

# iMA Newsletter



1-4981 Highway 7  
Markham ON L3R 1N1  
Phone: 905.489.4620  
3-50 Innovator Avenue  
Stouffville ON L4A 0Y2  
Phone: 905.640.6363  
www.internationalmusicacademy.ca  
info@internationalmusicacademy.ca

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 XX, No. 12

December 2016

## WELCOMING OUR NEW STUDENTS

Devin Radway (violin)  
Poojitha Sree Korimilli (piano)  
Natalie Pang (violin)  
Sami Iskandar (voice)  
Om Mistry (piano)  
Jacob Gaochen (piano)  
Kiana Landry (voice)  
Carl Cook (piano)  
Ava Edwards (violin)  
Claudette Zabsonre (alto saxophone)  
Karen Thomas (piano)  
Logan Boutros (piano)  
Holden Boutros (piano)

## IMA STUDENTS BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

Priyanka R, Daniel Y, Sebastian S, Renee W, Caleb Y, Trevor T, Dante M, Rida A, Shania W, Dhiren P, Evangeline L, Angela Z, Jatynne R, Shreya R, Labros S, Derek P, Aaron D, Aaryan K, John N, Charlotte L, Ella S, Celina M, Poojitha K, Ethan Javier W, Jake X, Catherine J., Ashvika M., Aditya A.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

## IMPORTANT DAYS IN DECEMBER

Dec 1 Canadian Music Competition registrations deadline  
Dec 1 Peel Music Festival Registrations deadline  
Dec 9-10 RCM theory examinations  
**Dec 10-11 IMA Winter Festival**  
Dec 15 RCM April session applications deadline (piano only)  
**Dec 16 IMA Mid-Year Progress reports**  
**Dec 17 Kindred Spirits Orchestra: GRAND ROMANTICS.**  
**Flato Markham Theatre**

Dec 24-Jan 8 Winter break (school is open)  
Dec 24-Jan 1 Hanukkah (school is open)

Dec 25 Christmas day. School is closed.  
Dec 26 Boxing day. School is open.

## NEWS

### GET A \$30 CREDIT ON YOUR NEXT MONTH TUITION

We have been very pleased with the continued success of our students. They have improved a great deal and we share their excitement with their families, friends, neighbors, and schoolmates. We appreciate your interest towards our programs and services. We are always very happy to welcome new students of all ages, levels, and instruments to the iMA. **Please tell your friends about your experience with the International Music Academy.**

Do you know someone who is thinking of taking music lessons or who has **children** who may be interested in getting their hands on a musical instrument or singing? Do you know a **teenager** who needs a high school OAC credit? Do you know an **adult** who has wanted for a long time to learn how to play a musical instrument but has never had the time or inclination? **Please tell them about the IMA.**

As an appreciation for your referral, we will give you a **\$30 credit** for each new student who registers at the International Music Academy as a result of your referral. As we value your friends as much as we value you, we will offer to each referred student a **\$30 credit** as well.

## PERSONALIZED IMA GIFT CARD



The IMA offers personalized Gift Cards that could be used as thoughtful birthday, holiday, bar/bat Mitzvah, graduation gift or for any other occasions as well as to encourage someone to start learning a

musical instrument or singing. The card can be used for any products or services.

The gift card is available for **any amount**. As cards are personalized with the name of the person who will receive it as well as with the name of the person who purchase it, requests have to be made 1 day in advance. Cards can be ordered in person, by phone at 905.489.4620 or by e-mail at info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca. At the time the card is ordered, a non-refundable \$5 deposit is required. The full value

of the card is paid upon pick-up (and the deposit is credited towards the purchase price). Payments can be made by any major credit card, cheque or cash as well as through the accounts of the IMA Clients.

