



Impromptu

Improvisation in Piano Lessons: Why & How



By Amy Essenburg

“Oh!” the middle-aged professional woman sitting beside me on the airplane exclaimed, “I took piano lessons for years as a kid, but I don’t play anymore. I quit when I was about 13; I just wasn’t into it. I wish now that I had stuck with it! I love listening to music though.”

“Hmm, I hear you,” I smiled and added, “Well, it’s never too late to learn!”

You have likely had similar conversations with acquaintances who learned that you are a music teacher. So many people were introduced to piano as a child, but focused entirely on note reading. Once they stopped lessons and forget the specific songs they had learned, they are left with virtually nothing they can play. But what if they had learned to improvise?

This article offers practical tips on why and how to incorporate improvisation into piano lessons for beginners to advanced students.

Improvising is the “Speaking” of Music Language

Music is a language. When I meet with new students, I use this analogy to help explain the different elements that we focus on in our musical studies. We learn to read notes just as we learn to read English in school. We learn to understand the structure and construct of music through theory, just as we study spelling and grammar in school. And we learn to “speak” music through improvising.

What if you only learned to read and write English, but never tried speaking in sentences of your own? Imagine you could recite books or poetry, but couldn’t speak other than that. Even two year olds can form short sentences to express their own desires, yet many of our older piano students are at a loss when it comes to expressing themselves musically. Every young child I have met feels free to improvise at the piano—plunking notes and experimenting with sound. Our job as teachers is to help guide that experimentation, giving our students the structure and freedom they need to continue creating musical ideas of their own.

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Read also “It’s More Fun in a Group” by LaDona Ahenda on p.13



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ARMTA

IMPROMPTU

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Publication: February 15

Impromptu is the newsletter of ARMTA Calgary branch with the purpose of informing members of events of interest, providing summaries of Calgary meetings, and encouraging and supporting professional development through member-written articles.

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**If you have a story to tell or ideas to share,
please contact the editor.**

President's Message

Happy 2017!

It's going to be an exciting year as we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday and ARMTA's 85th birthday. As I look to the coming year, I feel a sense of pride in being a part of an organization with a long history of contributing to the betterment of Canadian society through music and teaching.

Mayor Nenshi has challenged Calgarians to give "three gifts of service" to our country to commemorate Canada's 150th birthday: gifts of service to community, country, and to the world. I would like to take this idea a step further and suggest that one of the gifts that you give to your community this year to be a gift of service to ARMTA.

ARMTA was founded by a group of people who believed in working together to uphold excellence in music teaching. They also had a vision and purpose that included sharing music and ideas with other teachers, students and the community at large. To commemorate this legacy of giving, it would be wonderful if each ARMTA Calgary member contributed one small act or idea to the work of ARMTA in the community. It is critical that we all work together to ensure that ARMTA Calgary continues to be a vibrant and important part of local music teachers' professional lives.

ARMTA, together with the other provincial music teachers' associations, is part of a uniquely Canadian organization: the CFMTA. The CFMTA contributes to our Canadian national identity by unifying Canadian music teachers within an organization that has a national vision. A strong emphasis on promoting Canadian composers and Canadian music is also an important part of the work carried out by the CFMTA. I hope that you will take an opportunity this year to celebrate Canadian music of all genres and Canadian composers in your studios.

Please join me in taking pride in ARMTA and in our beautiful country, by making 2017 a year filled with patriotism through music and music teaching!

Best wishes,

Michelle

Time to renew your membership!

Renewal deadline: February 28, 2017

Renew before February 28 with an early-bird discount

Visit www.armta.ca and select "Member's Area"

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Contact the provincial Administrator,
Vicki Martin, at admin@armta.ca or 780.554.7682**



**ARMTA CALGARY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**March 14, 2017
9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

First Church of the Nazarene,
65 Richard Way, SW

Guest Speaker: Karen King

For more information,
contact Michelle Everett Faunt:
fauntpianostudio@gmail.com

**ARMTA CALGARY
GENERAL MEETING**

**May 15, 2017
9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Luncheon to follow**

First Church of the Nazarene,
65 Richard Way, SW

For more information,
contact Michelle Everett Faunt:
fauntpianostudio@gmail.com

The Annual Music Marathon Is Back

The Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association Calgary Branch

presents

Eight hours of continuous music at Stephen Avenue mall—The Core

Saturday, May 27, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Registration deadline: [April 1, 2017](#)

Please email Chrysanthema@shaw.ca

Music Marathon is our annual fundraising event sponsored by ARMTA Calgary. The main purpose of the event is to raise money for scholarships and programs for students of ARMTA teachers and ARMTA teachers themselves. The event also showcases the benefits of taking lessons from a registered music teacher in Calgary and provides students with an opportunity to share their music with the community at large.

