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Photo on the e-journal's front cover –

Top:

FesTaRi-2013 Espoo (Piano trio of Jāz. Mediņš Riga 1st Music School) at Tapiola Concert Hall;

Winter Master Classes-2013 for chamber music teachers in Riga (professors G.Larsens (Switzerland) and
J.Maļeckis (Latvia) with piano trio Jāz. Mediņš Riga 1st Music School);

Summer Masterclasses -2013 for young musicians: Limbazhi MS trio (Latvia) and prof.P.Kunca (Lithuania)

Bottom:

Winter Master Classes-2013 for chamber music teachers (final photo)

PROLOGUE



Dear colleagues!

First of all I would like to say a warm thank you to all authors who helped creating the 8th issue of our journal. Take it as greetings in the New Year – 2014. Letters with your opinion, thoughts, and suggestions are more than welcome. Our email is still the same: weplay@inbox.lv.

The authors of the articles of this edition are – in one way or another – active members of the European Chamber Music Teachers' Association (ECMTA) and participants at its organised events. Their daily lives are filled with joy and caring, just like ours. Whether we go into a classroom to teach our youngest colleagues or leave after an inspiring concert by the world's most prominent chamber musicians, “we should however keep in our mind that there are no *shortcuts* in chamber music”, as says Prof. *Junio Kimanen* (Espoo, Finland).

Step by step, day after day and year after year we must cherish this fragile seed with immense patience and constant faith, with enduring hope and unconditional love until the precious wonder of the chamber music blossoms.

Translated by *Skrivanek Baltic*

We will make it – together with friends!

REVIEW, IDEAS, COMMENTS



Anna Spalviņa, violinist.

Violin and chamber music teacher of the Limbažu Music School. Education: Cesis Music School in 1976;

Latvian State Conservatory in 1986 (prof. A.Baumanis).

LU Faculty of Pedagogy. Masters degree 1996.

Since the 1981 - Limbažu music school violin class teacher (before – 5 years Gulbenes MS).

Since the 1981 - *Vidzeme Chamber Orchestra* violinist.

More than 35 years of working experience in the music school, including a variety of string and chamber ensembles.

Chamber music masterclasses in Biržai, Lithuania

The 3rd International creative-educational camp “*Play music together*” took place in early September, at Biržai music school, Lithuania. We, trio from Limbaži music school and teacher Anna Spalviņa, participated for the first time. The camp was organised by Biržai music school in cooperation with European Chamber Music Teachers' Association (ECMTA), represented by professor Petras Kunca (LT). Master classes were presented by sincere enthusiasts of chamber music, among them president of ECMTA Dr. Evan Rothstein (UK), and director of trust fund “We play music with friends” Gunta Melbārde (LV). Since these people have long ago become not only colleagues, but also friends, these master classes were filled with lovely and friendly atmosphere.

Straight after entering the school, we were greeted with the sound of music. With the very first moment an intensive musicianship began. Two days, in many classrooms at the same time teachers held lessons at least in 2-3 languages. Besides the teachers already mentioned above also Lithuanian M.K. Čiurlionis School of Art teachers Antanas Ladiga, Ramute Kalnenaite and Tartu H.Eller music school teacher Kadri Leivateigija worked with kids.

It was interesting to watch, interesting to compare and analyse. Little kids, for whom it was perhaps the first time to play in ensemble, and already matured young musicians playing side by side, wide variety of backgrounds and experience, from classical sonata duo (piano and cello, violin or flute) and trio to exotic 8 hand piano ensemble, or ensembles of violin + piano + accordion, duo with harpsichord. Latvia was represented by trio from our school (2 violins and piano), trio lead by Gunta Melbārde, trio from Engure music school (teachers Alevtina Tairova and Kaira Egle), as well as nearly professional family duo – Gunta Melbārde with her son Reinis, cello student of Jelgava music college.

Our school trio managed to learn from 3 educators. First lesson took place immediately after our arrival. Girls, of course, felt a little worried, but after receiving praise from our first teacher dr. Evan Rothstein, they lost their fears and listened to the tips with interest.



It was nice that teacher didn't try to "remake" anything, but instead encouraged students to listen to their own music and to reflect on how to reach better performance. This was not the only lesson of E.Rothstein in which he managed to tear down the barrier of "teacher-student" and awoke mutually interested peer-to-peer conversation with young musicians.

In the second lesson our educator prof. Kadri Leivateigija paid more attention to the piano part of the trio. In the third lesson prof. Ramute Kalnenaite helped musicians to discover new opportunities in the dynamic plan of the composition. Things that are already known, but,

while working at home, they are left to a later time as something self-evident and sure. As a stranger, hearing the piece for the first time and with no need to deal with virtuosity problems or to find the best fingerings, the educator immediately noticed the gaps in the musical side. More precisely, they were actually not real gaps of failures, but more of an opportunity to "try it in a different way". As Ramute said to the students: "You can always try to do it differently and then, in the concert, choose to play as you want. But you will at least



know that it's not the only possible way...". And that's exactly the main benefit of this kind of workshops – to hear different judgements and opinions, try different methods, come home and decide, what is worth keeping and embracing, and, of course, to get to know new people, new musicians, new music and repertoire.

Opening concert of master classes took place in Biržai castle on the very first evening. We could hear many Lithuanian ensembles – both very young and also quite experienced musicians. All Latvian ensembles participated and were greeted warmly. We were glad, that everyone liked the composition of our young violinist Rota Lāce, and also "*Labdien*" ("Hello") by Alnis Zaķis. Duo Gunta Melbārde and Petras Kunca made a surprise playing "*Melody*" by Jāzeps Vītols. Biržai music school was represented by large violin ensemble, and bright as always was the performance of A.Ladiga brass quintet from Čiurlionis School of Art.