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## COMPOSERS' ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

14, 1719 MOZART, Leopold (father of Wolfgang)  
14, 1778 HUMMEL, Johann Nepomuk  
14, 1900 COPLAND, Aaron  
18, 1786 WEBER, Carl Maria Friedrich Ernst, Freiherr von  
18, 1860 PADEREWSKI, Ignacy Jan  
22, 1710 BACH, Wilhelm Friedemann  
22, 1913 BRITTEN, Lord Benjamin

*Where you born or do you know someone who was born on the same day as these famous composers? Drop us e-mail at [info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca](mailto:info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca) to let us know.*

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## FEATURED TEACHER OF THE MONTH

### Sara Chen, B.F.A.

Voice studies and interpretation, Suzuki Piano



Ms. Sara Chen has earned her Bachelor degree in vocal performance and pedagogy from XingHai Conservatory of Music. As an accomplished musical artist and over 15 years of teaching experience, Ms. Chen is able to perform and teach a variety of songs and genres including opera and art songs, musical theatre, folk and pop

songs. She understand the technical elements as well as the creativity needed to be successful in vocal music. She teaches students of all ages and levels, and enjoy seeing them progress achieving their own success, dreams and goals. Ms. Chen also teaches Suzuki piano as well. She is a registered teacher with the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCME 61054).

*Ms. Chen was happy to answer a few questions for our students and parents:*

**1. What do you like most about teaching?** Teaching is a pleasure but also a challenge. It requires finding the fine balance between nurturing love for music, encouraging consistent practicing, building up strong and proper music technique, fostering an understanding of philosophy of learning music. When everything is properly balanced, the learning/teaching experience is very rewarding.

**2. How do you inspire students to practice more?** It is important to always show my love and passion for music. Encouraging students' progress and helping them reach their

goals and make their dreams come true inspires students the most.

**3. What roles does performance play in student's development?** Public performances build up students' confidence and self-esteem. Overcoming the stage fright and gaining performance experience are integral parts of the learning process.

**4. Who are your favourite composers?** So many to list....

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## FEATURED STUDENT OF THE MONTH

### Kyra Sophie Oszlai



**What instrument do you play?** - I play the piano. I briefly played the violin, also, but wanted to concentrate more on the piano, as I had more success with this instrument and I truly enjoy playing it.

**How long have you taken lessons?** - I started in September 2013 at IMA with Ms. Antonia de Wolfe. I haven't played the piano before.

Antonia is a brilliant teacher and allowed me to progress in a way and at a tempo my parents could not even imagine. I am now at RCM Grade 5, and I love that my pieces grow in complexity and beauty. Last year I won at the Markham Music Festival and also at the North York Music Festival. The awards ceremony at the North York Music Festival was my absolute favourite.

**Who are your favourite musical artists?** - This is hard to say, as I love most composers I am playing a piece from. If I needed to narrow down, here are my classical favourites: W.A. Mozart, J.S. Bach, G.F. Handel, J. Haydn, L. v. Beethoven, R. Schumann, C. Czerny and A. Vivaldi. From the jazz style I love to play pieces by Christopher Norton and Mike Schoenmehl. From the modern artists, I like the songs of Katy Perry, as I dance to many of them.

**What are your other hobbies, besides music?** - I dance competitively. My true love is ballet, but I also enjoy a lot tap, jazz, acro and musical theatre. In addition, I love the arts and like to do all kinds of creative things: drawing, painting, Rainbow Loom, jewelry design, writing stories. I have a passion to read English and French books, and I love to design spaces and villages in Minecraft. I also love to spend time with my friends, Samantha and Zaara, and with my little brother, Darren, and my family.

**Favorite food?** - My favourite food is clam chowder and as a snack lychees, and for breakfast, my favourite food is crepes with chocolate filling.

**What is the coolest thing you've learnt in your lessons in the past three months?** - I love my RCM Grade 5 syllabus. My favourite pieces are Elissa Milne: 'No Worries' and Ludwig van Beethoven: 'Sonatina in F Major'. To learn these pieces with Antonia is a true pleasure. She is not only a fun teacher, but I also feel encouraged, and her guidance to refine the style and technique is helping me progress in the right direction.