Booking performance time

Teachers can book their time slots up to 45 minutes in one of the three sections of time:

10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.; 12:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.; 3:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

*Please be advised that the minimum performance time is 15 minutes!

*In case a student cancels his/her performance at the last minute, it will be the teacher's responsibility to perform.

A \$50-scholarship prize

All students who participate will be entered into a draw for the scholarship.

Collecting "pledges"

Like a sports marathon, students will be encouraged to collect "pledges" for their time participating in the Music Marathon. There is no minimum donation required to participate, but \$10 per student is suggested. Donations can be made by cash or cheque in person at the event, or online through the ARMTA Canada Helps page. Donations over \$25 will receive a charitable-donation receipt.

Students will perform on a seven-foot Steinway piano Model B provided by Steinway Piano Gallery.

Sound equipment will be available to amplify acoustic instruments such as violin, guitar and voice.

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Calendar of Events (February–June 2017)

Date	Event & Place	Contact
Feb. 4, 2017	Outstanding Student Recital (OSR), St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW, Calgary 4:00 p.m.	Ron Proctor: ronaldproctor@shaw.ca
Feb. 5, 2017	Presentation—Dr. Jacques Després-French Style/Influences, Michael Lipnicki Fine Pianos, 6033 Centre St SW, Calgary 1:00 p.m.	Eric Nyland: eric.nyland@gmail.com
Feb. 6, 2017	ARMTA Calgary Budget Meeting, Sharon Carne's House, 3 Ranch Estates Drive NW Calgary 9:30 a.m.	Sharon Carne: scarne@telus.net
Feb. 11–12, 2017	C3 Competition, Scarborough United Church, 134 Scarborough Ave. SW, Calgary, AB	Michelle Everett Faunt: fauntpianostudio@gmail.com
Feb. 25, 2017	ARMTA Provincial Meeting, Red Deer, AB	Melodie Archer: mel.lynn.archer@gmail.com
Mar. 13, 2017	ARMTA Calgary AGM, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB 9:30 a.m.	Michelle Everett Faunt: fauntpianostudio@gmail.com
Mar. 19–22, 2017	MTNA Conference Baltimore, Maryland	Beth Olver: soundsofmusic@shaw.ca
Apr. 1, 2017	North Student Recital, St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW, Calgary 2:00 p.m.	Han Ding: hding-89@hotmail.com
Apr. 10, 2017	ARMTA Calgary Executive Meeting, Location TBA: 9:30 a.m.	Michelle Everett Faunt: fauntpianostudio@gmail.com
Apr. 18–May 6, 2017	CPA Festival MRU	
May 6, 2017	South Student Recital, Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary 1:00 p.m.	Carol S. Moore: rhythmreader@shaw.ca
May 7, 2017	Dr. Magda Adamek Workshop, Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary 10:00 a.m.	Eric Nyland: eric.nyland@gmail.com
May 15, 2017	ARMTA Calgary GM, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB 9:30 a.m.	Michelle Everett Faunt: fauntpianostudio@gmail.com
May 27, 2017	Music Marathon, Core Shopping Mall/Stephen Avenue Mall	Chyrsanthea Pashenkova: violino@shaw.ca
June 3, 2017	North Student Recital, St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW, Calgary 2:00 p.m.	Han Ding: hding-89@hotmail.com

EXCITING NEWS

ARMTA Calgary Chamber Music Program is a GO!

Thanks to the ARMTA Calgary Executive Board and the Endowment Society!

The Program will run Saturdays at Steinway Piano Gallery

Deadline for Registration: February 1, 2017

Please register at Chrysanthema@shaw.ca

We were able to reduce the fees/tuition to \$15 per hour, per student!

The ACCMP is designed to expose young instrumentalists and aspiring musicians to the art of performing together in a small group setting. It also offers 10 intermediate and advanced students, aged 9 to 17, excellent opportunities to study and perform with established chamber music professionals.

Intermediate (RCM Grade 8–10) Students will meet every other week for rehearsals.

Advanced (RCM Grade 10 and up) Students will meet once a month.

2017 dates and times for both groups:

February 11, 25

March 4, 18

April 8, 22

May 6, 13

June classes & the semester-end recital dates and time TBA

Faculty: Kathleen van Mourik.

