at Mount Allison University July 9 - 10, 2009

1. PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 Provincial Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
 Representative's Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_
2. COMPETITOR'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 Competitor's Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_
3. ELIGIBILITY  
 Competitor's age as of January 1st, 2009 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of birth: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ RMT Branch \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher's Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_
4. COMPETITORS MUST BE STUDENTS OF AN RMT AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION
5. THE PIANO COMPETITION IS LIMITED TO COMPETITORS STUDYING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL OR LOWER AS OF THE DATE OF APPLICATION
6. Please include a typewritten resume of approximately 100-150 words. Please include a 8 1/2 by 11 glossy professional photograph as well as a smaller one for the newsletter.
7. Please include a separate typewritten list of your National Semi-final repertoire and also a list of the National Final repertoire as well as the exact time of each selection. Include all information regarding opus numbers, keys, number of movements, composers' names, etc. It would be helpful to have the repertoire in order of performance. Changes to the repertoire will NOT be accepted after May 15, 2009.
8. Applications must be received by the Convenor on or before May 1, 2009. Late entries will not be accepted under any circumstances. The registration fee of \$100.00, paid by each province and payable to CFMTA, must accompany each application. Please send cheque and application to: Heather Blakley, 611 Addie Crescent, Saskatoon, SK S7N 3K6  
 E-mail: hblakley@sasktel.net



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Join dynamic clinicians **Dan Coates** and **Gayle Kowalchyk** as they explore an array of relevant topics for piano teachers!



**Dan Coates**  
Pop Arranger

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**Gayle Kowalchyk**  
Piano Method Author

**Gayle Kowalchyk**, Senior Keyboard Editor for Supplementary Piano Publications at Alfred, formerly operated an independent piano studio with her husband, Dr. E. L. Lancaster. She holds a Doctorate in Education in Piano Pedagogy from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, and has served on various college piano faculties. Gayle is a co-author of Alfred's *Premier Piano Course*.



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#### **Wednesday, August 13**

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Darren Schwartz:  
(306) 244-1823  
[w.d.schwartz@shaw.ca](mailto:w.d.schwartz@shaw.ca)

#### **Thursday, August 14**

Rideau Music Ltd.  
Calgary, AB  
Lynden Gill:  
(403) 269-6062  
[lynden@rideaumusic.com](mailto:lynden@rideaumusic.com)

#### **Friday, August 15**

Long & McQuade  
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Christie Smith:  
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[csmith@long-mcquade.com](mailto:csmith@long-mcquade.com)

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Martha Mier's unique new *Classical Jazz, Rags & Blues* series revisits classical melodies from piano literature, opera and orchestral literature. Arrangements feature jazz styles including ragtime and blues. This Value Pack includes Books 1 and 2.



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Elementary

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Martha Mier



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Denise Alexander

Intermediate

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Mike Springer

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##### Rideau Music Ltd.

Calgary (800) 661-6874

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##### Lang & McQuade

National (800) 661-3761

Kamloops (250) 838-7254

Langley (604) 530-8704

North Vancouver (604) 986-0911

Vancouver (604) 734-4886

Victoria (250) 384-3622

#### MANITOBA

##### Musical Tymes Ltd.

Winnipeg (800) 665-5315

#### NOVA SCOTIA

##### MusicStop

Halifax (800) 565-1021

#### ONTARIO

##### Coran's Music Centre

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(800) 545-8867

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Toronto (Downtown) (866) 585-2275

Toronto (North York) (416) 663-8612

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(800) 605-5705

##### Remy's House of Music

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All prices are listed in US\$ and are subject to change.

View sample music pages of these new publications at [alfred.com/piano](http://alfred.com/piano).

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD PIANO TEACHER?

*Judith Altman graduated from the Bela Bartok Conservatory in Budapest, Hungary. She has taught piano and theory in Montreal for many years and sent hundreds of students for examinations with outstanding results. Six of her students have obtained the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto's Silver Medal for the highest marks in Quebec in their piano examinations. She was supervisor and examiner of the Canadian Bureau for the Advancement of Music.*

*Following is an excerpt from her unpublished work: "Teaching piano to beginner and intermediate students".*

## PLAYING FOR STUDENTS

Good teachers demonstrate pieces before assigning them as well as play other, more difficult pieces for their students. Listening to these will fill the students with awe, motivate them and inspire them to reach higher levels. Hearing you play gives them something to aim for. Playing duets with students is also helpful.

When demonstrating a new piece for the student before assigning it do not play it faster than the student will be able to because if he tries to imitate you the results will be deplorable. If students are not using the pedal yet, neither should you. Besides showing the student how the piece will sound as the final product, another advantage of playing it is that this demonstration will remind you of those parts of the piece that need explanation or going through prior to giving it to the student: irregular fingering, difficult rhythm or phrasing. These trouble spots must be discussed, and the student should play them correctly a few times during the lesson to avoid practicing them wrongly for a week.

When students request that you play a certain piece for them, you might ask others in the waiting room to come into the studio and listen. When people in a group share an experience, something remarkable and magical happens that makes the event more special.

## TREATING ALL STUDENTS AS IF THEY HAD TALENT. EXPECTING THE MOST AND NEVER GIVING UP

Behavioral scientists have shown that most people have a potential for success that is almost never tapped. For example, before the start of the school year, Dr. Prescott Lecky told a group of teachers that they were being given the brightest students in the school to teach. Actually, the students were chosen randomly from the school population. By the end of the year, all the students were doing brilliant work and the teachers were saying how wonderful these "bright" students were to teach.

Because the teachers believed the students were

exceptional, they treated them as exceptional. Because of the way the teachers treated them, the students also got the idea that they were gifted. The result was that the students performed like exceptionally gifted children.

This double—blind experiment (neither the teachers nor the students knew that the students were just average and the results were objectively assessed at the end by independent evaluators) proves beyond a shadow of a doubt the power of thought to affect performance. By replicating this experiment time and time again, scientists have proved conclusively that nearly everyone has a potential for achievement that usually remains untapped.

As educators, we must commit ourselves to developing the potential of all our students and inspiring in them a desire to achieve their personal best. Rather than being satisfied with adequacy, we must aspire towards excellence, not according to any external standard, but according to each individual's ability. If we communicate a feeling of inadequacy or doubt, we encourage them to fail. We cannot hope to tap the potential of students if we do not make a total commitment to excellence in our work as teachers, because we are responsible for awakening in them a sense of their highest potential and creative output. We must set high but achievable standards so our students will often experience success. A realistic goal is just a little higher than what the student can easily do. Students should be taught as if they were young Mozarts. Who knows? Maybe they are. No matter how hopeless they seem, if we insist they play correctly all the time, for weeks and months and years, one day they might just blossom into good students. Teachers should never give up. Some students take a long time, even years, to understand a concept, but if one persists they will get it eventually. Some students may be poor sight readers for years, then suddenly something clicks, and they are reading. Teachers can never feel lazy and say to themselves: "I will not correct them today", or "I can't be bothered to



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tell them again.” Mistakes should be corrected every time they occur. Students who are not lifting and curving their fingers should be reminded to do it even after years of lessons. A pupil of mine took lessons for four years before he was ready for a grade one examination. Now he is a professional jazz musician.

Explain to your students that you are insisting on the correct hand position because you know what technical problems lie ahead. Play an extremely fast scale or passage to show how they will play one day. Knowing what awaits students in the future, we must insist on developing good habits that will later help them achieve velocity and a good tone.

Our demands for improvement may result in some grumbling and some struggle, but it will be alleviated by the supreme satisfaction students feel when they can say, “It was difficult, but I did it.” We should not underestimate students’ flexibility and potential. I have had beginners as old as 65 who learned to play very well and derived great joy and satisfaction from their music.

If teachers expect a lot, they will receive a lot. Students respect teachers who have high standards, who don’t accept nonsense, who think highly enough of them to expect the best. Any limit on expectations will become a limit on learning. No final judgement should be passed on what any student is capable of achieving.

During lessons students need your undivided attention. Do not walk around or do something else when students are playing. Be there body and soul, completely involved with the students and their music. Good teachers give 100 percent of their knowledge.

It is easy to teach intelligent, talented and motivated students. The excellence of good teachers is measured by their success with dull, untalented and uncoordinated

pupils.

## GEARING PROGRESS TO STUDENTS’ ABILITY

What matters is not how well students are doing, but how well they are doing according to their abilities. Students’ ages and the number of years they have taken lessons do not determine what level they should be at.

To progress faster or slower than students are able to go may do great harm. To progress too slowly insults the students’ intelligence, robs them of a challenge, and causes boredom and loss of interest. To progress too fast causes inaccurate playing, low self-esteem due to inability to cope, and again loss of interest.

Underestimating students’ abilities is one of the main obstacles to progress. Students must be challenged as well as have fun, but the proper degree of challenge will vary from individual to individual. Some students thrive on difficulty, while others need to be more secure in their knowledge before advancing to higher levels.

It is essential that students master some basic concepts on a lower level, such as playing one hand legato while playing the other staccato, or playing one hand loudly while playing the other softly. But once the basics have been learned, there should be no limit on how fast students can progress.

Special understanding is needed for transfer students who come with bad technique from another teacher. To change habits is very difficult and takes a long time.

How does one decide what level students should be at? If students can play a new piece very well at their next lesson, then the piece is too easy for them and they are ready for harder ones. If students are struggling with a piece even after three weeks of practice, then the piece is probably too difficult for them. If students are on the appropriate level for their abilities, they will need about two or three, at most

*Continued on page 18*

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# RCM EXAMINATIONS

## *News*

### **One-Hour Workshops**

Based on the success of the one-hour workshops held in 2007, RCM Examinations is continuing to organize FREE workshops for future examination sessions across Canada. As in 2007, the workshops will be delivered during examination sessions by the visiting examiner.

Workshop topics can vary, but each presentation will include some details about the new Technical Requirements from the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*. Workshop topics include:

#### ***Preparatory A&B – New Beginnings***

This workshop introduces Preparatory A&B from the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*, which replaces the current Introductory Grade. Teachers will be given an overview of how this new approach helps prepare beginning piano students for examinations.

#### ***Piano Pedagogy Certificate Program***

Formerly published as an addendum, the Piano Pedagogy Certificate Program is now part of the *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*. This workshop outlines this three-level program aimed at senior piano students who have an interest in teaching piano.

#### ***Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition Highlights***

With the launch of a new *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition*, the Highlights workshop focuses on key differentiators from the previous edition, including Teacher's Choice and the new Technical Requirements.

We encourage teachers to propose an examination-related topic or request one of the above-mentioned workshops by contacting their local Centre Representative, who in turn will contact RCM Examinations to organize the workshop.

All one-hour workshops are free and available to all teachers. Details on workshop dates, locations and topics will be announced in *Music Matters* and posted on the RCM Examinations website. For the latest updates on workshops, please check the list on our website under "Teacher Information" at <http://www.rcmexaminations.org/teachinfo/events.htm>.

While RCM Examinations cannot guarantee that all workshop requests will be fulfilled, we will do our best to accommodate all requests received within a reasonable time-frame prior to the examination session.

### **New Horizons: Exploring the Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition**

The *Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition* has arrived! RCM Examinations will be co-hosting free, three-hour workshops **New Horizons: Exploring the Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition** with many of the Registered Music Teacher's Branches at over 30 locations across Canada beginning this spring and going throughout the summer and fall. Be sure to obtain a copy of the new *Syllabus* to take along to this informative presentation.

Workshop highlights include:

- an overview of the new layout and look
- changes to the marking scheme
- a demonstration of repertoire

The first eight workshops will take place this spring in Medicine Hat, Ottawa, Niagara Falls, Regina, Saskatoon, Richmond, Burnaby and Abbotsford.