**Do you have any performance coming up?** - I just had a Christmas concert at the end of November in a Church in Markham, and my IMA Winter Festival concert is coming up on December 10. Performing in front of public still makes me a bit nervous, but I feel the right preparation allows me to bring lots of colour and depth into the pieces I play, so that the audience enjoys them just as much as I do. At the end of the performances or exams I feel accomplished and rewarded. It is a great opportunity for me to grow. In addition, I will be dancing with Canada's Ballet Jorgen in the Nutcracker in the Markham Flato Theatre on December 30 in the 2:00 pm show. This is my second year with them and I am very proud to be part of their production.

*E-mail to [info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca](mailto: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

Matthew Aucoin, a 26-year-old wunderkind composer-conductor, had just previewed excerpts from Evidence, a work-in-progress of his commissioned by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, or LACO. Now he was discussing his approach to composing with a rapt audience at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Beverly Hills. "I tend to write short scores, like plotting points on a graph, and then I fill in the sketch, flesh it out, and orchestrate it," Aucoin tells members of LACO's Sound Investment program. That's a group of 104 investors who each pay \$300 a season to fund a new work and, in exchange, get to follow its development, engaging with the composer from inception to premiere and enjoying a rare insider's view of the creative process.

Raulee Marcus, a passionate commissioner of new classical works, with one of her signed scores. *Photo: Thomas Michael Alleman* Sound Investment and other programs devoted to contemporary classical music have turned [Los Angeles](#) into one of the most vibrant cities for musical creativity, and that, in turn, owes much to the increasing role that individual aficionados are playing by bankrolling new commissions. "There is really a shift in the

funding picture happening there," says Norman Ryan, vice president of composers and repertoire at publisher Schott Music.



"You have this very strong component of a very aggressive, proactive, and enthusiastic group of music lovers reaching out to composers in all sorts of ways, including having the ability to write a check. It's something that I don't see anywhere else."

Four years ago, on a whim, Justus Schlichting commissioned a new work from composer James Matheson, after listening to his work at a Los Angeles Philharmonic rehearsal. "I didn't know what I was doing," he recalls. Schlichting, who also plays the trombone, had recently sold his company, S&S Datalink, and was renewing his musical passion with a master class at the Music Academy of the West. "I was an average music consumer for 40 years," he says, "but seeing all of this great music and no composer in sight, it struck me that something needed to be rectified."

Since that first string-quartet commission, which debuted in 2014, Schlichting and his wife, Elizabeth, have become a potent funding force. They have committed to 135 commissions, costing \$1,250 to \$50,000 each and ranging from violin solos to operas, with a who's who of modern and emerging composers. Drawn to the entrepreneurial and experimental, the Schlichtings single-handedly underwrote last year's wildly inventive *Hopscotch*, Yuval Sharon's rolling opera staged inside a fleet of 24 limousines. "When I began doing this," says Schlichting, "I was thinking about



the times when classical music depended upon the largess of those with means to keep the art alive. And I was in a position to pay that forward.”

The fertile dynamic under way in L.A. offers a throwback to an earlier era of patronage, such as that of 18th century Vienna, but with something of a new and synergistic twist. Unlike most cities, where contemporary classical music is relegated to the ossified margins, in Los Angeles the major music institutions are catalysts, not only establishing an appetite for new music but also cultivating patrons to support it. Jeff Kahane, LACO’s music director, notes, “There is a willingness here to recognize how critical it is to the health of an orchestra to be in the business of fostering new works.”



