

The Quarter Note

Volume 38 Issue 2 – Spring 2008

President's Note

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It is Spring!! The snow is melting, the daffodils, tulips and crocuses are up, people are out walking, neighbours are raking their yards, the buds are on the trees and the birds are singing again first thing each morning! For music teachers, the other sign of Spring, of course, is the local music festivals which take place in our province anywhere from February through May. At this time of year, we find ourselves putting the polishing touches on pieces that were started many weeks or months ago. Most students are thinking and listening a lot more as to how they are playing. Parents are more diligent with practice times. Teachers are using all the tricks in their arsenal to get that scale passage even or the pianissimo passage soft but not thinand when the piece is just right, we pull out the maintenance practice schedule to prevent it from going over the top and downhill!!

Some students are so keen to perform I remember a dear little red headed student who was so excited to play on the festival stage that he had the first bar of the piece played BEFORE his behind was on the bench and the last bar was being played as he was lifting off of it!! All practicing with him on "What to do to settle yourself before you perform" was absolutely in vain!!

We had practiced sitting on the bench and not lifting his hands to the keys before he was ready. We had practiced counting in his head so the Andante wouldn't become Vivace! We had practiced thinking about the first few bars and locating the proper octave on the keyboard so that he wouldn't play the piece an octave too high!all in vain, butHis performance was not the best nor was it the worst. He played rather well for a seven year old first year student actually. He did play in the right octave and he remembered all the right notes and all the appropriate dynamics. He also played with the largest smile on his sweet little face that I had ever seen!! He was enthused and he was enjoying THIS moment in time!

In 2005, I attended the CFMTA convention in Calgary. One of the competitors at the Piano competition was a young 12 year old Asian boy. He played brilliantly Well enough to place among the top three winners of that competition. He had incredible technique and musicality and he played very difficult repertoire in both stages of competition first round and finals. It all impressed me, BUT what impressed me the most was his enthusiasm! He truly enjoyed every moment that he was making

could tell by his demeanour when he walked on stage and by the look on his face as he was playing! He was enjoying THIS moment in time!

My little red head only took piano for about 5 years, and then went on to play another instrument in the school bandThe young Asian boy has a wonderful career ahead of him should he wish to pursue it What they shared was a love for sharing their gift with others! How wonderful!! And what an example for us as music teachers! I trust that in all of our teaching we will do our best to share enthusiasm and joy in the study of music. That is key for all of our students.

Our AGM is fast approaching. I trust that you will come to the Saint John area on June 14th to sample all that the Saint John branch has worked so hard to plan for us It is always great to meet and greet new and old friends and to tap in to the resources available through our clinicians.

See you there!!

Kilby Hume
President

NBRMTA Annual General Meeting and Conference

June 14th, 2008

Saint Mark's Catholic Church

171 Pettingill Road, Quispamsis , New Brunswick

8:30.....Registration
9:00.....Ear training and Sight Singing Workshop
10:00.....Break
10:30.....Teaching Outside the Box:Using Games for Theory Learning
11:30.....About Canadian Music Centre and Upcoming Anniversary
12:00-1:45.....Lunch followed by Branch Reports and AGM
2:00-4:00.....How to run the Contemporary Showcase Music Festival

Provincial dues may be paid during registration on June 14th, 2008.

Please detach and mail to Rita Raymond-Millett, 1 Earle's Court, Quispamsis

New Brunswick, E2E 1C3

Closest local accommodations available

Amsterdam Inn(506-849-8050) and Shadow Lawn Inn(506-847-7539)

.....

Name: _____

I will be attending the annual general meeting and conference.

Registration fee is included(yes,no): member(\$40)_____ non-member (\$50)_____

Attendance of a single workshop, Name of workshop: _____

Registration fee for a single workshop: \$15

Please make cheques payable to NBRMTA

The Workshops and Clinicians

Ear Training and Sight Singing: Janet Kidd is a singer, composer, choral director, published author and teaches voice, theory and piano. Her choral compositions are published by Oceanna Music and are performed by choirs in Canada and the United States. She is currently working on a song cycle for Canadian soprano Wendy Nielsen, who performed the first of these with Symphony New Brunswick in 2007. She lives on Darling's Island with her husband, composer Richard Kidd and the 2 youngest of their children. Janet will present a workshop on the ear training and sight singing method she has been developing for several years. This method is designed to be incorporated into children's weekly piano or voice lessons.

