

IMA Newsletter



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International
Music
Academy

Voted **top 100 educators in the world** by the International Biographical Centre
Winner of the **Consumers' Choice Award** for best music school in the GTA.
Winner of the Royal Conservatory of Music **Gold Medal for Teaching Excellence**.
Winner of the **York Region Character Community Award**.
Markham Board of Trade **Business Excellence Award** finalist.

Year XVIII, No. 3

March 2014

WELCOMING OUR NEW STUDENTS

Larry W. (Saxophone)
Vanessa C. (Piano)
Rachel V. (guitar)
Joshua G. (violin)
Celina M (voice)
Lewis W (Flute)
Dailiang C (piano)

IMA STUDENTS BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL

Rachel. T, Daniel. R, Andrew. S, Claudia. I, Mateo L,
Anayraj. G, Justin. G, Maria-Aimee. T, Kathy. D, Noor. A,
Michael. C, Jasio. C, Cluadia. T.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

IMPORTANT DAYS IN APRIL

April 4-6, 11-13, 25-28. North York Music Festival
April 7-12, RCM Practical exams (piano only)
April 14-22 Passover

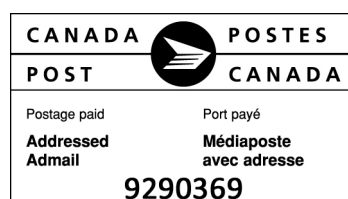
April 18. Good Friday, School is Open

**April 18 Markham Theatre: Andé Laplante plays
Beethoven's Piano concerto No. 5 with KSO**

April 20 Easter Sunday, School is open

April 21 Easter Monday, School is open

International Music Academy
4981 Highway 7, Unit 1
Markham ON L3R 1N1



NEWS

IMA CLIENTS APPRECIATION DINNER GALA

As an appreciation for your support, we would like to invite you to the IMA Clients appreciation dinner gala. The event is part of Gala for Giving – a special evening hosted by the City of Markham and organized with the joint support from Markham-based corporations, the International Music Academy being one of them. Last year, the gala was attended by about 800 people, including many of the IMA teachers, staff and guests.

The dinner gala will take place on **Thursday, April 24, 2014** at Le Parc Banquet Centre (located at 8432 Leslie St, at HWY 7). The evening includes a reception at 6:00 p.m., a dinner at 7:00 p.m., a silent auction, a live auction, raffles, table prizes and many performances of light classical music, jazz, dance, etc. The dinner offers rolls, mixed greens salad, pasta, chicken (or a vegetarian option, requested in advance), sorbet, coffee/tea/espresso, soft drinks and a cash bar. Entertainment includes the Kindred Spirits Chamber Orchestra featuring child prodigy Leonid Nediak, the MSO Brass Quartet, pianist Giulio Paonessa, jazz singer Shaina MacPherson, the teenage sensation Nicole Jaskot (who used to take voice lessons at the IMA) as well as Tamil and Chinese cultural dance groups. Among the guests of the Gala will be senior executives from many of the largest corporations in Canada, avid supporters of the arts, education, community outreach programmes and social services as well as City of Markham's Councillors, the Mayor of Markham and other dignitaries.

Please let the IMA Office know **by April 5, 2014** by sending e-mail to info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca or by phone at 905.489.4620 if you would like to attend as well as the number of confirmed guests you would like to bring with you. The IMA will be covering the cost of the tickets. Looking forward to seeing you at the Gala.

COMPOSERS' ANNIVERSARIES IN APRIL

01/04/1873	Rachmaninoff born
01/04/1917	Scott Joplin died
03/04/1897	Brahms died
06/04/1971	Stravinsky died
08/04/1848	Donizetti died
14/04/1759	Handel died
18/04/1936	Respighi died
27/04/1891	Prokofiev born
27/04/1915	Scriabin died
27/04/1992	Messiaen died

Where you born or do you know someone who was born on the same day as these famous composers? Drop us an e-mail at info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca to let us know.

