



# Newsletter

The Monthly Newsletter of *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts*

October 2016

## Does Practice Make Perfect?

I recently ran across a thought-provoking article in the “Time” magazine titled *Practice Doesn’t Make Perfect, Actually*, by D. Zachary Hambrick. According to this author, “some people are dramatically better at activities like sports, music and chess than other people.” Hambrick then poses the questions: “Are experts ‘born, endowed with a genetic advantage? Are they entirely ‘made’ through training? Or is there some of both?”

What seems to have inspired Mr. Hambrick to write this article is a new book titled *Peak: The New Science of Expertise* (by Anders Ericsson and Robert Poole) and the heated debates regarding talent versus hard work that ensued among renowned psychologists--including the father of Multiple Intelligences Theory, Howard Gardner. Mr. Ericsson claims that--with the exception of body size--people can overcome any “limiting factors” with proper and thorough training. Mr. Gardner disagrees: “Practice does indeed matter – a lot and in surprising ways. But it would be a logical error to infer from the importance of practice that talent is somehow irrelevant as if the two were in mutual opposition.”



So, scientists do seem to agree that with a lot of practice you can develop amazing skills. After many hours of hard work, you can become an expert in your field, achieve admirable dexterity, acquire razor-sharp decision-making abilities, etc. And I concur. Professional musicians, including myself, often practice 3-6 hours a day for many years to achieve the level of mastery needed to play some of the most challenging music written for their instrument. Talent also plays a huge part, but I wonder WHAT or WHO makes the “magic” happen? Or, what causes the so-called “light bulb” moments in science, for example? Some music performances are flawless but make us feel nothing inside. At the same time, a not-so-perfect performance by a child or a street performer, for example, can move us to tears. But a flawless performance combined with feelings can transform and move people in ways difficult to describe. There can be a million cellists in the world, but there is only one Yo-Yo Ma.

When a scientist makes a ground-breaking discovery, it certainly is a result of talent/intelligence combined with many hours of training, hard work, patience and passion. But so many talented and educated scientists still fail to find a cure for cancer, for example. What’s missing is the “light bulb moment,” a spark of inspiration or magic, if you will. It comes in when all of the above-mentioned factors work in harmony, allowing our unique personality/soul to produce something that generations will talk about. That spark is--in my opinion--neither talent nor training. It is impossible to measure, evaluate or replicate. Many top performers spend a lifetime chasing and capturing those perfect moments of inspiration and magic, and sometimes they succeed. Would they ever reach that elusive goal if training had not prepared them for success?

So, dear HAA community, what do YOU think? How much of what you do every day is a result of your hard work, and how much of it can be attributed to your natural ability, talent and moments of inexplicable inspiration? Mr. Ericsson says: “The most important gifts we can give our children are confidence in their ability to remake themselves again and again, and the tools with which to DO that job.” I could not agree more. We are honored that you have chosen HAA as an environment where your children can experience first-hand the spark of inspiration and discover their own unique personalities. Performing arts activities are not only immensely enjoyable. They also nurture creative thinkers with great problem-solving skills to lead more successful lives.

*Valentina Jovic*

## Highlights

**Introducing:  
ROCK Plus (2)**

**Faculty  
Achievements (2)**

**Pet of the Month:  
Gus Hughes (3)**

**Fall Referral  
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**Faculty Showcase:  
Brian Green,  
Guitar (3-4)**



**Hunterdon**  
ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

*Flemington & Lebanon*

Join

# ROCK Plus

The New Rock Band Program @ HAA!



## From Classic Rock to Pop to Your Original Songs!

Always wanted to play in a Rock Band? Calling on all Guitar, Bass, Drum, Voice, and Keyboard Lesson Students! Playing in a Rock Band is as exciting as ever! But to get the full experience, you need to develop some solid skills both on your instrument and as a band member. In ROCK Plus, you will get exactly what you need to succeed in a band: weekly one-on-one Music Lessons and Band Rehearsals. Your lesson teacher will prepare you for your weekly band rehearsals in your one-on-one lessons. When band members then come together for rehearsals, they can focus fully on bringing the music to life! ROCK Plus is a performance-based program intended for students who are committed to performing in public Bands will have frequent performances at HAA and in the local communities. Classes start Saturday October 29th!

