



upbeat

Notes from the Concord Conservatory of Music

FALL 2019

The Journey is the Goal

Learning to play music is like going on a run and the techniques you develop are like your sneakers. Most people wear shoes when they run, but they don't go on a run for the sake of their shoes. They use the shoes in order to enjoy the run more and be able to run better. CCM faculty Ian Goldstein explains how at the Concord Conservatory of Music it's "not about the technique for technique's sake, no one will enjoy that journey." Instead, techniques are seen as tools, which while necessary to learn, are accessories to the learning journey rather than goals themselves.

CCM is committed to doing everything possible to help our students succeed. "The instructor's job is to stoke the fire of that joy from week to week and to encourage passion. Rather than small technical aspects as goals, the emphasis should be helping students find joy in developing those techniques," says Goldstein. Our students strive for excellence not because they need to, but because they want to, and our faculty teach them the skills they need along the way.

There are systems in place so that students continue to progress technically, but the focus is first and foremost on making sure each

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Letter from the director:

WHAT DOES MUSIC MEAN TO YOU?

We all have that one song that gives us visceral nostalgia for our college years or calls forth all our happiest memories of family and friends as we rock out in the car. For some, music is background noise, and to others an artistic outlet, but it means something to everyone.

A few years ago, I joined the students of CCM in learning a new instrument. I chose the mandolin because we were starting our American Roots program and I wanted to experience the opportunity to again play in a group once I had reached that level. In picking up an instrument again, I found myself reflecting on all the ways music plays a role in my life and all the ways my life is better for it. For me, music is a passion. I love the pieces I play, and the people I get to play with, and every moment when I find myself struggling to learn something new and then finally succeed. However, music isn't just about performing. It's about listening with an attentive ear and considering each note and dynamic as both the composer and performer share it. It's about understanding and speaking in a language fully open to each individual's interpretation. Most of all, for me music means joyfulness. It means developing a passion and letting that passion grow and carry you for years and years to come.

Sometimes it is important to remind ourselves of the reasons we do things. When I speak to the parents of a prospective student, I always ask them why they want their child to study music and precisely why that instrument. My hope is always that they want their child to experience the "joy" of learning a new language, music, and developing a lifelong passion. Learning music should never be just another item on the bucket list. It can be so much more than that. So as we make our way into the new semester, I ask every student, faculty, and community-member to consider: what does music mean to you?



Kate Yoder, CCM Executive Director
and Founder

musician is following their passion. In the first week of Fall lessons, instructors work with their students to complete a goal sheet for techniques they will learn and practice throughout the semester. Faculty can then integrate these skills—vibrato, scales, or anything else—into everyday lessons wherever it makes sense. As a result of this planning at the beginning of a semester, students can focus more on what interests them and worry less about the minutiae.

“The instructor’s job is to stoke the fire of that joy from week to week and to encourage passion”

Students put in a lot of hard work challenging themselves to improve each and every week, and so it’s important for them to understand the progress they are making in order to stay motivated. Faculty write progress reports every December and May to explain to their students exactly where they have excelled and where they will be continuing to work. Additionally, after every performance, instructors sit down with their students to review what went well and what can be improved. This is a chance for students to receive constructive feedback from real performing experiences.

As the famous tennis player Arthur Ashe once said, “success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.” Learning music is a challenging journey, and it’s important to find motivation in the right things. Goldstein summarizes the rewards of learning music simply; “The reward is in making a joyful noise and finding joy in the noise we make.” 🎵



Chieko Loy

LEARNING FROM & SHARING HER LIFE EXPERIENCES

Every year, dozens of new students join the CCM community on the long path to becoming a musician. The amazing faculty at CCM not only guide our students through the trials of learning but also represent the possibility of what can be gained with years of dedication and enthusiasm. CCM piano faculty and long-time music instructor Chieko Loy is a brilliant example of what a commitment to music can achieve.

As a child growing up in Yokohama, Japan, Loy loved to sing, but she remembers how difficult some aspects of music came to her:

"In seventh or eighth grade, I flunked music theory. It was tedious, and you have to take a step-by-step approach. You can't just jump right in. However, now I can tell my students, 'I flunked that class but learned it in the end, and so now you can learn it too.'" There were several incidences from her childhood

that Loy says lets her empathize with the fears and struggles her students face every day, especially when it comes to performing on stage. Loy recalls a time in elementary school when she was chosen to sing in front of her class of more than 60 people, "I goofed, forgot all the words...and it was no big thing over the course of a long musical career, but I still remember it."