Ms. Van Mourik is the founder and co-artistic director of the Mountain View International Festival of Song and Chamber Music (MVF), Canada's only summer master programme and concert festival combining art song and chamber music. She is also a founder of the Mountain View Connection, Calgary's only concert series devoted to presenting emerging artists in concert. The current Calgary Chamber Music events calendar is filled with musicians who were promoted by Kathleen and Charles Foremann! New in 2016 was a Winter Festival added to the MVFest with chamber music masterclasses for young musicians and workshops for both students and teachers.

For more information please visit: <https://mvfest.wordpress.com>

We all know the role and importance of chamber music studies for students! Please select your intermediate and advanced students and encourage them to apply.

Please check ARMTA Calgary website for details about the program and for the application form.

ARMTA Workshops Survey Report

By Alicia Romero, BMus, MEd
Vice-President, ARMTA Calgary Branch

ARMTA Calgary Branch has organized workshops for its members for many years. A needs assessment was conducted with the purpose to provide information to the Workshop Convener, to take advantage of during the planning of workshops, which pertain to clinicians, topics, scheduling, and format.

This needs assessment took the form of a digital survey made available through SurveyMonkey to the membership. The survey was comprised of ten questions and was made available during the months of October and November of 2016. Regular announcements were sent to the membership via email requesting their participation. A draw for a gift card was offered as an incentive to participate in the survey.

The results of this survey are organized in three areas: topics, scheduling, and format. When it comes to topics, different aspects of teaching within a specific level (beginners, intermediate, advanced) were ranked by respondents as the most important. Respondents ranked as second in importance, topics from other disciplines that can be applied to instrumental instruction. Finally, instrumental technique was the third most important topic members would like to know more. The preferred time for such workshops to take place is weekday mornings in a half-day face-to-face format.

New opportunities to develop and offer workshops were also revealed. Such opportunities range from workshops on technology for communication purposes to the development of digital workshops (repository and resources).

In the coming months the Executive of our branch will thoughtfully investigate:

1. The feasibility to offer members access reputable sources for professional development which could include references links to websites, articles, and recordings through a Digital Resources section in the associations' website with regular updates. This resource would allow members to add new materials as well as rating and reviewing existing ones in order keep such resource relevant.

2. To offer workshops for members in areas of expertise with small representation (strings, winds, guitar, and theory).

We thank all of the members who took the time to let us know what they are interested in knowing more, the times that it is more convenient to attend workshops, and their points of view about the need to offer workshops which can be useful to all sorts of music specialists (strings, vocal, guitar, winds, piano).

Below are some interesting numbers for your consideration.

78 members responded the survey which is 35% of the membership. Respondents' area of expertise is presented below:

Piano 71%
Voice 9%
Piano & Voice 5%
Violin 3%
Cello 1%
Clarinet + Saxophone + Bass Clarinet 1%
Classical guitar 1%
Guitar 1%
Piano & music theory 1%
Piano & Yamaha group classes 1%
Trombone 1%
Violin & piano 1%
Violin & viola 1%

The majority of the respondents have taught for over 30 years (30%) followed by the ones who have taught between 10–15 years (20%).

Participants' responses

Below are the three most important topics respondents expressed interest to learn more about.

1. Aspects of teaching within a specific level (beginner, intermediate, advanced)—60%
2. Principles, theories, and methods from other fields (education, psychology, sports, etc.) that can be incorporated to improve music instruction—52%
3. Technique—44%

With regards to dates and times to schedule workshops, below are the preferred options by the respondents

1. Format: Face-to-face workshops, followed by live streaming
2. Length: Half-day
3. Day and time: Weekday morning, followed by Saturday morning
4. Season: Late August followed by October and January

Respondents also indicated that Email followed by the ARMTA website and newsletter is their preferred channel to receive information about workshops.

We are always eager to know what you think. Email Alicia (aliciaromero@shaw.ca) with any questions or suggestions you may have.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Doug Evans for winning our workshop survey gift card.*

*Raffle took place during the Jan 16, 2017 Executive meeting.

New Member Profile

A native Calgarian, Lorne began piano lessons at an early age. From the beginning, he has written compositions and arrangements, some of which are performed to this day. His university degrees include a BMus (1986) and a BEd (1988) from the U of C, and an MMus (Music Theory) in 1992 from the U of A. Lorne also has an ARCT in piano teaching and currently operates as a piano accompanist and choral director. He has his own studio, Coffee Notes Music, which offers a variety of music services such as piano and theory lessons, recording, and sequencing.



