

Lac Léman
Music Masterclasses



2012

The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses 2012

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 developed the idea of setting up a series of masterclasses for the most talented up-and-coming string players in a private setting. After the successful launch of the first Lac Léman Music Masterclasses (LLMM) in 2011, a second series of masterclasses, building on the success and the concept of the initial event, was organised in the fall of 2012.

The idea behind these masterclasses is to provide one-to-one tuition at the highest possible level to young, gifted musicians who play the violin, the viola or the cello and who aspire to become internationally acclaimed soloists in their disciplines. The masterclasses give them the opportunity to participate in an intensive week-long course and further develop their playing skills under the watchful eyes and encouragement of the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses faculty.



The teachers



Mihaela Martin (violin) and Frans Helmerson (cello)

LLMM was happy to have Mihaela Martin (violin), Nobuko Imai (viola) and Frans Helmerson (cello) in its faculty again in 2012. This star faculty was joined by Professor Boris Kuschnir from Vienna, one of the foremost and most respected authorities in international violin teaching.



Daniel Austrich (violin)



Nobuko Imai (viola)



Boris Kuschnir (violin)

Daniel Austrich, a young top prize-winning violinist who joined the Michelangelo String Quartet in 2012, acted as a coach for the additional study of chamber music works in the evenings.

The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses Association

The Association Lac Léman Music Masterclasses was formed in 2010 to support and organise the LLMM masterclasses of the same name.

To take account of the growing activities of LLMM, the executive board of the Association has widened its membership. Now Professor Pierre Tercier of Fribourg, chairman, Benoît Chappuis, lawyer in Geneva, Fabian von Schlabrendorff, lawyer in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, as original members and Liana Georgana, lawyer in Geneva, and David Pelot, lawyer in Lausanne, as new members steer the preparation and organisation of the masterclasses.

They are assisted in their work by a managing assistant based in Geneva. None of the members of the executive board of the Association receive any remuneration for their work.



The concept behind the Lac Léman Music Masterclasses

It is the fundamental concept of LLMM to provide exceptionally talented young string players with the opportunity to meet teachers of world acclaim in a week-long course and study with them with a view to improving their musical and instrumental skills. Although the masterclasses are open to the public, the carefully chosen location of the Hindemith Music Centre in Blonay, Switzerland, offers ideal conditions for a very intensive week of studies and teaching in a nearly private,



family-style manner. The aim is to create an atmosphere in which students are allowed to train with their coaches on a level playing field, avoiding the classic format of the teacher telling the students top-down what to do.

The compositions chosen as teaching material by the students themselves are generally solo pieces or works with piano accompaniment. While the emphasis of the course is clearly on solo work, however, it also provides for significant musical interaction between all participants in the form of some chamber music activities in the evenings and, above all, in the preparation of a work for chamber orchestra in which all students join under the guidance of the teachers. In addition, in 2012, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Paul Hindemith's death, his chamber music works were studied and presented in a concert at the church of Blonay.



The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses students

The 2012 masterclasses were met with the same great enthusiasm as the 2011 masterclasses by both students and members of the public.

As before, the students were individually selected solely on the basis of their talent and skills, without any restrictions as to nationality or institutional affiliation. The students admitted to the course in 2012 came from countries as diverse as Belgium, China, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the USA. While all of them were already accomplished musicians, they included students of different ages – from some well under 20 to young artists in their mid-twenties or older who already find themselves on the brink of starting a concert career.

The second successful operation of the masterclasses has confirmed to the executive board of the LLMM Association that it is on the right track with the conceptualization and execution of these masterclasses, which are aimed at giving young, already accomplished string students a chance to learn from top musicians to improve their playing even further.



The Lac Léman Music Masterclasses presentation of concerts

The highlights of the 2012 masterclasses were a concert produced at the Hindemith Music Centre, a concert dedicated to the works of Paul Hindemith at the beautiful old Roman church of Blonay, and a grand concert involving all of the teachers and students, presented at the end of the course at the great hall of the Music Conservatory of Geneva. In the concert dedicated to Paul Hindemith, solo works for violin, viola and violin cello were presented, along with as a number of chamber music works, including Hindemith's Minimax Quartet, a humorous persiflage on military band music. In the concert of Geneva, the young LLMM soloists presented works by Robert Schumann, Ernest Chausson, Sergej Prokofjev and Eugène Ysaÿe. The audience also listened

to Beethoven's opus 95 string quartet by the Michelangelo Quartet and to Chostakovitch's chamber symphony opus 110a, played by all LLMM students and their teachers. Judging by the reaction of the audience, the event was an overwhelming success and provided a clear demonstration of what astonishing levels can be reached in just a week if highly talented young musicians are able to work with world-class teachers.



The future of the project

Like the 2011 masterclasses, the 2012 project would have been unthinkable without the financial and other support which was provided from so many sources. It is a great pleasure for LLMM to have the opportunity to thank its generous sponsors, including in 2012 ITT, Lombard Odier, Tarisio and Shiseido for their financial contributions. Likewise, LLMM is very grateful to the Hindemith Music Centre for again offering the use of its premises and services at significantly reduced rates for most of the students. And of course the many individuals who joined the Association or provided financial or non-financial support in any other form are to be mentioned here, including the Geneva families providing the LLMM students with a home for a day or more during LLMM's Geneva concert. Without the support of its individual contributors, LLMM could not achieve what it set out to do. Special thanks are also due to Radio Télévision Suisse for reporting on the LLMM activities in its Espace 2 cultural programme.

This broadcast, which included the presentation of violin solo works by Bach and Hindemith,

assisted in attracting a considerable number of interested listeners to the LLMM Geneva concert.

There is a sense of community which characterises the entire organisation of these masterclasses and which encourages the executive board of the Association to continue in its efforts and help to achieve the goals of musical excellence. The intention is therefore to continue organising courses in the coming years.

This will, of course, not be possible without the continuous support, financial or otherwise, of individuals, institutions, and businesses keen to make a contribution to our culture of classical music. But LLMM is confident that it should be possible to find continued support, from those who have already provided so much of it, as well as from new sources, to make LLMM a continued reality. Such support will always be welcome as any future masterclasses based on the principles now developed by LLMM promise to continue to be an event at the forefront of international musical education.



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