Be sure to check our website and read the flyer in the March/April issue of *Music Matters* for further information about these workshops.

To register for a workshop contact the local representative listed for your area.

### **Marked Theory Papers Online**

Theory results and marked theory papers are now available online.

Candidates are able to view their results and marked papers by selecting "Examination Results" from the homepage, then by following the steps to view their examination mark.

The marked theory papers are available online once the scanning process has been completed. Candidates may view their paper by clicking on the actual mark.

Theory examination results will no longer be mailed to candidates.

four weeks to learn a piece properly, more weeks only if they are unprepared for public performances.

Progress does not move in a straight line. Some students progress rapidly for a while, then slow down, then advance quickly again later on. Teaching materials should allow for this variability, and students encountering difficulties should stay on the same level for a while.

It is important to talk to parents to find out how much your students are practicing. You may discover, for example, that students who you thought were doing very well are practicing very little. This means they are performing below their potential. They need more difficult pieces and more should be expected from them.

If students want to try pieces that are a few grades higher than their levels, let them. It is amazing what students can do if they are really motivated! Even if the pieces do not reach perfection, they will have satisfied a craving, and you will have gained an idea of how fast your students can progress.

If students really hate a piece even after playing it for two weeks, don't insist on their continuing and perfecting it. If they dislike the piece they will not work on it, and staying on it for too long will slow down their progress. Why make their lives miserable when there are plenty of beautiful and enjoyable pieces to choose from?

### ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

The emphasis should be on learning by the students rather than on instruction by the teacher. One of the most important functions of a teacher is to provide criteria which students may use to assess their own performances. Good teaching makes the teacher progressively more redundant as students move towards higher levels. It leads students to do more and more things for themselves and by themselves. This will develop the invaluable habits of self-reliance and self-motivated work.

When students ask questions, don't simply give the answer, but instead help them find the answers by reasoning. For example, if students have trouble with the rhythm, count with them once, but then have them clap or play the measure with the correct rhythm by themselves. If they can do it only when you count for them, they haven't learned it yet. Students should not leave the lesson until they can do it correctly by themselves.

Always listen to students' ideas carefully. Encourage independent thought by finding something positive in them no matter how unworkable they are. You can say: "This is a good point. However..." or "This is true some of the time, but..."

After a student had played a piece beautifully at one of my pupils' recitals, I said to the audience: "Jennifer learned this piece by herself. The first time she played it for me was almost as good as

what you just heard. I like it when my students don't need me any more."

### FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION

A creative person has an urge to seek and find and test, to explore, to invent, to discover.

The creative spark is a very delicate and fragile quality which each of us possesses to a greater or lesser degree. Creativity is that marvelous unknown quantity which lies dormant inside us waiting to be nourished and encouraged. Teachers who foster creativeness in their students wisely will experience an excitement and exhilaration which seldom surface in the routine teaching of technique, sight reading and ear training.

On the other hand, if it is handled improperly, that creative spark may be extinguished forever, causing a tragic loss to both the student and the teacher, who will not be able to share the happiness potentially resulting from this creativity. Teachers must guide and channel imaginative responses from students into sound musical ideas which express the students' feelings and emotions.

Creativity does not so much need to be developed as liberated. The fear of being wrong seems to be a prime inhibitor of the creative process. To unlock creative abilities we need to establish an atmosphere of psychological safety where students can be spontaneous without being afraid that what they produce will be evaluated according to set standards. They need psychological freedom, which means giving them permission to think, to feel, to be passionate and to discover whatever artistic abilities they possess within themselves. Creativity flourishes in a flexible atmosphere, open to a variety of ideas and information, since creativity must involve learning, growth and evolving perceptions. Rigidity in thinking and a defensive attitude towards the teacher's musical concepts and perceptions can destroy the process.

Listen to your students' improvisations and compositions. Help them write them down and include them in your recitals. Good compositions may be entered in music writing contests.

Respond to and foster curiosity. Students who ask questions are attentive, thinking, inquisitive, imaginative, and trying to understand. Show them that you value these



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qualities. Creative and bright students have the most unusual questions as well as answers.

Imagination is the root of discovery, the inspiration that leads to explorations. It fosters interest, kindles ideas and is the pathway to growth and achievement. Imagination is the students' capacity to put their visions into their music, taking risks with new ideas and seeing the music in different ways. The musical form can come alive only when the individual's imagination gives it life.

Creativity may start with just playing music by ear, and students should be encouraged to do it. If they need it, help them harmonize their melodies with chords.

### RESPECTING THE STUDENT'S OPINION AND TASTE IN MUSIC

Students have a right to their own taste and opinion even if it is different from the teacher's. Many students' strong likes or dislikes are only prejudices — they have not been exposed to certain kinds of music long enough to be able to judge them by their own merit. Students should experience all styles of classical music before their rejection of one style is justifiable. Their dislike of Baroque music is not legitimate until they have heard and played many Baroque pieces. Once they have been exposed to many Baroque pieces and they still don't like them, their feelings should be respected.

If they say of a modern piece, "This sounds awful!" I say, "You are right, this has some strange sounds. Composers sometimes use unpleasant, shocking harmonies for special effects, to build tension, for mystery. When you get used to it, you may like it. Be adventurous, try something new." Very often they will get to like the piece.

If this doesn't happen and after trying a few more modern pieces they still hate them, it is better to ease off and not give them any more for a while. Let them try again the following year, when their tastes may have changed.

Students may want to play some popular music — jazz, rag, rock, blues or Broadway — and I accept this. Their enthusiasm for these pieces may carry over to classical music also. Working out the complicated rhythms of popular music or jazz may improve their rhythms in classical music as well.

I loved to play popular music when I was a teenager and it doesn't seem to have done me any harm.

### PRAISING MUCH, CRITICIZING CONSTRUCTIVELY

Nothing works as well as praise. When appreciated, students will do better and better and will love the lessons. When we teach students after praising them honestly and reasonably, they are all ears. It is the teachable moment. But if we try to teach them something after reprimanding them, they will tune out.

Students should be encouraged. If returning students play well at their first lesson in September, I tell them, "I can see this is going to be a good year. I am looking forward to hearing you play many more pieces so beautifully".

Good teachers always have something nice to say about a performance no matter how poor it was. The smallest progress should be praised, "Good", "Nice", "I like that", "Good job", "This is much better than last time", "I can see that you have worked on it", or "Pretty good, but it is a difficult piece and we still have more work to do on it." Show confidence in them, "I have a feeling you know this piece better than that. Play it again and show me how well you can do it." Positive reinforcement enhances performance.

If students made several mistakes in one measure, they should be praised even if they correct only one error: "Good! you got the right key! Now try it again and this time make sure you count for the half note."

Reassure them when they say, "I had trouble with this piece." Tell them, "That is OK. That is why I am here. If you could play everything perfectly well I would be taking lessons from you."

Bright and talented pupils should know that you expect a lot from them. Don't praise them for small achievements; it might lower their expectations of themselves. If they do what is expected of them, they don't need more praise than "good". Talented students need praise also, but only for considerable improvements. On the other hand, students



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who have great difficulties but are working very hard should be praised for the slightest improvements.

Criticism must be offered in the least hurtful way. Instead of saying "That is a wrong key!" say "Change that key", or "Find a better key". If you want to suggest a different way of playing a piece, say, "How about doing it...", or "What would you think if we...". And laughing with students over mistakes will lighten their embarrassment.

### BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STUDENTS' OVERALL EDUCATION

Good teachers take an interest in their students' general education, not only in their piano playing. When you give them pieces, talk about the era when it was composed, tell anecdotes about the life and works of the composer, and discuss the form of the piece: Sonata, Rondo, Variations, etc.

Have music dictionaries and encyclopedias handy in your studio for yourself as well as for your students to look up information.

Hold informal gatherings of pupils at the studio for playing the piano, or listening to recorded music, along with mini—lectures or commentaries by yourself or the students on composers and their works.

Encourage your students to attend concerts, recitals, festivals, and operas. Even better, take them yourself. Discuss and recommend (Zs, tapes, radio and TV programs, and lend books on music, literature, science, art, etc.) It is useful to make a list of the books you lend to students because many forget to return them unless reminded of it. Recommend subscriptions to magazines for students, like "Clavier's Piano Explorer".

Point out the advantages of playing other instruments, joining the school band, singing in a choir. Attend the

concerts at which your students are performing.

### TEACHING HIGHER LEVELS

Teachers of beginners should teach at least intermediate levels as well. It is in the higher grades that the faults of poor early training show up. It is here that we see how important correct hand and body position is. If in the lower grades students haven't learned the basics of playing one hand louder than the other, and of playing one hand legato while the other is staccato, they will have a very difficult time in mastering higher levels.

On a low level students may be able to perform slow, easy pieces even with incorrect hand position and with wrong fingering, but later on they will not be able to execute fast and complicated passages with these bad habits without stumbling and playing unevenly. For example, if in lower grades students haven't learned to place all their fingers over the keys and their thumbs are hanging off the keyboard, then on a higher level they will not have the time to twist or turn their hands to get their thumbs back over the keyboard in time. Teachers who teach higher levels are aware of what awaits students in the future and will insist on developing good habits in the early grades.

Most important, if students don't receive correct instructions in the beginning, their bad habits will have been so thoroughly learned by the time they reach higher levels that it will be extremely difficult if not impossible to correct them. Reteaching is a slow and painful procedure for both students and teachers. Students may even have to revert to lower levels in order to master correct techniques. For students who considered themselves to be on a higher level already, this may be very frustrating and discouraging.

Teachers need higher level students to remind them of the importance of insisting on the correct technique from the very first lesson.

## MEMORIAL PEDAGOGY AWARD 2008

One of the Special Projects sponsored by CFMTA is the Memorial Pedagogy Award. This award is offered to the candidate who receives the highest mark in the Teacher's Written exam of either the Royal Conservatory or Conservatory Canada. This award has been established to honor teachers who have been recognized for their contributions to the profession. The award is presented biannually in non-convention years.

The 2008 Memorial Pedagogy award goes to Jessica Koch of Victoria, BC with a mark of 94%. Congratulations go to Jessica and her teachers Janice Dahlberg and Linda Kundert-Stoll. At the time of writing the exam Jessica was living in Okotoks, Alberta where she had a thriving piano studio and also did freelance accompanying.

Jessica has since moved to Victoria, BC where she is pursuing a degree in linguistics. She continues with freelance accompanying and has a small number of students with the intention of growing her studio in the coming years.

*HEATHER BLAKLEY, B. MUS, A MUS, RMT  
SPECIAL PROJECTS CHAIR*

# MEMORIAL PEDAGOGY AWARD

CFMTA is pleased to offer a Memorial Pedagogy Award to the candidate who receives the highest mark in the Teacher's Written Examination of either the Royal Conservatory of Music or Conservatory Canada. This award has been established to honor teachers who have been recognized for their contributions to the profession. As a tribute to these teachers, the Pedagogy Award is being offered to a deserving candidate who has recently qualified in this field. It was initiated upon the passing of Robert Pounder,

CFMTA's first Honorary President from 1975 to 1996.

The applicant must have studied with a current CFMTA/FCAPM teacher and the examination must be from a nationally based teaching institution, which examines in every province (Royal Conservatory of Music / Conservatory Canada). Along with an official transcript of the Pedagogy Examination mark, the applicant will be required to submit a summary of musical training and interim teaching, which will be considered in the case of a tie.

The Memorial Pedagogy Award will be presented biannually in the non-convention year and will be governed by the Special Projects Convenor. The closing date for applications to be received by the Convenor will be February 15<sup>th</sup> of the non-convention year, and anyone completing the requirements in the two years prior will be eligible. Anyone completing the requirements from January 2008 to January 2010 will be eligible to apply.