Gustavo Dudamel leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic.  
Photo: Hiroyuki Ito/Getty Images

Consider the Long Beach Opera, now in its 37th year, which has earned international acclaim for its unorthodox programming: Nearly all of its offerings each season are devoted to new and rarely performed works. One of the L.A. Philharmonic’s longest-running and most popular programs is its Green Umbrella new-music series. The Philharmonic announced an astonishing 21 new works for the 2016-17 season, to be performed at the Frank Gehry–designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, up from nine new works commissioned during the 2009-10 season. Chad Smith, the Philharmonic’s chief operating officer, says, “Even a blue-chip institution can keep a certain sense of experimentation.” No surprise, then, that composers are flocking to the City of Angels. Andrew Norman, the feted Pulitzer Prize finalist whose works are performed globally, is one of them. “In L.A., there is this sense of wide-open possibility,” he says, noting that unlike most established musical centers, it is OK to take risks in L.A., even to fail. “Relatively speaking, it’s much more possible here to come up with some wild, crazy idea and then find people willing to support it.” Aucoin, recently named L.A. Opera’s new artist-in-residence, concurs: “A lot of places have wealthy patrons of the arts. They support young artists, but they are more likely to be a hotshot violinist. In L.A., donors gravitate toward the funky and the new.”

**Within the small** but influential commissioning set, Raulee Marcus, founder and president of financial-services firm Pinnacle Management, is one of the most active. The bathroom of Marcus’ downtown loft is covered in framed and signed frontispieces and

scores of her many commissions. Marcus’ love of music was nurtured by listening to the radio in her grandmother’s Kentucky kitchen, and she socializes with composers, holds soirées in her loft, and introduces new potential funders to composers. After hearing a performance of Andrew McIntosh’s “Etude IV,” during a Green Umbrella concert, she sent him an e-mail, stating, “You are a today Bartók. I would love to know you better.” She has since commissioned several of his works. “There’s a lot of engagement with the actual composers if you’re involved in new music,” she says. “I would have loved to have met Beethoven. I get to meet today’s Beethovens.”

Hannah Lash, an award-winning composer and harpist, and member of the Yale School of Music faculty, is amazed by the intensity of L.A.’s patrons. “From a composer’s standpoint, any commission is a good thing,” she says. “But there is something so special about a commission coming from an individual. You have someone invested in you.”



The impassioned Marcus frequently funds works together with Stephen Block, a retired general counsel at International Flavors and Fragrances. They spend anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 a commission, and often bring in Leslie Lassiter, a managing director at JPMorgan Private Bank, or others, when they need more funds to get a commission off the ground. Block says he has given up most other philanthropic activities, and last year spent about

\$50,000 bankrolling music. "For me, the driving factor is really the opportunity to help composers and help support and nurture new music. By doing this we can make sure as many new composers [as possible] get heard, and hopefully some of their music becomes part of the repertoire."

Interested? In addition to LACO's Sound Investment, there are numerous worthwhile festivals offering commissioning opportunities, such as wild Up, an event dedicated to creating new music and performances, and Jacaranda, an ongoing series presenting experimental works. Both provide easy access to composers and musicians. The nonprofit MusicBridge also cultivates artistic collaborations and commissions. Of course, reaching out directly to a composer can also lead to a commissioning relationship.

The grander L.A. Philharmonic requires an annual donation of \$15,000 for a donor level that lets you see "the list," the works-in-progress looking to get bankrolled. Demand is so hot that a new breed of benefactor is elbowing others aside to get a leg up. "I talk to my Phil handler and say, 'You better get that list to me before the commissions are gone,'" says an active member. "There's definitely a competition for the best composers and commissions." Benefactors don't own the music, and while many hope their commissions eventually become part of the canon, there is always the chance that the piece will slide into obscurity. The rewards are rooted in a lust for establishing a lasting musical footprint. Sue Bienkowski, president of the board of the Long Beach Opera and a sponsor of underfunded composers, says she gets "satisfaction from helping those who don't have the resources or development donors."

Justus Schlichting would agree. Two years ago, he and his wife helped violinist Jenny Koh finance her Stradivarius. But instead of paying them back with cash, she asked if they would accept new pieces as repayment, works that other composers would donate to her in the Schlichtings' honor. In the end, 34 composers, including Philip Glass and Esa-Pekka Salonen, did just that. "I look at something like this and say to myself, 'Do I want to be a part of that world?'" says Schlichting. "You bet." Translation: You can't put a dollar figure on the total returns earned from passion.

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International Music Academy

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*for new students only*

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