

IMA Newsletter

Winner of the **Consumers' Choice Award** for best music school in the GTA.



4981 Highway 7, Suite 8
Markham ON L3R 1N1
Canada M1K 3K1
Phone: 905.489.4620
Fax: 905.489.4621
www.internationalmusicacademy.ca
info@internationalmusicacademy.ca

International
Music
Academy

Year XVII, No. 2

February 2013

WELCOME NEW STUDENTS

Yasmina N. (Voice)
Tina Q. (Guitar)
Connor M. (Piano)
Noah M. (Piano + Guitar)
Kristen Z. (Voice)
David Y. (Violin)
Leo L. (Voice)
Mihali V. (Guitar)
Daniel G. (Piano)
Matteus G. (Piano)
Ethan D. (Piano)
Priyanka R. (Piano)

IMA STUDENTS BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

Martin H., Michael L., Noah M., Christine M.,
Gabrielle D., Kyler N., Trinity W., Kiara B., Mihali V.,
Chloe I., Olivia X., Sandeep D., Victoria G., Emma L.,
Radomir D., Owen C., Nathan S., Alina B., Tina Q.,
Jeremiah L., David Y., Chloe T., Kayvon N., Vlad L.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

IMPORTANT DAYS IN FEBRUARY

February 1. PA day (YR)
February 10. Chinese New Year.
February 14. Valentine Day.
February 15. North York Music Festival
registrations deadline.
February 16. Markham Theatre:
Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn
February 18. Family Day. School is open.
February 19-March 2. Kiwanis Music Festival.

GREAT COMPOSERS ANNIVERSARIES IN FEBRUARY

February 27, 1917 – Pierre Mercure (Canadian)
February 3, 1809 – Felix Mendelssohn (German)
February 17, 1653 – Arcangelo Corelli (Italian)
February 21, 1836 – Léo Delibes (French)
February 23, 1685 – Georg Handel (British)
February 29, 1792 – Gioachino Rossini (Italian)

FEATURED TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Lili Imastounian, D. Mus, B.F.A.
Piano studies and Music Theory



Mrs. Imastounian has earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts (with Honours) from York University (Toronto), along with a Diploma in Musicology, a Diploma in Piano Pedagogy, and a Diploma in Piano Performance. She brings to the International Music Academy over 25 years of valuable experience teaching piano and theory to students of all ages and

levels. Mrs. Imastounian has been on the Faculty of New Conservatory of Music, Federal Conservatory of Music, Scarborough Parks and Recreation, and School for Music and Art. In addition to a great passion for teaching music she also has a passion for languages; she speaks fluently English, French, Russian, Armenian, and Arabic. During the past almost three decades, Mrs. Imastounian has prepared over 1,000 students for various competitions, recitals, concerts, and examinations. Mrs. Imastounian is a registered teacher with the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCME 21006).

Mrs. Imastounian was happy to answer a few questions for our students and parents:

1. What do you like most about teaching?

One of the guiding principles for me as a music educator is Japanese violinist and music educator Shin'ichi

Suzuki's statement: "Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart." Suzuki believed that creating the right environment for learning music would also help foster character. Various teaching methods themselves do not create a music educator. As a music educator, in addition to teaching, I try to create a world of musical experiences and foster musicianship in students, in order to create love and appreciation of music. Teaching music requires patience, perseverance and determination, combined with a genuine interest in the uniqueness of each student. Teaching music is a rewarding journey through life.

2. How do you inspire students to practice more?

Each student has a variety of strengths and weaknesses; therefore, teaching methods should adjust to the learning style and personality of the student. As a teacher, I strive to facilitate the learning process and make it more efficient, assisting students in building a strong foundation and developing different areas of skill development. Through music study, students learn the value of sustained efforts, in order to achieve excellence. As a teacher, my task is to provide students with appropriate practical goals, assisting them with suggestions for the most effective ways to practice a new composition, identifying interesting musical features, isolating different challenges, and selecting appropriate practice strategies. In addition, dividing the piece into more manageable and smaller sections makes practising easier. It is also important to relate basic theoretical concepts to repertoire study. Practicing could sometimes lead to automatic and mindless repetition; therefore, a creative approach is necessary when organising students' learning stages.