## CFMTA/ FCAPM MEMORIAL PEDAGOGY AWARD 2010 - APPLICATION FORM

**1. APPLICANT'S NAME** .....

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Province ..... Postal Code .....

Telephone ..... Fax .....

E-mail .....

**2. ELIGIBILITY**

Date of Teacher's Written Exam .....

Institution (RCM or CC) .....

Name of Teacher .....

Teacher's Signature ..... RMT branch .....

Address ..... City .....

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Please include: 1) An official transcript of the Teacher's Written Exam mark.

2) A typewritten summary of your musical training and interim teaching.

NOTE- The applicant must have completed the requirements between January 2008 and January 2010. Applications must be received by the Special Projects Convenor (Heather Blakley) on or before February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Please send the application to:

Heather Blakley, 611 Addie Cres., Saskatoon, SK S7K 3K6  
1-306-249-3717 • E-mail: hblakley@sasktel.net

# BAROQUE KEYBOARD AND DANCE WORKSHOP



HEATHER THOMSON

Imagine a seventeenth century court salon. Tapered candles flicker light across the gilded trim work on the painted walls. Lush, velvet draperies frame the reflected image of a sea of dancers as they swirl past the tall windows. The scent of candle smoke and heavy perfume fills the air. In one corner a trio of musicians performs a lively minuet, the delicate strains of the strings and harpsichord mingling with the rustle of silk dresses and the delicate foot falls of calf-skin slippers on the polished, parquet floors . . . But wait. The mists of time disperse to reveal a slightly different scene. The dancers in this cameo are wearing Converse sneakers and their footsteps have a shuffling uncertainty to them. While carrying fans and donning feathered hats these dancers lack the grace and manners of regal courtesans. They are, in fact, Baroque dance novices, participants in an introductory dance and keyboard workshop featuring social practices of the seventeenth century.

In January of this year, students of the Saint John branch of the RMTA were invited to take part in a bit of time travel. For one afternoon they had the chance to dance and perform music as it would have been experienced three hundred years ago. A combined effort between the SJRMTA and The Saint John Early Music Studio, the Baroque Dance and Keyboard workshop provided students with the opportunity to play their baroque and early classical repertoire on a real harpsichord. Local early music specialist Tim Blackmore served as both clinician and performer. His small, single manual harpsichord was handmade by a local New Brunswick artisan. Mr. Blackmore demonstrated the muted dynamics of the instrument and showed how performers of the period added the illusion of volume by arpeggiating chords or adding ornaments. A simple coupling stop also allowed for a doubling at the octave.

Students gathered around the instrument to peer at the inner mechanics. They were able to see the plectrum at work and marvel at an instrument which, unlike the modern day piano, needs daily tuning.

Student volunteers performed their List A conservatory piano repertoire on the harpsichord. The offset middle C and limited four and a half octave range proved problematic for students accustomed to the modern piano topography. The slightly smaller key size and reduced key depth were also difficult to adjust to, but everyone who played came away with a hands-on appreciation for the capabilities of the harpsichord. Period instruments dictate a sense of the natural grace and delicacy. For years we have been coaching our students to adopt a portato touch and a graceful lilt appropriate to this era. The students at this workshop heard and felt immediately how these sounds and tempi were the

natural result of the smaller, gentler instruments for which they were composed.

Following the keyboard workshop students adjourned to the larger “salon” for a dance lesson. While the minuet proved too difficult for a beginner workshop, students did achieve a comfortable competence with the simpler Contre Danse. While the Baroque minuet was exclusively a couples’ dance, the “country dance” involved multiple partners. As the head couple danced their way down the line the waiting couples socialized with one another. Waiting to dance was part of the fun, and the emphasis on group participation was a nod to the changing democratic social conventions of the mid 1700’s.

Students in our modern day dance group were enthusiastic learners. As we had more female than male participants we divided the group in half using simple period props: the “men” donned feathered tri-corn hats; the “women” held paper fans fastened from their wrists with strands of ribbon. The props helped the students step into the character of their seventeenth century counterparts without the expense or trappings of full costumes.

The contra danse involves four “figures” or dance units. While the dance steps may be quickened to adapt to a 4/4 meter the dance is most easily felt in, and we performed our rendition to a lively Quadrille. The quick, footsteps are repeated in various directions across a quadrant of four dancers. Couples dance to and away from one another before finally exchanging places to begin a fresh set with the next couple in line. As the dance is quite repetitive our young musicians learned by watching those who danced ahead of them. All kept time so as not to lose their place in the music. As their confidence in the dance patterns grew you could sense their manner relaxing as well. The larger spectacle of the dance routine was impressive with some thirty participants tapping and bowing and swirling to the beat.

Dance instruction included male and female bowing routines, an integral part of court social protocol. Once the students were confident in their movements Mr. Blackmore joined in with live harpsichord accompaniment.

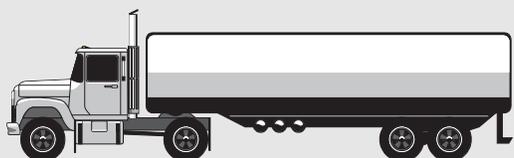
The final aspect of the Baroque workshop involved costuming. Cost issues precluded us from providing every participant with a full court costume but we did want to make students aware of how period courtesans would have dressed. Powdered wigs, fancy hats, ruffled shirt sleeves and bow-bedecked, high heeled shoes were *de rigueur* of fashion for men of this period. It is written that Louis IXth was extremely proud of his shapely leg muscles and his prowess on the dance floor. Male courtiers in his entourage followed suit paying close attention to their manner of dress and physical bearing.

Women were tightly corseted so as to show off their slender waists to full effect. Originally it was my intention to teach the entire dance program in period dress, however, the tightness of the corset made breathing so difficult I feared I might faint simply standing in one place. Bending or sitting down was impossible when laced tightly and the weight of the various petticoats, dress skirting and basket panniers added another ten to fifteen pounds of weight to each step. In the end I decided to teach the dancing in my street clothes and I allowed a student to model the dress and two foot Marie Antoniette wig. By watching her careful movements students could appreciate the graceful, straight-postured bearing which would have been necessary for women of this era. In a fascinating circle of influence, the elegant yet constricting clothing of this

century, dictated by the social conventions of the day, determined the way in which those who wore them moved and behaved.

The Baroque workshop provided a unique opportunity for students to hear, play and move to music of the period. It was our hope that, having danced to a period piece, students would be better able to understand the note phrasing, portato articulation and elegant ornamentation which are characteristic of keyboard music from this style period.

While absorbing the elegant mannerisms of this era would take more than an afternoon the workshop was a lively and multi-sensory introduction to a fascinating period in music history.



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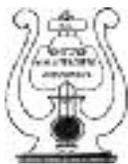
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## PROVINCIAL REPORTS



### BRITISH COLUMBIA

LYNNE CARMICHAEL

Greetings from Beautiful British Columbia!!

The BCRMTA is composed of 21 branches scattered throughout the provinces each with its own executive and slate of musical activities. Each branch presents a report of their activities at the Provincial Council Annual General Meeting each year. The Branches speak of providing recital opportunities for their students and for their teachers; providing opportunities for music composition; presenting awards, scholarships and bursaries to students; presenting 25 Year and 50 Year Membership pins to

teachers; providing workshops for teachers and students; sponsoring Music Festivals; sponsoring special Canada Music Week celebrations and providing opportunities for colleagues to mingle and socialize.

#### BCRMTA CELEBRATED ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2007

And what a celebration it was!! Saturday, September 22, 2007 began with registration for the day for \$60. What a deal!! The afternoon began with a Workshop entitled "Creativity for All" which was presented by Forrest and Akiko Kinney from Seattle. I think the topic was a hit and by the number of teachers lined up to purchase their creative material many students in B.C. are now enjoying creating music without fear! Their workshop was followed by an address given by Dr. Peter Simon, President of

the RCM and a presentation by Dr. Tom Green regarding changes to the RCM Examination requirements. There was little time to change before the Gala Banquet which is always marvellous fun with good food, great and many door prizes, and wonderful fellowship and camaraderie. A toast to the BCRMTA, a trace of some of its history, an introduction of Past Presidents and Honorary Life Members and the conferring of Lynne Carmichael as the latest Honorary Life Member rounded out the banquet. The evening concluded with a special concert by the Canadian Piano Duo, James Anagnoson and Leslie Kinton. We were also very honoured that Peggy L'Hoir, CFMTA President and Patricia Frehlich, CFMTA Past President were able to be with us for the festivities.



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We are looking forward to the BCRMTA Convention entitled "Rejuvenate in 2008" which will be held at Harrison Hot Springs Hotel, September 26 and 27, 2008 with Stephane Lemelin as guest clinician.

## SASKATCHEWAN

JANET MCGONIGLE

*Greetings from the "Land of Living Skies"* as the license plates in our province proudly display! It might have said "Land of the Arts" and described it as well. We continue to have an active provincial association; and music thrives in most communities throughout the province.

SRMTA has a membership of two hundred seventeen; five are Affiliate One Members (those with a Grade X or comparable certificate), and four are Honorary Life Members. Almost all of these members are members of a local branch of the Provincial Association; forty-three are not.

This past year we said a final

farewell to three of our colleagues and friends: Marjorie Temple, Marguerite Richards and most recently, Margaret Kippen. They were members who contributed in various and many capacities.

Marjorie Temple would have been known to many of you. She served on the CFMTA Executive from 1989 – 1995, including a term as President. She also served as SRMTA President from 1982-1985. She was dedicated to the teaching of music and to the many organizations that supported teachers. She was a member of the Prince Albert Branch.

Marguerite Richards was a member of the Saskatoon Branch of SRMTA and taught from 1944 until retirement, a few years prior to her death. She was awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the Saskatoon Branch for her years of service including a term as President.

Margaret Kippen was also a member of the Saskatoon Branch and taught for 70 years, both in the public

school system and privately. She served as Provincial President, CFMTA Vice – President; was an Honorary Life Member of SRMTA, Trinity College and The Musical Art Club.

Our members are embracing the new membership categories in different ways, some enthusiastically, others cautiously. We have five Affiliate Members already and many inquiries regarding joining the Association. We have seen great enthusiasm from these members and we trust we will receive from them as much as they will receive from us.

Publication of our provincial directory has been discontinued. In its place, we have included in our Provincial Newsletter, an insert which can be removed. It is updated three times instead of once a year and the change has also saved our Association a substantial amount of money.

Our Branches continue to present workshops and learning opportunities for their members:

### NOVUS VIA JOINS CONSERVATORY CANADA FOR AUGUST WORKSHOPS!

Clinicians: Christopher Norton & Victoria Warwick

Plan to attend these exciting and informative sessions presented by Christopher Norton (composer of the world-wide smash hit publication *Microjazz*) and Victoria Warwick, Executive Director of Conservatory Canada.

These workshops will provide teachers with tools for the performance and instruction of contemporary styles of music. You will be introduced to exciting new publications involving the Conservatory Canada **Contemporary Idioms** curriculum. Victoria Warwick will demonstrate the pedagogical value in Conservatory Canada's new *Guide to Contemporary Idioms* while Christopher Norton will enthuse and inspire teachers with illustrations from the new and successful series, **American Popular Piano!**

Workshops will take place as follows:

August 5 –	London, ON	August 8 –	Vancouver, BC
August 6 –	Saskatoon, SK	August 11 –	Toronto, ON
August 7 –	Edmonton, AB	August 13 –	Regina, SK
		August 14 –	Ottawa, ON



**Battlefords:**

- “Dream for a Lifetime” a recital featuring the Canada Music Week performance of “Dance of the Loons” for piano and “Lullaby of the Iroquois” for voice.