Teaching Outside the Box: Using Games for Theory Learning: The complex theory concepts inherent in any beginner instrumental program can make music challenging for young learners. Most note literacy and theory issues require frequent review and repetition before they are mastered, a process which many students avoid. In creating twenty-four "Games for Music Learning" Ms. Thomson has provided teachers, students and parents with a wide array of quick and simple learning activities which promote the concepts encountered within the first three years of instrumental training. Many of these board and dice games can also be adapted for more advanced pupils. Imagine a world where theory is fun!

Heather Thomson received a Bachelor of Music degree (Cum Laude) from Mount Allison University. She has operated private music studios in various cities across three Atlantic Provinces offering instruction in group and private piano, theory and music history, music and movement, junior choir and handbells. She will shortly be relocating to Toronto where she hopes to incorporate many "outside the box" ideas into her teaching studio teaching.

Canadian Music Center: Shawn Bostick, Regional Director of the Canadian Music Center, Atlantic Region will be coming to help us get acquainted with what CMC does, as well as the upcoming Anniversary Year Celebration Plans.

Contemporary Showcase Festival: The only festival of its kind in Canada, Contemporary Showcase is devoted entirely to music by Canadian composers. It is non-competitive, multi-discipline, with no marks awarded. Ann LaPlante, General Manager of Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects, along with Jacqueline Sorenson and Canadian Composer Dr. Michael Parker (Born in Toronto, studied violin and viola at Royal Conservatory of Music, in Banff and at Michigan State University. He considers himself to be a very eclectic composer. He is completely self-taught, the compositional skills he has acquired by being an avid consumer and performer of all kinds of music throughout his life) will illustrate how a Contemporary Showcase Festival is run, what kind of pieces the students would perform and about the programme.

Chocolate River Conservatory of Music to Host the Atlantic Young Artist Competition

DIEPPE, NB - Nine gifted young musicians from across Atlantic Canada will participate in the Atlantic Young Artist Competition, to take place in La Caserne concert hall at 205 Gauvin Street in Dieppe, between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, 2008. Melody Dobson, Artistic Director of the Chocolate River Conservatory of Music notes: "We are proud to be hosting the Young Artist Competition. This event brings together some of the most promising young musicians of the Atlantic region. The Competition is a valuable opportunity to measure their developing skills against those of their peers, and an equally valuable chance to gain wider performance experience."

Each performer will present a short recital, featuring major solo works from the baroque, classical, romantic, or contemporary repertoire. The participants include a soprano, a violinist, a flautist and six pianists, drawn from the provinces of New Brunswick (including several from the Moncton area), Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

Two well-known music professionals will act as the adjudication panel for the Atlantic Young Artist Competition. **Dr. Janet Hammock** holds an Artist Diploma from the University of Toronto and both Master and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Yale University. She taught piano and related topics at Whittier College in California and at Mount Allison University, where she was appointed Professor Emeritus of Music in 2003. **Dr. Alasdair MacLean** is one of Eastern Canada's most accomplished composers. He has been Composer-in-Residence with Symphony Nova Scotia and Debut Atlantic. He holds degrees in composition from the Juilliard School in New York and a Doctorate in Composition from the University of Toronto.

The Atlantic Young Artist Competition is a project of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers Associations and its provincial counterparts in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The Atlantic Young Artist Competition is open to young Canadian pianists, singers, and instrumentalists who are residents of, or studying in, the Atlantic provinces. In addition, these performers are currently students of a Registered Music Teacher. The Competition winner receives a concert tour of the Atlantic region, consisting of four or five concerts in the fall of 2008.

The Young Artist Series was initiated in 1942 under the direction of Saskatchewan music educator Dr. Lyell Gustin, in order to give talented young performers an opportunity to gain concert tour experience. The Young Artist Series now operates in three regions of Canada: Atlantic, Western, and Ontario.

Many Young Artist soloists, who had their first major concert experience through the Series, have gone on to make careers in music. Some Atlantic Young Artist winners have included Donald Fraser, organ (PEI - MTA), David Sharpe, piano (NB - MTA), Thomas Yee, piano (NF), Measha Brueggergosman, soprano (NB), Marc Djokic, violin (NS), and Patrick Cashin (NF).

The public is cordially invited to attend the Young Artist Competition; all recitals are free of charge.

For further information regarding the Atlantic Young Artist Competition, please contact: Melody Dobson, New Brunswick Young Artist Convenor, Tel. 383-3192, mail@crcm.ca

2008 ATLANTIC YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION



Saturday, May 10, 2008

**CHOCOLATE RIVER CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
Dieppe, New Brunswick**

Performances by talented young musicians
from across the Atlantic region

Saturday, May 10th

**Salle de concert *La Caserne* concert hall
*Admission Free***

Morning Session, 9:00 a.m.