Work in the master classes continued also in the second day. We managed to get a tour around lovely Biržai town with its beautiful lake, castles and churches. The second concert took place in Biržai Lutheran Church. It impressed us with its magnificent interior and specific

acoustics that caused us some difficulties playing. These acoustics would be more suitable for large vocal-instrumental works for choir and orchestra, but children tried to manage and did their best. Engure music school trio performed A.Piazzolla “*Oblivion*” and trio from Riga

performed “*Painting with watercolours*” – these pieces found new, unprecedented timbral nuances. Memorable were the brave clarinetist and pianist from Kaunas J. Naujalis Music Gymnasium, who performed Horovitz *Clarinet sonata*, and young cellists from Čiurlionis National School of Art. Concert was concluded with teachers duo (P.Kunca, G.Melbārde), that was made into trio when Reinis Melbārdis joined in. And in the very end brass quintet from Vilnius filled the church with effective and mighty chords.



The next day, in the morning, teachers gathered for the last meeting, during which we understood that there is so much to discuss, but, unfortunately, we don't have time for everything. These three days were enjoyed in a pleasant, friendly attitude from all sides – master class teachers, music school teachers. Astonishing that such a little town, can organise and hold such a serious and meaningful event. By the way, at the same time with chamber music master classes in Biržai castle was workshop for young harpsichord players. Biržai has its own harpsichord and a great teacher. The results of their work were also shown in the closing concert.

During these lovely last days of summer we gained impulse for further work and desire to come back to Biržai again and again. I can recommend these chamber music master classes to other Latvian music school ensembles as well. It is worth it!

Translated by *Renāte Vilnīte*

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Music School. Graduated from Leningrad State Conservatory.
Master's degree of Pedagogy obtained in Latvian University.
Artistic director of International Festival – Competition of
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Friends*. Creator of numerous anthology's for young musicians.
Editor by e-journal for chamber music teachers.



1st Summer workshops – 2013 for young chamber musicians in Dobele

The latest event that had been fostered for a long time in the framework of *Foundation „We Play Music with friends”* activities were the first *Summer workshops - 2013 for young chamber musicians*. The event took place from August 19 to 25, near Dobele, in a lovely 3-

storey rural guest house „*Ausātas*”. Surrounded by a quiet forest, on the shore of a small lake, far from the city crowds and noise... Conditions both for living and playing music were close to ideal. This summer camp was attended by 36 young chamber musicians (including the chamber orchestra *Armonico*) and 8 teachers: Professor Petras Kunca from Lithuania and 7 teachers from Latvia. Intensive music lessons were held the whole week. The sunny weather really made us glad. When it was too hot for the orchestra to rehearse in the hall, they continued playing music on the 2nd floor terrace, close to the nature with great views of the lovely surroundings. The orchestral group work led by violinist Dace Upatniece and cellist Reinis Melbārdis was also held both indoors and outdoors.



The culmination of the camp was two concerts: on August 23 - chamber music concert in Dobele music school. Before the concert, prof. P. Kunca and G. Melbārde held four open master-classes for Dobele teachers (with 2 chamber ensembles, a violinist from Limbaži and a pianist from Jāzeps Mediņš 1st Music School of Riga). We had staged a varied program for the concert with musical performances by the young musicians and workshop leaders. Finally the dream of the string quartet came true thanks to the enormous amount of work and love invested by prof. Petras Kunca. At the concert, they were playing with a true passion and on a superb artistic level, receiving the acclamation of the audience. On August 24, youth chamber orchestra *Armonico*, led by conductor Normunds Dreģis, performed at Dobele Lutheran Church. After the concert they received the enthusiastic reviews of the audience.



Our *Foundation* had made sure that the free time in the summer camp would be substantively filled: there were both attractive morning exercises in the green meadow and trips to special places - *Pokaiņu forest* and ancient *Castle ruins* of Dobele. A family of white swans was nesting in our lake, adding a romantic accent to the beautiful landscape. On August 22 we watched with delight a wonderful full moon night from the second-floor terrace. For sport - swimming in the lake, from which our "mermaids" came out with white water lilies in their hair... We also played volleyball, chess, and games of *Alias* on the first floor terrace until late at night. Was housed the "painter's workshop", where they could paint the stones, and later held an exhibition. We should not forget the Evening circles around the fire with the interesting and exciting conversations! After the last concert the landlady of „Ausātas”, Vineta, surprised us before the rich feast with an opportunity to enjoy the spirit and delights of real rural bathhouse.



Students and workshop leaders received certificates for active participation in this lovely, unforgettable week. At the end of the camp we were cheered up with variety of witty diplomas, noting each participant's creative nature and characteristics with friendly humour. We thanked Māra Rozentāle, director of Dobele music school, for creative collaboration. We particularly thanked cook Aija Cimmermane for the delicious and abundant meals four times a day. Our driver Ēriks, who masterfully guided us through all the routes, often to please the whims of musicians to deviate from the route, deserves particularly kind words of appreciation.

The summer workshops for young chamber musicians will be held hereafter every year at the end of the summer holidays. These workshops will be international, as we will invite our friends from other countries and other Latvian music schools. See you next year!

Translated by *Innotesco*

AN ARTISTIC PORTRAIT

Dr Evan Rothstein, violinist, Deputy Head of Strings at the *Guildhall School of Music & Drama* and Chairman of the European Chamber Music Teachers' Association (*ECMTA*). Studied at the *Eastman School* and *Indiana University* in Bloomington. Instructor in musicology at the *University of Paris 8 – Saint Denis* from 2001-2012, he has been professor of chamber music at the *Indiana University Summer String Academy* since 1997.



INTERVIEW with Chairman of the ECMTA Dr Evan Rothstein

Gunta Melbärde: Was your way to chamber music begun in childhood?

Evan Rothstein: I feel that my background is distinct from that of most of my European colleagues; I grew up in New Jersey, and although my parents had a love and knowledge of classical music, I only began to study violin as part of a public school project when I was 9 years old. A single, very talented general music teacher had been employed by the small town I lived in to teach all instruments in the two elementary schools, with the objective of forming a wind band and an orchestra. She asked for volunteers, and I raised my hand. Although my aptitude and skill in music-making was recognized, I was not singled out for special training, and was certainly no prodigy. So from the beginning, all instruction was related to ensemble playing; I'm sure that no one imagined that they would be training future professional musicians. It was simply acknowledged that teaching children a minimum of instrumental skills in order to make music together was a useful pedagogical strategy. It seems amazing that what seemed so obvious to everyone then is now, 40 year later, something we must fight so hard to preserve!