**Swift Current:**

- Workshop by Gaye-Lynn Kern entitled “First Came the Words” focusing on the support of Speech Arts in the Saskatchewan Music Festival.

**Saskatoon:**

- Clinicians Dale Wheeler, David McIntyre, Heather Laliberte and Darren Schwartz.
- Workshops included “Let’s Get Technical”, “Reading the Fine Print” (in regards to the music festival)
- Contemporary Showcase.

**Yorkton:**

- Hosted the Provincial Annual General Meeting held in September
- Contemporary Showcase with Sarah Konescni as adjudicator and clinician.

**West Central:**

- Workshop with Dale Wheeler entitled “Do You Hear What I Hear?”

**Regina Branch:**

- Contemporary Showcase
- Workshop with RCM’s Karen Haggman
- Music Festival guests, Doris Lazeki and Penny Penniston fielding questions.
- Workshop on “Income taxes for Home Based Businesses”

**East Central Branch:**

- Book exchange
- Workshop with Wes Froese “Teaching Lead Sheets & Improv”

The ongoing project for the Provincial Executive is “A Policies and Procedure Manual” which is proving to be a challenging one. We continue to work on communicating more effectively with our members and keeping the membership well informed.

It is a privilege to serve the Saskatchewan Registered Music Teachers. I look forward to attending the annual meetings of the CFMTA in Mississauga this July.



*CORRIE HAUSAUER*

The Alberta Registered Music Teachers’ Association (1982) celebrated their 75th birthday with a wonderful conference in October. It was presented in collaboration with the “Composers Series” and the “Edmonton Recital Society” held in Edmonton. It included Stephane Lemelin and The Lafayette String Quartet in concert. The successful conference included recognition of past Presidents and recognition of “40 year members”. The Annual General Meeting was also held at this time.

ARMTA membership remains strong with a total of 409 members. Member certificates will be updated to be in line with the new CFMTA requirements, consisting of categories: Full, Affiliate Member Level I, and Affiliate Member Level II.

All of ARMTA members are receiving our provincial magazine, the “Tempo”. It is now an expanded thicker magazine with a fresh new look, thanks to the Tempos’ new editor Bettijo Smith.

The Young Artist Tour is well under way and will occur in late April or early May of 2009. Members are excited about the revival of this beneficial program in Alberta.

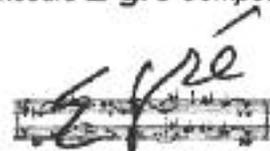
Other continuing provincial projects include the Canada Music Week Writing Competition, with five composers that got recognition last year. And there were four Scholarship winners at the provincial festival that were sponsored by ARMTA.

Every one of the branches in Alberta is doing an outstanding job promoting music in each region, with

musical events, workshops, and recitals organized regularly.

The Calgary Branch holds discussion groups every few months called “Chamber Chats”. They co-hosted the RCM Technical Requirements Workshop in October, in November they had their Contemporary Showcase, and in January an ARMTA Honours recital gave scholarships and medals to students with high marks.

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The Branch in Edmonton hosts “Magenta Mondays” for music workshops. The Composers Celebration concerts featured music of Schubert, Szymanowski, and Beethoven. And the Edmonton Branch Newsletter is now being offered on line as well as in print to keep their members informed.

It has been an exciting year for music in Fort McMurray. Their branch had their 24th Annual Awards Ceremony during Canada Music Week that gave away \$10,000 in scholarships that were donated by local businesses. During this week they also had their 18th Annual Creative Music Writing Competition Concert. In February the Branch had a Creative Music Workshop with Joyce Pinckney. Fort McMurray is busy planning a pre-festival master class in April working with 2006 Honens Piano Competition winners, and continues with their projects such as the Technique Olympics and the Pre-Exam Recitals for their students.

The Lethbridge Branch continues with several student recitals throughout the year. The Canada

Music Week Recital also awards students with high marks on their exams. There are discussion groups and informal recitals, just for the ‘adult’ student, giving the more mature student extra opportunities to enhance their learning. Lethbridge helped host a RCM workshop, and is planning a membership drive.

The Red Deer Branch always has enjoyable monthly meetings, with different guest speakers, and interesting discussions on music such as Technique Olympics, Sight Reading and Rhythms, and Unique Interval Reading. Their pre-festival recital, called the “Jitterbug Recital”, is held at the Red Deer College just prior to the Red Deer Festival.

Lloydminster Branch had a very educational workshop and master class put on by Helmut Brauss on pedaling techniques. Then another workshop on Ear Training and Sight Reading by Lore Ruschiensky was a benefit to all who attended. For Canada Music Week they also had a student recital and scholarship presentation. Other recitals were organized like the Barr Colony Museum’s Family Christmas Day, and a pre-festival recital.

The Members-at-Large are full of activity in the rural areas. In Three Hills there was involvement in productions of Cinderella, three chamber music concerts, and the Academy’s String Department. Some smaller communities had the Music Festival cancelled last year because of the lack of finances and volunteers. Now the provincial board has funds designated to help this problem, and the festivals are planned for this year. The Members-at-Large have helped piano teachers connect with other music teachers in remote communities they have moved to, and are helping families make music teacher contacts.



## ONTARIO

NANCY HUGHES

Greetings from Ontario!

The 2007 ORMTA AGM and

Student Competitions took place on July 21, 2007 at the Stage West Hotel in Mississauga. In response to some difficulties experienced this year, council has implemented a few changes. These include increasing the time limit for the Provincial Student Instrumental Competition from fifteen to seventeen minutes and increasing the Young Artist Competition to twenty minutes. A new handbook of guidelines is being prepared.

In November all of the provincial executive helped with the RCME Silver Medal Ceremony in Toronto. President; Doranne Cooper was Master of Ceremonies. We hope to be able to participate again next year.

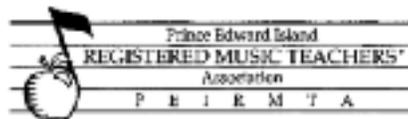
In January provincial council held its first electronic meeting. All agree it was a huge success which not only saved thousands of dollars but also spared councilors from the hazards of winter travel. We would like to see this happen again next year.

Our website continues to be upgraded and improved under new Webmaster, Helga Morrison. All interested branches have been added along with up to date information on all ORMTA matters.

A new topic has come up for discussion recently – the issue of security concerns regarding children’s photos on the internet. This might concern our competition winners and recital performers. One opinion from an expert on internet crime with the Toronto Police Department – “We should use the internet for good purposes – if we don’t then the bad guys win”. We plan to weigh each side of this issue very carefully to hopefully develop a policy.

Looking ahead to July 2008 the ORMTA Convention will be held in North Bay. Paul Coates, Charlene Biggs, Thomas Jones, Jamie Thompson and Joe Ringhofer all have very interesting topics to present. There will also be presentations by RCME, Conservatory Canada, The Canadian National Conservatory, Yamaha, Roland and Frederick Harris. The Student and Young Artist Competitions will be held as well as the AGM, Awards Luncheon and Gala Banquet. Called “Sounds of the Bay”

the convention committee has also prepared a relaxing sunset cruise and barbeque on lovely Lake Nipissing. We hope CFMTA members from across Canada will be able to join us.



**P.E.I.**

JANE NAYLOR

This report covers the period from June 2007 to June 2008.

Our Annual Meeting on June 16, 2007 was very successful with a large turnout for our business lunch meeting, at which the proposed changes to our By-laws were approved, including the new CFMTA Membership categories. Rebekah Maxner of the NSRMTA presented two very interesting and well-received workshops: *Wired for Sound* on teaching auditory learners, and *Notekidds*, her creative piano series, with a fresh and effective approach to note-reading. ([www.notekidds.maxner.ca](http://www.notekidds.maxner.ca))

On July 30, the pianists among us enjoyed a workshop with Alan Fraser, discussing various aspects of technique with examples, both live and from his DVD, *The Craft of Piano Playing* ([www.craftofpiano.com](http://www.craftofpiano.com)).

We were busy during the first two weeks of August, prior to the August 15 deadline for *The Canadian Music Teacher*, to which we contributed. The Executive prepared and sent our annual August mailing to members, including our new directory reflecting the new categories of membership, Membership Cards, a Chronological List of Dates, our Young Musicians Recital Series Entry Form and Guide to Teachers/Parents, our Canada Music Week® Composition Competition Information & Entry Form, Minutes of our Annual Meeting, Annual Report for 2006/7, and an RCM flyer about a September 30 workshop. An advertisement for the PEIRMTA and a notice about the upcoming RCM Workshop went out to PEI's September arts listing, *The BUZZ*. PEI's featured composer for

the Canada Music Week® issue of *The Canadian Music Teacher*, Jim Dickson, was contacted to submit his information. We agreed to continue to participate with the NSRMTA in a joint newsletter, *Arabesque*. A social event was held Aug. 30.

On September 12, our piano teachers took advantage of a Frederick Harris Workshop on Christopher Norton's *Connections for Piano* series. The PEIRMTA held the first of its monthly Pedagogy meetings on September 20. On September 30 the PEIRMTA co-sponsored the RCM workshop, *Let's Get Technical*, on the new technical requirements in the upcoming 2008 Piano Syllabus.

At our Executive meeting on October 27, Dr. Frances Gray volunteered to act as Co-ordinator for the PEIRMTA Provincial Piano Competition to choose a competitor for the 2009 CFMTA National Piano Competition in Sackville, NB. The first of our six PEIRMTA Young Musicians Recitals for this academic year also took place on October 27.

Our November 15th Pedagogy Meeting featured an unusual direction for us, as we decided to learn more about fiddling and its accompaniment styles. We watched an excellent video on the Cape Breton style called *A Chording to the Tunes* by Tracey Dares. (1997, Crooked Lake Productions 902-727-2850) Canada Music Week® was celebrated on Nov. 17th instead of the 24th because several of our members and students were involved in symphony practise that day. Our report on Canada Music Week® was published in the Winter Edition of *The Canadian Music Teacher*. We will be forwarding a DVD of the performance of their composition to each of Lilian Safdie and Ernst Schneider.

On December 2nd, the first of our two annual Socials for Adult Students and Teachers took place at the home of one of the students. We always have a good time at these. There is no pressure to perform, but most do and we end with a pot luck meal.

A workshop featuring PEI fiddle accompanist Glen MacEachern was held January 12. We enjoyed this very

much and had an opportunity for some hands-on instruction. He has a couple of CDs out and I really like the one I bought: *Feeling the Rhythm* ([www.glenmaceachern.com](http://www.glenmaceachern.com)). Following the workshop, those of us who had attended joined other members for "Dinner Out".

February 23 was the occasion of an excellent vocal Masterclass, *What Do I Do With My Hands*, with Pam Campbell and Nancy Beck. This dealt with interpretation and presentation

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rather than vocal technique. One of our members said it was the best masterclass of its type she had ever attended (and she has a lot of experience).  
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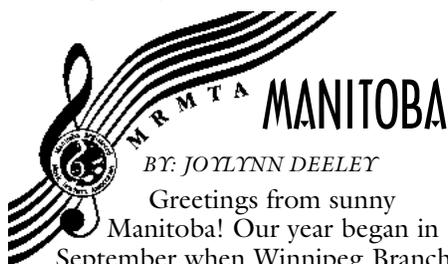
Our March 29th student recital included a ceremony for the performance and presentation of awards for our Canada Music Week® Composition Competition. Three compositions will be forwarded to the CFMTA National Music Writing Competition for judging this summer.