Lorne D. Pankratz

ARMTA welcomes also the following new members:

Tara Marlena Laberge

Tara has a Doctorate of Musical Arts in vocal performance and she teaches at Ambrose University College

Darrin Hogue

Music Makers
Registered Subjects: Music Education

Michele Wheatley-Brown

Registered: Piano

Susan Clow (formerly Elfner)

Registered: Piano

Tom Mirhady

Registered: Cello

Heidi Behrenbruch

Glenmore Christian Academy/ Somerset Suzuki Violin Studio

Registered: Violin, Viola

Scott Arnold

Asylum for Art
Registered: Guitar

Laura Whitehead

Piano By Laura
Registered: Piano, Music History

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E-mail: m.andronikou@gmail.com
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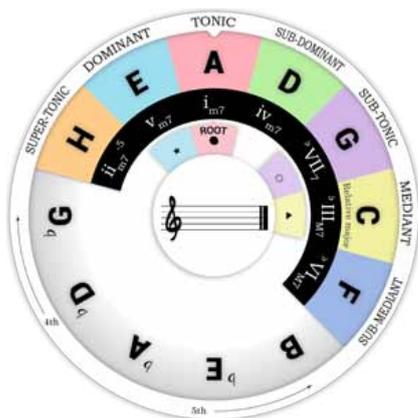
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Improvisation in Piano Lessons: Why & How (Continued from page 1)



Tips to Fit Improvising into Busy Lessons & Schedules

Have a theme month

Choose a month of the year (I recommend February) to build a theme around improvisation; include an element of improvisation in one of the songs assigned. This will ensure that you have at least one month to intentionally teach students something new about improvising without having to fit in as much of it for the rest of the year.

Utilize “bad weeks”

Use lessons where students didn't practise much that week. Re-assign the same homework; then spend the rest of the lesson working on improvisation.

Substitute ear and sight or technique time

About once a month, fit in a quick improvising exercise during the time you would usually do an ear and sight test or review their technique.

Take advantage of Christmas

Utilize all the familiar melodies to get students playing by ear, arranging their favorite carol, or playing an improvised duet with you.

Use the last two minutes

On those rare wees when you finish early, spend the last two minutes improvising together.

How to Start

Beginners are generally quite open to improvisation. Even four or five times a year would be enough to build into them the concept and idea of freely expressing their own ideas on the piano.

Black-note improvisation

The easiest way to start is to encourage beginners to play any black notes they want while you play a progression in G-flat major or E-flat minor.

Integrated activities

Do every improvisation activity incorporated into the beginner curricula.

Convert teacher duets

While you play the teacher duet part, get students to improvise with the five-note scale their song is based on.

Intermediate students can learn chord patterns & progressions. Continue building on the concepts they have been experimenting with, and point out chords and progressions in their written music.

Use *Pattern Play/Chord Play Books*

These are great resources that include many duets and suggestions for how to improvise based on simple progressions.

Lead sheets

Use lead sheets to encourage students to improvise with different left-hand patterns, or to improvise along with a singer or solo instrument following the chords provided on the lead sheets.

Google “three-chord songs”

Find familiar songs that contain two, three or four chords; use these as an introduction to improvising based on chord progressions.

Composition

Encourage students to make up their own songs. If they struggle for ideas, give them some guiding structures; for example, “See if you can make up a spooky idea in A minor in 4/4 time. You can use the A-minor and D-minor chords in your left hand and the notes A–B–C–D–E in your right hand.”

Advanced students are capable of improvising more complex melodies and progressions. They benefit from real-life applications for improvising, such as wedding prelude music or accompanying singers from chords.

Extend popular songs

Use songs that have simple foundational harmonies as a launching point to improvise. Have students play the first page, then improvise for a while before coming back to the music. Two of my favorites for this are “River Flows in You” by Yiruma and “Canon in D” by Pachelbel.

Arrange from simple music

Use easy piano music that has guitar chords written above the melody as a launching point; encourage students to create their own arrangements of pieces.

“Instant duets”

Encourage spontaneity by getting students to pick a key, time signature and a song title and then improvise a duet with them on the fly. One person starts the lower part with whatever chords and mood they want to do, and the other person improvises the top part to match.

Modify repertoire

For applications such as wedding music, encourage students to experiment with how they can shorten or lengthen songs, repeat different sections or cut sections out, or improvise to adjust the length of time a song takes on the fly, say, for a flower girl walking down the aisle.

Blues improvisation

Teach students the 12- or 16-bar blues progression for the left hand, and the blues scale in the right hand. Set them loose!