### Available to Two Different Levels

“My First Rock Band” (Ages 7-9) rehearses for 1 ½ hours per week, and presents band performances at HAA. Must have had 6 months to a year of prior music lesson training. By audition.

“Rising Stars” (Teenagers) is the “professional track” of ROCK Plus. Bands have 3-hour weekly rehearsals and perform in Hunterdon and surrounding areas. Requires several years of prior music lesson training. By audition.

**Call (908) 782-4943 and Register by October 29 to Receive a \$25 Tuition Discount!**

[www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/ROCKPlus](http://www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/ROCKPlus)

## Save the Date!

Friday 10/7 *Jam Session*,  
7:15-8:15pm

Saturday 10/22, *Return of the  
Halloween Picture Day*

Saturday 10/29, *ROCK Plus  
starts!*

★HAPPY★  
BIRTHDAY!

## Birthdays in October

Dallas and Jacklyn Solimani; Nathan Diaz; Amelia Milza; Jack Suddeath-Almendinger; Sydney Whidbee; Eric Kafarski; Dylan Leiwant; Angela Grillo; Samantha Soybel; Gabriella Scarpelli; Alex Defreitas; Kylee Siebert; Grace Clifford; Priya Gupta; Jacqueline McBride; Luke Buza; Kyle Ur; Rick Bentley; Vivienne Graves; Aida Looft; Christine Donetz; Thomas Campbell; Hunter Lelli; Kallista Saam; Andrew Tota; Yashvi Sharma; Samantha Thompson; Matthew Hilke; Will Kwietniak; John Kasprzak; Abigail Morgan; Zachary Motovidlak; Tyler Apple; Devyn Wysocky; Amani Ashraf; Daniel DePinto; Luke Jenison; Aliya Khan; Anita LaBelle; Phillip LaBelle; Zachary Cheung

## Thank You for Your Referrals!

A BIG THANK YOU to several individuals, for referring their friends to *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts*! It's wonderful to have such strong supporters who spread the word about HAA in the Hunterdon community! We'd like to give a special shout out to:

**Gina DiPalermo, Jane Gallagher, Joseph Robben, Andrea Doyle, Lucas Santo, Rosemary Maravetz, Lada Contos, Brielle Esporin, Jan Coey, Sydney Atkinson, Andrew Needleman, Claudia Bigdelle THANK YOU!!!**

Thank You!

## Faculty Achievements

Mauricio de Souza: I'm extremely excited to announce the release of my new album, “Trajetórias”. The pre-release concert will be on Friday, September 30th at Galeria West in Westfield, NJ. I recorded a live concert with my Brazilian jazz group, Bossa Brasil®. The tracks feature my arrangements of compositions by Tom Jobim, Pat Metheny, Milton Nascimento, and Hermeto Pascoal. The group is a quintet with myself on drums, Dmitry Baeovsky on alto sax, Jerry Weir on vibraphone, Bob Rodriguez on keyboard, and Gary Mazaroppi on bass. The album will soon be available on iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, and most online music stores. For updates and more information, please visit my website at [www.mauriciodesouzajazz.com](http://www.mauriciodesouzajazz.com).

Violin and Viola Instructor Mialtin Zhezha recently performed at a wonderful outdoor festival with some big names of the classical music industry in Moab, Utah: [www.moabmusicfest.org](http://www.moabmusicfest.org)

Voice Instructor and Actress June Asai is featured in a new Amazon original series (with the actor from Police Academy, Steve Guttenberg) called “The Other F Word.”

## Pet of the Month: Gus Hughes

Congrats to Gus for winning the October Pet of the Month Award! His Dad, Jacob, tells us, "he is the definition of laid back. He loves nothing more than to sprawl out on the floor, belly in the sun. Though he does have a social side - he likes to try to jump up onto the table to be a part of whatever conversation is happening." AWWWWW

Don't despair if your pet isn't featured in this issue. We will keep all materials on file for future issues! Do you love your pet and can't wait to tell us all about him/her? Just visit [www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet](http://www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet) and fill out the form on that page! If we choose your pet as the next *Pet of the Month*, we will feature him in the upcoming issue of the *HAA Newsletter* and send you a **\$25 Gift Card!**



[www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet](http://www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet)