Most of this activity was in conducted ensembles, so although useful, it would not be precise to say that I was developing real chamber music skills. I played in three amateur orchestras throughout my childhood; there were many players in the community, but not so many professional teachers and musicians. So I would say that I was much more familiar with the social function of collective music-making long before I had any true consciousness of the artistic requirements and responsibilities of being a musician. I did not attend a conservatoire at all, and had only limited opportunities to play in a quartet from time to time, but without regular chamber music instruction.

But real exposure to a high standard in chamber music training only came later, when I was 18 years old and fortunate enough to study at the Eastman School in Rochester, New York, where the Cleveland Quartet was in residence. That was a revelation.

GM: Who was your inspiration at a young age?

ER: The highlight of my chamber music life throughout childhood was the visits from my aunt Harriet, a professional pianist and teacher. Not only were her performances filled with total commitment and expressive power, but she would always find time to patiently play my repertoire with me, no matter how simple. She always demonstrated the most remarkable empathetic listening that one could ever hope for, born of a total respect for whoever the musical partner might be (in this case, a very inexperienced beginning violinist). I would like to believe that I have carried that attitude of attentive listening with me ever since, and I think it explains in part why I am perfectly at ease teaching students of any level. She taught me to listen with respect.

GM: You are a violinist. Was it your dream and choice to devote yourself to pedagogy or was it a coincidence?

ER: It is true that I trained as a violinist, and obtained all of my diplomas in violin performance in the United States. But I was always teaching, although not quite as one would expect. I only served as my violin professor's assistant for one term, but for 5 years during my postgraduate studies I was an assistant instructor of Music Theory, and although I was also an apprentice in the violin pedagogy programme of my university, I focused on chamber music coaching and even conducted several string ensemble. This gave me immense pleasure and satisfaction, but I did not realize that it would be my future. I played in orchestras, and once I moved to France I performed in a full range of musical activities, including concertos, recitals, contemporary music, and chamber music. This came very late in life, but it was a great passion, to be living the life of a free-lance artist in Paris.

But eventually I had to admit that two elements were out of synchronization: in school I always had a greater love of study than of performance, and in performance I was always far behind the colleagues who had had proper systematic training much earlier than I did. This simply meant that while everyone else was practicing, I was always happy to be buried in the library with books; and yet because of my late start and unfocussed training, I really needed to work twice as hard as anyone in order to meet a proper standard. It was an irreconcilable situation over the long term.

It was not until I was awarded a teaching and research position at the University of Paris 8 – Saint Denis – as a musicologist I might add, not as a violin teacher! – that I realized that my true path was not as a performer, but as a facilitator, mentor, and mediator between written music, performers, and the public. Since then I have devoted myself almost entirely to teaching, and I have had the greatest satisfaction in finally understanding how to live in harmony with my nature.

GM: Are you happy in your job? What is the 'key' of this happiness?

ER: I can easily affirm that I love all of my jobs... and they are very different types of work. At Guildhall, I feel grateful for the opportunity to work with wonderful students and remarkable colleagues on so many different levels. Here for the first time I can bring my many

different experiences and skills under one roof. Most of our students are already very successful and active professional performers, so it is a rare privilege for me, as a musical *thinker*, to be assisting them in the refinement of their interpretations, to be actively solicited to provide performance feedback and advice. This is a high-intensity professional training programme, and it is both stimulating and challenging to contribute to this kind of environment.

By the same token, working with the ECMTA has been thrilling. This involves developing relationships with extraordinary musician-teachers from many different countries, and has given me the possibility of understanding both the differences and the similarities in approach and mentality across borders. This overview is priceless, and it is worth the effort.

Every summer since 1997 I am at the Summer String Academy in Bloomington, where I teach string quartets to teenagers and rehearse the Baroque Ensemble, and this is among the greatest pleasures imaginable; my colleagues are now old friends, and the director of the Academy is one of the most inspiring pedagogues in the world. I give all of my energy to this work, and yet return after a month refreshed as if I had been on vacation.

But I must emphasize that I also deeply appreciate the privilege of returning to France to teach violin to small children in the Parisian suburbs: without this, my life as a teacher would be incomplete. The conditions and objectives are very different, but the sense of meaning and satisfaction is very great. Somehow, this many varied activities provide a necessary balance and perspective, which is perhaps the key to a certain form of happiness.

The key is to remember why we are here, in this life, and why doing what we do is part of that greater purpose. As Casals wrote, we are first men and musicians only second. If we focus on small objectives, short-sighted ambitions, narrowly technical or professional goals, we will inevitably judge everything and everyone in relation to our success or failure. But remembering what is truly important, which is above all the quality of our human relations, puts everything else in perspective. It should, if we are strong enough and thoughtful enough, allow us to find the truest form of love, which is love of life.

GM: What is your teaching *credo*?

ER: Pedagogically, I was trained in the spirit of positive reinforcement: start from the student's strengths, build his trust and confidence, believe in his ability to change, and find clear strategies that the student can understand and apply on his own in order to progress. Every day, I hear the voice of my pedagogy tutor Mimi Zweig repeating, "Every mistake is just a source of information." This way of working informs all of my teaching: it is pragmatic and empowering. I also love to remind my students, as Mimi often said, that the true learning of a piece begins when you perform it for the first time.

Recently, the Head of Strings for Junior Guildhall, William Bruce, spoke to my teaching skills class, and he said something of such fundamental importance that I will surely repeat it to myself for many years to come. He said, "Teaching is a balance of instruction and self-

awareness.” This extraordinarily concise thought resumes much of what I believe is necessary for effective teaching.

GM: You are working daily with the modern young musicians. In your view – how would you characterize them?