List of Improvising Resources

Beginner methods

- such as *Piano Adventures* by Nancy and Randall Faber—Use built-in improvising activities and utilize teacher duets
- *Pattern Play* and *Chord Play* Books by Akiko and Forrest Kinney
- *American Popular Piano* series *Etude* books by Christopher Norton

Simple songs to learn by ear based on two to four chords (Google “three-chord songs” to start)

- Children’s songs such as “Jesus Loves Me”
- Pop songs such as “Say Something”
- Christmas Songs such as “What Child is This” or “Jingle Bells”

Notated music based on a simple progression such as

- “River Flows in You” by Yiruma
- “Canon in D” by Pachelbel
- “Someone Like You” by Adele

Lead sheets

- Books with lyrics and chords such as the *Real Book* series by Hal Leonard
- Books that include guitar chords above the piano part
- Record yourself playing a chord progression on a student’s smart phone so that they can practise improvising at home (I–vi–IV–V or vi–IV–I–V for example)

Conclusion

“Oh!” the middle-aged Mom at the New Year’s party exclaimed, “I took piano lessons for years as a kid.” I smiled and nodded, listening as she continued: “I quit when I was a teenager, but I still play sometimes. Not often for other people, unless you count playing “Twinkle” for my kids. I mostly just play to relax after a tough day.”

My hope is to hear many more stories like hers. By including improvisation as an integral part of piano study, we give our students the opportunity to develop their own “voice” in the language of music. Perhaps, once the long-forgotten Minuets are gone from their memories and the dust settles there will be something left—a structure so simple and yet so profound that they can sit at a piano and play something—*speak* something from their heart, however simple.

Amy Essenburg teaches piano, music theory and pedagogy. She runs a music studio and enjoys speaking engagements. She has her Performers’ and Teachers’ ARCT and 14 years of teaching experience. She sings with the New West Symphony & Chorus, and is happily married with one son and a daughter due this April.

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It's More Fun in a Group

How to Successfully Run Group Classes in your Private Studio

By LaDona Ahenda



At the recent Honens ProAm Competition I was chatting with the mother of one of the more successful performers. She gave much credit for her son's performance to the weekly classes that he had had as a teenager. I have been incorporating group classes (performance classes) into my private studio for a number of years, and have seen tremendous growth in the musical maturity of my students.

There are many benefits:

- They learn performance etiquette that gets practised on a regular basis.
- Every opportunity to play in front of anyone teaches a lesson in controlling the nerves.
- Students develop camaraderie, which is important for those who do not have the opportunity to join a larger musical ensemble.
- Some concepts can be taught and practised in a group setting, saving valuable private lesson time.
- The classes serve as direct preparation for upcoming recitals, festivals, exams, etc.
- Students begin to learn how to listen to music, a much different process than reading and playing.

The logistics take some working out, especially in the first years. There are many ways to implement and run group classes, but this is what I have found works well.

First, I make it clear when taking on new or returning students that the yearly **tuition fee** is for x number of private lessons and y number of performance classes. I do five per year. I charge the same amount for a group class as for a private lesson. This ensures that the parents take them seriously. Group classes ARE lessons, and they replace the private lesson for that week.

Second, scheduling can be tricky. To ensure the comfort of all students, it is important to group them in similar age groups and levels. Age takes priority when there is an older beginner, or more advanced youngster. Activities or comments can be tweaked to accommodate one student playing at a different level than the rest. Four to five students per class is ideal; I allow one hour for most classes, but allow up to 90 minutes for the more advanced classes.

Some scheduling flexibility may be required; in case of a conflict, a student may be able to join a similarly-grouped class. When this doesn't work at all, I may end up giving a private lesson or two that week.

Third, I try to have a particular **focus** for each session of classes such as rhythm, articulation, memorization, recital preparation, and learning how to listen.

Music blogs abound with ideas for **activities** for group classes, especially the younger ones. I try new things, then quickly assess them and discard if necessary. For younger students it is vital to be over-prepared. The first year or two of planning classes took me an extraordinary amount of time, but I have kept and made notes on everything I've done in the past, and now recycle the best ideas every two or three years. Some activities become student favourites and they ask for them each time.

These are some of the things I've done in classes over the years:

- Note-naming games for beginners. There are many online.
- Rhythm activities for all classes. This might include

rhythm dictations, or clapping in beat patterns while one student is playing, or the use of rhythm cards to force students to look ahead and remember one rhythm while simultaneously clapping the previous one they saw.

- Articulation classes—teaching the symbols and sounds of all the different articulations. A good activity for intermediate classes is to give the students a copy of a short easy piece where all the markings have been removed (white-out and photocopies), then to play it several times with my own markings and have them write down what they hear.
- For more advanced classes, a lesson in what to listen for in the major eras of music (Baroque, Classical, etc). Planning ahead for this one, I might have a Classical class where all students play the classical piece they are currently working on, leaving opportunities for good discussions.
- Younger classes love the Distraction Game. With strict guidelines, I allow students to try to distract the student performing. They can make goofy faces, throw streamers around the room, etc, as long as they don't actually touch the student or piano. It is a lesson in focus and concentration that includes laughter.

