Greetings!

Welcome to the Music Note, The Piano Preparatory Program’s official newsletter. The Music Note is issued two times a year and provides helpful information about your piano studies and upcoming events. If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter, please do so by sending a fax or e-mail to the program’s office.

As the fall semester comes to a close it is nice to look back and see all the wonderful accomplishments each and every student made with their music studies. Friendships have been made and confidence has been built. This is an exciting time of the year as we celebrate the holiday season. Encourage your children to share their musical talents with others over the winter break. We have many events planned for the spring semester. Please read on to learn more! Have a relaxing and safe holiday break!

Musically Yours,

Megan Walsh, DMA
Director, Piano Preparatory Program
Crossing Borders

Greetings from O Music Studios—Vancouver, British Columbia,

It gives me great pleasure to announce our 1st annual Cyber Piano Recital in collaboration with the University of Miami Piano Prep Program on May 8th, 2010 5:00pm (EST). Miami performers will perform live in Miami and Vancouver performers will be performing live from Vancouver May, 8th, 2010 2:00pm.

This event will be Crossing Borders with Live Jam Sessions, Duets, 8 hands or solo playing—the music will be open to all languages and music styles:

☐ Spanish
☐ Chinese
☐ English
☐ Korean
☐ French
☐ Other

Deadline for applying for this event will be Jan. 30th, 2010. We will accept 20 applicants from Miami and 20 applicants from Vancouver. You will be grouped with one member from your home city and then others from your Crossing Borders music buddies.

**Jam Session:**
Those of you interested in improvising with some blues or Rock Tune you are encouraged to sign up for this session.

**Duet Playing:**
You will practice with your music home buddies for the duets and then you and your home buddies will do the live concert with your Crossing Border Buddies.

**8 Hands:**
You will practice with your home group your home buddies and then you and your home group do the live concert with your Crossing Border Buddies.

**Solo Playing:**
If you are chosen you will be performing a solo piece for the 1st Annual Crossing Borders Cyber Concert.

How it works is really simple—just sign your name on the Crossing Borders List and if you make the 20 member cut you will start your music venture to the Cyber World of Performing.

** REQUIREMENTS **

**Organization of performances:**
You will communicate with your Crossing Border Music Friends by e-mail on how you would like to present your piece. You may ask someone other than your performance group to announce your piece.

**Communication:**
Communicate with your Crossing Borders person in the language you prefer (please see above for the languages of choice) via e-mail cc'ing your teachers and all parties involved.

**Director of Ceremonies:**
O Music and the University of Miami will each choose one announcer to represent their respective cities. The announcer will share a little history of their city; it can involve anything from their favourite restaurants to their favourite things to do in Vancouver or Miami. Suggestions will be made by all members of the Crossing Borders Group.

Those interested in Emceeing please put your name on the Emcee list. You will emcee in the language you prefer as well as our universal language of Music to introduce our 1st annual Crossing Borders Concert.

Look forward to meeting you all on May 8TH, 2010.

Jeannie Lee, Music Director-O Music Studios
Wall to Wall Opera For All

The annual Wall to Wall Opera for All festival took place on November 21st. For the second year, Alan Johnson, Program/Music Director of the Frost Opera Theater invited The Piano Prep Program to attend a special presentation for young students. The event included two short Operas The Fox and the Hen and The Fox and the Grapes based on Aesop's Fables by composer Peter Winkler and librettist Rhoda Levine. The Prep Program is looking forward to working together again soon with the Frost Opera Theater department!

Family Fun Nights

New this year! Family Fun Nights are evenings dedicated to enriching parents about their child’s musical studies. While parents are learning, students have the opportunity to socialize with other students in the program and play music games. This fall we had two Family Fun Nights. The first topic was "How to practice with your child". Topics discussed included:

*How Many Minutes and Days Each Week?  
*Structured Practice Time: Exercises, Scales, New Piece, Review Piece  
*Mindless Practice vs. Effective Practice  
*Spot Practice, Slow Practice, Start in Middle of Piece, Practice in Rhythms  
*Tips to Encourage Practicing  
*Healthy Practicing: Stretching, Sitting Properly-Developing Good Habits

The second Family Fun night this semester was on “Performance Preparation” and “Performance Etiquette” A sample of topics discussed included:

*Rehearse your whole routine. (Example: Bow, say your name, play your piece, bow.)  
*Don’t play your piece too many times the day of your performance.  
*Come to the recital early. This gives you a chance to try out the piano, focus and not feel rushed.  
*While you wait your turn to play, take nice deep breaths.

Scale Juries

By: Oona Gonzalez

Congratulations are in order for all of the participants in last Saturday’s scale juries! Students from all levels prepared scales and performed them for a panel of teachers in our first-ever technical examinations.

Why are scales so important, anyway? One of the most important fundamentals of the pianist’s technique is evenness of tone. However, we are constrained by the anatomy of our fingers – they are of different lengths, sizes and strengths. Thumbs are naturally very strong, while fourth fingers are extremely weak. We need to be able to play passages of music where the notes played by every finger sound exactly the same, or passages where the strong thumbs play very softly, while the weak fourth fingers sing more loudly than the others. To develop this level of control over each finger, we practice scales, which allow us to develop the strength of each finger individually. At the same time, hearing the long strings of notes allows us to listen for an even, steady sound.

