



# Newsletter

The Monthly Newsletter of *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts*

**May 2017**

## The Love-Hate Recital Relationship

I sometimes hear people say that “Recitals can be long/boring and difficult to listen to”. But many others also tell me that they love Music Recitals and look forward to hearing the progress students made. It may be challenging to set aside time on a busy day (or a busy weekend) to sit for an hour or more and appreciate what’s happening in a performance hall. There’s SO MUCH else going on in our lives, right? Sports events to get to, house projects to complete, vacations to plan, or to just relax and do nothing for a change.

So, what makes the recital experience enjoyable for one person and difficult for another? Could it be about how they approach the event? I’ve been thinking about this, and what I do know is what makes them enjoyable for me. Since I usually listen to all the scheduled HAA recitals, I am often at the Stanton Reformed Church (where we’ve been holding these recitals) from 9 am till 9 pm. It IS a long day, but by the end of the day I’m tired NOT because I listened to a lot of music but because my back hurts!

I’ve decided to share a few - and I hope, useful - tips for those of you who would like to enjoy a deeper and more meaningful experience while at a recital:

- Focus on the person performing, not on the right or wrong notes played. Appreciate the performer’s effort and the courage they are showing by sharing what they’ve learned.
- Recitals are important to your child, grandchild, sibling, friend or family member. Just keep that in mind and be supportive.
- Observe the body language of the person performing. Try to experience the emotions the performer is trying to convey.
- Imagine yourself on stage. How would you feel? Is the applause comfortable, is the silence tense? Then help the performer by being supportive, warm and pleasant. It really helps to see a smiley face in the audience!
- Understand that there is an exchange of energy when people perform for you. It’s not just about being entertained - it’s about receiving the energy of the person playing for you and it’s about giving back to that person - in attention, appreciation, applause and mental support.
- Stay through the very end of the recital. All the performers will appreciate it.
- Lastly, when leaving the recital, try to remember the names, faces and performances of individual students and acknowledge their progress whenever possible. A “well done!” goes a long way.

HAA’s summer recital season is approaching fast and the dates are already set for June 10 and 17. Stay tuned for the detailed schedule. I look forward to seeing you and hearing many of our students play!

## Highlights

**May Student Birthdays (2)**

**Student Achievements (2)**

**HAA Wins “Top Music Program” Award (2)**

**Pet of the Month: Pearl “Cheeky” Levine (2)**

**Faculty Showcase: David Beck, Piano (3)**

**Spring Referral Contest: Beneduce Winery (4)**



**Flemington & Lebanon**

## 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 the **Berardi Family, Paula Papazian, Sydney Atkinson, Dorothy Coppetto, THANK YOU!!!**

## May Student Birthdays

Daveigh Costine, Alison Naples, Samuel Sherwood, JJ Evans, Vikram Samanthapudi, Sid Narla, Christophner Schneider, Michael Zhang, Ryan Harkins, Lilian Swingle, Natasha Hoffman, Eileen Apruzzese, Gavin Lefebvre, Jakub (Kubi) Vogel, Angela Luo, Victoria Krok, Mary Petronko, Mauricio Hallock, Sam Swartwood, Madelyn Swingle, Deborah Burns, Lila Mortensen, Bella Pizzone, Arianna Bellotti, Clemente Brogca, Layla LoPrimo, Alexandra Ottenstoer, Evan Lijo, Sierra Squire, William Clarke, Natalie DiStefano, Brandon Forleo, Jimmy Benson, Emma Lentine, Avery Messinger, Liam Byne, Madalyn Arcurio, Julia Maravetz, Poppy Opdyke, Chris Serrao, Brandon Todd, Christopher Doyle, Maya Chernick, Natalie Mason, Micah Constantakis, Kyle Chauvette, Brianna Fragner, Peyton Fragner

## Student Achievements

Victoria Coey won *The Hunterdon County Young Composer's Contest (Grades 6-8)*! She will be performing her original piano composition on Saturday, May 27th at *The Raritan River Music Festival*. Congratulations, Victoria!

## HAA Wins Hunterdon's "Top Music Program" Award - Again!

We're so thrilled to let you know that Hunterdon Academy of the Arts won the 2017 "Top Music Program" Award of the Hunterdon Happenings List! It's the second year in a row that we've been honored to receive this coveted prize. MANY THANKS for your continued support; we could not have achieved this without you.