- I have an ensemble recital most years. In the group classes we learn how to play with a partner(s) and have a chance to do some rehearsal. Note: the group class alone may not be enough preparation for this recital.
- A performance of pieces for upcoming recitals. Here is a chance to test memory in front of peers.

One long-range goal is to prepare students to listen carefully and offer intelligent comments on the others' performances. Even at the youngest age I get the students to follow along in the score and offer positive and maybe helpful comments. This is where I have seen the most growth over the years. By now my advanced classes almost run themselves. I know they are set up for a lifetime of intelligent listening and enjoyment, regardless of whether they become professional or amateur musicians.

LaDonna Ahenda holds a BMus from the University of British Columbia and an ARCT in Piano Performance. She teaches piano and theory at all levels to all ages in her Calgary home. She is a freelance accompanist, adjudicator, and examiner, and contributes occasional articles to ARMTA and APTA publications.

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Erich Herchen and Riley Ngo Won First Place in Duo-Piano Competition



Erich Herchen & Riley Ngo

Congratulations to Erich Herchen (11) and Riley Ngo (12), students of Colleen Athparia, for winning first place in the 16 and under Division of the International Duo-Piano Competition held in Vancouver on November 26, 2016. The competition is held every two years; this year there were six other teams in the junior category including one from San Diego, California, and several in the senior category including one team from China/Germany. After performing their first round, Erich and Riley advanced to the finals with two other pairs and were awarded first place with \$1000.

International Jury included Bulgarian pianist and professor in Germany, Tomislav Nedelkovic-Baynov as well as Marcel Bergmann of the Canadian duo-piano team, and Jeroen Van Veen from the Netherlands..

Linda Kundert-Stoll and Elaine Case Honoured by The Royal Conservatory of Music



From left: Linda Kundert-Stoll, Peter Simon, President and CEO of the Royal Conservatory of Music, and Elaine Case

Calgary ARMTA teachers Linda Kundert-Stoll and Elaine Case were honoured as Teachers of Distinction during the RCM Calgary Convocation and Gold Medals Ceremony at the Bella Concert Hall on Sunday, November 13, 2016.

The award honours leaders in the field of music education who provide mentorship to other teachers and instill a lifelong love of music in their students; it is a recognition of their contributions of creativity, dedication, innovation, and passion. This is the first year the RCM has presented this honour. There were also one recipient from Vancouver and two from Toronto.



ISME—What is it?

By Gloria Rita Thurn

ISME stands for the International Society for Music Education. ISME supports all music education and music genres. Members belonging to this Society come from over 90 different countries. They have access to three different types of paid memberships—as an individual, as full-time student (four-year period) or as a group membership. Membership rates differ within each of the three categories. Only members can register for the World Conferences. The membership provides you with online information on a monthly basis. You also receive the *International Journal Of Music Education on Research & Practice* (four issues annually). The ISME World Conference I attended this past summer was in Glasgow, Scotland. It was amazing to see the diverse cultures participating and networking from July 22–29, 2016. There were four venues with ongoing seminars in each of them. It was difficult to pick and choose which ones to attend. The venues were in close walking distance from the concert hall. It began with an opening concert and reception. They had poster sessions during our lunch breaks (some lasted longer). The nightly entertainers were totally amazing. The conference closed with a spectacular performance in the Royal Concert Hall of Scotland. Musicians performed in every genre imaginable. It was a truly rewarding experience. Glasgow too, is an experience itself. I had been there in 1995 but I still enjoyed the Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus on the city tour.

The 33rd World Conference will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan from July 15–20, 2018. The 2020 World Conference will be in Helsinki, Finland.

