
NATscape

The Newsletter of
NATS Ontario Chapter

December 2005

FROM THE PRESIDENT - Lynn Blaser

Passing the hats

The time has come when, according to the Chapter bylaws, I can no longer hold any Executive office in NATS Ontario so this will be my last message wearing the President's hat. It has been my privilege to serve as President and Vice President of Membership through 3 elections. I have also been Coordinator of the Student Auditions for 8 of the last 9 events. I am delighted that **Michelyn Wright** will now take over the Auditions for November 2006 and I know you will give her your help and support. Another hat passed on.

When I began, there were only general guidelines for the Auditions and I sent endless questions to my very patient predecessor, **Leslie Jost**, about how things should be done. This year, I have written a document on to "**How to do the Auditions**" that I hope will serve as a framework to build on for the future. Not rules, just my experiences from having put the Auditions on computer and made them easier to manage, even though the numbers of singers and teachers have doubled.

I have to say that I would never have learned so many computer programs and skills, had it not been for the Auditions. For that reason alone, I am grateful to have been involved. But I have also had a wonderful time meeting and working with so many of the NATS Ontario members and watching their students progress from beginners or undergraduates to young professionals. We will hear many of them at the District NATSAA in April. This has been so very exciting!

I had a couple of intentions as President. One was to spread NATS activities around to more

institutions and locations. In addition to the Universities of Toronto and Western Ontario who have traditionally hosted our Student Auditions, we have had events at Wilfrid Laurier University, the Royal Conservatory and soon, at York University. I hope that, as more music facilities are built at other universities, we can hold the Student Auditions in other locations.

I also wanted to access the expertise and experience of our membership and share that in workshops that would be of help to teachers in preparing their students. So there have been workshops on French Mélodie (**Ginette Duplessis**), Lieder style and language (**Daniel Lichti**), Vocal Health (**Mary Enid Haines**) & her colleagues) & and Approaching Modern Opera and Song (**Wayne Strongman** & **Christopher Foley**) among others.

I must give credit to **Michelyn Wright** and **Christopher Foley** for initiating and organizing the very successful "**Making the Cut**" workshops to help voice students learn about the many post-secondary programs available in Ontario. The large attendance of singers and parents indicates their value and that they are appreciated.

Last spring, we took on the Ontario section of the **Rozsa Competition** and sent 2 singers as Ontario representatives to the Finals in Calgary. With the cooperation of then District Governor, **Darryl Edwards**, we managed to have the event pay for itself and were able donate the surplus of about \$500 towards the cost of travel for one of the singers. (ORMTA paid for the other singer). This is something I believe we should do again as it helps further our connections with voice teachers across Canada

So I thank you for the opportunity of working for NATS Ontario and its members and students and I look forward very much to attending

the next Student Auditions as a member and wearing only my last hat as District Governor.

SPRING GENERAL MEETING

The **Spring General Meeting and Election** will be held on March 12, 2006 – a Sunday afternoon – at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Information on the exact time and location will sent out early in 2006. Following the meeting, **Dr. Darryl Edwards** will present a workshop with a provocative and fascinating title:

Musical Flares:

Igniting your Musical Best

This workshop for singers and voice teachers will introduce **new approaches** and **refresh favourite techniques, interventions** and **resources** for your most **ideal music preparation and performing**. It will include such topics as:

- **Lesson patterns:** flexible formats
- Building on a variety of **teaching styles**
- Techniques for serving different **learning styles**
- Strategies for effective **practicing** and **memorization**
- Creating **optimal performances**
- Easily **using technology** in your voice studio and practice room
- New **resources** for voice teaching
- **Idea-Mia!** Exchanging your own ideas for successful learning and performing

Encourage your students to attend with you for this adventure into learning.

.....