April is always a busy month for teachers with preparations for PEI's Kiwanis Music Festival, which takes place in May. However, we put aside time for the third of our four executive meetings, the last Young Musicians Recital, the second Adult Social and our monthly Pedagogy Meeting. In an effort to attract more members, we engaged in an email campaign this month, making available the information about our new membership categories and the benefits of belonging to the PEIRMTA/CFMTA. (We currently

have 26 members.) As many of us as possible, along with our students, their parents, and our other colleagues and friends, took part in the National Day of Action Demonstration for CBC Radio Two and CBC Orchestra on Friday, April 11, 1 pm in front of PEI's CBC building.

May 3rd was the date of our annual fundraiser, the PEIRMTA Performathon. Two contestants represented PEI in the CFMTA Atlantic Young Artist Competition, May 10th, in New Brunswick. We also placed an advertisement about the PEIRMTA in the Music Festival Program.

Our Annual Meeting took place June 14th, with one workshop and a business lunch. Two delegates will attend the CFMTA annual business meetings, July 5 and 6, 2008.



Greetings from sunny Manitoba! Our year began in September when Winnipeg Branch hosted their annual Breakfast Meeting welcoming new and existing members of MRMTA as the fall season begins. Our Take Note Newsletter, which is published three times per year, includes a Calendar of Events page informing us about upcoming meeting, workshops, concerts and social events. Our MRMTA Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, September 30th, 2007. After much careful thought, discussion, research and many meetings our provincial executive brought forth a motion to require all teaching members of MRMTA (new and existing) to complete a Child Abuse/Criminal Record Check. This motion was voted on at the AGM and passed unanimously. Therefore, as of May 1st, 2008, all Manitoba Registered Music Teachers (members of MRMTA) will be required to complete a Child Abuse and or Criminal Record Check. We feel this is a progressive step in the world we live in today and are proud to be leaders in this direction. Our new provincial executive was voted in at the AGM.

Our thirty and forty year members were honoured. Our guest speaker was a representative from the Winnipeg Police Association who helped us understand the pros and cons as well as the processing of a Child Abuse/Criminal Record Check. We were musically entertained by the Winnipeg Police Choir directed by one of our own MRMTA members. Our Canada Music Week Concert was held on Sunday, November 18th, 2007. This concert featured a varied and talented group of performers. The program included organ, piano, voice, clarinet and an Orff ensemble. As well, one of the winners of the Canada Music Week Writing Competition performed her original composition. The R.C.M. Silver Medal Ceremony was held on Sunday, December 2nd, 2007 honouring R.C.M. students who received the highest marks in the province for the 2007 year of practical examinations. The annual Holiday Breakfast hosted by Winnipeg Branch was held on December 13th, 2007. This morning serves as a moment of relaxation in the midst of the mad mayhem of Christmas concerts, recitals and church services. What could be better than good food, good friends, camaraderie and carol singing accompanied by a strolling accordionist and violinist? Winnipeg Branch continues to inspire us with many outstanding workshops. Topics are varied and relate to all of our members. We have enjoyed: Performance Anxiety Strategies with clinician Ingrid Toews, A New Technique for the Piano with clinician Lobomyr Melnyk, What's Current with Manitoba/ MRMTA Composers? with clinicians Maryanne Rumancik and Julianne Dick, and Interpreting Contemporary Selections of the Voice Syllabi with clinician Valdine Anderson. The 19th Annual MRMTA Pianothon- Musichthon was held in February at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. This is a special fundraiser for MRMTA who together with Variety Club provide music programs as well as musical therapy in various schools and daycares throughout the inner city. Marge Lebrun, a long time member of MRMTA, has dedicated many years to this project and she was awarded

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the coveted RBC's Local Heroes Award for the year 2007. The MRMTA Scholarship Series preliminary auditions were held in February which includes piano, voice and strings at the Introductory, Junior and Senior level. The finals and semifinals will continue into the spring. Branches in Brandon and Southern Manitoba continue to be musically active representing the rural areas of Manitoba. We continue to do our best to increase membership, support our members and provide excellence in the musical education of students in Manitoba.



## NEWFOUNDLAND

LORNE BUICK

Greetings to all from Newfoundland. Perhaps by the time you all read this it will be Spring . . . as I write it's -11° as the moon shines on two feet of crunchy snow . . .

2007-8 is the 20th anniversary year for the NLRMTA, and as always has been a busy round of musical activities. One of our highlights was the Canada Music Week recital and CBC broadcast, as reported in the last issue. That was followed in December by our annual Christmas Food Bank recitals; admission is by donation to the local food bank, so it's a chance for our students to combine their love of music-making with the spirit of giving and sharing.

Again this year several Memorial University music professors generously donated their time on Saturday afternoons to offer masterclasses for pre-university students. This is a tremendous educational experience for the young players and singers and greatly appreciated by them, as well as by teachers and parents. Many thanks to Tim Steeves, Kristina Szutor and Maureen Volk (piano), and Catherine Fitch and Jane Leibel (voice).

February 5th saw a recital at the Petro Canada Hall by James Hurley, student of member Timothy Steeves. James was our representative and was

the second place winner in the CFMTA National Piano Competition at our National Convention in Toronto in March of 2007.

Still to come in May is the Scholarship Recital. It's another great performance opportunity for the students—and we all know they can use the money!

Best wishes for the New York conference and a great summer!



## NOVA SCOTIA

LORNA WANZEL,  
PRESIDENT,  
NSRMTA.

Greetings from Nova Scotia. Activities in the NSRMTA Chapters have followed the normal yearly routine of monthly Chapter meetings and shared recitals. The Halifax Chapter had an active and productive year with an interesting Workshop on Changes for the new RCM technical requirements, held in October. The members provided a lovely reception for the "Trio Mosaïque" concert which was part of the St. Cecelia Concert Series in November. We also celebrated Canada Music week in November and the 70th birthday of our Association. Rafael Alcolado played a lively rendition of the Dennis Agay Variations on the Happy Birthday theme and we shared a huge birthday cake with all the performers and audience. The winner of the NSRMTA Halifax Chapter Prize for the highest total points earned during the Halifax Kiwanis Music Festival was 11 year old Karen Choi for voice and piano. Karen is a piano student of Carol von Syberg. The Halifax Chapter is busy organizing the Provincial Scholarship Competition this year which will be held on May 17th at the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts, the adjudicators will be Patricia Wyman for strings and Tina Cheng for piano.

The Dartmouth Chapter held nine hours of recitals during Canada Music Week. Some of their teachers offer Christmas recitals featuring seasonal music and duets. Seven hours of

recitals prior to the Kiwanis Music Festival were also held to give their students a rehearsal opportunity for festival performances. The Dartmouth Chapter is responsible for the Annual Provincial Convention to be held on June 21st at the Alderney Gate Library in the Helen Creighton Room. One feature of this convention will be a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the NSRMTA. Speakers will feature two clinicians from Nova



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Scotia and one from RCM Examinations. There will be many archival and anecdotal memories from past years showcased. There will also be performances by some of the winners of the Scholarship Competition. Chapter members will be very busy during the spring making sure that the anniversary convention is a special event.

The Valley Chapter included several workshops in their winter programme. These included "Alexander Technique" by Ron Tomarelli; "Baroque Style" by John Hansen; "Music Therapy" by Heather Price. They organized student recitals in February and April and many of their students participated in the Annapolis Valley Music Festival in April. We all mourn the loss of our dear colleague, Hetty Jackson, who passed away last fall. She was a long standing member of the Valley Chapter and will be sorely missed.

The Independent Music Teachers' Research Group (IMTRG), which

consists of members from both the Halifax and Dartmouth Chapters, continues to meet and is preparing to present the findings of their first research project, "Motivation and Retention of Students in the Independent Music Studio". The IMTRG was delighted to hear that Jane Naylor, PEIRMTA, has also started a research group as a result of hearing our presentation at the 2006 NSRMTA Annual Convention. What better way to learn and gain new knowledge than from each other and our students.



Greetings from snowy New Brunswick. Despite the very hard winter, New Brunswick has certainly been a happening place for music this past year.

In August 2007 the National Music Festival was held in Moncton on the campus of Université de Moncton. The monumental task of organizing this event went to Executive Director, Barbara Long from Somerville. She enlisted assistance from teachers and musicians throughout the province to achieve a smooth and polished festival. Congratulations to Barbara on a job well done!

The Anna Malenfant Festival took place in October 2007 with Monette Gould handling all of the organizational

details. All events took place at Monument Lefebvre Theatre in Memramcook. Masterclasses were held with pianist-coach Dalton Baldwin and singer-teacher Lorraine Nubar. This was an extraordinary chance for both singers and collaborative pianists to benefit from the expertise and experience of Mr. Baldwin and Ms. Nubar. The weekend finished with a concert featuring baritone Dion Mazerolle and pianist Julien LeBlanc, originally from Cognac. In May Podium 2008 is being held in Sackville at Mount Allison University. The concert agenda will feature Rajatan, an internationally acclaimed vocal sextet from Finland. Also performing will be the National Youth Choir along with a lengthy and superlative list of choirs and presenters. The Marsh will be humming with activity.

The Atlantic Young Artist Competition will also take place in May. This will be hosted in Dieppe at the Chocolate River Conservatory of Music under the direction of NB Convener, Melody Dobson. Competitors from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland will be competing.

The momentum continues as we approach 2009. Plans are well under way for the CF Convention in July 2009 - "Go Maritime in 2009" - which will also be held in Sackville on the campus of Mount Allison University. Featured artists will be violinist Jasper Wood, originally from Moncton and pianist Edmund Dawe, long-time associate of Mount Allison University. With Barbara Long again in charge, this will be an event you will not want to miss.

All of our local festivals have been keeping their students on their toes with periodic recitals to prepare them for upcoming music festivals and exams. As reported in the last issue, Canada Music Week was celebrated with concerts throughout the province - all commemorating the great Canadian composers who enrich our musical lives.

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BY PETE JUTRAS

Greetings to my Canadian Colleagues! Since I began my tenure as Editor-in-Chief in 2007, I have received many Canadian inquiries about *Keyboard Companion* magazine, and I'm pleased to write this short article to both introduce you to our publication and to let you know of a special new offer for Canadian subscribers.

## Who we are

*Keyboard Companion* magazine was founded in 1990 by the esteemed pedagogue Richard Chronister. Richard's inspiration for the title was based on his observation that piano teaching can be a lonely profession. Since most of us teach at home, we aren't able to discuss our ideas and problems with colleagues on a daily basis. Richard founded KC with the hope that it would serve as a

companion to teachers, providing a lively dialogue for the exchange of ideas about our work.

*Keyboard Companion* is published quarterly, and each issue has regular departments headed by an "all-star" team of editors. These editors pose a question or topic, and they solicit responses from other teachers. You always get different points of view and solutions that you know have been implemented by real studio teachers working with real students. In this sense, it is like having a series of workshops delivered right to your door. Here's a list of our departments and editors:

*Adult Piano Study* – Michelle Conda

*Jazz & Pop* – Tony Caramia, Geoff Haydon, Phillip Keveren, Christopher Norton

*Keyboard Kids Companion* – Helen Smith Tarchalski

*Music Reading* – Craig Sale  
*News & Views* – Helen Smith Tarchalski

*Perspectives in Pedagogy* – Rebecca Johnson

*Repertoire & Performance* – Nancy Bachus

*Rhythm* – Bruce Berr

*Technique* – Scott McBride Smith

*Technology* – George Litterst

All of our articles are designed to be practical and useful, and our regular readers report that they love getting the magazine. One teacher from Oregon recently commented to me, "If I had to teach on a desert island and could only bring two things, I would bring Beethoven Sonatas and *Keyboard Companion*." The *Keyboard Kids Companion* is a two-page section that usually contains a fun puzzle, a composer biography, and some practice ideas for students. As a subscriber to KC, you have



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#### A Variety of Views

Recent articles have included topics such as teaching artistic phrasing, fingering principles, improvising for non-improvisers, using stuffed animals to teach technique, dealing with reading reversals, interpreting Gershwin's 2nd Prelude, designing a studio website, choosing concerti for adult students, and teaching students to properly subdivide beats at an early age. You really do get different points of view – over 60 authors have contributed in the past year alone, and this list includes writers such as Gail Berenson, Marvin Blickenstaff, Dan Coates, Seymour Fink, Gail Lew, Rebekah Maxner, Phyllis Pfeiffer, Stephen Reen, Paul Sheftel, Christos Tsitsaros, Robert Vandall, Paul Wirth, and many more! In 2008-2009 we have many exciting articles scheduled, including cover stories featuring Leon Fleisher, William Westney, and Scott Price.

