

Lac Léman
MusicMasterclasses



2014

The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses 2014

In October 2014 the fourth series of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses was organized. As in the previous years it consisted of an extensive educational encounter of highly talented young string instrument players from many different countries, cultural backgrounds, and levels of musical training, with some of the foremost world-class teachers of the violin, the viola, and the violoncello to be found in the world of classical music.

The concept of bringing together such recognized masters of their instruments with some promising young musical talents in the unique setting of the Hindemith Music Centre in Blonay, allowing both teachers and students to focus on highest musical achievements in a serene, family-like setting, again proved to be highly successful.



The 2014 course assembled some 25 students of stringed instruments from countries such as Australia, Belgium, Colombia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, and Switzerland. They were chosen to take part in the course on the basis of an informal, but highly rigorous process

looking at their musical achievements and promise to become outstanding players. Some of the students participated in the course on the basis of a scholarship granted by LLMM or other organizations in their countries of regular study.



The results of the work invested during the course were offered to public audiences in two concerts, on 10 October 2014 at the Hindemith Music Centre in Blonay itself, and on 11 October in the Grande Salle of the Conservatory of Music in Geneva.

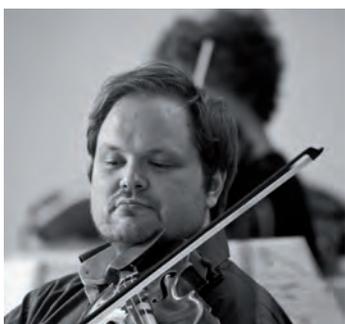
The musical training of the students during the course and their performance in the concerts were supported by three experienced pianists of high achievement: Rusdan Alvidze, Geneva, Megumi Hashiba, Cologne, and Ron Regev, Tel Aviv.

The Teachers

The faculty teaching the 2014 course consisted of the same five great teachers who were already acting as coaches in the previous year: Mihaela Martin and Boris Kuschnir for students of the violin, Nobuko Imai for students of the viola, and Frans Helmerson for students of the violoncello. Daniel Austrich (violin and viola) focused again on teaching performance practice for chamber music groups. The course also offered studies in orchestral practice in which, with the exception of Boris Kuschnir, all other teachers were involved.



Nobuko Imai (viola)

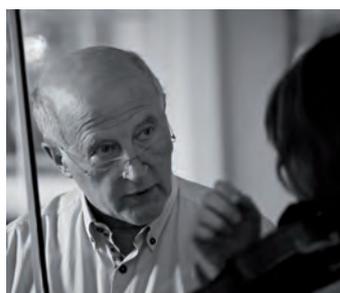


*Daniel Austrich
(violin and viola)*

What distinguishes all of the teachers who imparted their knowledge and experience to the students in the 2014 course is the fact that, in addition to their teaching activities, they are at the same time highly active solo performers of classical music on some of the most important stages of the musical world, which enables them to provide their students



Mihaela Martin (violin)



Boris Kuschnir (violin)



*Frans Helmerson
(violoncello)*

with many highly practical hints and well-tested advice as to the conditions of performance on stage. The artists Mihaela Martin, Daniel Austrich, Nobuko Imai, and Frans Helmerson, in addition to their solo work, frequently also appear on stage as members of the Michelangelo String Quartet.

The Concept behind the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses

The 2014 course brought a week of intensive musical work for both students and teachers alike. As in the case of previous courses, the work started in the early morning and often lasted until midnight or even later. The core of the work consisted in masterclasses for individual students, with or without piano support, in which the student receives the specific training and advice with regard to a particular piece of music to be performed, often under the attentive eyes and ears of fellow students and/or visitors of the centre. It is the student who, sometimes with the advice of the teacher, has chosen the work he or she has prepared to be studied and which is to be brought to a higher level of performance in class. The students of the 2014 course were of different age levels and levels of musical accomplishment, ranging in age from 16 to 30 years, but they all came well-prepared.

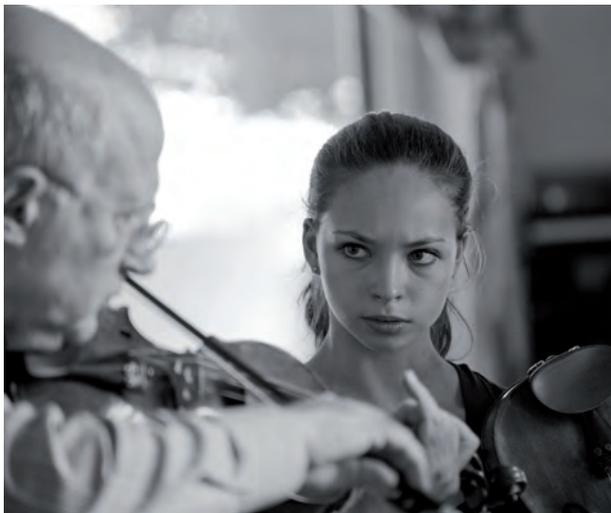


With the teachers recognizing this and applying their highly developed pedagogical skills the master classes often became akin rather to final rehearsals for a concert than sessions of practical training. Instead of top-down teaching many sparkling moments of musical feeling and expression were to be experienced, making the masterclasses a joyful event for students, teachers and listeners alike.

Generally speaking, the artistic level of playing of the students in the masterclasses was awesome right from the beginning. It was thus even more impressive to observe how such classes, accompanied by the incessant effort of students to practice and apply the advice received, still resulted in remarkable improvements of performance in such a short time as just one week of focused work.