FROM THE DISTRICT GOVERNOR – Lynn Blaser

The deadline for the **NATSAA Competition** has now passed. I received a number of inquiries about the **Ontario District Round** which will take place on **April 8, 2006** at the newly-opened **Accolade Recital Hall at York University**. Rehearsals will be on April 7. The **NATSAA Coordinator** will inform me of how many entrants will be singing in Toronto. The number of singers that Ontario District can send onward to Great Lakes Regional will be based on the number of competitors who **actually sing** on April 8. The

more entrants we have, the more Regional Finalists we can send forward to the **Great Lakes Regional** round of **NATSAA** on **Sat. April 22** at Albion College in Wesley Chapel in Albion, Michigan. http://www.albion.edu/ac_map/ Let's hope a lot of singers entered.

NATS endeavours to find **judges** “of the highest caliber” at all levels of **NATSAA**. I would welcome your suggestions of suitable names for the Ontario District Round. They should not have worked with any of the singers in the District Round in the recent past.

I have been in contact with most of the **NATS** members in Ontario who are not yet members of the Ontario Chapter and hope that they may become interested in Chapter activities. In the recent Student Auditions, we were very pleased to have **Maria Kastellitz, Marcel van Neer and James Norcop** acting as Judges and several voice teachers decided to become Chapter members and enter students.

VP MEMBERSHIP – Barbara Dunn Prosser

At the present time our chapter has 75 members and all but 3 are on e-mail now. The most recent changes include: new e-mail addresses for Barbara Collier, Elizabeth Parsons, and Inna Golsband and the reinstatement of Norma Burrowes as a member of our chapter. We also welcome new members **Heather Faris** and **Linda Fletcher**. **Gloria Gassi's** email should be ggassi@uwo.ca

After our March auditions at the University of Western Ontario, we were delighted to welcome new members **Joel Katz, Reid Spencer, Kimberley Barber** and **Rachel Mallon**. Rachel Mallon has now moved to London, Ontario and has a new address and phone number. There were also changes to the information on **Torin Chiles, Glyn Evans, Marc McNamara, Patricia Green, Jennifer Higgin, Jane Black** and **Catherine Robbin**.

Earlier in the year (January and February) **Victor Martens** withdrew from the chapter due to his decreased teaching schedule at **Laurier** and **Donna Garner** requested a leave of absence due to performing commitments. That lucky lady is

working in shows on a cruise ship in the Caribbean this winter.

We extend our sympathy and condolences to chapter member **Mary Morrison** on the death of her husband, the renowned Canadian composer Harry Freedman, this summer. We would also like to thank Stephen Chaiet for e-mailing the wonderful profile to the rest of the chapter on Harry Freedman's life and works.

TREASURER'S REPORT
– Kimberley Briggs

These statements were distributed at the Fall General Meeting and are available by email on request from the Treasurer.

Administrative Account

Interim Report

For the Period from March 1, 2004 to October 31, 2005

Administrative Account

Balance as at March 1, 2004 \$10,547.40

Receipts

Membership fees	\$980.00
Student Auditions	150.00
Rosza Competition – Application Fees	1,275.00
Rosza Competition – Admission Fees	50.00
Special Projects – Workshop Admission Fees	675.00
Bank Service Charge Reimbursement	10.00
Bank Interest	

Total Receipts 3,141.84
13,689.24

Disbursements

Student Auditions Expenses	900.00
Student Auditions Refunds	55.00
Transfer to Scholarship Fund for Student Auditions	1,900.00
Rosza Competition – Expenses	680.00
Special Projects – Workshop Expenses	375.00
Postage	37.61
Printing and Photocopying	11.80
Telephone	9.81
Stationery and Supplies	6.77

Total Disbursements 3,975.99
Balance per accounts as at October 31, 2005 **\$9,713.25**