To read a sampling of articles and enjoy accompanying audio and video

files, I invite you to our website at [www.keyboardcompanion.com](http://www.keyboardcompanion.com), where you can also order a subscription.

*Keyboard Companion* is a non-profit publication, and we have a limited budget. We find that our subscribers are very loyal, but many teachers are unfamiliar with us. I welcome this opportunity to introduce ourselves, and I hope you'll consider giving us a try.

#### Special Offer for Canadian Groups

In the United States, *Keyboard Companion* offers group subscriptions to organizations of 5 or more. These subscriptions offer a 20% discount off of our regular rate, and many associations use the articles in the magazine as a basis for lively discussion and debate at their meetings. Over recent years, increasing postal rates and budget challenges forced us to discontinue offering new group subscriptions to Canadian subscribers.

I'm thrilled to report, however, that we have just found a new solution and will again be offering new group subscriptions to Canadians. I received

many inquiries about this at the Collaborative Conference in Toronto last year, and I am very happy to offer this option again. For groups of 5 or more, there will be a 20% discount (\$24US instead of the normal rate of \$30US), and for groups of 10 or more, the group leader will also receive their subscription *free*. To start a group subscription in time for our Autumn 2008 issue featuring Leon Fleisher, please order no later than July 25th. For complete details on the group subscription program, please call Maggie Zullinger at 1-800-824-5087, or write to [circulation@keyboardcompanion.com](mailto:circulation@keyboardcompanion.com). If any of you have any editorial questions or inquiries, I invite you to write to me at any time at [editor@keyboardcompanion.com](mailto:editor@keyboardcompanion.com).

I thank you for interest, and I hope you'll consider subscribing to the magazine, either as an individual or through a group. I know you will enjoy the great ideas and teaching tips, and I would love to have more Canadian companions!



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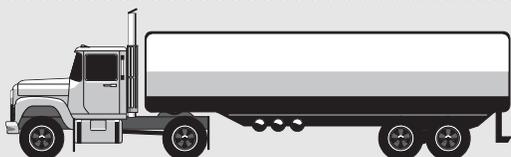
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# HOSTING A TECHNICAL OLYMPICS

## Nurturing Technical Prowess to an Artistic End

BY HEATHER THOMAS, NBRMT

As a fledgling teacher some two decades ago, I remember being keen to introduce my young students to the study of piano technique. Still a student myself, I recognized the benefit in mastering the note and finger patterns and the physical dexterity which comprise technique outside of a piece of music. I knew from personal experience that securing flawless technical skills takes considerable time and effort but that the end result produces benefits which extend beyond the immediate demands of a student's exam requirements; secure technical skills are, in fact, foundational to artistic performance.

It was somewhat of a shock when I discovered, time and again, that most students did not share my can-do attitude. While they embraced their technical requirements with a weak enthusiasm in September, their interest invariably dwindled as the year progressed. No matter how much I coached, cajoled, threatened or even ignored a student's technical regime it seemed they left the bulk of the work till the final weeks prior to their exam.

It is true that scales and triads can be a tad boring. I had a friend in high school who confessed to practicing her technique while she read the comics!

It has long been my belief that mastering the technical requirements for any given grade should not take longer than a week or two. Of course, this requires that a student set learning goals and stay focused on the routine required to reach them. Most instrumentalists do not have the independent drive needed to reach their technical goals quickly. They need an exterior motivation and what better nudge than the threat of a looming public performance? From this reality was born the Technical Olympics.

My first Technical Olympics was an informal affair. A colleague of mine in Halifax, Nova Scotia was planning a group lesson involving our combined piano studios. It was early spring of 1992 and the world was eagerly preparing for the pending summer Olympic games. Struck by a sudden pedagogical whim, I proposed a sort of athletic challenge for our students. Using the technical requirements specific to their grade level each child would compete to see who could perform their technique to the highest level of competency.

It was a low key affair. Students had only a week or two to refine their technical skills. There was no audience beyond their competing peers, no stage or medals or host judges, but the students enjoyed themselves and practicing efforts did increase prior to the big event. Perhaps the most beneficial spin-off was that students glimpsed the level of technical perfection that could be achieved at their instrument. For many it was the first time they had looked seriously at the elements which comprise a "perfect" scale performance and the muscle coordination required to reproduce that result consistently.

Fast forward sixteen years. It is February 2008 and twelve students are nervously awaiting the start of the Fourth Annual City-Wide Technical Olympics in Saint John, New Brunswick.

At the marking tables our host judges and their tabulating secretaries rustle papers in readiness for the first event. One coordinator busily arranges colourful helium balloons and medals at the awards table while another adjusts the position of the chairs and performance instrument in each room of the church facility which we are using as our athletic "stadium." The Technical Olympics has become a fun, annual event in Saint John, a chance for students to strive for technical perfection far ahead of their June exam date and to reap the rewards of early preparation.

A successful Technical Olympics on this scale requires careful planning far ahead of the actual event. A venue must be secured, judges enlisted and award medals ordered. The olympics in our region is open only to students of registered teachers and it is advertised as one of the events in our yearly calendar. It is up to individual teachers to select the students from within their studios who they wish to participate each year. Setting the registration a full two weeks ahead of the actual event will allow the planning committee ample time to divide the participants into grade levels and events based on the enrolment statistics. Participation numbers vary from year to year. Some years we are inundated with competitors at the Grade One and Two conservatory levels; other years we might see a glut of participants in the higher grades. Students should be grouped loosely by grade so that you have two or three levels competing simultaneously. Each student competes with requirements from their specific grade level so it is possible to place multiple grades within one performance division. Our grade divisions this year placed six participants into one of two groups, Grades One to Three or Grades Four to Eight.

### THE STRUCTURAL DETAILS

With an event of this size it is important to conscript a large number of helpers. It is impossible to have too many staff members available on performance day. While it is most expedient to have a small planning committee of just two or three teachers, you will need many more at the actual event. We find it helpful to have two workers handling registration, two setting up the tables, chairs and instruments, plus a judge and secretary for each technical event. Additionally, it is helpful to have emcees in each competition room to keep the atmosphere light and to direct the flow of the competition. An overall organizer who can direct traffic, answer technical questions and liaison between each of the competition rooms is also essential.

A first-time Olympic event should be run on a small scale. We were kept very busy this year with just twelve competitors. We divided the competition into two rooms within the church facility. The first was a large sanctuary which came complete with a grand piano and bench seating. The second was a smaller room off the main one where we set up stacking chairs, a keyboard and a table and seats for the judge and secretary.

Parents and family members are encouraged to stay and cheer on the participants. Students usually arrive at this event

feeling nervous and unsure about the proceedings. Without the encouragement of the audience the event can easily remain stiflingly serious. We provide our audience with fun noisemakers (castanets, jingle bells and other fun rhythm instruments) with which to make raucous noise in between each performance. This keeps the event fun and gives young siblings in the audience a reason to wiggle when appropriate!

We have limited our Olympics to just two technical events: scales and chords. For students at the higher conservatory levels the chord event will comprise of major and minor four note chords as well as dominant V's and diminished 7ths as required for their specific grade levels. With a smaller group of competitors you may wish to include an arpeggio event or even competitive clapbacks and rhythmic sightreading, however, remember that two rounds of an average event with six to eight competitors will take approximately thirty minutes to run. Be careful not to exhaust your performers by trying to fit too many events into a single afternoon.

For ease of administration we instruct the teachers of all participants to make up a plastic baggie for each event in which a student is participating. Inside the baggie are paper slips on which the teacher prints the keys required for that student's grade level. Each event is comprised of two "rounds" of play. At the start of each round students remove the baggie from under their chair and blindly pick two slips from the bag to determine which technical requirements they will perform. A lucky Grade One RCM student might pick C and G major in the scales event while an unlucky co-competitor picks A and E

harmonic minor. Only one of each key is contained in the baggie, so students who pick easy keys on their first round are bound to end up with the more difficult keys in round two. Participants perform their scales HS or HT and two or four octaves as required by grade. For the triad/chord event students not yet playing their technic HT select which hand will play which of the two keys. In this way there exists a little strategy along with luck. They may play A major with the RH and leave the F major (irregular in the RH) for the left. Because they are only asked to play technic which is specific to their exam requirements we can have students from a multitude of conservatories and grade levels fairly competing with one another in the same event.

### JUDGING

While it is ideal to have host judges from another city centre our limited budget usually dictates that teachers, retired or practicing, from within our own locale serve as judges for this event. Where possible we try to trade off this responsibility so that we are seldom judging our own students. Marking is, in fact, very objective. Each aspect of technique is marked out of a total of five points with a half point being deducted for each incorrect note, finger slip, tempo change or severely under tempo performance. A false start earns a one point deduction. It is extremely difficult to play a scale "perfectly" without a warm-up. ( If you don't believe me, test yourself now by going to your instrument and trying!) Most students will average 3.5 to 4.5 for each technical aspect they perform. Those who consistently score 4.5 and 5's are truly well-versed.



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In the four years which we have been running our Olympic event and keeping track of the winning scores we have noted that, not unlike music festivals, the winner of an event usually wins by only a half point. The results are always very close and we are quick to point out that, while “today” this student took first place, tomorrow or next week the results might be completely different. Like all such competitive events, it is in preparing for the event that a student receives the most benefit.

Each student receives a score sheet which travels with them from one event to the next. On this sheet are two tables with room for four technical “aspects” (four scales, four triads, etc.). There is room for the judge to write the key played, the score received and a brief comment. Students and their teachers may review these score sheets at their first lesson following the Olympics and will benefit from knowing whether a poor score was the result of an overly ambitious tempo choice, a nervous note stumble or incorrect fingering.

Because the marks received are usually so close and the winners so marginally better than their competitors we have found it encouraging to have students compete both individually and by team. Each participant is placed on one of two teams when they register and they receive a red or blue pinny with their competitor number which they wear during the event. When the marks are tabulated we award medals for the best score in each event (Best Junior Scales, Best Senior Chords, etc) as well as candy-filled mugs for each member on the team with the highest total points. Arriving at the final team scores will take a little fast juggling of numbers and a ready calculator.

We also award each student a medal just for participating. In this way the time and effort which they put forward in preparing for this event is recognized.

#### EVENT EXTRAS

Few students need to be coached about taking this event seriously. On the contrary, we have found that students need to be reminded frequently that this is NOT an exam. Yes, they are performing publicly and, yes, they will likely make some mistakes, but they are not alone. To keep the spirit of the event light we always add a few fun touches. Colourful helium balloons and a large Olympic banner decorate the front of the main competition room. We bring a CD player and play the John Williams olympic theme music while competitors march into the main hall for the awards ceremony. Lively emcees at each event direct the competition, entertain the audience, lead the cheering and help deflect attention from the awkwardness of the occasional weak performance.