## Fall Referral Contest: Win a FREE Breville 800ESXL Espresso Machine on December 19!

This may well be one of the nicest holiday presents you've ever received--a beautiful Breville 800ESXL Espresso Machine! This highly rated gadget has lots of attractive features, including:

- 15 Bar Italian Pump
- Purge Function: Automatically adjusts water temperature after steam for optimal espresso extraction temperature
- The Triple Prime Pump releases 3 bursts of hot water to moisten the ground coffee resulting in greater build-up to extract the fullest flavor
- Thermoblock Heating System
- 75 Fl.oz (2.2L) removable front-fill water tank
- Espresso machine with ThermoBlock heating system and 15-bar Triple Prime pump
- Durable stainless-steel housing; selector dial for espresso, steam, or hot water
- 4-1/2-inch cup clearance; swivel steam wand with frother; 75-ounce removable water tank
- Filters, tamping tool, cleaning tool, and stainless-steel frothing pitcher included
- Measures 12 by 10 by 12-1/2 inches; 1-year warranty



## A Value of \$323!

### Referrals Are a Win-Win, Each and Every Time

To enter the Fall Raffle for this amazing prize, just refer your friends to HAA! It's easy! As a sign of our appreciation, we are rewarding **both you and your friend with a \$25 check** when s/he enrolls in our programs!

[www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/Referrals](http://www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/Referrals)

## Faculty Showcase: Brian Green, Guitar

This month, we are spotlighting Brian Green, one of our most successful Guitar Teachers. We're fortunate for having Brian on board, and can't wait to share with you the interview we had with him.

**When did you start playing music and what inspired you to get started?** My parents always had music playing, many different genres. I've always felt deeply about sounds that I would hear in music, and lyrical meaning through melody impacted me a lot. I began playing music around age 10 when my parents had me take piano lessons. I remember doing well but not being very interested in practicing at the time. I think the lessons only lasted a couple of years. I did much better when, as a teenager, I joined bands and was learning on my own. It was later in my adulthood that I really began to take music seriously enough to formally study it and try to better my understanding of music. I've always been inspired by the creative element of music and music's ability to change us.

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*Award-winning Hunterdon Academy of the Arts has campus locations in Flemington (NJ) and Lebanon (NJ). Founded in 1981, we are the largest performing arts school in Hunterdon, serving students of all ages and levels of ability. The school is particularly well known for its high-quality Music lessons and classes, but has more recently added Acting instruction to its services.*



## Faculty Showcase (continued)

**Why did you choose guitar as your instrument, and what is special about it (in your opinion)?** I love the diversity of sound that guitars can produce, from the intimacy of playing solo arrangements and chordal melodies to playing electric guitar through a pedal board and creating interesting effects. I like the challenge that it has to offer, particularly in terms of blending chord harmonies and single note melodies.

**You have your own band. Can you tell our readers more about it (what kind of music do you perform, etc.)?** I've recently been performing in two bands, The Poet, Ebenezer and Sourland. Both of these bands fall into the indie rock genre. Currently, Sourland is the band I am performing more consistently with, playing gigs in Lambertville, New Hope, and various other Hunterdon County venues.

**You are very successful as a teacher and you have a very high student retention rate. What is your secret?** Every student is different and learns differently. My goal as a teacher is to help my students become the best musicians they can be and to be sensitive to each student's needs. I seek to foster a positive experience in the classroom and help to guide them in their own personal, musical journey. I also feel that vulnerability as a teacher is important, and also to allow myself to be taught by my students. There are so many things that students are trying to understand that they inevitably ask questions, or bring up certain ideas that really cause me to think hard and learn. A bass guitar teacher that I had for a while told me that "if you teach once, you learn twice..." As a teacher I also have to remain a student and I think that is reflected onto my students and hopefully inspires them to continue studying and learning, and most importantly to enjoy playing music, because that is what it is all about.

**What do you enjoy about being part of the Hunterdon Academy of the Arts community?** Hunterdon Academy of the Arts has been a fantastic community to be part of. Everyone is friendly and attentive to both students and teachers.

**Other than music, what are your interests and hobbies?** I love surfing, reading, riding my bike, walking in cities, drawing and painting, and going to art galleries, and hanging out with artists and musicians.