Bank balance as at October 31, 2005 9,748.25
Less: Outstanding cheques 35.00

True bank balance as at October 31, 2005 **\$9,713.25**

Respectfully submitted, Kimberley Briggs,
B.Mus., M.Mus.,
Treasurer

Bursary & Scholarship Account

NATS ONTARIO CHAPTER

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

Bursary and Scholarship Account

Interim Report

For the Period from March 1, 2004 to October 31, 2005

Balance as at March 1, 2004 \$1,659.47

Receipts

Donations – Chapter	\$445.00
Concert Receipts	270.00
Transfer from Admin. Account – Student Auditions	1,900.00
Bank Interest	0.14

Total Receipts 2,615.14

4,274.61

Disbursements

Awards – Ontario Auditions	3,100.00
Awards – Rozsa Competition	645.00

Total Disbursements 3,745.00

Balance per accounts as at October 31, 2005 **\$529.61**

Bank balance as at October 31, 2005 554.61

Less: Outstanding cheques 25.00

True bank balance as at October 31, 2005 **\$529.61**

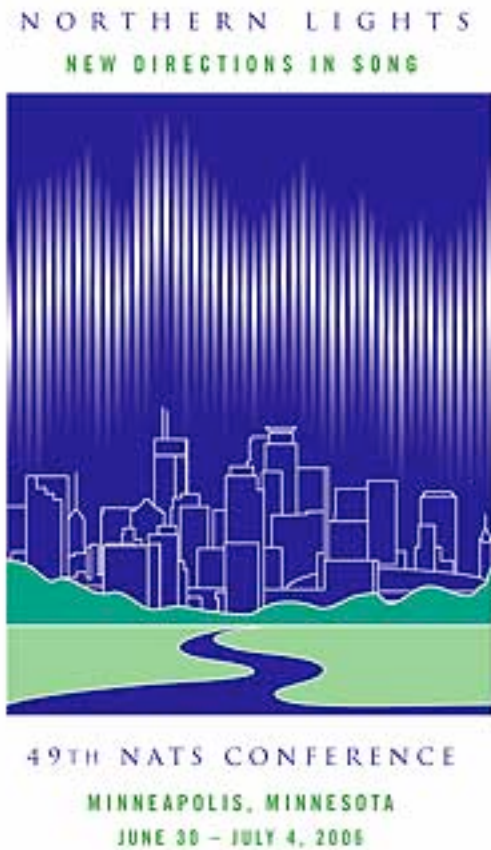
Respectfully submitted, Kimberley Briggs,
B.Mus., M.Mus.,
Treasurer

***The NATS' 49th
National Conference
"Northern Lights:
New Directions in Song"
June 30-July 4, 2006
Minneapolis, Minnesota USA
Make plans to attend this event!***

You will have received the brochure for the conference with your Dues Notice this week. And there is information in the Journal of Singing as well. With the Canadian dollar being so high at the moment, early payment of dues and registration is a good idea.

NATS conferences are a wonderful experience. Those of us who were in New Orleans can tell you about the marvelous workshops and recitals that were presented. Let's hope we'll have

an Ontario Finalist for NATSAA too. Please ask any of the Ontario members who have been to conventions about the experience – they are really worth it for all of us as both performers and singers. Some members to contact: Lynn Blaser, Tannis Fast Vetter, Catherine Robbin, Joan Heels, Leslie Jost, Jennifer Higgin and many more.



VP PROJECTS – Michelyn Wright & Christopher Foley

Making the Cut: Auditioning for University Vocal Programs 2005

Now officially a bi-annual event, our “Making the Cut “ workshop was again a great success. We had 10 panelists representing 11 University and College vocal programs, and 100 students, parents and teachers in attendance.

A great big thank you goes out to the Royal Conservatory of Music, who gave us the space to present this workshop for free. As well as thanks to

Chris Foley and Donna Sherman, who convinced them it was a good idea!

I’d also like to thank our panelists for freely giving their time, many of them driving great distances during the highest gas prices Ontario has ever seen! Thank you!