#### THE BENEFITS

While the tone of the Technical Olympics is fun, a student’s preparation for this event will need to be strategic in order to yield consistent results. As a young teacher I remember being frustrated that many students failed to understand the “technique behind the technique,” that scales and chords played with fluidity and control were beautiful enough to be considered “artistic.” It is toward this level of technical mastery that we need to propel our students, to play their technique, not just till they have played it right once, but till they cannot play it wrong. A Technical Olympics celebrates the achievement of the very skills a musician requires to play his or her music well.

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# EXPANDING YOUR TEACHING HORIZONS

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MR. BRAHMS!: NEW WAYS TO THINK ABOUT RECITALS

BY KATHY BEVERIDGE

Who doesn't like birthday parties? And eating cake? That's what my piano recitals are - celebrations. I choose my recital dates to coincide with the birthday of one composer I want to feature, both biographically and musically. I think students should look forward to performing on stage in a festive atmosphere.

All I remember from recitals when I was a student is the dread and terror of not being perfect, thereby embarrassing my parents to no end. The sweaty palms; clammy, slippery fingers (oh, no, not Bach - I'll slide off the keys!); the shaking pedal foot (not to mention the visibly vibrating knee); that awful feeling in the pit of the stomach (I'd rather be in the dentist's chair). The mind is blank; the ears tune out as one awaits the inevitable turn on the stage. Then, when one's turn is finally over, after that eternity on stage, one is so relieved to "have it over with" that one's ears still aren't in proper working order until the drive home.

In physics, Newton's Third Law states that to every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. Now that I am THE PIANO TEACHER, I am questioning and discarding many of the things that were done to me as a piano student. Way back then, the main goal of my piano study seemed to be to "beat" Jeffrey in the festival (I never did), to get a better mark than Debbie on the Royal Conservatory of Music exam (well, I did once) and to get that all-important piece of paper - the Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto diploma at the end of all those years. Whether I could actually play musically or whether I enjoyed any form of music seemed to be irrelevant. It was the outer trappings - the product, the ribbons, and the certificates - that were deemed important. The process itself - the actual production of glorious music, seemed almost irrelevant.

Now, it is the doing - the joyous playing on the piano - that I revel in because I want to not because I have to. I perform at

my own recitals now by choice. I want to show my students the joy of making music. Solo piano can be a lonely experience, but it doesn't have to be - think about duets!

I have learned a great deal about music, but even more about joy, from my two daughters, Laurel (in Grade 7 piano and school) and Jessica (in Grade 5 piano and school). We three play the piano much more often than we practice the piano! They urged me to put some of our fun and funny moments on the piano at home onto the recital stage in a Viktor Borge-like manner. It all started with the page-turning incident. After all those years of piano lessons, I am a competent page turner, but while I was playing something for the girls, a much younger Jessica decided to "help" me by turning the page for me - two bars early and causing the whole book to fall into my lap! Naturally, Laurel wanted a turn in messing up the page turn. This scene was carried over to the start of my Beethoven recital where I "fired" three different page-turners, chosen (seemingly spontaneously) from "volunteers" in the audience, as I attempted to play Für Elise. Giving up on the piece in feigned disgust, I chose five students from the audience to play one section each of the A-B-A-C-A piece (pre-planned, of course).

I try to involve as many of my students as possible in entertaining moments at the recital. This creates a positive atmosphere of anticipation. I swear each group to secrecy so that everyone will have a few surprises at the recital itself. All of my helpers are bursting with that wonderful feeling of "I know something you don't know!" Naturally no one has to go along with any of my wild ideas unless he or she wants to. HAVE TO does not exist for my students. GET TO is the operative phrase. Fortunately for me, when all else fails, my daughters will usually go along with whatever scheme is at hand. They also are my severest critics and let me know when something is just too ridiculous.

All this silliness is good fun, but there are several more serious reasons behind it:

- I want my students as relaxed and happy as possible to

## NEW INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

It was with enormous gratitude that the CFMTA received \$5000 from the Hugheen Ferguson estate. Hugheen was a former President of the CFMTA and always a great supporter of our Association. We would like to be sensitive to ways in which she might have wanted to see this gift spent. As a result, we are asking that the CFMTA membership contact Lorna Wanzel, Chair of the New Initiatives Committee (NIC) with your suggestions.

Please contact me by e mail or snail mail at [lwanzel@hfx.eastlink.ca](mailto:lwanzel@hfx.eastlink.ca) or 6158 Lawrence Street, Halifax, N.S. B3L 1J6 with your suggestions of how we should use this gift.

Lorna Wanzel  
Chair, New Initiatives Committee

counteract the negative effects of adrenaline at recitals.

- I like to keep the audience's attention on more than just the student's own turn on stage.
- I want everyone to see that it is okay to make a mistake on stage and that it is not a big deal to make mistakes.
- I try to educate my audience. This is more effectively done via a five-minute skit or a silly song than by my pontificating on stage about the life and music of the featured composer.
- I want my audience to really listen to the music of the featured composer.

I perform at my recitals so that my students can see that adults practise, too. I also want them to feel that I am in this, too, and that music continues beyond piano lessons.

It is because I had such a miserable time with music history - memorizing the lives and music of a dozen or so composers - that I began the composer theme throughout my piano teaching. Besides featuring a composer at a recital (complete with a birthday cake bearing

the composer's name), each of my students "adopts" the composer whose birthdate is closest to his/her own birthdate. The student receives a compact disc of his or her very own composer's music plus some biographical information and sheet music. One has the optional privilege of writing a one-page research paper on the composer and presenting it at a recital. Two wonderful things have resulted from this project:

- A 14 year old boy in Grade 9 school and piano convinced his social studies teacher to let him write a 4000-word essay on Wagner rather than on 19th century wars.
- An 8 year old girl chose to do six composers for a language arts project and read two of them at the recital just before performing pieces by those two composers.

It was tremendously gratifying for me as a teacher to be a part of this.

Recitals - either the preparation of the performance piece itself, or hearing someone else play something personally appealing - often inspire students into a self-directed month of serious piano practice. One reluctant 13-year old beginner started practicing an hour a day

to get a Grade 2 Bach piece into shape, after I had suggested (ten days before THE DAY) that it would be okay not to perform at the recital. Usually a few students hear a piece performed that is one or two grade levels above them, but their WANTING TO learn it produces a very quick and good study of the piece, which in turn, gives them a major sense of accomplishment. It also is beneficial to hear other students perform the pieces that one has learned oneself.

The ultimate goal of my recitals then is to make my students feel good about and proud of themselves and their accomplishments. And, most important of all, to have FUN.

*Kathy Beveridge was born in Alberta, Canada and earned the ARCT diploma when she was only 17 years old. She also earned a bachelor of education degree with a math major and chemistry minor. She has taught math, science and French and has worked in the chemistry department at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. She currently lives in Victoria and teaches piano and theory lessons in her independent studio.*



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# IN MEMORIAM

## DAPHNE SANDERCOCK L.R.A.M., L.R.S.M., A.R.C.M., A.T.C.M. • 1918 - 2008

*HEATHER ROBERTON & ANNA  
ORMEROD-GAULT, ROYAL  
CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC ALUMNI  
ASSOC., MONTREAL CHAPTER*

Daphne Sandercock's musical life began in Nelson, B.C. where she won classes in the Kootenay Musical Festival as a pianist and violinist and passed the Grade X piano examination with first class honours at the age of fifteen. She graduated from the Toronto Conservatory of Music at seventeen and won a four-year scholarship in 1939 to attend the Royal College of Music in London, England. She took up this scholarship in 1944. An adventurous crossing by convoy, which resulted in the loss of two ships to enemy submarines, was a dramatic introduction to war-torn London.

Throughout her years at the Royal College of Music, where her teachers were Herbert Fryer, Herbert Howells and Kathleen Long, she supported herself by teaching. She played professionally as a

piano soloist and chamber musician. She also played the violin in amateur orchestras and in a quintet employed by the East Ham Education Authority. For seven years she taught in the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music where 'Special Talent' children attended on scholarships.

In 1955 she returned to Canada, settling in Montreal, where she taught privately. She also taught at McGill University on a part-time basis. Daphne adjudicated at several festivals across Canada and workshops have been a regular feature of her work.

Daphne served as President of the Quebec Music Teachers' Association (QMTA) from 1965 to 1967. In 1969 she co-founded the Senior Performance Club of the QMTA which continues to meet currently.

She also was an active member for almost fifty years of the Royal Conservatory of Music Alumni Association, Montreal Chapter. She held

office as President for two terms.

In 1979, Oxford Press published her book, "Help Yourself to Sight Reading" which is a remedial course for intermediate and advanced pianists. In 1987 the book was translated and published in Japan by the Tokyo-Ongaku-Sha Co. Ltd. of Tokyo.

Students, colleagues and friends will remember Daphne with affection and respect for her strength of character, her incredible energy and hard-work and her ability to inspire all those she influenced to strive for excellence.

Donations in her memory can be made to the Royal Conservatory of Music, 90 Croatia St., Toronto, Ont., M6H 1K9 Attn: Teresa Simm. Online [www.rcmusic.ca](http://www.rcmusic.ca) (donate)



## Patricia Lee • 1918 - 2008

It is with sadness that we report the death on January 25, 2008, of Patricia Lee, a valued member of the New Brunswick Registered Music Teachers' Association.

Patricia came to New Brunswick from the United States, when she had accepted a position on the staff of Mount Allison University in Sackville. After a few years, the position of voice instructor became vacant, and Patricia was appointed to that position in the music department in 1982. After her retirement she was named Associate Professor Emerita.

Patricia Lee received her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from Eastern Washington University, and her Master of Music from the New England Conservatory. After moving to New York City in 1960, she became a regular soloist with the Amato Opera Theatre. Later, she was accepted into the Metropolitan Opera Young Company which toured the United States and Mexico. In 1966 she joined the

Metropolitan Opera Chorus at the time it opened its new venue at Lincoln Center.

As a teacher of singing, her energy knew no bounds. Her students were like family to her. She took a personal interest in them, and supported them in their endeavours, long after they had graduated from Mount Allison. She had a wide knowledge of vocal repertoire for all voices, and was always willing to share her knowledge when asked by voice teachers in private studios. On C.B.C. radio, she was a frequent guest on the Opera Quiz Panel on 'Saturday Afternoon at the Opera', where her profound knowledge of the field was outstanding. As a popular adjudicator, Patricia earned the respect of many music festival committees, particularly in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

After she became a member of the NBRMTA council, her worth to the organization became very apparent very quickly. As treasurer, she set up the financial records in a most efficient

manner, and gave sound financial advice to the membership. Her advice resulted in there being moneys invested to the advantage of the organization. Basically, her method of 'keeping the books' has remained the basis for those who have followed her in the position of treasurer.

Perhaps, though, the many NBRMTA members who sat on council with Patricia will remember her best for her quiet, insightful ways. Very often, when members would be struggling at council meetings with what seemed to be very difficult resolutions to situations, Patricia would sit quietly and listen. After everyone who wanted to had spoken, perhaps more than once, there would follow a quiet moment. Then, our Patricia would lift her head, usually begin with, "Perhaps we might.....", and lo and behold the answer to the problem had been heard, and immediately and gratefully adopted.

Her counsel on council will be missed, along with her rare bright smile.