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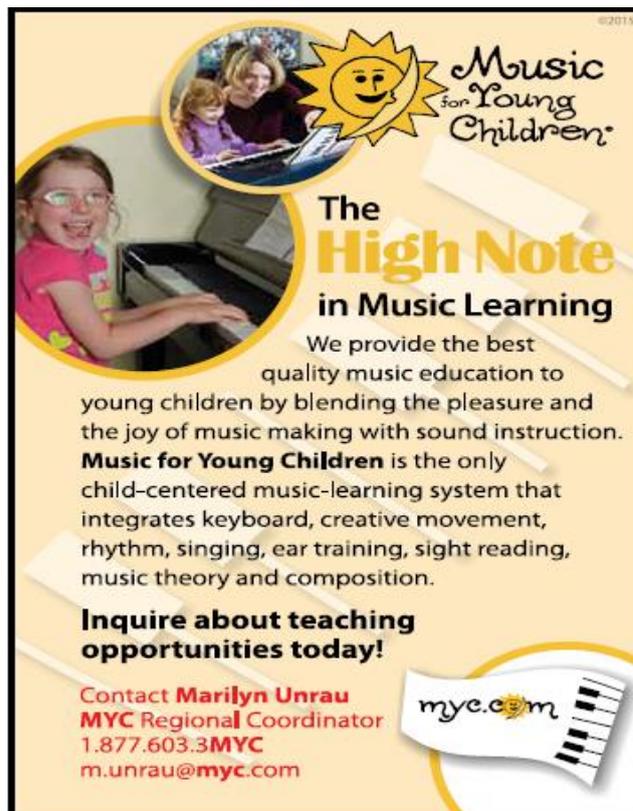
HONOURS RECITAL 2016–17

By G. Rita Thurn,
Honours Recital Chairperson

The Alberta Music Teachers' Association (Calgary Branch) is the sponsor of the Honours Recital. This Recital recognizes students who have excelled in examinations taken during the previous calendar year in their chosen genres of music & speech arts. Each autumn, ARMTA Calgary teachers are invited to provide the names of their students who have received the highest marks to participate in the upcoming Honours Recital. This year, the Honours Recital took place on January 28, 2017 at Hope Lutheran Church. Forty-five students of 19 ARMTA teachers were featured. These talented students performed for a very appreciative audience. Medals and scholarships were presented to each of these students in recognition of their diligent work.

We gave out Piano Diploma Association, Peter Turner Memorial, and Eileen & Elgar Higgin Scholarships. The ARMTA Honours Recital was fortunate to offer two new special scholarships—the Harold Saklofske Scholarships (2 x \$250). We are truly appreciative of the generosity & thoughtfulness of the Saklofske family for providing these scholarships since the recent passing of Harold Saklofske. They will be a lasting legacy to Harold's great contribution to young developing musicians in Calgary. Harold was an eminent pianist and band leader during the Big Band Era of the 1940. He was an imposing force in the Calgary music scene. Harold's Big Band was used for the majority of the big functions and visiting celebrities up until the mid 90s. He was very passionate about his music and the education of young musicians. Brent Saklofske has committed \$500 a year for ten years to be scholarships for young musicians at the annual ARMTA Honours Recital in his father's memory.

The sponsors & donors of the Honours Recital were included in the recital program and can also be found on the ARMTA Calgary website. Thank you to each and every one of them for their generous support. Thank you to the volunteers who spent many hours working to make sure that the Honours Recital was a tremendous success! ARMTA was able to continue the tradition of honouring musical & artistic excellence because of your efforts.



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VOICE Junior One

Alexis Palmer	Gold
Makenna Watson	Gold
Bron Hodgson	Silver
Jacqueline Magaj	Silver
Kenzie Rigel	Bronze

VOICE Junior Two

Nora-Jane Bonner	Gold
Natalie Marshall	Silver
Katie Levinson	Bronze
Kaitlyn Watson	Bronze
Aurora Hunt	Bronze

VOICE Intermediate

Katie McMillan	Gold
Cynthia Gan	Silver
Thea Allen	Bronze

VOICE Gr.10/Diploma

Abbey Curzon	Gold
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SPEECH ARTS Junior

Natalie Hu	Gold
Luke Huang	Silver
Kyle Chang	Silver
Isabella Hu	Bronze
Luke Huang	Bronze
Adam Chan	Bronze
Cynthia Huang	Bronze

STRINGS Junior

William Tao	Gold
Thienan Le	Gold
Nicole Gee	Silver

STRINGS Intermediate

Amilia Hildahl

SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS:

PPG GRANT: Tamara Nelson

PIANO DIPLOMA RECOGNITION CEREMONY: Gloria Bieker

PIANO DIPLOMA ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP: Richard Sheng

PETER TURNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: Leila Lok

EILEEN AND ELGAR HIGGIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: Abbey Curzon

HAROLD SAKLOFSKE SCHOLARSHIPS: Amilia Hildahl, Katie McMillan

PIANO Junior One

Alexa Monzano	Gold
Ava Stevenson	Gold
Neil He	Silver
Rilea Roque	Silver
Louisa Stevenson	Silver
Natalie Hu	Silver
Ethan Ngo	Silver
Sophia Lee	Bronze
Kira Ting	Bronze
Daniel Moyano	Bronze
Madeleine Tat	Bronze
Maria Mansi	Bronze
Grace Du	Bronze