3. What roles does performance play in student's development?

Performance is a very important part of students' development. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of performance opportunities. Performance creates a stimulus for achieving excellence. It provides students with concrete rewards of hard work and a feeling of accomplishment. Performance requires in advance mental and emotional preparation. Memorization is also an important part of performance preparation. As a music educator, I strive to support students in the process of performance preparation, with the goal of obtaining a technically secure and expressive performance. Among the many benefits of performance are the development of students' commitment and discipline, perseverance and

determination, confidence and self-esteem.

4. Who are your favourite composers?

My favourite composers are J.S. Bach, one of the main composers of the baroque period, G. Verdi, the Italian romantic composer, and the German composer R. Wagner. Bach's role in music is uncontested; the musical and pedagogical value of his works is invaluable. Verdi transformed the Italian opera and Wagner greatly influenced the development of classical music and transformed operatic thought.

5. What was the last piece of music (sheet music or a recording) you purchased for yourself?

I have bought one of the recordings of Korean Grammy award winning, lyric coloratura soprano Sumi Jo, who is one of my favourite opera singers. Her voice has been praised for its remarkable agility and flexibility, and it has been claimed as "a voice from above" by Maestro Herbert von Karajan. Apart from her famous interpretations of opera arias, she has also performed for the movie soundtracks of "Eat, Pray, Love" and "The Ninth Gate."

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Gligor Djogo

What instrument do you play? **Clarinet.**

How long have you taken lessons? **I have been a student at the International Music Academy for 6 years, since 2007.**



Who are your favorite musical artists? **I enjoy all pop tunes on the radio, though I can't say I have an affinity for any particular artist. I prefer variety, old and new, all genres.**

What are your other hobbies, besides music? **I love being active by playing rep basketball and other sports with my brothers and friends. I also enjoy reading good books too, especially classic mysteries such as Sherlock Holmes.**

Favorite food? **I have a hard time choosing, but I do like pasta.**

What is the coolest thing you've learnt in your lessons in the past three months? **I've recently learned how to**

do *glissando* on my clarinet. It's something fun to do and creates a cool effect with the instrument. There is a famous clarinet solo in the introduction to Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' which includes a *glissando*; since hearing it, I've always wanted to learn the beautiful jazzy tune.

Do you have any performance coming up? I play in my school wind ensemble and we are playing some challenging pieces at the Ontario Band Association festival in early February. Individually, I've begun practicing a new piece, a clarinet concerto by Mozart, and I am looking forward to performing it at an upcoming competition.

E-mail to info@InternationalMusicAcademy.ca a photo of yourself (or your child) together with the answers of the following questions: What instrument do you play?, How long have you taken lessons?, Who are our favourite musical artists?, What are your other hobbies, besides music?, Favourite food? What is the coolest thing you've learnt in your lessons in the past three months?, Do you have any performances coming up?). 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? Hold 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

Early Music Lessons Have Longtime Benefits

By PERRI KLASS, M.D.

New York Times, September 10, 2012



When children learn to play a musical instrument, [they strengthen a range of auditory skills](#). Recent studies suggest that these benefits extend all through life, at least for those who continue to be engaged with music.

But a study published last month is the first to show that music lessons in childhood may lead to changes in the brain that persist years after the lessons stop.

Researchers at Northwestern University [recorded the auditory brainstem responses of college students](#) — that is to say, their electrical brain waves — in response to complex sounds. The group of students who reported musical training in childhood had more robust responses — their brains were better able to pick out essential elements, like pitch, in the complex sounds when they were tested. And [this was true even if the lessons had ended years ago](#).

Indeed, scientists are puzzling out the connections between musical training in childhood and language-based learning — for instance, reading. Learning to play an instrument may confer some unexpected benefits, recent studies suggest.

