



# Music Is a Life Force

CFMTA  
Convention  
July 6-9, 2011  
Regina, SK



Music  
Laughter  
Memories  
Friendships renewed  
New friends made  
Thank you Regina  
**Music Is a Life Force**

# "MUSIC IS A LIFE FORCE"- An evaluation from the inside

Lore Ruschiensky and the 2011 CFMTA/FCAPM Convention Committee

It is July 12, the 2011 CFMTA National Convention wound up three days ago, and I am again at my computer early in the morning. It has become a habit that will be hard to break. The emails I am getting are now thank you's and congratulations rather than convention planning details. What a joy they are to read.

As anyone who has planned a convention knows, there is an enormous amount of work involved. After having had the wonderful opportunity to attend many CFMTA conventions as the Canada Music Week co-ordinator and Canadian Music Teacher editor, this time it was my turn to head up the organizing. Most of the convention committee had never been to a national convention and followed trustingly as I shared my visualization and spirit of the event.

The evening concerts were to me an essential part of an exciting musical event. The Gryphon Trio as our major



artists led to the idea of the addition of the Piano Trio to the piano competition with the trio that our own David L. McIntyre had written in 2005. The work was wonderfully performed all three times in the finals AND the youngest competitor – Carter Johnson of BC won the Piano Trio award! We of course were thrilled to have our own Saskatchewan competitor, Meagan Milatz win first prize in the Piano Competition. The evening of Canadian

music featuring all the major clinicians of the convention and the CFMTA Alumni Concert by two former winners from Saskatchewan filled out the concert schedule.

As former CMW coordinator, I thought it would be great to have everyone hear the winning compositions from the Student Music Writing Competition so we set aside a day as Canadian Composer Day. Six students attended; two national winners and four provincial ones. The clinicians were thrilled to have the opportunity to work with them and the students responded enthusiastically to all the events planned for them; a very successful and exciting day for all.

We decided to do a first ever "Call for Proposals" for sessions for the convention. There were 15 proposals submitted which fit perfectly into our convention plan and all were accepted. That along with the sessions provided by the artists and adjudicators and the ones from the trade show displayers filled out our three day schedule with interesting and relevant sessions.



The response to the trade show call was great with all available spots in the two large rooms and the hallway filled. One room was dedicated to piano manufacturers. The rooms were a beehive of activity at each of the coffee breaks. A great boost to the convention was Yamaha Canada and the Yamaha Piano Centre providing all the

performance instruments as well as the technicians.

The attendance was quite good and most people had preregistered so that they could take advantage of the meals included in the convention price. This helped to keep everyone together which added to the spirit and camaraderie of the convention. The opening Welcome Barbecue sponsored by RCM and the final Fowl Supper were especially well received.

Volunteers were essential to keep things running smoothly. University students as well as adult students and friends of the convention committee helped out in many ways. Local musicians provided informal musical entertainment. For their contribution all of these people were given tickets to the evening concerts which they loved.

A convention chair could not have asked for a more dedicated convention committee to work with. They included:



L to R: Marlene Wickenhauser, Corinne Groff, Lore Ruschiensky, Penny Joynt, Sandra Kerr and Joyce Sison. Together we spent many hours in meetings with much hard work and laughter.

As we tend to our aching feet and sit happily exhausted in our lawn chairs we wish the Nova Scotia 2013 Convention Committee all the best and hope you have as much fun in your planning and execution as we did in ours.

**Music IS a life force!**



# Music Is a

*Life Force*

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Congratulations to you and your committee on an excellent convention. You have set the standard at dizzying new heights! Very glad I attended -  
*Wendy Maggiora, BC*

I just wanted to pass on my thanks for allowing us to be a part of the CFMTA convention. I was especially impressed with the Masterclass and Improvisation workshop. The concerts were fantastic, and I was simply left stunned by the talents of those young people who competed on Saturday night -  
*Jennifer Petriew - SK- this was a mother of a participating student, not a music teacher*

Thank you so much for inviting me to present a session and to be part of the July 7th concert during the CFMTA convention. Finally, thanks to you and your colleagues for all your great work in organizing this successful convention! -  
*Sophie Bouffard, SK*

Many thanks to you and the committee for your work hosting the conference this year. I particularly enjoyed all the opportunities to hear good music. The lunch and evening concerts were amazing! The Gryphon Trio and the work its members did with master classes and students were greatly appreciated. David McIntyre was great fun to have. And composers' day, being able to meet with so many composers was wonderful -  
*Beth Oliver, AB*

I would like to thank you and your committee for the many hours of work you put into the convention. It was my first one, and I was very impressed with the quality of the concerts and workshops -  
*Sandra Stobbe, SK*