Loy started teaching when she began college at the age of eighteen, first with just a few neighborhood kids and friends of her mother. She entered college as a pianist but had long wanted to sing. "The musical 'West Side Story' came, and I just fell in love. I wanted to be a singer after that," says Loy. She went to a voice professor and asked to take one of their classes. Loy ended up switching her major to voice and in turn, received both her Bachelor of Music degree from the Senzoku Academy of Music and later her Masters in Music from the University of Tulsa for voice.



Loy explained that as a voice student she still needed to learn piano as a part of her studies; "The piano majors weren't required to learn a second instrument, but all other majors had to learn piano. It was because the intervals and intonation were so easy to see and understand on the piano. It helped to teach music theory."

After leaving Japan, Loy taught in India, and then Hong Kong, and finally ended up in Oklahoma where she went back to school to study for her Masters. Loy recalled how there was only one other student who was also a mother trying to get a degree and raise her children at the same time. Loy explained how it was challenging to find time for her children and also take classes, but she was determined to succeed.

Loy has now been teaching for just over half a century and says her teaching style has changed over that time and advanced to serve her students better. She says that for each new student she asks herself, "Oh, I've never had this kind of kid before, so how should I approach [teaching them]?" Loy wants to stress the importance of her students following what they are interested in, because if they are interested then they will be motivated to put in the required effort. She says, "I can push my students, but in the end it is up to them."

Loy explained how parents are also an essential part of the equation for success. She says that as an instructor, "I can teach music. You don't ask me to teach math or science, because that's not what I teach." Loy explains that it is the teacher's job to teach and to criticize, and the parent's responsibility to provide the love and support necessary for a student to face the challenges and frustrations that come with learning. "There's no quick fix for anything. If there are wrong notes or wrong fingers, it can take years...so the parents must step back and give the instructor the time to work." She says, "It can be difficult to accept criticism or corrections, but students must know that their playing is not their character. If I correct your fingers, I'm not saying you are a bad person."

Loy has taught at CCM since its founding fourteen years ago, and in that time has proven to be a valued and well-loved member of the faculty. Whether singing along to her student's playing or explaining the ins and outs of music theory, Chieko Loy brings her lifetime of experience and shares it all with her students so that they can learn and follow their passions as well. 🎵



2019 – Making a Difference

This year CCM offered many opportunities for the greater community to come together and enjoy music. In March we presented a family concert, featuring the Grammy-winning Okee Dokee Brothers to their local super fans and many that traveled from across New England. As a cultural institution in Concord, CCM was proud to open our doors and host the final day of West Concord's ArtWeek with our Bluegrass Band Scramble and the unveiling of the Cultural District's Art Scramble. CCM continues to broaden our offerings, this year

with our new Singing with Parkinson's Chorus for those living with the disease and their family members.

CCM is making a lasting impact on the lives of individual students and families and enriching our community's engagement with music. Thanks to this support, we are able to strengthen current programs, offer more scholarships, and develop new events and course offerings that are accessible to the community.

Devotee Circle

\$10,000 – \$19,999

Peter and Sarah Blum
Frances Friedman
Douglas and Katherine Yoder

Virtuoso Circle

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Anonymous (2)
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\$250 – \$499

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THANK YOU

Thank you to the generous individuals, companies, and foundations whose financial donations to our Annual Fund, Winter Party, and Financial Assistance Fund play a crucial role in allowing CCM to serve our community.

Gifts received September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019



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The mission of the Concord Conservatory of Music is to foster a sense of community through music by providing accessible, high-quality music education and performance opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels.

Located in the West Concord Union Church, our offerings include group classes, workshops, private lessons, and jam sessions for children and adults, from beginners to advanced. We also host a Faculty Concert Series featuring CCM Faculty and local and nationally acclaimed artists.

We welcome you to explore our programs online at www.ConcordConservatory.org, or give us a call at (978) 369-0010

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