## Pet of the Month: Pearl "Cheeky" Levine

Congrats to Pearl for winning the May Pet of the Month Award! Cheeky is 2 years old and her sisters Emma and Hannah tell us, "[Cheeky] is soft, cuddly and fun to play with. She loves chasing deer, playing tug of war and eating off the counter. She really loves peanut butter and also loves to chew shoes and underwear!"

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**!



## Save the Date!

**Friday 5/5, Beneduce Vineyards  
Performance 6-8pm  
(rain date 5/26)**

**Friday 5/5 Jam Session  
7:15-8:15pm**

**Friday 5/12 Acting Class  
Performance at the Courthouse**

**Friday 5/19 Acting Out  
7:15-8:15pm**



## May Faculty Showcase: David Beck, Piano

**You teach piano at HAA and teach over 50 students. How does it feel to work with so many different personalities, age groups and learning styles?** I love it. It is always challenging, new and different. I enjoy getting to know so many different people! It has taught me to be a better listener, more patient, and empathetic towards dispositions so different than my own. It's cliché, perhaps, but my students have taught me even as I teach them. Working one on one with any person results in more and more layers of personality being uncovered and discovering music that fits is always an adventure. So I have now developed a thorough knowledge of music from Disney, video games, k-pop, rock n roll, anime, and it's all good music that I've never heard of before! I try to customize everything possible for each student, so I am always excited when they come into my lesson and say "Can we learn this? This is my favorite song!"

**You are a classically trained pianist, but your musical interests are very diverse. Your students also play a wide variety of musical genres. How do you decide what music to assign to each student?** Trial and error. My philosophy is: "If you like it, let's do it! And if you don't, there are thousands of great songs out there just waiting for you." I will ask them what they like to listen to or video games they play or movies they like. Then I will play examples of every genre I can think of, give them listening homework, and introduce them to the music I love so much. Many times the student doesn't even know what they like, so together we explore what's out there and I feel like a guide just ushering them through as many doors as I can on their journey to discover themselves. Once they find it? Wow! It's an experience like no other watching the sudden blossoming of insight and revelation in another human being!

**What is the most difficult part of being a piano teacher (for you)?** Countering the misconception in society that music doesn't deserve the same work ethic, pride, and discipline as other activities or studies. I am constantly looking for new ways of helping each student come in from their busy lives and fall in love with music all over again! They are all so busy already and my 30 minutes with them feels so brief in comparison with all the other stresses put on them. Creating a place where learning happens while also being a safe place to de-stress and enjoy the power of music at your fingertips is incredibly challenging. I spend more time thinking about my students outside of work than anything else in my life, digging through music archives and perusing libraries looking for more and more pieces.

**What is the most exciting part of being a piano teacher?** This answer is two parts. 1: Seeing each student experience the joy of playing, especially as a result of their own hard work and dedication. That's an experience that I cannot just make happen, but I love to inspire and motivate them towards that incredibly fulfilling destination. 2: Customizing music for each student! I have many students who want to play music that hasn't been written for piano, or is too challenging for them. So I re-arrange these pieces of music myself to fit the student's strengths, weaknesses, hand size, and abilities while maintaining a lot of challenging aspects. If a student loves what they are learning, then they can learn anything.

**What do you enjoy about being part of the *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts* community?** The team atmosphere. I respect every one of my colleagues as professionals, but have also become great friends with many of them. It has never been easy to make a living in music, but together we succeed because we share a common goal and enthusiastically strive together to support each other. Whether feast or famine we're akin to a family, bonded in our love for music and the desire to share that music with the world.





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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.*



## **Spring Referral Contest: Win a FREE Date Night Basket by Beneduce Vineyards!**

- Mixed Case of Beneduce Vineyards Wine (12 bottles. Retail around \$250)
- Private Tour and Barrel Tasting by Winemaker/Sommelier Mike Beneduce
- Two Group Therapy Vouchers (live music every Saturday evening from 6-9pm)
- Two Etched Logo Glasses

**(Winner MUST be 21 to claim prize)**

## **A Value of \$299!**

### **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! Refer as many friends as you like!



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