The Course Activities

A portion of the afternoons respectively of the evenings during the course was dedicated to orchestral work and chamber music in



preparation of the two concerts to be performed. This work, too, was characterized by the same degree of focus on possible improvements and intensity as the individual masterclasses. It was to be observed that all students participated in these activities under the expert guidance of the teachers with a keen interest and great enjoyment.



A non-musical, but music-related highlight of the 2014 course was the guided tour of the Villa La Chance in which the composer Paul Hindemith had lived and worked during his stay in Switzerland. Paul Hindemith's former home is kept by the Hindemith Foundation in the original form it has been when the composer died, and Monsieur Marcel Lachat, the director of the centre, provided the students and teachers of the 2014 course with some extremely interesting insights into the composer's life and work. It became clear, inter alia, that Paul Hindemith was not only a great composer but also a very skilled draughtsman with a very developed sense of humour.



Home of Paul Hindemith, Villa La Chance, Blonay, Switzerland

The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Presentation of Concerts

It has already become a tradition of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses to show the results of the work done in two concerts presenting the young soloists and their teachers to the general public.

In 2014 the first of the concerts was performed on 10 October 2014 at the Hindemith Music Centre itself, with listeners from Blonay and surroundings and members of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association attending. In this concert, to the critical acclaim of those who attended, course participants performed solo works and chamber music pieces, inter alia, by composers such as Hindemith, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Ysaÿe, and others. This Blonay concert was of an outstanding quality in the opinion of everyone present, but only a limited number of listeners were present to enjoy it. The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association is therefore considering measures to increase the public attention necessary for these wonderful Blonay concerts.



The concert performed on 11 October 2014 in the Grande Salle of the Geneva Conservatory, in

contrast, was sold out as in the preceding year. The first part of this concert was introduced by a performance by the Michelangelo String Quartet of Beethoven's famous quartet op. 18 no.6 in B-flat major, to be followed by the interpretation of a number of solo pieces, some of them with piano accompaniment, offered by the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses soloists, which included some fascinating works by Enescu, Beethoven, Tchaikowsky, and Wieniawski. In the second part of this concert an orchestra formed by all course participants and led in the first chairs by the members of the Michelangelo String Quartet (Mihaela Martin, Daniel Austrich, Nobuko Imai, and Frans Helmerson) presented a fascinating rendering of Dvořák's Serenade for Strings in E-major, op. 22. This concert, which ended with a standing ovation by the audience, was attended by many friends of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association, including the Japanese ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, representatives of the sponsors of LLMM, and members of the general public. After the concert a sponsored reception was held on the upper floor of the Conservatory to celebrate this year's success of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses and to wish farewell to all students attending the course.

The Geneva concert has been recorded and the association is glad to have again been able to cut a CD of excerpts of this recording for promotional purposes. A short video film of some scenes of the masterclasses will also be made accessible via link on LLMM's website www.llmm.ch.

The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association

The Lac Léman Masterclasses Association has been founded with the purpose of organizing activities of musical education of the highest quality for highly talented and deserving young musicians, such objectives being pursued without any motivations of obtaining financial profit. The costs of courses such as the 2014 course could not have been fully covered by the fees which students can pay for the course. Some students need scholarships, which cannot always be obtained from other organizations. The 2014 course was no exception to this. The Association was therefore particularly pleased to have received generous financial support from various sources for organizing the course in 2014 as well, both from individual music lovers and from sponsors.



The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association would like to express special thanks to everyone who supported its work again in 2014. Specific mention goes to Tarisio and Lombard Odier who, among others, provided generous

sponsoring. Likewise, special thanks go also to the Hindemith Foundation who offered reduced rates of lodging to students below the age of 26 years. Such reduced rates applied to a significant number of students in 2014.

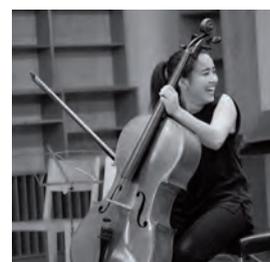


The executive board of the Association also expresses heartfelt thanks to the many individual music lovers who support its work, financially or otherwise, including those who assisted in organizing the public concerts and provided students with a friendly home for the night of their stay in Geneva after the concert. LLMM could not pursue its activities if it was not able to rely on this very personal help of individuals which also serves to give students coming from far distances a feeling of being welcome in Switzerland.

The Future of the Project

The membership on the board of the LLMM Association continues to consist of Professor Pierre Tercier, Fribourg, chairman, Benoît Chappuis, lawyer in Geneva, Fabian von Schlabrendorff, lawyer in Frankfurt, Germany, Liana Georgana, lawyer in Geneva, and Jean-David Pelot, lawyer in Lausanne. All members of the board fulfill their functions and work for LLMM on a purely honorary basis. In view of the support received until now the board members trust that the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association will continue to be able to organize similar masterclasses in the future. It is to be noted, however, that if the economic situation does not improve, in particular in those countries where most students participating in the masterclasses are based, the gap between what students can pay for the courses offered by LLMM and the costs to be charged for such courses will become more severe than before. It will therefore be essential for the future work of LLMM that the financial support received so far continues to be provided and is even increased. Given its experience to date, however, the executive

board of the Lac Léman Music Masters Association is very confident that the required financial support will be found and that LLMM will be able to continue its successful work.



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