We aren't talking here about the "Mozart effect," the claim that listening to classical music can improve people's performance on tests. Instead, these are studies of the effects of active engagement and discipline. This kind of musical training improves the brain's ability to discern the components of sound — the pitch, the timing and the timbre.

"To learn to read, you need to have good working memory, the ability to disambiguate speech sounds, make sound-to-meaning connections," said Professor Nina Kraus, director of the [Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory](#) at Northwestern University. "Each one of these things really seems to be strengthened with active engagement in playing a musical instrument."

Skill in appreciating the subtle qualities of sound, even against a complicated and noisy background, turns out to be important not just for a child learning to understand speech and written

language, but also for an elderly person struggling with [hearing loss](#).

In a [study of those who do keep playing](#), published this summer, researchers found that as musicians age, they experience the same decline in peripheral hearing, the functioning of the nerves in their ears, as nonmusicians. But older musicians preserve the brain functions, the central auditory processing skills that can help you understand speech against the background of a noisy environment.

“We often refer to the ‘cocktail party’ problem — or imagine going to a restaurant where a lot of people are talking,” said Dr. Claude Alain, assistant director of the [Rotman Research Institute](#) in Toronto and one of the authors of the study. “The older adults who are musically trained perform better on speech in noise tests — it involves the brain rather than the peripheral hearing system.”

Researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, are approaching the soundscape from a different point of view, studying the [genetics](#) of absolute, or perfect, pitch, that ability to identify any tone. Dr. Jane Gitschier, a professor of medicine and [pediatrics](#) who directs the study there, and her colleagues are trying to tease out both the genetics and the effects of early training.

“The immediate question we’ve been trying to get to is what are the variants in people’s genomes that could predispose an individual to have absolute pitch,” she said. “The hypothesis, further, is that those variants will then manifest as absolute pitch with the input of early musical training.”

Indeed, almost everyone who qualifies as having truly absolute pitch turns out to have had musical training in childhood (you can take the test and volunteer for the study at <http://perfectpitch.ucsf.edu/study/>).

Alexandra Parbery-Clark, a doctoral candidate in Dr. Kraus’s lab and one of the authors of [a paper](#) published this year on auditory working memory and music, was originally trained as a concert pianist. Her desire to go back to graduate school and study the brain, she told me, grew out of teaching at a French school for musically talented

children, and observing the ways that musical training affected other kinds of learning.

“If you get a kid who is maybe 3 or 4 years old and you’re teaching them to attend, they’re not only working on their auditory skills but also working on their attention skills and their memory skills — which can translate into scholastic learning,” she said.

Now Ms. Parbery-Clark and her colleagues can look at recordings of the brain’s electrical detection of sounds, and they can see the musically trained brains producing different — and stronger — responses. “Now I have more proof, tangible proof, music is really doing something,” she told me. “One of my lab mates can look at the computer and say, ‘Oh, you’re recording from a musician!’ ”

Many of the researchers in this area are themselves musicians interested in the plasticity of the brain and the effects of musical education on brain waves, which mirror the stimulus sounds. “This is a response that actually reflects the acoustic elements of sound that we know carry meaning,” Professor Kraus said.

There’s a fascination — and even a certain heady delight — in learning what the brain can do, and in drawing out the many effects of the combination of stimulation, application, practice and auditory exercise that musical education provides. But the researchers all caution that there is no one best way to apply these findings.

Different instruments, different teaching methods, different regimens — families need to find what appeals to the individual child and what works for the family, since a big piece of this should be about pleasure and mastery. Children should enjoy themselves, and their lessons. Parents need to care about music, not slot it in as a therapeutic tool.

“We want music to be recognized for what it can be in a person’s life, not necessarily, ‘Oh, we want you to have better cognitive skills, so we’re going to put you in music,’ ” Ms. Parbery-Clark said. “Music is great, music is fantastic, music is social — let them enjoy it for what it really is.”



Music is sooooooooo beuatifull!

Register for lessons by **February 23, 2013** and receive

\$30 off

New students only.

Cannot be combined with any other offer.

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Your name: _____

Name of the new student: _____

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