Thank you so much for all the work you and your committee put into planning the convention. I really enjoyed the sessions and the great concerts -  
*Robyn Rutherford*  
Congratulations on a fine convention, it was very organized, and represented Saskatchewan well -  
*Wes Froese, SK*

Congratulations to you on a wonderful convention! Everyone seemed so energized, and everyone I spoke to was thrilled with the sessions and the clinicians. I know from experience what a tremendous undertaking it is to put on a conference, and you did a fabulous job - brava!  
*Pauline Minevich, Department Head, Faculty of Music, U of R, SK*

The convention was such a wonderful experience and I enjoyed it very much. It was nice meeting all of you and I hope that we will all see each other again at similar future conventions -  
*Svjetlana Djordan*

And a huge THANKS to you, Lore, for going that extra distance and doing such a great job organizing this conference. I had a great time with all of the colleagues I met there and I enjoyed myself enormously.  
*Kent McWilliams*

THANKYOU for all your hard work putting on this last week's convention in Regina! It was so thoroughly enjoyable, a wonderful learning experience and a really good time connecting with old friends and making new ones -  
*Gail Murray, SK*

Just want to congratulate you and your committee for all the work you did on a wonderful Convention. It was inspiring to say the least, and MRMTA would like to take the opportunity to thank you for every valuable minute you spent preparing for the success of the activities -  
*Dorothy Lothar, MN*

It was an exceptional conference. Congratulations to you and your team -  
*Cherith Alexander, SK*

I enjoyed the Convention immensely! I've come home so motivated I wish I could teach for another twenty-five years. Okay, once again Lori- words cannot really express how much I enjoyed the Convention. It will certainly go down as the highlight of my summer- even though we are off to Hawaii for two weeks. This trip comes every summer- but the Convention in Regina will be a once in a lifetime treat! -  
*Leona Porth, BC*

Fantastic conference, congratulations. The Canadian Composer Day and CC Concert were an inspiration. And getting all those kids to play was awesome. They are the future and I'm sure they will never forget that "gig." Thanks for all you and your committee did; please pass on my congratulations -  
*John Burge, Ontario*

Thank YOU and your committee for all your many hours of hard work. Last week was a great success due to your organization and preparation. Congratulations, and I'm glad I was able to be a part of it -  
*Stephen Runge, NB*

I want to make sure I send you a note thanking you and your team for doing such an excellent job on the convention. Halifax will have a hard time following Regina. All the best -  
*Lorna Wanzel, NS*

Just want to let you know that we really enjoyed the convention. You & your team did a fantastic job and you deserve all the praise in the world! We are so happy to have participated -  
*Gayle & Jim Dunsmoor, BC*



# "MUSIC IS A LIFE FORCE" - Canadian composers' day

by Cindy Taylor - BC

**M**usic as a Life Force dedicated an entire day to Canadian Music.

The morning began with Po Yeh, CFMTA/FCAPM National Canada Music Week® Convenor who introduced the days' events and highlighted the aims of CMW which has expanded to include the "The Call for Compositions" and "The Student Composer Competition". This past year our Canadian Music Week® celebrations involved approximately 3500 members across Canada in 80 branches where they held workshops, concerts and Community activities and they brought together people to enjoy Canadian Music. Last year was a landmark Anniversary for CMW as we

celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Helen Dahlstrom, the founder of CMW and our National Chairperson from 1969 – 1992 was attending this year's "Music as a Life Force" conference and was given special acknowledgement for her contribution to CMW. Through her vision, hard work and dedication she laid the groundwork for what Canada Music Week® is now today.

This year we have Canadian Composers' Day which is a first for our convention to feature Canadian Music. Composers were invited to share their talents and to share their compositions with us. Also, students were invited to meet and work with composers. This included some of our Call for Composition composers.

After the opening session the students had workshops with composer John Burge; "the Composers' Perspective" with Martha Hill Duncan, Teresa Richert, and Joanne Bender; a Q&A session with composer David McIntyre; a recital given by John Burge; and an Improvisation session with Forrest Kinney. It was really exciting to engage our students as part of our convention.

## "From Child to Composer"

David McIntyre was introduced as a wonderfully prolific composer, whose piano and vocal works have been enjoyed and admired for years. He is an Associate composer at the Canadian Music Centre; Composer in Residence with the Regina Symphony; and his music can be heard on CBC Radio.

If I had to choose descriptive words to describe the impression when first meeting Mr. McIntyre they would be – inspiring, passionate, magnetism, enthusiasm. He has left a lasting impression with his thought provoking opening address and his vision of finding beauty and inspiration in all things.

David began with heartfelt thanks to the organizers of the convention for dedicating an entire day to Canadian music.

His following points explain why, today, he is a composer.