# CONSERVATORY CANADA'S NEW CONTEMPORARY IDIOMS SYLLABUS: A WELCOME ADDITION FOR PIANO TEACHERS

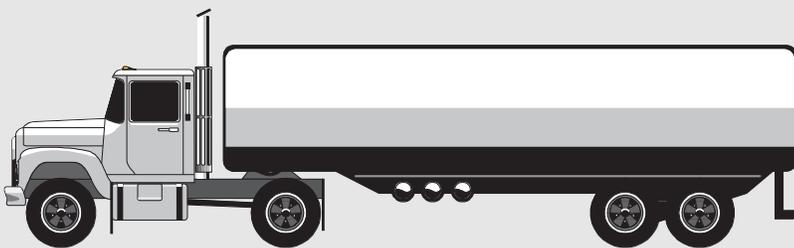
ANDREA BATTISTA

Those of us who attended the Collaborative Conference in Toronto in March of 2007 will remember Bramwell Tovey's address as one of the highlights. He began by sitting at the piano and performing a short Romantic piece and one of his own jazz piano arrangements. If you are like me, you enjoy jazz and appreciate the skill involved, but you may be a little overwhelmed by the idea of teaching Jazz, Swing, Blues, Latin, Rock and other genres.

Conservatory Canada deserves to be applauded for their foresight in developing a Contemporary Idioms Syllabus for piano. Developed in co-operation with several well-known performers and educators, it is a carefully thought out approach to the teaching of contemporary genres of music. The current syllabus spans from Level 1 to Level 8 with Level 8 equivalent in skill to the Classical Grade 10. Each level requires the performance of 4 pieces plus one supplementary piece, as well as technique, sight reading and aural tests. In addition, candidates must be prepared to give background information on composers and demonstrate knowledge of signs, terms, keys and structure. There is also an improvisation requirement.

In Levels 1 to 4, candidates must play pieces from various genres, such as Ballad/Blues, Swing, Rock and Latin. In levels 5 through 8, one of these 4 pieces must be *Traditional* referring to *Traditional* jazz styles including Ragtime and Boogie. The supplementary pieces are chosen entirely at the discretion of the teacher, and may include student improvisations. This component may also include a traditional Classical piece. Many teachers enjoy this feature as it allows them to incorporate Classical compositions on the Contemporary Idioms Examination. The syllabus contains extensive lists of pieces from each required genre, chosen by professional jazz educators across the country. These pieces are readily available from publishers. The repertoire list is cross-referenced on the Conservatory Canada website to facilitate your search. Hal Leonard has recently published *Level 1 Contemporary Piano Repertoire* which contains 20 pieces chosen from the various required genres, specifically designed for use with the Contemporary Idioms Syllabus. These pieces are in addition to the already established repertoire list. Levels 2 and 3 will be available March 2008.

Right from Level 1, technical requirements are clearly laid out in the syllabus. Modes and common chords are introduced early, and students learn scales in swing rhythm as well as even eighth notes. Level 2 introduces minor 7th chords to familiarize students with contemporary sounds. More complex chords and scales are introduced gradually. Sight reading involves reading a lead sheet, starting from a very simple tonic-dominant requirement in Level 1 and moving through common progressions level by level. Improvising is introduced in Level 2 and becomes more complex as the student learns to play more chords in the technique section. Aural tests are primarily similar to those on traditional exams, but the candidates need to be able to recognize a few more contemporary chords such as minor 7ths and dominant 7ths with raised and lowered 9ths.



## HAVE YOU MOVED?

Address changes  
should be  
reported  
through your  
provincial  
registrar.

Conservatory Canada has also obtained provincial accreditation for the Contemporary Idioms Syllabus, which is a huge help for teachers. Many of our private students are playing in jazz bands at school, and they are already learning to arrange and read lead sheets. They may wish to pursue this avenue instead of more traditional paths.

It must be stressed that, as with the Conservatory Canada Classical syllabus, it is expected that students perform to a high standard. Practice of technique (scales, modes, chords, etc) is even more important, since in order to improvise and read lead sheets, students must be thoroughly familiar with scales and chords. This will only help them in their traditional practice as well, since they will have a much better understanding of keys and harmonic structure.

Conservatory Canada also provides excellent back-up support for this new system. The Conservatory held a series of 2-day workshops across the country in September 2007, run by various 2-person teams. I attended the workshop in Burlington, Ontario, led by Brian Usher and Peter Clements. Brian Usher is a London-based performer and educator who has arranged for contemporary musicians for decades. Peter Clements is the former Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario, who began experimenting with jazz as a teenager and continues to play in a jazz group in London. Sessions included reading a Lead Sheet, Improvisation, Modes and Chords and other technical requirements. Both men were extremely approachable, helpful and organized. They gave many hands-on examples and tied everything in with the syllabus requirements for each level. Both men are also very familiar with the traditional syllabus, and see this new addition as a valuable extra tool in our studios.

Teacher Gail Olmstead in Alberta attended a workshop conducted by Derek Stoll and Steven Fielder and found that "there were many helpful hints and techniques that brought the complex art of jazz down to simple and teachable methods." She adds, "I am very glad that there is a system in place now that supports and encourages students to learn the contemporary music that they so often hear in today's world." April Smith of Coquitlam, BC thinks that the new syllabus "opens up a whole new world of possibilities. I certainly don't think that it will pull my students away from classical music: they will have a greater understanding of all music."

Conservatory Canada is also creating support books titled *A Guide to Contemporary Idioms*. These books will be created for each level and are designed for both teacher and student. They contain valued pedagogical information for teachers and students as well as many pages of practice examples of improvisation and lead sheets.

In my own Hamilton-Halton branch of ORMTA, we have 2 members who are jazz educators and several other members who compose and arrange various styles of music. Many young people are pursuing music degrees in jazz pedagogy and returning to their communities to contribute to the musical development of our youth. The new Contemporary Idioms Syllabus gives these teachers a systematic approach that is recognized by government. I praise the effort of all those involved in this project.

The syllabus is available to download free of charge from the conservatory website [www.conservatorycanada.ca](http://www.conservatorycanada.ca) and is also available in hard copy from your local dealer or from Mayfair Music [www.mayfairmusic.com](http://www.mayfairmusic.com). I was able to buy a copy at my local music store and it is well worth everyone's consideration.

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# BOOK REVIEWS



## Conservatory Canada Guide to Contemporary Idioms Level 1 – Piano

Written by Vicky Oveson, Derek Stoll, Brian Usher

Mayfair Music Publications Inc.

JOANNE BARKER

I can remember how I felt when I first heard about the new Conservatory Canada Contemporary Idioms Syllabus. How exciting!! Finally, a new curriculum! But, how am I going to teach this? I have never been formally instructed in jazz or swing myself! Help!

Conservatory Canada has now created a new resource to help those of us who wish to teach the new curriculum! The Guide to Contemporary Idioms seems to be just what we need in order to feel more confident with the new material. Having attended a couple of different presentations on the new syllabus, I began to think that, yes, I could take my students down this new path. With the creation of this guide, and the many workshops that have been offered, teachers can feel more confident as they present the materials to their students.

I do think that this guide will be a very necessary and useful addition to any teacher's library. Everyone who is

teaching from the new syllabus needs to have this guide close by! As for our students, the exercises given are very useful, making this guide a great addition to their collection as well.

I really like the activities that are given. Having actual hands on exercises to use with a student will make the concepts easier to understand. Pages can be discussed in class and assigned for homework making the guide a very useful tool for students as well. The scales that are included are very useful. There is no questioning what is expected once someone sees those scales all written out and explained!

My initial question upon receiving the new guide was, "Who is this book intended for"? It isn't readily apparent who should be reading this book. Throughout the book, reference is made to "you" being the student and to "the student" in a context of speaking to a teacher. I found the wording to be above what a student would easily understand, depending, of course, on the age of that student.

It would be helpful for the introduction to lay out what the goals and expectations of the guide are- ie- give examples of what the guide can do for a teacher or student-the fact that there are definitions of styles given, examples to actually play, etc.

Another useful addition would be the list of requirements for the specific

level from the actual syllabus right in the guide. This would prove helpful in order to tie the topics covered in the guide to the syllabus requirements.

Overall, I am excited to make use of the new guide and to explore the new curriculum.

## Grand Solos for Piano

Melody Bober

LYNDI BLAHLEY

With a history of writing incredibly entertaining music with a variety of pedagogical challenges for students of all ages, Melody Bober has done it again! Grand Solos for Piano is an energizing and satisfying collection with an enjoyable balance between pedagogical challenges and fun, rewarding pieces for students as they progress through their musical journey.

This new six book collection ranges from early elementary to late intermediate levels. Each book contains between nine and eleven pieces, with optional accompaniments in books one (early elementary) and two (elementary). As always, Bober's collection contains a variety of fun styles, including waltzes, jigs, rags, blues, jazz, Spanish, and character pieces.

What I adore about Bober's books is that the pedagogical requirements progress logically and realistically as the difficulty level escalates. As such, the books are expertly subdivided by

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## BOOK REVIEWS (CONT'D.)



level. For example, in book one (early elementary), Bober focuses on differentiating between staccatos and long legatos; using quarter, half, dotted-half, and whole notes; and dealing with basic time signatures (4/4 and 3/4), while adding accents, octave notation, D. C. al Codas, and crescendos and decrescendos. By book four (early intermediate), the student is working with short slurs and frequent quick staccatos; adding in eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets; and working with more complex time signatures including cut and compound time.

This is a beautifully formatted collection with wonderfully fun and fascinating pieces that are sure to hold your student's interest. Alfred's Grand Solos for Piano is a can't miss!

### Celebrate Burgmuller; Celebrate Scarlatti; and Celebrate Schumann (Volume II)

Compiled by Ried Alexander,  
Samuel Holland, and Marc Widner  
Series Editor Andrew Hisey

A fine addition to Frederick Harris Music's Celebrate series, these three

collections continue on in the tradition of their predecessors by combining some of the best and most frequently played pieces and lesser-known gems into detailed, well formatted, and attractive books for the burgeoning musician.

Included in each collection is historical information about the composer and a thorough description of how each piece should be properly executed. This particular feature is what I enjoy most about this overall collection because the historical and performance information is designed to be understood by both the teacher AND the student (depending on the student's age and musical knowledge of course). Why? As teachers, it is our responsibility to teach our students not only the piece he/she is currently studying, but also to teach the musical tools that can be applied to the next piece. I believe there are certain factors in the compiling of a piece that students may conclude to be the magic dust that their teachers magically pull out of thin air to finish off a piece, and by that I mean the little subtle nuances that teachers have learned over the years that are necessary to each style and piece. Having pedagogical notes included

within the volumes may diminish this student wonderment and encourage him/her to learn more outside of the lesson.

Another added feature of these books is the inclusion of a table identifying the level of difficulty of each piece on a scale of one to ten with one being late elementary and ten being advanced.

The three new books added to this collection are:

- (1) Celebrate Burgmuller, which includes selected studies covering late elementary to early advanced levels;
- (2) Celebrate Scarlatti Volume II, which includes selected sonatas covering the early advanced to advanced levels; and
- (3) Celebrate Schubert, which includes selections from German Dances, Waltzes, Moment musicaux, and Impromptus; 12 Landler, D. 790; Scherzo in B-flat, D. 593; and Allegretto in c-, D. 915, while covering intermediate to advanced levels.

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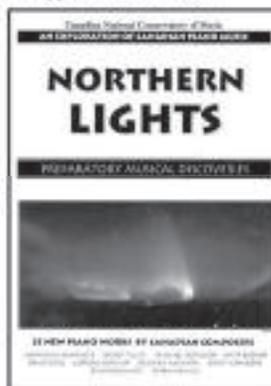
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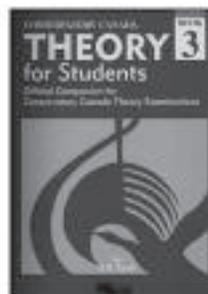
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