

## OPUS | MAY 2018



The Concord Conservatory of Music

[www.concordconservatory.org](http://www.concordconservatory.org)

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### News at CCM



## May Recitals

**Saturday, May 12 at 1:00 (All School Concert), 2:30 and 4:00 pm**

**Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**

**Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00, 2:30 and 4:00 pm (MAP celebration)**

**Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm**

**“American Originals” at the CCM All School Concert** CCM students will showcase their ensemble experience at the **All School Concert on May 12<sup>th</sup>**. Students will share the stage with their peers and perform in large ensembles, duets, and even family bands.

The 1:00 and 2:30 pm concerts will feature songs written and performed by American artists. Please join us to hear the string ensembles, rock bands, saxophone ensemble, and vocal groups, and much more.

## **CCM Second Saturday Bluegrass Jam with BBU: May 12th**

Join the [Second Saturday Bluegrass Jam](#) at CCM from 7:00 – 9:30 pm on May 12th. Our monthly jam, co-sponsored by the Boston Bluegrass Union, is open to all ages and bluegrass

instruments for advanced beginner musicians and above. The fee is \$5 payable at the door. **The jams will take place at CCM through June 2018.**

Summer strumming—**Guitar Workshops** to elevate your playing!



This summer CCM is offering a variety of guitar workshops for both kids and adults. [See workshop details and register online. Space is limited.>>](#)

**Are you a CCM friend yet?** Join us on [Facebook](#) to hear the **Tune of the Week** and be the first to hear CCM news and more! See what music videos we like, photos we post, practice tips and articles we suggest, and discover what's new in the music world. Join us on [Facebook](#).

**Learning Guitar with Others - Not Online**





The dynamics of a guitar group class allow students to learn from their peers as well as their instructors. If you were asked to name the instrument that produces the best social experience—it just might be the guitar. It’s the instrument of choice for the group beach setting and certainly at those summer campfires. A group class offers a dedicated time set aside to get more comfortable with your instrument and allows you to become a more confident musician.

Ian Goldstein, CCM faculty and instructor for the [All Together Now](#) summer guitar classes, says that learning in a group is such a supportive environment and the group quickly becomes a unit—even if doing it for a month. He says that the group bonds and the social aspect of a class should not be underplayed. People with like interests get together, and it doesn’t matter if they are playing at various levels. Especially for adult classes. Ian points out that adults don’t usually find the time for “play” and a group music class becomes such a

joyful experience where learning isn't work. It's just a natural and organic experience where adults support one another. Ian exclaims that "We (adults) don't get enough opportunities for social situations that we call play. For a group class the reward is more play!"

Björn Wennås, CCM faculty, and instructor for the Summer Guitar Workshop for young students appreciate the camaraderie and the opportunity to learn from one another in a group class. He says, "It lends itself to get excited about all things guitar." From an early age, Björn enjoyed playing with a group and now continues his excitement with his world-renown group Newpoli.

### **Benefits of learning in a group**

In a group class, everyone is a contributor, and inevitably one learns from his or her peers no matter what age. A group class naturally lends itself to fun social time. Ian has noticed that no special effort is required to create group camaraderie; it comes naturally when playing a piece together. Ian says, "Playing together is one big trust fall. Especially in adult group classes where adults are all vulnerable and learn from one another."

When Ian learned guitar as a teenager, his motivation to get better was that he wanted to catch up to the kids who were already playing better than him. He played other instruments first and felt he needed to work harder to catch up to his friends' playing abilities. A friendly competition of who can learn a piece first became a motivator. He's not sure he would have kept with it if he played in isolation. He enjoyed the competitiveness and playing with friends. Ian says, "Playing in a social group, that's where the magic is! The sound we make as a group—there's power in that."

Björn's response was similar when reminiscing about attending his first group class. Björn says, "All of a sudden, I had friends to compare myself with. I wanted to do what she is doing; I wanted to learn the song he can play." Playing together and a little friendly competition can elevate one's playing.

Learning in a group is also the ideal time to try playing various genres. Björn says, "Almost all genres have their idiomatic ways of approaching the instruments—derived from tradition and influential players." This is something unique to explore together in a group. Playing in a group can push you to go beyond your comfort zone and explore genres you might have avoided otherwise.

## **Favorite summer guitar playing**

Ask most guitar players what their favorite summer experience was and inevitably it's playing with friends. Imagine a 3-day giant sing-along with your extended family in sunny Sonoma, California, and singing and playing around the campfire. That's one of Ian's fondest memories—it was for his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Björn's most memorable moment came when he was at summer camp playing together with friends. It seems that summertime playing in groups produces incredibly memorable moments.

Eventually drawn to the guitar, both Ian and Björn started with other instruments. We are not saying to abandon your other instruments, but maybe it's time to try the guitar too. *We encourage everyone to grab their guitar this summer, gather your friends, choose your perfect scenery, and just play.*

## Alexander Technique—Why play in pain?



Practice makes perfect, right? What happens, though, if we are playing an instrument, walking, jogging, singing, or making any other physical movement while tensing our muscles and holding our neck stiffly? Repeatedly. In the 1890's, an Australian actor Frederick Matthias Alexander developed a technique that is still used today in helping musicians and others rid themselves of the pain they get while taking part in a specific activity. His technique is all about “how to properly coordinate body and mind to release harmful tension and to improve posture, coordination and general health” (*Medicine.net*).

Practicing an instrument in conjunction with trying to achieve perfection can cause unnatural stress on our bodies.

Apparently, it is easy to learn unhealthy habits and can even cause what is known as Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). Whether we are speaking of musicians, actors, or athletes, if we are doing a repetitive activity but compressing our neck and back or tensing our shoulders, we are causing ourselves undue pain. Consequently, this can affect performance as well as one's quality of life.

Alexander was experiencing chronic laryngitis while performing and realized that muscular tension was to blame—he set out to learn how to breathe correctly. Our bodies, including how we see, move, and sit, can create stressful situations and alter how we feel. Practicing to perfect a musical piece or prepare for a performance can cause anxiety and strain, which inevitably affects our bodies. The technique helps one learn how to recognize these stressors, how to sit, stand, and even breathe correctly to create your body's natural state.

Additional reading on the Alexander Technique:

*"Musicians and the Alexander Technique"*

Elements of Alexander Technique: discovering a natural approach to string playing

### **Did you know...**

Soothing lullabies live foot-tapping music, smooth jazz—how do they all affect the brain and socialization?

From lullabies to live concerts: How music and rhythm shape our social brains

### **Upcoming Area Performances**

#### **Pink Martini at Berklee Performance Center**

Two performances: Thursday, May 17 and Friday, May 18 at 8 pm

136 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston

With a repertoire that crosses genres of classical, jazz and golden-era pop music, Pink Martini draws inspiration from music from all over the world and performs in 22 languages.



Admission: \$40 / \$52 / \$65 / \$79

**For tickets>>** <https://www.berklee.edu/BPC/calendar>

**Sunday Concert Series Ravinia's Steans Music Institute**

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm, Calderwood Hall at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Miriam Fried on violin, Zhanbo Zheng on viola, Maria Ioudenitch on violin, Zoë Martin-Doike on viola and Zlatomir Fung on cello will perform Mendelssohn, String Quintet No. 1 in A Major, Op. 18 and Beethoven, String Quartet No. 13 in B flat Major, Op. 130

For tickets: \$12 - \$36

<https://www.gardnermuseum.org/calendar/event/ravinias-20180513>