ER: The younger generation is faced with new challenges, and my impression is that they are better equipped to face them than most of their teachers! They are familiar with social media, they are technologically skilled, and they are comfortable with a broad range of musical styles. Many of our students switch from classical music to rock, folk, or jazz with ease; they have a natural openness to diversity. We have all noted that the musicians of the future will need multiple professional skills, what is commonly referred to as the *portfolio career*. It is understood now that making a living as a musician in the future involves more than playing concerts and making recordings: it requires a much broader ability to understand music in society. These are challenges, but I feel that the students are ready to face them. They even have one other great advantage over older musicians: these days music schools and institutions encourage this kind of eclecticism, whereas in the 20th century it was generally not tolerated in the classical music world.

GM: What are your everyday teaching problems and how you solve them?

ER: For me, there are no everyday problems, every situation is unique. But in general, I find that most of the advanced students only suffer from a lack of reflection: if there is anything that is truly inauthentic about their interpretation, it simply comes from not being aware of that which requires their attention. John Cage was once asked for a definition of music: “Music is paying attention to sounds,” he replied. This is often completely forgotten by our students. And once their attention is awakened to the meaning of sounds, they will usually find an appropriate and convincing solution for themselves. I have recently had some of my greatest satisfaction in working with students in Finland and London who were brilliantly playing pieces I did not know at all; nevertheless, by studying the score with them, we were able to draw out of the music fundamental elements of *interpretation* which had totally escaped them, primarily because their only concern was with *execution*, not interpretation. The delight of these students on learning to pay attention, the dramatic change it brought about in their playing, moved me deeply. It allows me to believe that I can offer the students an approach which liberates their innate musical nature and imagination, without necessarily telling them how to play. This is a source of infinite pleasure.

GM: Does co-operation with colleagues - chamber music teachers - present any special challenges?

ER: There will always be some problems, as when different teachers work with the same ensemble and give them contradictory instructions. For students who are already fairly mature, I don’t find this to be negative at all, since the contradiction obliges the student to think and to decide for himself. In philosophy we have long understood that synthesis is the result of the confrontation of antithetical propositions! I tend to feel that I learn a great deal from colleagues, even those whose ideas are most challenging to me, and I still love observing lessons and master classes more than attending concerts; the process of learning is infinitely

fascinating to me, and the transformation of students is a greater form of human expression than the highest form of theatre.

We had a most interesting experiment in a recent ECMTA meeting in Finland, where teachers were assigned to co-teach chamber groups that they did not know. I had a splendid time working with colleagues from Estonia and Finland with Russian and Finnish students, and learned a great deal; others felt that it was only frustrating to be constantly reacting to the other teacher instead of focusing on the students. Is it a problem? We must simply recognize that different personalities need different conditions to work effectively, and refuse the systematic application of so-called *innovations*.

GM: How much attention you devote to methodical (pedagogy and psychology) questions?

ER: In my work with ECMTA, I am constantly inquiring my colleagues about their practices and methods, and I have often occasion to write about what they are doing. But I spend surprisingly little time myself doing research in these areas: for me, the fundamental framework for my attitude and approach are established, and so I have a much greater desire to immerse myself in the music itself. I was grateful a few years ago when Gunta Melbarde asked me to write an article for this journal about my strategy for teaching string quartets to children in Bloomington: although I had published many analytical articles as a musicologist, this was the first time I tried to systematize my thinking about chamber music teaching. But I felt then as now that the *theory* of teaching needs to follow practice, and not the other way around.

Nevertheless, I participate actively in workshops organized by the Guildhall in feedback, assessment, and mentoring, usually with specialists who are not musicians at all but who bring new perspectives and recent research to our attention, and I have found that much of this resonates with my existing convictions about how to share information and motivate our students.

GM: Have you worked with contemporary composers?

ER: When I was performing, I had the privilege of playing their music to several notable composers, some well-known internationally, such as Edison Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina, Franco Donatoni, or Georges Aperghis, and others fairly well-known in France, such as Thierry Blondeau, Jérôme Combier, or Stéphane Leach. In school I enthusiastically participated in New Music ensembles, and once I moved to Paris I was impressed by the number and quality of new music groups, and the multitude of new musical languages, and I tried to play with as many ensembles as I could.

But my closest associations with new music came through my work as a musicologist, which led me to write and speak about the music of Steve Reich and John Adams for the Cité de la musique in Paris, and to study deeply the experimental music theatre movement in France from the 70s on, especially the work of Georges Aperghis, whose music and musical direction I came to treasure as my own. Most importantly, my position as pedagogical consultant for ProQuartet in Paris led me to organize masterclasses twice with the legendary György Kurtág,

each time with 6 young professional chamber ensembles as participants. Even though I was not playing, watching Kurtag teach different ensembles about his own music was perhaps one of the most extraordinary musical experiences of my entire life. It was not uncommon to see the musicians weeping with joy at the end of a session.

GM: You are the Chairman of the ECMTA. How do you see your role with regard to chamber music teachers?

ER: As Chairman of the ECMTA, I see my role and the role of the association in general, as facilitating the exchange of experience and friendship. I am not there to tell anyone how things should be done, and I have no belief in a single perfect solution to any problem. I also believe very strongly that the ECMTA has no need to duplicate on an international level what all of its members are already doing with great skill and devotion: we do not need more competitions, festivals, or academies! What we need is a place to meet, a structure which encourages discovery and interaction, and the sharing of experience. My job, then, is to promote these fundamental values as best I can. My life has been infinitely richer thanks to these meetings and correspondence, and I want to believe that every member who engages in this adventure with us will have the same impression.

Nevertheless, music education is in great danger; the current transformation of European institutions and the degradation of the social and cultural responsibilities of government are alarming. Many music departments are disappearing, sometimes whole conservatories threatened with dismantlement. In such a climate, federating, cooperating, communicating, and, yes, lobbying, become necessary forms of self-defense. For this reason, ECMTA has recently joined the European Music Council, and renewed its contacts with the Association européenne des conservatoires. When threatened, we cannot stand alone.

GM: Our Foundation *We Play Music with Friends*, as well as many chamber music teachers from other Baltic countries (Lithuania, Estonia) – we felt your true interest and warm support for our work. How do you explain this?