Another advantage of scale practice is its applicability to all levels of study. Scales can be adapted to fit the technique of pianists from the earliest beginner to the greatest artists. This is why all of our students were given some form of scales to study – from simple, 5 finger C scales for our beginning students to four octave scales in all keys for our more advanced students. In addition to being appropriate for all levels, scale practice is limited only by the imagination – you can play your scales legato, staccato, with thundering crescendos or the softest diminuendos, with contrasting dynamics (one hand loud, one hand soft), in thirds, in sixths…. The possibilities are endless and lead to a creative, yet satisfying workout for any pianist. The great pianist and pedagogue Rosina Lhevinne practiced her scales every day, well into her 90s, and credited her legendary technique with this study. We hope all of our budding pianists will embrace the study of scales as an essential, lifelong component of their piano studies.

Spring Family Fun Nights: March 11, May 13
University of Miami-Frost School of Music
International Summer Piano Symposium
July 26-August 6, 2010

The International Summer Piano Symposium is a comprehensive program of study and performance for young pianists. It is a program that integrates individual lessons with daily classes in theory, sight-reading, improvisation, memorization and ensemble music making. Courses are designed for both classical and jazz musicians. The University of Miami Frost School of Music faculty members will conduct lessons and masterclasses and teach all courses. This summer camp is a great way for the Piano Preparatory Program students to meet and interact with students from around the world and with their new Vancouver music buddies. Mark your calendars now and save the dates! More information will be available in January.

Holiday Studio Class

Our final event for the fall semester is the Holiday Studio Class on Wednesday, December 9th. The theme of the Studio Class is Duets! We will be entertained by student-student, student-sibling, student-parent and student-teacher duets. The Holiday performances will be held in Fillmore, Broby and Nancy Greene Halls. We will follow the Studio Class hours with Session I taking place at 5:30p.m. and Session II taking place at 7:00p.m. The pizza party will be at 6:15 and include holiday desserts! And as a special treat this year, at 6:45 the Jazz Ensemble classes will showcase their talents in the lab. All are invited to attend.

Piano Explorer

Piano Explorer is a music magazine written for children. Each issue includes information about composers, music crosswords and word searches, fun music facts and much more. To subscribe you can call (888) 446-6888 or visit the website www.instrumentalistmagazine.com. Ten issues are mailed each year and the cost is $10.

Recycle Old Piano Books

Want to minimize the clutter in your piano bench? Why not donate your old piano books that you are no longer using to needy children. The Piano Preparatory Program is organizing a fundraiser to donate books to orphanages. Please drop off books to the program’s office no later than January 30th.
Upcoming Events-Spring 2010

Community Service Events

Walk Now for Autism Speaks

Come out and support Thomas Whitehurst, one of our students in the Piano Prep Program, in the walk for Autism in Crandon Park, Key Biscayne on Sunday, February 21st at 10am. To join Team Thomas please visit www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/miami. Click on register and join under Team Thomas. For more information please contact Mrs. Whitehurst at MWhite4809@aol.com

Chocolate Covered Strawberry Tour

My name is Michael Hoffer-Hawlik for those of you who do not know me. Six years ago my brother Matthew started the Chocolate Covered Strawberry Tour. For the past three years I have served as the director and organizer of this event. This is our sixth year of collaborating with the University of Miami’s Piano Preparatory Program in this community service project. Last year we visited the Miami Jewish Home for the fourth time. The Barr, Hawlik, and Gellman families, along with Temple Beth Am and The Sweet Tooth, helped make this event possible. Musicians from the Preparatory Program volunteered and provided a live musical concert for the elderly and, as is our tradition, handed out our delectable chocolate covered strawberries. The highlight of this event was our sharing, interacting, and connecting with the elderly. I am grateful to all of you who participated and hope you will volunteer this year on Sunday, February 21, 2:00 P.M., to be a part of this beautiful, rewarding experience. The deadline for sign up is February 7. Please contact me at strawberrytour@bellsouth.net if you are interested in participating and let me know the name of the piece, the composer, and the length of the piece you intend to play.

Composers’ Play

Each spring during theory classes we dedicate part of class time to learning about a new composer. The past two years we have had two events as part of our Composer’s Series that showcase a particular composer. In 2008 we invited Carol Matz to join the program in an afternoon concert featuring her arrangements and original compositions. Last year, the program learned selections from Mana-Zucca and performed an evening concert for family and friends of the late Mana-Zucca. This year we will be putting on a musical play! Katrina Tomas, a student in the Prep Program has written a script for the play. Students can participate as performers, actors, stage managers or make-up/costume assistants. If you are interested in being part of the event please contact Dr. Walsh by January 30th. The play will take place in late spring.

Teen Pop Music Concert

This spring we will have our first ever teen pop concert. Our teens will be pop stars for an evening performing music from artists such as Coldplay and Alicia Keys. This special event will take place off campus at a hip location. There will be a “red carpet” after party following the concert for our performers. If you are a teen and interested in participating please contact Dr. Walsh by January 30th. Indicate if you play other instruments so we can form bands!

Spring Semester Tuition

The second semester payment will be due on January 15th. An invoice will be sent the second week of December showing your outstanding balance.
Spring Semester Calendar 2010

January 11  Classes Resume
February 19  Studio Class
February 21  Chocolate Covered Strawberry Tour
February 21  Walk for Autism Community Service Event
March 11  Family Fun Night
March 15-21  Spring Break
April 17  Studio Class
May 1  Spring Formal Recital
May 8  Scale Juries
May 13  Family Fun Night
May 13  Last Class Day

New Logo!
The program is excited to finally have a logo! Families can purchase merchandise such as t-shirts, bags, hats, etc. online at http://www.cafepress.com/joro/6745117.

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