2014 GREAT COMPOSERS ANNIVERSARIES

- C.P.E. Bach** – 300 years from his birth (March 8)
M. Mussorgsky – 175 years from his birth (May 21)
R. Strauss – 150 years from his birth (June 11)

FEATURED TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Leonid Sprikut, Ph.D., M.Mus., B.Mus.
Woodwinds and Brass, Music history and Theory



Mr. Sprikut holds a MMus in Music Education from the University of Toronto, as well as Master of Music in Performance Diploma *cum laude* from the Moscow P. Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, and a Bachelor of Music in Performance Diploma *cum laude* from Moscow State Conservatory Music College. He also holds a Bachelor Degree in Wind Ensemble Conducting from Moscow

State Conservatory Music College. As a professional clarinetist and saxophonist Mr. Sprikut has been affiliated with many symphony and chamber orchestras around the world, such as Moscow State Ministry of Education Symphony Orchestra (Principal Clarinet), Moscow State Academy of Music Opera Theatre (Principal Clarinet), New Jerusalem Symphony (Principal Clarinet), Israeli Operetta Theatre (Principal Clarinet), and was a member of a Moscow State Conservatory Woodwind Quintet.

As a soloist, Mr. Sprikut performed in Russia, Israel, USA, Canada, and has taken part in various International Music Festivals, such as International Klezmer Music Festival in Zfat, Israel. Among his teachers were the internationally renowned Vladimir Sokolov (Principal Clarinet for The Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Clarinet at the Moscow State Conservatory) and Dr. Scott Bridges (Professor of Music and Clarinet at the Alabama University School of Music). Mr. Sprikut started teaching in the early 1980's, while a student at the Moscow State Conservatory and was one of the founders and first teachers at the Special Music School for Woodwind Instruments in Moscow, Russia. Later, in Israel he worked as a teacher for a Music Project of the Municipality of Jerusalem and was a Music Director of The Youth Jerusalem Wind Orchestra, where his duties included selection of repertoire for the Orchestra, auditions, public relations, and foreign tours. He has taught wind instruments, piano, and music theory privately and in groups at his studio, at various schools and at the Music College. Mr. Sprikut has been affiliated with iMA since 2006. He is experienced and successful in teaching students at different levels and ages from 7 to 70. Mr. Sprikut is also the conductor of the iMA Jazz ensemble, which successfully performed at the IMA summer music Festival in 2009. His students constantly win local and international music competitions, hold principal positions in students' and professional bands and symphony orchestras, and participate in a variety of musical activities in Canada and abroad.

Mr. Sprikut gives master classes and adjudicates music competitions and festivals in Israel, Russia and Canada. He is a member of Ontario Music Teachers Network and a Teaching Assistant in the instrumental class at the University of Toronto. Currently, Mr. Sprikut is a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto where his research interests include music pedagogy and culture. His research papers were accepted and presented at several international conferences, such as 2010 international Conference in Multidisciplinary Research in Music Pedagogy at the University of Ottawa, Canada, and the ISME World Conference 2010 in Beijing, China. Mr. Sprikut possesses strong knowledge and excellent skills for teaching the classical style, as well as the jazz, folk, and music of modern composers. Determined to bring out the best of his students, Mr. Sprikut is one of the most highly recommended teachers in the GTA. He has been teaching wind instruments, piano, and music theory for over 25 years. Mr. Sprikut is a registered teacher with the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCME 60140) and is fluent in English, Hebrew, Russian.

Mr. Sprikut was happy to answer a few questions for our students and parents:

1. What do you like most about teaching? There are two statements that serve as a point of reference and a guiding principle for me as a music educator. The first is made by a famous Russian educator Vasily Sukhomlinsky: "Music education does not mean educating a musician- it means first of all educating a human being". The second is the following passage from the "Upanishads", one of the most important set of texts in Hindu scriptures: "Give your best in learning and teaching. Give with faith. Give with love. Give with joy". These statements, in my opinion, capture the very essence of a concept of music teaching as a complicated, multi- faceted enterprise. As an educator, I teach the whole person; as a teacher, I love and enjoy what I do. The choice of these two statements is not accidental. As a performer and music educator, I consider myself fortunate to be able to travel and work in different parts of the world, gain knowledge of different cultures, learn several languages, study with great teachers and teach great students. I'm really passionate about teaching. While teaching requires a lot of creativity and imagination, it also involves analytical skills, as well as the ability to be flexible, thoughtful, patient, and understanding. At the same time, a teacher has to be determined and persistent. Many of our students at IMA are complete beginners, and one of the best aspects of my job as a teacher is the opportunity to help my students develop not only technical skills but also deeper, stronger and long-lasting relationship with music, the ability to understand and appreciate it.

2. How do you inspire students to practice more? As a teacher I always strive to build strong relationships and establish a sense of cooperation with my students and their parents. It is very important to let the students know and feel that their work is essential and vital for the collaborative process. It is also important for me to let my students feel that I trust them, that I'm always ready to help, and we always work together and rely on each other. As a music educator who had a chance to work in different cultural and social environments, I always strive for a greater flexibility of my teaching approach, employing a variety of methods with a "dialogue" as a key aspect of my concept of teaching. My responsibility as a teacher is to create a safe, constructive, and dynamic learning environment in which my students' efforts, hard work and willingness to study are deeply appreciated and supported. My task is to encourage them to participate actively in the learning process. I am constantly searching for better, more efficient ways to approach my students, to involve them

into this process, and to arouse and maintain their intellectual curiosity.

3. What roles does performance play in student's development? As a musician and music educator I realize that performance is an essential part of the music education process. I strongly believe that being able to perform is important for anyone who plays and studies music. It helps the students become more mature, and develop self-confidence, self-discipline, organization skills and sense of responsibility. On the other hand, however, as teachers, we also have to be flexible, and realize that different students have different learning styles, different approaches to study, and different learning pace. Therefore, one of our most important goals should be to help them develop greater degree of confidence by providing them with constant support, positive reinforcement and encouragement.

4. Who are your favourite composers? My favourite composer is Dmitri Shostakovich. I admire not only his creative imagination but also his determination, strong will and ability to overcome unimaginable political, social and cultural obstacles and hardships to become one of the most important and original composers of the 20th century. He managed to express in his music the feelings, state of mind, and emotions of the modern human being. His ground- breaking musical compositions and innovative musical language inspire and influence generations of the contemporary composers.

5. What was the last piece of music (sheet music or a recording) you purchased for yourself? Just recently I have bought a couple of recordings by Charlie Parker, who is one of my favourite saxophone players. However, most of the recordings and sheet music that I purchase are for my students, as I always strive to make the learning process more creative and interesting for them.

FEATURED STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Lea Herschel

What instrument do you play? I do play piano and I take vocal classes at IMA.

How long have you taken lessons? I've taken lessons for nearly 5 years now, and I've had a variety of teachers as well in the past few years.

Who are your favourite musical artists? I don't really have a favourite, most songs that I like are from a variety of artists, but if I had to choose, I'd probably say Katy Perry and Selena Gomez.

What are your other hobbies, besides music? I do play video games, and I like to draw. Sometimes I search up things online that I don't know about. I even edit photos from the internet when I'm really bored.

Favorite food? My favorite food is cake. Poutine. That's for sure. It's pretty much the food I always order when I'm at the mall food court.

What is the coolest thing you've learnt in your lessons in the past three months? I would probably say a song that my music teacher, Eva, introduced to me. It's called "Mean" by Taylor Swift. I'm still learning it now, but the song is really catchy and uplifting.

Do you have any performance coming up? Not that I know of. But the Summer Festival is coming up soon, and that's what I'm working towards. I wasn't able to make it for the Winter Festival because of the ice storm that happened in late December.

E-mail to info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca a photo of yourself (or your child) together with the answers of the questions above. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of every month. We will feature you in one of the next issues of the newsletter.

PET OF THE MONTH

Send a photo of your pet together with following information and we will publish it in one of the next issues of the IMA newsletter.