ER: From the beginning of my first mandate as Chairman in 2009, I was struck by the presence of teachers from Baltic countries in the ECMTA, and noted that our former Chairman had already been present in activities of *We Play Music with Friends*. In my first article for *Ensemble Magazine*, I wrote about the Baltic conservatories' International Student Chamber Music Festival, and their close collaboration over many decades. Slowly I came to understand that something special was happening in these countries, which, previously, I did not know very well at all. So when I received my first invitation to attend the Foundation's chamber music festival/competition, I accepted with great curiosity. What I found, and what I continue to find on every visit, are cultures of chamber music pedagogy that possess both exquisite musical sensitivity and profound human values. I see children who have solid instrumental skills, who perform with confidence, who demonstrate artistic insight, who have warm, happy relationships with their teachers and their fellow students, who project a great pleasure in performing and listening, and whose institutions seem to know how to provide a nurturing atmosphere. I see teachers who are curious and inventive. In short, I find in the Baltic

countries a firm conviction in the larger fundamental values that support good chamber music practice, and I am deeply moved by this. I feel very much at home there.

When I learn that your institutions are also in danger, that budgets are being reduced, that the place of musical education in each country is valued less and less, I feel rising up inside of me a tremendous indignation: how is it possible that these national treasures should be misunderstood? But even in the midst of these difficulties, the response of colleagues in Baltic countries demonstrates solidarity and strength of purpose that should serve as an example to all of our colleagues. Recent events at the Latvian Academy of Music are proof of this.

GM: What are your hopes for young chamber musicians?

ER: That they should understand that playing chamber music is really about much more than the music itself; chamber music is a way of listening, a way of working together, a way of life.

GM: What would be your wish for us - teachers?

ER: That you should also believe that teaching chamber music practice is about much more than the music itself. We must affirm and assert that what we are teaching are fundamental skills for the preservation of a certain kind of society, one that values the quality of human relations above all else.

GM: Thank you for this conversation!

CHAMBER MUSIC: PEDAGOGY and PSYCHOLOGY



JUNIO KIMANEN, pianist. Studied the piano at the Sibelius Academy, received his diploma in spring 1996 with excellent credit. Junio has completed his studies in Paris under Konstantin Bogino in 1991-95.

Junio Kimanen has performed both as a soloist and a chamber musician in Finland and abroad, as well as a part of a piano duo with Konstantin Bogino. He has appeared at several festivals playing with many of the top chamber musicians of our time. Teaches chamber music and piano at *Espoo and West Helsinki Music Institutes*. Kimanen's chamber music and piano students have both won many prizes in national and international competitions. He is also a board member of the Finnish Piano Teachers' association. Junio Kimanen has been the artistic director of *Kuhmo Chamber Music Courses* since year 2002, as well as one of the most active organizers and workshop leaders of the International Chamber Music Festival *FesTaRi*.

About chamber music skills

Versatile chamber music teaching gives students important skills both as musicians and human beings

Busy while giving advice about phrasing, balance, etc. we chamber music teachers sometimes forget how beneficial work we do. By simply teaching students to be better chamber musicians we actually help them building some essential qualities and skills both as musicians and individuals in general. Correspondingly, playing chamber music at a high level requires a wide range of important skills – on top of good instrumental abilities.

Without trying to give a lecture on how to teach such things I will give a short non-comprehensive list of the qualities that in my opinion will be improved by uncompromising chamber music training.

Instrumental abilities

A good chamber music player has to constantly challenge the limitations of his/her instrument. One could say that a good solo player does that too, but there is a small difference there. Chamber music is full of adaptive and imitating elements between different instruments. The varying timbres, ways of phrasing, articulation, musical breathing and even intonation between different instruments are interesting challenges to beat while trying to match one's way of playing to the others. This will result in wider range of musical expressions and more comprehensive tool box of technical skills. I have for example witnessed some nice improvements in pianists' legato playing and string players' bowing technique during chamber music sessions.

Listening in multiple levels

I have a sense that people's ability to listen has deteriorated in general. Our environment gets constantly more and more polluted by noise and on the other hand especially our western culture encourages individuals to bring themselves forth and trying to get others to pay more attention to them. Playing chamber music serves as a very good antidote for these tendencies.

In chamber music one has to be able to listen to every co-player separately, the ensemble in whole and his/her own playing, all simultaneously. When succeeded, this can open players' ears to for example harmony, polyphony and intonation in music like never before.



Piano duo (prof. Konstantin Bogino & Junio Kimanen) at Kuhmo Festival 2010

Multilayered communication

Elaborated chamber music playing is of course much more than just playing together. A truly interesting chamber music performance always involves communication between players. In order to achieve good musical communication skills one has to familiarize with the conversational nature of music and accordingly chamber music repertoire is probably the easiest way to cultivate that. However, as many of the solo pieces – especially in 18th century – contain elements of that same nature, we actually train something that is a basic attribute of music in general. I think we can find an analogical situation in theatre art: the conversational nature of performing is usually present both in monologues and dialogues.

In addition to musical communication chamber music training improves one's skills in cooperative work with other players. It's not self-evident that a group of excellent musicians can actually work well together. Too often I have seen frustratingly unproductive chamber music projects with some serious problems in communication between players. In an ideally creative and democratic ambience everyone suggests, questions and adapts to many different kind of ideas without meeting with any discouraging behavior.

Like in any musical performance, the chamber music ensemble interacts with the audience as well. Sometimes the ensemble does that as a whole and sometimes the individual players seem to do that separately. Again I find it reasonable to compare this with theatre: Acting in front of audience is a very different thing from doing it for a movie. The proportions of interaction between the players/actors and between players/actors and audience can change quite a lot depending on the performers' character, ensemble's character, the character of the piece of work and even audience's character, but it's obvious that all that should exist.

Tolerance against instability, learning reflexive and improvisatory actions

Uncertainty on stage is one of the biggest bugbears in musicians' life, no matter how young you are. Usually adding moving parts to a system increases its instability and I think chamber music playing makes no difference. Having more people to play together actually makes it

more difficult to perform perfectly – especially if we think that perfect means the same invariant way. However, both sharing the responsibility for a successful performance and the fact that such a successful performance will inevitably be different every time, most musicians feel psychologically easier to perform in an ensemble than doing it alone. The instable nature of chamber music performance calls yet for good skills in reflexive and even improvisatory actions. It's always necessary to agree on many interpretational aspects and practicing them well together, but without training (and teaching) one's awareness of what the other players are doing and how to react on unexpected ways of playing, we expose the players to risks that can harm their performance.