- **From Child to Composer:** this statement could be turned around **From Composer to Child**
- the wonderful sense of abandonment a child feels when they have an entire afternoon just to make things up. Building a fort from dried poppy stems; conducting a Teddy Bear Choir; Dying dramatically in a neighbourhood play of Cops and Robbers;

Writing music is as much fun as these childhood games. But then there is the process of growing up. Becoming an adult; Taking responsibility; Learning the ropes; Paying your dues; "A living composer usually does this through the

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rigours of formal training. Learning the craft can be quite intimidating and at times inhibiting. There's a mountain to climb and you have to climb the mountain. It's finding the path back to childhood where the joy of creating little worlds is restored."

One of David's favourite pastimes as a child was drawing imaginary maps, creating little and not so little communities, with each building creating their own world of imagination for him. When writing music he uses the same sense of creating new worlds filled with an emotional life which is very evident in his music. David recalled his first memory of music as sitting under a piano listening to his uncle practicing for his ARCT exam. This experience inspired him and left a vivid impression on him. He recalled listening to his mother play the piano every evening of his childhood putting him to sleep at night. With deep love and

emotion David shared how he returned this experience by playing for her in her later life. I was reminded of the book by author Robert Munsch "I Love You Forever". This will be one of my fond memories of David's opening address. In 1981 as a loving tribute to his mother he composed a hymn using the harmonic contrapuntal characteristics of his mothers piano playing.

David's uncle was his first piano teacher and in many ways his most important musical influence, encouraging the development of the ear. He was a church musician and organist who improvised and taught by example. David recalled with some humour his mother threatening to cancel his lessons unless he stopped making up music. "Now they call it composing!"

As a child, David's favourite game was *Guess Who Composed This Tune* – then he'd make up his own piece. "Mozart, Beethoven, or McIntyre?" he

was disappointed when they guessed McIntyre (he said with a smile).

He recalls how difficult it was to notate his first piece of music. It was much more difficult than improvising. He explained that it was different when imagining the notation from something in your head.

"What is the role of the piano teacher today in regards to composing? - giving permission and not getting in the way."

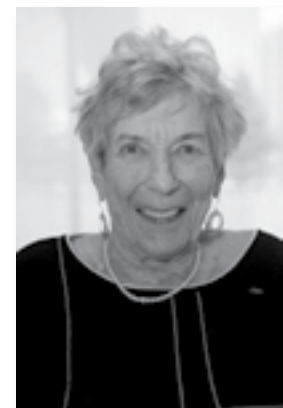
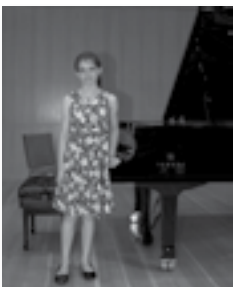
"Composers compose because he or she cannot but compose."

"*A Wild Innocence* (a recent piece of music David has composed) describes my approach to creative work -Taking risks and not over calculating. In the creative process I try to capture the spirit of a carefree playful child which frees me to discover the world of ideas in the thin air of imagination."

Throughout the convention we experienced his imaginative and creative world through performances of his works at an evening concert entitled "An Evening of Canadian Music" and the noon concert of his own compositions; and with the performance of his Trio at the CFMTA National Piano Competition.

"Child yearns to be a composer. Composer strives to recapture the child."

**David McIntyre is a wonderful example of "Music is a Life Force".**



**Top row:** David McIntyre, Sarah Cunningham, Elizabeth Roberts,

**Bottom row:** Carmyn Slater, Brandon Mooney, Jackson Moore and Helen Dahlstrom

# MUSIC IS A LIFE FORCE - *Highlights from a few workshops*

## **Physics and Piano Playing Moon Landings, Fast Cars and Bouncing Balls: Using Physical Forces to Shape Musical Interpretation by Stephen Runge**

By some strange inexplicable scientific force, I found myself in a session on physics and piano playing. How appropriate to be discussing physical forces at a conference entitled, "Music is a Life Force".

Gravity and weightlessness: Depending on the music being played, chords will have the grounded sound of gravity or the weightlessness of a moon landing. Listen to the difference of the landing of a chord in Debussy and Beethoven.

Going against Gravity: It takes more energy to throw something up than to let it fall down. Likewise, scales need more energy to go up than down. And don't forget the "hang time" before the descent back down. But do remember that there will be more hang time before the descent in some periods of music than others. The longer the hang time on a roller coaster, the more "exciting" the experience.

Inertia: Listen to the increase of the rate the ball bounces when you drop it. The ratio for this change is similar to the rate of an *accelerando*, or conversely, the rate of a *ritardando*. And yes, I have been bouncing balls with my students this week.

Centrifugal Force: As fast cars go around corners, we feel a pull, just as we should as we change directions in a musical passage. Don't phrase to the top note, but go around the corner to the first pulse after the turn.