What is the name of your pet? How old is he/she? What kind of breed our pet is (if applicable)? How long have you had him/her for? Any special circumstances around getting the pet (i.e. a gift, foster pet, etc.)? The funniest story about you pet? Any special skills or abilities.

FEATURED ARTICLE

The New York Times

MUSICAL OR OPERA? STAGE COMPANIES ARE DRAWING ON BOTH ART FORMS

By DAVID BELCHER - MARCH 26, 2014

LONDON, UK — When the Chicago Lyric Opera approached the company controlling rights for Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals about staging their Big Five works, it might have quietly made history. By blurring the lines even further in a major opera company repertoire, the move hints at a turning point in how opera companies and symphonies stage American musicals alongside traditional blood-and-guts opera.

As opera houses search for new works and new audiences — and, ultimately, new sources of income and guaranteed ticket sales — musicals may be a salvation and, most likely, a staple of future repertoires. Musical are drawing in audiences who have never attended a traditional opera — 50 percent of the audience at the recent Lyric Opera production of "Oklahoma!" were seeing their first production at the opera house — but also drawing the most jaded of opera-goers and symphony subscribers weary of yet another "Don Giovanni" or Beethoven's Fifth.

"The vast majority of musicals are not appropriate to opera companies, but there are a small number of titles that are enhanced by the skill and scale of an opera house," said Anthony Freud, general director of Lyric Opera of Chicago. "I see it as an inherent part of our output. I don't see doing 'The Sound of Music' with any less professionalism than in doing 'La Traviata.'"

The Lyric Opera is staging the Big Five — "Oklahoma!," "The Sound of Music," "Carousel," "The King and I" and "South Pacific" — over five seasons, the first time the Rodgers and Hammerstein company has given such approval to an opera company.

And opera houses in Europe are also embracing American and British musicals, including the Volksoper in Vienna, which has ramped up its musical repertoire with "Guys & Dolls" and "Kiss Me, Kate." Other examples include Stephen Sondheim's grand and ambitious "Follies" at Opéra de Toulon in France last year; "Miss Saigon" at Malmo Opera in Sweden this season; Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Boulevard" at Goteborg Opera, also in Sweden; and "South Pacific" and "Carousel" recently at Oper Graz in Austria.

The Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, with its rich history of French operettas, has become known more in the last few years as a venue for American musicals, including the French premieres of Mr. Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park with George" last year (reorchestrated by Michael Starobin for that production with a 46-person orchestra) and his 1987 musical "Into the Woods" (running April 1-12). "The King and I" will be staged in June with the American opera superstar Susan Graham, a favorite among French audiences.

Many of the works being staged at opera houses are often considered hybrids of operas and musicals, in part because of their vocal demands, but also because they were written by composers who were hugely influenced by the American musical. One example is "The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny" by Kurt Weill, being staged next season at the Royal Opera in London. Weill fled Nazi Germany for America just as the musical was evolving as an art form.

"Weill grew up in Germany and knew the atonal operas, but he was also on a journey to New York and to the epiphany of the 20th-century American musical," said John Fulljames, associate director of opera at the Royal Opera in London. "I think a musical is different than an opera, but it's a hard definition to draw. In a way, that distinction is easier to make now than it was 40 or 50 years ago, because that type of unamplified

singing in early American musicals doesn't really exist anymore in musical theater."

It was in that prewar era that many lines were blurred as opera gave way to operetta, with 18th-century opéra comique that brought lighter, more humanistic works to French audiences. Many historians agree that the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan and the German and French composers in the late 19th century laid the groundwork for the American musical.

Works like "Porgy and Bess" and "Show Boat," which is often considered the first great American musical, have helped opera companies evolve in their repertoires. Works that have become regulars in opera repertoires over the past 50 years or so include "Candide" and "Sweeney Todd."

"I believe passionately that it's central to our job as a major company to see how the opera art form can evolve," Mr. Freud of Chicago Lyric said. "I'm not sure there is a clear definition between operas and musicals. If you distill it down to its basics, it's about telling stories through music and words."