J. Kimanen and students:masterclasses at FESTARI Espoo 2009 and Rīga 2011

Sense of responsibility both in music and in projects

Reliability is one of the most important qualities for a good chamber musician. Like in all teamwork one should never leave his/her teammate in the lurch. On the contrary, in chamber music one should support the co-player as well as possible. Sometimes it means stepping aside, sometimes pushing, pulling, calming down or activating. A reliable teammate minds the others outside the concert hall too. He/she gives a high priority to the chamber music project, practices the parts well and arranges enough time for ensemble rehearsals. These are things that are hard to understand especially by children, but amazingly often by adults too.

Conclusions

Good communication skills, tolerance against instability, ability to act in a reflexive and improvisatory way, sense of responsibility, these are all highly respected qualities everywhere and in my experience most of the top chamber musicians actually have those skills both in music making and in everyday life. Numerous researches have been conducted about how studying music affects our individual capacity positively. Studying chamber music on top of that is an important supplement that surely gives us a good boost on our social capacity too. Playing chamber music is also one of the most efficient ways of learning as instrumentalist both during and after school years. Considering all this I sometimes wonder why chamber music is not supported better than it is now and why many music schools and universities still treat it with marginal importance.

While building up great performances is still the most important short term goal for us as chamber music teachers, we should however keep in our mind that there are no *shortcuts* in chamber music. We have to see things in wider perspective and at least try to help our students to build up the skills mentioned. All in all it warms my heart to realize that our work is not only about training better musicians but also giving students more universal abilities that they can benefit from for the rest of their lives.

OUR EXPERIENCE



Petras Kunca – Lithuanian violinist, member of the Board of ECMTA. In 1965 Kunca graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatory. He took further courses on violin and chamber music in Hungary (1968), Finland (1988), Spain (1992), Sweden (1998), Denmark (1999), Austria (2001). Awarded the National Prize of Lithuania (1979) and the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas. For 31 years he performed with the *Vilnius Quartet*; now – with String quartet *Akademia*. 1964-1974 prof. Kunca taught at the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art. Became a professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and 1996-2008 he was Head of Chamber Music Department. More than 200 chamber music students have graduated from prof. Petras Kunca class. Prof. Kunca – artistic director of International Chamber Music Camp in Biržai.

International Camp at the Lake Širvena – a child of ECMTA

The third International Creative educational camp "Let's make music together" was held in early September in Biržai municipality of Lithuania. This event since the beginning has been characterized by active cooperation between music schools of the Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia and, since 2013, Estonia. The camp unites educators – teachers of different genres of ensemble music of the countries in which the role of training in the chamber music is highly valued in creative development of the youth.

The idea to organize an educational camp in Biržai was born thanks to moral support of ECMTA – *European Chamber Music Teachers' Association*, founded in 2007 in Finland. Now the Association unites various European institutions related to chamber music from children's music schools, conservatories, music universities to various other associations and international festivals as well as individual members. Founder of the Biržai creative educational camp is the *Lithuanian Union of Musicians* (President – A. Zhigaitite-Nekroshiene) and *Biržai music school*, named after the famous composer Vladas Jakubėnas (Director – R. Zuozene, Deputy Director – R. Petronite). These two creative organizations are members of ECMTA. Participation in the International Association expanded opportunities to exchange information on pedagogy and concert activities of youth chamber ensembles in various European countries, including Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The geographical proximity of Biržai to Latvia helped to expand the creative contacts of music school with colleagues from different musical institutions of the neighbouring country: *Jazeps Medins 1st Music School of Riga*, Latvian Foundation "We play music with friends," *Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music*, since 2013 also with schools of Jelgava, Limbazi and Engure. This year the camp was joined by *H. Eller Tartu music school* (Estonia): that's how the dream came true in Biržai for the teachers of music schools, all of which are institutional members of ECMTA, to come together for the first time.



Creative atmosphere of the Camp helped the teachers and their prearranged ensembles early in the school year to believe in their talent, improve knowledge and develop stage skills for playing music together with others. This year the Camp differed with particular freedom of communication in workshops among ensemble members and their teachers. There was a live creative conversation, exchange of experience and repertoire. A lot of attention in the Camp was paid to the development of skill of ensemble members to listen to each other more closely while playing together and a deeper understanding of the score of the composition played. There were no language barriers in the Camp: Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, English, German and Russian flowed freely. Apparently, the creative atmosphere of the event has become quite constructive and attractive, as the number of participants increases every year. This year, the desire to play music together was expressed by more than 100 musicians playing the strings and wind-instruments, piano and harpsichord.

Without a doubt, the main purpose of the Camp is playing ensemble music. Empathy of the teacher, as well as his/her ability to communicate, to participate and to supervise the execution of the selected repertoire is very important in this case. This year 50 teachers were gathered by this aim – active participants from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Lithuanian schools are friends of Biržai creative educational camp: M.K.Čiurlionis National School of Arts, J.Naujalis Music Gymnasium, Kaunas 1st Music school, Vilnius Balys Dvarionas secondary music school, Vilnius Žirmūnai Music School, R. Liman Rokiškis Music School. This year they were joined by Birštonas School of Arts. 25 different ensembles performed in the concerts. Some of them were invited to perform at the concert on the occasion of the International Day of Music, organized by the Lithuanian Union of Musicians on October 1, at the Vilnius Town Hall.

Lectures by associate professor of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Dr. R. Vitkauskas, President of ECMTA, professor at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Dr. E. Rothstein, founder and head of the Latvian Foundation "We play music with friends", G. Melbarde, Director of H. Eller Tartu music school K. Leivategija, associate professor of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, A. Zhigaitite-Nekroshiene and prof. P. Kunca on informal education attracted attention and stirred debates. Apparently, it is worth to continue this innovation in the events of the next Camp in September 2014.