Stephen used numerous examples of pieces to demonstrate the examples of the "physical forces" in music. Hopefully Stephen, who is in the Department of Music at Mount Allison University in Sackville, will present again at the CFMTA Conference in Halifax in 2013. See you there.

*Barbara Robertson - ARMTA*

## **Life's Composition – A Balancing Act by Thomas Yu**

What is Thomas Yu life's composition?

His wildest dream - to be performing and speaking was realized at this CFMTA convention and had its start ten years ago when he won the National Piano competition. (I was there).

A friend advised him on how to start the session "If you don't know what to say, ask if there are any dental questions".

"Life's composition is knowing that your passions are".

The National Piano competition was a kick start. Thomas practised a half hour daily till he was seventeen years old. Then the passion entrapped him into a fantastic, pressured, unrealistic hard life – a world of study, practice, traveling out of a suitcase, he felt he lived in a cardboard box. Bartok said "competition is for horses not audience".

His parents had another fork in life for him – an academic one, one that supplies dinner and not only breakfast. Naturally there was a clash. Reality set in, he sought for a balanced life. Yes, there is an exciting life outside there.

While competing in Warsaw, he met a girl from France who told him of the International Amateur Piano Competition in Paris. Amateur??? "Stooping down to that level?"

At the Paris competition in which he won, he also won friendship with lawyers, Starbuck employee, videogame composers, doctors.... Life got interesting. The connection with others outside the practice room shapes you as a musician. Love changes you. There are tons and tons of people who are musically trained and have other jobs and have passion not only in music but in other spheres as well. Thomas listed and named all his piano teachers, appreciated their devotion in sharing their lives not only musically but for life. "Even on how I walk".

Now he loves playing concerts in living rooms, looking forward to the International Amateur competition in Berlin 2012.

He loves and cares for his patients, would even phone at an ungodly hour from Germany to check how his patient was doing.

AMA-teur? One who LOVES what one does. Follow your passion...sss Yes! Passions

*Solange Liang - MRMTA*

### Look, Listen , Understand New Compositions by Francis Mae Bolodis

On Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, we were fortunate to have the editor of *Music for Young Children* present a workshop called, *Look, Listen, Understanding New Compositions*. Francis Mae Bolodis' criteria for composing makes so much sense. Not only does her step by step means of composing help to make a creative aurally, visually and analytically interesting new piece of music but these concepts can be found in the works of J.S. Bach, Domenico Scarlatti, Bela Bartok and Claude Debussy. This criteria of concepts can also be found in the compositions of numerous other composers. The following is the list that Francis Bolodis gave us:

Motive – a musical theme or idea	Rhythmic Augmentation – note values become larger
Repetition – of a motive note for note	Fragmentation – only part of the motive is used
Sequence	Rhythmic Shifts – melody and notes are the same but occur on different beats
Retrograde motion	Octave Displacement – motive is in different registers
Inversion	
Rhythmic Diminution – note values become smaller	

#### Question and Answer

Cryptics – Random chance composing ie: assign numbers to note names and then “spell your telephone number”

1234567890

CDEFGABCDE

These steps, on concepts, also allow the performer to imagine images of nature, astronomy and technology. For example, “rain on a hot tin roof in the summertime.”

Francis mentioned that Violet Archer told her that when one composes one makes up one's own scales.

Francis also used her own compositions as examples to demonstrate these concepts. The pieces can be found in the *Northern Lights* books which are now used as part of the *Canadian National Conservatory of Music* curriculum. The *Northern Lights* books contain pieces written by Canadian composers only.

I found the workshop to be abundantly valuable for teachers and students of composition. Also, one need not look further for a criteria to analyze and play better the music already written.

*Peter van Ginkel - MRMTA*

### Discovering the Baroque Dance by Kent McWilliams

We have all wondered how we can help our students understand the baroque dances and at what tempo they should be played. This was the workshop to attend.

Kent McWilliams had researched the dances and found some videos to demonstrate the dances. We tried the different steps and soon realized why the court gentlemen and ladies spent hours rehearsing these dance steps. The dances discussed were:

- The **Minuet**, a popular 1600 – 1800 court dance.
- The French **Gavotte**, at first a peasant dance, was energetic with much leaping. When it reached the courts it became stiff and formal.
- The **Bourree**, a strong vigorous dance was more popular with the peasants than the nobility. Written in 4/4 or 2/2 meter it was one of the liveliest of French court dances.
- The **Courante**, a favourite of the French court, was a dance of running and leaping. It originated in Italy known as the Courente. A second type of French Courante, the “branle de Poitocé” was a style of gliding and making gallant gestures.
- One of the most beautiful court dances of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the **Sarabande**. Slow and sensual movements caused it to be banned in many places. It was an enjoyable and informative workshop.

*Agatha Warkentin - MRNTA*



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