James Hurley, piano (St. John's, NL)
Kathryn Ledwell, piano (Charlottetown, PE)
Terri Surette, violin (Riverview, NB)

Afternoon Session, 1:15 p.m.

Michael Thibodeau, piano (Sackville, NB)
Morgan Saulnier, flute (Montague, PE)
Juliane Gallant, piano (Riverview, NB)
Laura McLean, voice (Sackville, NB)

Evening Session, 7:00 p.m.

Andrew Coffin, piano (Corner Brook, NL)
Pierre Andre Doucet, piano (Moncton, NB)

Concert Review: Anne-Julie Caron, marimba, January 26, 2008

A recital by young Canadian marimbist Anne-Julie Caron was the first performance of the new year put on by the Mount Allison University Performing Arts Series. The concert proved to be a great success, as Caron captivated her audience from the first note and held its attention until the very end.

The concert was quite long, lasting for two hours. However, the evening seemed to fly by as Caron performed a fantastic programme that was greatly varied. The programme included contemporary pieces written for marimba as well as transcriptions of pieces originally for cello, piano, and guitar. The fact that the composers came from all different musical eras as well as different countries, including Germany, Japan, France, and Argentina, ensured that a plethora of musical styles were incorporated into the performance. The inclusion of transcriptions of pieces by composers well known to art music enthusiasts (Bach and Debussy) as well as modern composers who are less well known (Abe and Espel) also made the programme more multifaceted. The order in which the pieces were presented was also well planned. The programme opened with a piece by Espel that was calm and soothing in mood but showcased the performer's virtuosity. The final piece before intermission was also a good showpiece that was obviously very technically demanding but also very musical and beautiful. The final piece of the programme, Marimba d'Amore by Abe, was a good choice because it conveyed a great deal of emotion, especially as Caron explained to the audience beforehand what the piece was about.

A particularly notable aspect of Caron's performance was the overall physicality of it. Playing the marimba involves a lot of physical movement, and Caron moved very musically. Her motions and gestures were like a dance and seemed to be as much a part of the performance as the music she was producing. Her facial expressions conveyed that she was extremely focused and that she was very passionate about the pieces she was performing. She would often breathe loudly as she began a phrase and would sometimes stamp her foot with the beat. Her performance was very controlled and she was able to play very accurately when moving incredibly quickly. In each piece, her voicing was excellent, with the melody always singing out over a supportive accompaniment. Each phrase was clear and well shaped.

Caron's stage presence and professionalism were commendable. Of particular note was the way she would explain the pieces she was performing so that the audience could more fully appreciate the performance. When she learned at intermission that most of the audience knew very little about marimbas, she took the time to explain the instrument's origins and a bit of its history as well as demonstrating some of its capabilities before continuing with the programme. She also incorporated some humor into her commentary, endearing herself to the audience, and made herself available afterwards to answer any questions.

No Fortissimo? Symphony Told to Keep It Down

By [SARAH LYALL](#)

LONDON — They had rehearsed the piece only once, but already the musicians at the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra were suffering. Their ears were ringing. Heads throbbed.

Tests showed that the average noise level in the orchestra during the piece, “State of Siege,” by the composer Dror Feiler, was 97.4 decibels, just below the level of a pneumatic drill and a violation of new European noise-at-work limits. Playing more softly or wearing noise-muffling headphones were rejected as unworkable.

So instead of having its world premiere on April 4, the piece was dropped. “I had no choice,” said Trygve Nordwall, the orchestra’s manager. “The decision was not made artistically; it was made for the protection of the players.”

The cancellation is, so far, probably the most extreme consequence of the new law, which requires employers in Europe to limit workers’ exposure to potentially damaging noise and which took effect for the entertainment industry this month.

But across Europe, musicians are being asked to wear decibel-measuring devices and to sit behind see-through antinoise screens. Companies are altering their repertoires. And conductors are reconsidering the definition of “fortissimo.”

Alan Garner, an oboist and English horn player who is the chairman of the players’ committee at the [Royal Opera House](#), said that he and his colleagues had been told that they would have to wear ear-plugs during entire three-hour rehearsals and performances.

“It’s like saying to a racing-car driver that they have to wear a blindfold,” he said.

Already there are signs that the law is altering not only the relationship between classical musicians and their employers, but also between musicians and the works they produce.

“The noise regulations were written for factory workers or construction workers, where the noise comes from an external source, and to limit the exposure is relatively straightforward,” said Mark Pemberton, the director of the Association of British Orchestras. “But the problem is that musicians create the noise themselves.”