That melding of opera and musical may have roots in economics for some companies. Opera attendance has been down at even the most prestigious opera houses. New York City Opera went out of business last year after 70 years. The Metropolitan Opera reported recently that it sold only 69 percent of its total potential box office revenue last season, the lowest in years. That figure has generally hovered around 80 percent for much of the past decade, and it hit 88 percent in 2008 and 2009.

And although many opera executives acknowledge a slump in ticket sales — sometimes severe — and are concerned about attracting new audiences, they see the potential to reconfigure the art form and simply explore more popular works.

"Inevitably, running an opera company is a combination of pursuing an artistic vision and managing a viable business, and insuring that we fill 3,600 seats," Mr. Freud of Chicago Lyric said. "But we're also giving our audiences the chance to see and hear these musicals at a scale at which they were conceived."

At Opera North in Leeds, England, musicals have been part of the repertoire for over 20 years, including such lesser-known titles as the Gershwins' "Of Thee I Sing" and another Weill opera-cum-musical, "One Touch of Venus."

"We've always had an interest in what you might call the lighter strand of work," said Richard Mantle, general director of Opera North. "But if you see doing musicals as a way of bringing in new audiences, there has to be a new root established. It's not a big step to go from something like 'Carousel' to 'La Bohème,' but it might be a hard leap for an audience to go from 'Carousel' to 'From the House of the Dead.'"

The company's recent production of "Carousel" showed that the musical, which was written and staged during World War II, is evolving as an opera in some ways.

"'Carousel' straddles the two worlds of opera and musicals, and it has one of the largest scores ever written for the musical

theater," Mr. Mantle said. "And there was no amplification when it premiered. You almost need a Verdi baritone to sing the role of Billy Bigelow," the lead male character in "Carousel."

At the same time, Mr. Mantle said, a company that stages both classical operas and light musicals needs to be careful which singers it chooses to put in specific roles. Few can sing both art forms with equal aplomb, although many singers, such as Nathan Gunn and Stephanie Blythe, have crossed genres successfully.

At the Royal Opera, Mr. Fulljames is clear that the house's mission is to honor the art form of opera. The company has staged only one musical, "Sweeney Todd," in its main house, in 2003. "Mahagonny" is, to his mind, not a musical, although it and other Weill shows, such as "The Threepenny Opera," are performed by theater companies.

And although the Royal Opera has only staged "Sweeney Todd" once (and has no plans to bring it back into repertory, according to Mr. Fulljames), Mr. Sondheim's 1979 musical thriller has become one of the most staged modern American musicals by opera companies. Opera North was the first opera company to stage the musical without amplification, in 1997, Mr. Mantle said. The New York Philharmonic recently staged a concert version that featured the Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson in her New York stage debut in the flamboyant role of Mrs. Lovett, and the opera baritone Bryn Terfel, who has sung the title role around the world.

Whereas many philharmonics and symphonies have staged musicals, often as part of their "pops" series, "Sweeney Todd" was reorchestrated for the 2007 film version by Jonathan Tunick, a longtime collaborator with Mr. Sondheim — giving it an even bigger sound ideally suited for symphonies and opera houses. And a full orchestra, much like it was when it premiered on Broadway nearly 35 years ago, harks back to the musicals of Broadway's golden age with full orchestras and singers not daunted by microphone-free singing.

"'Sweeney Todd' is a great example of a piece that benefits enormously from being played by an orchestra onstage," said Alan Gilbert, music director of the New York Philharmonic. "This is especially important today in an era where in the West End and Broadway you're not always getting the effect of a full orchestra."

Several of the musicals staged over the last decade by the New York Philharmonic have been broadcast on American television, including another Sondheim musical, "Company," that starred Neil Patrick Harris, giving the philharmonic an even larger profile and securing its reputation as an interpreter of American musicals (the recent "Sweeney Todd" will also air on television at a date still to be determined).

"Orchestras these days are called on to be more than just concert venues," Mr. Gilbert said. "We are continuing to play Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, but the hope is to always expand our audience. It fits into a wider definition of what a philharmonic has to be in the 21st century."

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