The above mentioned persons also organized master classes in improving the performance of ensemble and chamber music. They were joined by teachers – experts of the M.K.Čiurlionis National School of Arts R. Kalnenaite (cello), A.Ladiga (tuba), as well as a specialist in Baroque music, V. Norkunas (harpsichord).



It is worth mentioning the value of nature and history of Biržai that positively influence the atmosphere of the creative educational camp. The city is located on the bank of picturesque Lake Širvėna, near the old Biržai castle and Evangelical Reformed Church. Classical and popular music played with joy and dedication by the talented youth of the 3rd International creative camp sounded inside these majestic buildings. The attention of Biržai audience surpassed all expectations. It seemed that the blue sky, the summer sun and even the white swans in the lake accompanied the success of all these creative days.

Mayor of the Biržai, Madam I. Vyarzene left the following words in the booklet of 3rd creative educational camp: "In our turbulent and sometimes grey everyday life, events of such magnitude, organized by music schools, strengthen the spirit and give hope." Dr. E. Rothstein, president of ECMTA, sent the following e-mail from London: "Camp' concerts in Biržai Mayor's office as well as in the Castle and Evangelical Reformed Church were the implementation of a nice new idea. Theoretical lectures were of high quality. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to re-visit Biržai. The camp is expanding both in form and in content. We all felt that the enthusiasm of teachers and youth gathered here is growing. I am glad for the opportunity to be together with so many colleagues and to thank them for cooperation with ECMTA." He also expressed his thoughts on Biržai camp in his article posted on ECMTA website.

In conclusion, I would like to mention the high quality of professional training of ensembles from Latvian schools. Firstly, their performance stands out with the right balance of individual instrumental and ensemble training. It is gratifying that these performance qualities characterize not only ensembles of Jazeps Medins 1st Music School of Riga, but also the youth from music schools of Limbazi, Engure and Jelgava. Secondly, harmonious, natural performance of Latvian ensembles at Camp Biržai served as a good example for Lithuanian peers. Needless to say that the participation of Latvian youth as well as their peers from Estonia in next year's camp is highly desirable.

(Translated by *Innotesco*)

COLLEAGUES REFLECT



Normunds Dreģis, conductor,

Chairman of the LOA, conductor of the Latvian National Opera, artistic director of Jāzeps Mediņš Riga 1st Music School chamber orchestra *Armonico* (Riga, Latvia). Pedagogue and conductor of chamber orchestra in the Latvian International Young Musician's workshop (since 2004) in Ogre and Sigulda.

His academic degrees include the MA in Music (2003), BA in symphonic orchestra conducting with prof. Viesturs Gailis (1997) and BA in choir conducting with prof. Imants Kokars (1992); all awarded by Jāzeps Vītols Latvia Academy of Music.

The professional competence was upgraded by prof. Volker Wangenheim at the Cologne Music Academy, Germany, prof. Eri Klaas at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland and master classes with prof. Helmuth Rilling in Stuttgart, Germany.

N.Dreģis collaborated with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Liepāja Symphony Orchestra (Latvia), the New Rhine Chamber Orchestra (Cologne, Germany), South-Westphalen Philharmonie-Orchestra (Germany) and early music ensemble *Ludus* (Latvia). Conducted many recordings (*Ecumenic Christmas*, *Armonico*). Since 2012 the Youth chamber orchestra *Armonico* is a member of European Orchestra Federation (EOFed).

1st Festival of the newly formed Latvian Orchestra Association

The idea of bringing children's/youth symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, and string orchestras together under a single organization which would take the initiative to unify, facilitate, and develop creative activity of Latvian youth orchestras has been hovering in the air for years. After over ten years of experience in the area of music education and conducting of music high school as well as music & art school orchestras I had also come up with an idea to establish an association of orchestras that would bring together not only Latvian children's/youth but also amateur and semi-professional string orchestras, chamber orchestras, and symphony orchestras.

In early 2012 I was invited to participate in the 9th Festival of the European Orchestra Federation (EOFed) in Tallinn with *Armonico*, chamber orchestra of Jazeps Medins 1st Music School of Riga, as well as to conduct master class for joint orchestras at this international festival. EOFed has been organizing festivals and master classes for European youth, amateur, and semi-professional orchestras ever since 1988. I met a number of conductors, orchestra managers and representatives of numerous orchestra associations from different European countries at the festival with over 700 participants including 26 youth, amateur, and semi-professional orchestras from 13 European countries. We discussed and shared views on the music education system and the culture of orchestral performance in European countries. I also took part in the general assembly which discussed the importance of collective musical performance and EOFed's role in the creative activity of European orchestras. Daniel Kellerhals, President of the Federation, and Juri-Ruut Kangur (*Jüri-Ruut Kangur*), President of the Estonian Symphony Orchestra Association (ESOL), shared their organizational experience and encouraged me to take the initiative to establish an association of orchestras in Latvia. It gave me a push and convinced me even more that conductors of youth orchestras of Riga and all Latvian municipalities should be addressed and Articles of Association should be drawn up

as well as association of orchestras should be established in the near future. On October 24, 2012 the most active conductors of Latvian children's/youth symphony orchestras and chamber orchestras as well as representatives of orchestras and music school headmasters (altogether 18 founders) met in a general meeting and approved the Articles of Association as well as passed the decision to establish Latvian Orchestra Association (LOA).

Currently Latvian Orchestra Association brings together 26 orchestras (8 symphony orchestras, 16 chamber orchestras, and 2 string orchestras) from all over Latvia. Those are university, high school as well as music & art school orchestras from Riga, Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale, and Latgale. Aims of the association have been defined in several discussions and laid down in LOA's Articles of Association. Those are:

1. To facilitate and develop creative activity of Latvian children's/youth as well as amateur symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, and string orchestras in Latvia and abroad;
2. To facilitate establishment of new orchestras in Latvia;
3. To raise and maintain awareness of the importance of collective musical performance in Latvia and around the world;
4. To facilitate regional cultural politics and social integration processes in Latvia.