Rock musicians have talked openly about loud music and ear protection for years. The issue is more delicate for classical musicians, who have been reluctant to accept that their profession can lead to [hearing loss](#), even though studies have shown that to be the case. At the same time, complying with the law — which concerns musicians’, not audiences’, noise exposure — is complicated.

One problem is that different musicians are exposed to different levels of noise depending on their instruments, the concert hall, where they sit in an orchestra and the fluctuations of the piece they are playing. In Britain, big orchestras now routinely measure the decibel levels of various areas to see which musicians are subject to the most noise, and when.

Orchestras are also installing noise-absorbing panels and placing antinoise screens at strategic places, like in front of the brass section, to force the noise over the heads of other players.

“You have to tilt them in such a way so that the noise doesn’t come back and hit the person straight in the face, because that can cause just as much damage,” said Philip Turbett, the orchestra manager for the English National Opera.

They are also trying to put more space between musicians, and rotating them in and out of the noisiest seats.

At the Royal Opera House, the management has devised a computer program that calculates individual weekly noise exposure by cross-referencing such factors as the member’s schedule and the pieces being played.

Musicians are spacing out rehearsals and playing more softly when they can. As the Welsh National Opera prepared for the premiere of James MacMillan’s loud opera, “The Sacrifice,” last year, the brass and percussion sections were told to take it easy at times in rehearsal to protect the ears of themselves and their colleagues, said Peter Harrap, the orchestra and chorus director.

Conductors are also being asked to reconsider their habit of “going for a big loud orchestration,” said Chris Clark, the orchestra operations manager at the Royal Opera House. Composers, too, are being asked to keep the noise issue in mind.

“Composers should bear in mind that they are dealing with people who are alive, and not machines,” said Mr. Nordwall of the Bavarian orchestra.

And companies are examining their repertoires with the aim of interspersing loud pieces — Mahler’s symphonies, for instance — with quieter ones. They are also buying a lot of high-tech earplugs, which are molded to players’ ears and cost about \$300 a pair. Many orchestras now ask their musicians to put the earplugs in during the loud parts of a performance.

“I have a computer program that gives me a minute-by-minute timeline chart through the whole piece,” said Mr. Turbett of the English National Opera. “I can go back to the musicians and say, ‘Between bar 100 and bar 200, there’s a very loud passage, so please put in hearing protection.’ ”

But these remedies can bring problems. Some musicians in the brass and percussion sections resent being screened off from their colleagues, as if they were being ostracized. Musicians, even if they accept the need to use earplugs occasionally, tend to hate wearing them.

Mr. Garner, the Royal Opera House oboist, said: “I’ve spent nearly 30 years in music and I know all about noise, and occasionally, if I’m not playing and there’s a loud bit next to me, I might shove my fingers in my ears for a few bars. But I have yet to find a musician who says they can wear earplugs and still play at the same level of quality.”

The modern noise-level-conscious orchestra is also dependent, of course, on the indulgence of the conductor. Arriving at an orchestra to find that decisions have been based solely on musicians' noise exposure can be galling to the sort of conductor who likes to be in control, which is most of them.

Although Switzerland is outside the [European Union](#), an extraordinary noise-related argument between the conductor and the Bern Symphony Orchestra disrupted the opening night of [Alban Berg's](#) "Wozzeck" in March.

The piece called for 30 string players and 30 wind and percussion players, all crammed into a too-small pit. When the stage director complained in rehearsals that the music was too loud, the conductor didn't order the orchestra to play more softly, but instead asked for a cover over the orchestral pit to contain the noise, said Marianne Käch, the orchestra's executive director.

That meant the noise bounced back at the musicians, bringing the level to 120 decibels in the brass section, similar to the levels in front of a speaker in a rock concert. The musicians complained. The conductor held firm. But when the piece began, "the orchestra decided to play softer anyway in order to protect themselves," Ms. Käch said.

That made the conductor so angry that he walked off after 10 minutes or so, Ms. Käch said. Told that there had been "musical differences" between the conductor and the orchestra, the perplexed audience had to wait for the two sides to hash it out.

In the end, the orchestra agreed to return and finish the performance at the loud levels. For subsequent performances, a foam cover that absorbed instead of reflecting the sound was placed above the pit, and the conductor agreed to tone things down.

"This is the problem you find in many places, that the conductors are conducting more and more loudly," Ms. Käch said. "I know conductors who have hundreds of shades of fortissimo, but not many in the lower levels. Maybe the whole world is just becoming louder."

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