PIANO Junior Two

Tessa Nysetvold	Gold
Sam Barber	Silver
Cindy Lei	Silver
Howard Wen	Bronze

PIANO Intermediate

Tera Minato	Gold
Madeleine Nysetvold	Silver
Samantha King	Silver
Aaron Wang	Silver
Frank Zhu	Silver
Mary Long	Bronze

PIANO Gr. 10/ Diploma

Leila Lok	Gold
Jessie Chai	Silver
Richard Sheng	Bronze



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A Reflection on “Talent and the Iceberg Illusion”

By Marilyn Newbury



When I read Sharon Omura’s “Talent and the Iceberg Illusion” in the September 2016 edition of *Impromptu*, I was very motivated to find a way to share the information with my music studio family.

Sharon kindly granted me permission to share her writing, and I then assigned the article as a research project. Students were asked to write a minimum one-paragraph summary, and then a second paragraph applying the concepts to their own lives.

The response from both the students and parents was very positive. One father shared the article with his business colleagues all across North America. Another mother stated that she and her husband started using the words “growth mindset” versus “fixed mindset” in their daily vocabulary with their young children.

Students wrote that they benefitted from reading the article. Here are some of their mostly unedited comments:

Age 12—One highlight would be that when I practise, I learned that it doesn’t matter how long you practise or who you are. If you believe and put in the quality, the effort will be worth the result.

Age 10—I believe that making mistakes is a great opportunity to learn because when we make mistakes we must learn and understand what is wrong and redo it in a better way.

Age 7—The only reason a person gets better at doing something is because they practise really hard. We are not born talented.

Age 8—Keep practising and you’ll get better. Try, try again.

Age 12—I think if I try harder things and do better quality of practice, I can get much better and go farther.

Age 9—After reading this article, I am working on a growth mindset.

Age 8—If I practise piano for 10,000 quality hours, I will be outstanding.

Age 7—I think that icebergs and musicians are friends.

Age 10—“Purposeful” practice is where you work at what you can’t do. This means failing—something everyone finds hard, especially me!

Age 10—When you see someone do something extraordinary, remember that you have not only seen the tip of the iceberg, but the huge chunk of ice underneath of lots and lots of practice.

Age 14—This article highlighted the key points to success in not only piano, but life. These components are driven guidance, technique you use, amount of practice, quality of your practice, and commitment.

Thank you, Sharon, for inspiring my students!

Marilyn Newbury has moved many times in her life and has had many varied vocational experiences; however, teaching music has been the most consistent thread in her working life. Since moving to Calgary in 2007, she has once again built up her studio of piano, voice, and theory students. She appreciates ARMTA Calgary and is always searching for strategies to add to her motivational repertoire” for her students and parents.

ARMTA Workshop

presented by

Dr. Magda Adamek

Date: Sunday, May 7 at 10 a.m.

Location: Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary

Dr. Magda Adamek will present a two-part workshop on the use of arm weight to liberate technique, and on the art of collaborative piano playing.

Dr. Adamek is a pedagogue and performer with an international presence; we at ARMTA Calgary are honoured to host her.

Admission to ARMTA members and students is free.

Contact: Eric Nyland: eric.nyland@gmail.com

Call for articles for *Impromptu*

Would you like to see your byline in ARMTA Calgary Branch's official journal? Do you have a topic on music teaching, business, music trends, pedagogy, or musician's life that you would like to share with ARMTA members?

We are looking for short articles from 500 to 1000 words for the September 2017 issue and beyond.

The next deadline is August 10, 2017.

Email your ideas or direct your inquiries to Lisa Ng: impromptu.editor@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you!



RECITAL OPPORTUNITIES



Student Recitals

Student recitals provide an excellent opportunity for students to perform and enhance their self-confidence, pride, and joy of performing. Recitals can simply be a means for them to gain experience, to help prepare for an exam or other special events. The opportunity to perform in front of an audience gives your students the perspective needed to understand the necessity of practice, study, and commitment.

North

Date: April 1 & June 3, 2017, 2:00 p.m.

Location: St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent, NW Calgary

Contact: Han Ding: hding-89@hotmail

South

Date: Saturday, May 6, 2017, 1:00 p.m.

Location: Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary

Contact: Carol Moore: rhythmreader@shaw.ca

Joint Recital

Organized by two or more teachers for their own students.

Branch provides up to \$75 towards costs, see application form for details.

Please submit application form to **Juanita Stauffer: stauf6@gmail.com**

Application forms, additional information & deadlines for all recitals are available in the Member's Area of our website **www.armta-calgary.com**

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