In order to facilitate creative cooperation between Latvian children's/youth symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, and string orchestras, ensure regular concert life, encourage creation of repertoire for youth orchestras as well as exchange of experience between orchestra managers and conductors, one of LOA's main tasks is to organize various culture events, including festivals, collaborative concerts, master classes, seminars, and creative camps.

I presented the concept of children's/youth symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra, and string orchestra festival as one of the tasks laid down in LOA's Articles of Association at LOA's general meeting on February 14. In the light of the international experience and my cooperation with European Orchestra Federation I wanted us – LOA to establish traditions and organize orchestra festival on a regular basis to make it an important part of the creative life of each and every orchestra as well as a significant culture event in Latvia.

LOA's founders include Composer Ilona Rupaine who is also Creative Head at the Embassy of Latgale GORS. She was an active participant in the implementation process of



LOA's festival idea and as a new acoustic concert hall had just recently become operational in Rezekne we decided that the 1st LOA festival would be organized in Latgale region at the new concert hall GORS. I am happy to say that it was the right choice as the first festival of the association took place at the best concert hall in Latvia with outstanding acoustics, modern design and conditions suitable for a great number of orchestras.

The 1st LOA's festival featured 19 orchestras (585 participants) from various Latvian towns and municipalities. Those were LOA's current children's/youth, amateur and semi-professional chamber orchestras and symphony orchestras from all Latvian regions. During the festival (between October 25 and 27) each orchestra was given a chance to perform in Latgale region (concerts were organized in Vilani, Ludza, Karsava) and at the opening concert of the festival at Rezekne concert hall GORS and also to perform together in one of the five joint orchestras at festival's master class.

Master classes for orchestras where professional and experienced conductors shared their knowledge of the understanding and interpretation of music played an important role. Joint orchestra master classes were lead by conductors: Martins Bergs (*Mārtiņš Bergs*), Guntars Bernats (*Guntars Bernāts*), Normunds Dregis, Andris Vecumnieks, and Boleslavs Volaks (*Boleslavs Voļaks*).

I believe that orchestra master classes have a significant impact on the creative growth of all orchestras and they facilitate creative cooperation between orchestras and conductors. They also make children/youth more interested in improving their playing technique of the chosen instrument and increase the prestige of collective musical performance as a study subject at school.



Due to the great number of participants at the 1st LOA festival each orchestra had a chance to perform a 15 minute long programme at the opening concert. Performances included Viennese classics, Western European and Russian romance as well as original pieces by contemporary composers and arrangements for various orchestras and also music from famous movies. Special focus was put on music by Latvian composers.

At the festival's opening and closing concert orchestras performed pieces by J. Vītols (*J. Vītols*), Jek. Medins (*Jēk. Mediņš*), J. Ivanovs, T. Kenins (*T. Ķeniņš*), S. Mence, D. Aperane (*D. Aperāne*), I. Arne, E. Esenvalds (*Ē. Ešenvalds*), A. Tumsevica (*A. Tumševica*), A. Veismane, I. Klingenberg, E. Vecumniece, L. Gustovska, P. Buravicka, A. Balodis, and E. Eglitis (*Ē. Eglītis*). The bright and expressive joint orchestra performance featured W.A. Mozart's Symphony No. 40 (Mvt. 1), L. van Beethoven's Symphony No.1 (Mvt. 1), J. Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 5, B. Britten's Musical Evenings, D. Shostakovich's Suite for Variety Orchestra, and A. Pjazzolla's Libertango.

As well as promising performances by young gifted solo artists: Alina Vizine (*Alīna Vižine*), Aleksandra Malishkina (*Aleksandra Mališkina*) /violin/, Julija Skipore (*Jūlija Skipore*), Mara Peiseniece (*Māra Peiseniece*) /accordion/, Paulina Pitenko (*Paulīna Piteņko*), Elvis Vizulis, Raivis Sieks /saxophone/, Elza Heinberga /piccolo/, Sandija Skribane (*Sandija*

Skribāne) /flute/, Kristine Kiete (*Kristīne Kiete*) /clarinet/, and Reinis Tomins (*Reinis Tomiņš*) /marimba/.

It was a truly special large-scope event in the life of every orchestra as well as one of the most important LOA's tasks for this year. I am happy to say that joint determined efforts resulted in bringing the idea of orchestra festival to life and I am especially happy about the fact that the festival took place at the new Rezekne concert hall GORS which is acoustically speaking justly considered to be one of the best concert halls in the Baltics. I am thankful to Diana Zirņina (*Diāna Zirņina*), Board Member of the Embassy of Latvia GORS, and Ilona Rupaine, Creative Head, for their responsiveness and creatively successful cooperation.

After discussions with colleagues and summarizing opinions I am happy to say that the 1st Latvian Orchestra Festival turned out to be a bright, musically colourful event which raised creative discussions, opened up new opportunities for cooperation and justified the usefulness of such festival and master classes in the future.

The 1st festival organized by the Latvian Orchestra Association in Rezekne serves as a starting point to LOA's creative organizational activity and completes the first task. Me and my colleagues Martins Berģs (*Mārtiņš Berģs*), Guntars Bernats, Aivars Broks, and Aivars Bunķis (*Aivars Bunķis*) analyzed the job done in the festival and discussed the tasks to be completed in the near future at the LOA's Board meeting. As soon as we summarize suggestions and proposals by all LOA members – conductors and creative heads we are determined to make plans for the 2nd LOA festival.

LOA has begun cooperation with the National Centre for Education (VISC) and at the moment we are working on developing a children's/youth symphony orchestra concert programme for XI Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Festival to take place in July 2015. VISC is planning to organize XI Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Festival modelling concert to take place on April 5, 2014 at the Large Guild. Considering our work and organizational experience at the 1st LOA festival we will develop the creative concept and organize 5 to 6 Latvian children's/youth joint symphony orchestras.

I wish all the colleagues, music teachers, and readers of the e-magazine the New Year 2014 to be full of creative ideas, positive emotions, successful cooperation and success.

I wish you happy holidays and best of luck in your everyday activities!

Translated by *Innotesco*

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