

Lac Léman
Music Masterclasses



2011

Lac Léman Music Masterclasses 2011

In 2010, out of their passion for music and the aim of imparting their knowledge to the younger generation, world-renowned musicians, Mihaela Martin, Stephan Picard, Nobuko Imai and Frans Helmerson conceived of setting up a series of Masterclasses for the most talented up-and-coming musicians. The overwhelming success of the inaugural Lac Léman Music Masterclasses (LLMM) promises to be a harbinger of future such Masterclasses.

The idea behind the Masterclasses is to provide one-to-one tuition to young, gifted musicians who play the violin, the viola or the cello and who aspire to become internationally acclaimed artists in their discipline. The Masterclasses give them the opportunity to participate in an intensive week-long course, under the watchful eye and encouragement of the Music Masterclass teachers.



The teachers



Mihaela Martin (violin)



Stephan Picard (violin)



Nobuko Imai (viola) and



Frans Helmerson (cello)

are all internationally acclaimed soloists and highly esteemed teachers who provide expert tuition in their chosen instruments. An *“irresistible desire to play together the greatest repertoire of all”* brought them together in 2002, when they formed the Michelangelo String Quartet.

Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association

Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association was formed in order to support the project conceived by the founders of the Masterclasses.

Its board comprises Professor Pierre Tercier, chairman of the board, Benoît Chappuis, managing partner of the law firm Lenz Staehelin and dean of the Geneva Bar, and Fabian von Schlabrendorff, of-counsel to the law firm Clifford Chance in Frankfurt am Main.



The concept behind the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses

The fundamental concept of the LLMM is to provide exceptionally talented young string players the opportunity to meet and study together with a view to improving their instrumental skills, regardless of their nationality and financial status. Although the Masterclasses are open to the public, the carefully chosen location offers ideal conditions for the activities included in the programme. The compositions chosen as teaching materials by

the instrumentalists themselves range from solo pieces to chamber music pieces, and while the LLMM course provides for significant musical interaction between all participants, the course is not a string quartet course. The LLMM is designed to offer young musicians the opportunity to focus on developing their individual skills and to provide a setting to best enable solo performers to mature as musicians.



The inaugural Lac Léman Music Masterclasses

Conducted for the first time in 2011, the LLMM met with great enthusiasm by the students and audiences alike, and proved a resounding success.

The classes were conducted throughout the first week of October 2011 and culminated with a concert at the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, on 8 October 2011. The chosen venue was the Hindemith Music Center in Blonay, which offers an idyllic, peaceful, and intimate setting by Lake Léman providing an environment conducive to teaching and learning alike.

Despite the late announcement of the course, the four classes on offer (two violin classes, a viola class and a cello class) filled up rapidly with 31 students enrolling, with the selection process being conducted by the teachers themselves.



The participating students came from all over the world, including Japan, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, the United States, South Korea, China, Great Britain and Spain, with ages ranging from 14 to 28 years.

A scholarship programme (at least partially) covered the costs of some 10 students to participate in the course.



The atmosphere during the course was marked by great intensity and interaction between students and teachers. The photographs attached hereto capture some of the atmosphere.

Classes often started before 9:00am, lasting until late evening. In their spare time, the students practiced individually in the practice rooms at the Hindemith Center, and even in their rooms. Feedback from both participants and observers is encouraging. As one of the students notes: „*I had extremely high expectations to begin with, and they were exceeded*“.

The inaugural Lac Léman Music Masterclasses

A significant portion of time of this year's Masterclasses was spent on the rehearsals for the concluding concert, entitled „*An open window to LLMM*“, which took place on 8 October in the concert hall of the Conservatoire de Genève. Each afternoon, virtually all students, supported by two double bass players, assembled to study „*Verklärte Nacht*“ by Arnold Schoenberg. Their rehearsals were overseen by the four teachers, each teacher directing a section of instruments. At the concert in Geneva, the students played selected solo works by Schubert, Crumb, Saint-Saëns/ Ysaÿe and Brahms and the „*Verklärte Nacht*“ was played by 35 instrumentalists without a conductor. The audience embraced the performances with extended, rousing applause.

It would be remiss if LLMM did not acknowledge the generosity of the 15 host families who so kindly provided accommodation for the LLMM students for the night following the concert, thus making the „*Open Window to the LLMM*“ possible.



The future of the project

Given the success of this year's course, the LLMM board is pleased to announce that it intends to organise further LLMM courses in the coming years as well. This will, of course, only be possible with support, financial and otherwise, which LLMM has enjoyed in organising the 2011 course.



The LLMM is deeply grateful to all individuals, as well as to all institutions and sponsors who so generously supported the 2011 project, either by providing logistical support, by making financial donations or who helped in any way, shape, or form.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals for their support and to express our thanks and gratitude to JTI, Lombard Odier, Tarisio, Shiseido and Sunstar for sponsoring the 2011 event.

Our thanks also go to the Conservatoire for kindly allowing the use of its hall free-of-charge and, above all, to the Hindemith Music Center for offering its premises and amenities at reduced rates for the students. The board of LLMM is confident that, with the help of institutions and individuals who share the love of music, the LLMM Association will be able to organise further Masterclasses in the future, which promise to be at the forefront of international musical education.



Association
Lac Léman
Music Masterclasses
c/o Pierre Tercier
ch. Guillaume-Ritter 5
1700 Fribourg
Switzerland

Contact:
Ryo Pittier
Phone: +41 (0) 79 628 98 39
pittier@geneva-link.ch

Photos:
Fabian von Schlabrendorff