- Listed alphabetically our panelists were:
- Kimberley Barber:** Wilfrid Laurier University
 - Darryl Edwards:** University of Toronto
 - Mary Lou Fallis:** University of Western Ontario
 - Steven Henrikson:** University of Windsor & St. Clair College: Musical Theatre
 - Ingemar Korjus:** Ottawa University
 - Deborah Linton:** Brock University
 - Marta McCarthy:** University of Guelph
 - Catherine Robbin:** York University
 - Donna Sherman:** The Glenn Gould Professional School, Royal Conservatory
 - Reid Spencer:** Sheridan College: Musical Theatre

We began again with general questions, and then later opened the discussions up to a question and answer period for the students. For those of you who remember the first article I wrote on the 2003 workshop, the answers to most of the questions have remained the same. As does the commonality that most Vocal programs are looking for the same things from prospective students.

The panel agreed on many things and often reiterated the same sentiment as their colleagues when discussing the nuts and bolts of applying and auditioning for University Vocal programs. A grade average of above 80 is generally looked for, although exceptions can be made for extraordinary vocal abilities. That said, most agreed that those students with exceptional talents often tended to be straight A students.

Enough could not be said about piano skills, we all need them as singers and teachers. A Grade 6 piano proficiency was the norm. For theory, working on or the completion of Gr. 3 Harmony is ideal, while a Gr. 2 Rudiments is the lowest minimum expectation.

As for repertoire, each University wants at least one piece sung in English. Only the University of Toronto has specific guidelines for different genres of repertoire, otherwise the rest are looking for contrasting pieces. The one constant was the choice of repertoire should *not* be above the singer’s

abilities. They asked not to be wowed by difficult songs but rather, would like to hear a folk song or something that best suits the student's voice. Royal Conservatory grades and marks are not expected, however they are looked upon well, as it informs the adjudicator of the student's motivation to work.

An important point for us as studio teachers, were the comments made about the letters of recommendation. All the panelists agreed that they should be written as truthfully as possible. As colleagues, we need to be honest about our students' work habits, motivation, ability to learn and deal with change, as well as how they work with others. These are the things the audition panelists can't grasp in a short period of time, and they look to those letters to inform them.

It was unanimously decided that clean cut, smart attire that is *not*, tight-fitting is necessary, and expected. Extraneous jewelry should be removed, platform shoes are not a good choice, and hair needs to be pulled back away from the singer's face. These are all things that we as teachers encourage our students to do, however sometimes certain students need extra feedback – feel free to print this article out and highlight this section!

One new interesting addition at U of T, UWO, and Laurier was the ability to actually “minor” in Voice. These programs come with voice lessons, an important bonus, not previously available. Some of the other Universities were adding this choice so ask when applying, as I may have missed naming a school. Also new, York is again holding live auditions for those who wish them. When applying, remember to have your students ask for an audition time. Thank you Catherine Robbin!

It was a great experience this year to have the musical theatre component added to the panel. Both the new program in Windsor at the St. Clair College and the Sheridan College Music Theatre School were represented. Obviously these auditions are triple threat based, and so each section (dance, drama, music) are equally considered. What was different in comparison to the University programs, was that generally the audition itself is the most important factor in being accepted to either program. Marks are looked at, but generally the performance is the most important aspect. Attire should include something suitable to dance in, then something else to wear that shows respect for the other disciplines.

During the question and answer period a number of questions came up for the Music Therapy programs at Laurier and at Windsor. The audition process is exactly the same as it is for all music students, however the interview includes more discussion about what volunteer work the student has done in preparation for the program.

There were also many questions about the jazz degree at U. of T., which I hadn't considered. So we will try to make sure that aspect of the program is represented by a jazz specialist next time. Perhaps we need to invite Humber as well, although we may need a bigger room!

I've enjoyed my time as a Co-Vice President, and I believe the projects that Chris and I created were well received. I hope someone especially will take on this bi-annual workshop, as it is not only good for the continual influx of new undergraduate students, but is also a good example of colleagues coming together outside their schools and cooperating in the larger context of voice education.

Michelyn Wright
Co-Vice President of Special Projects

The NATS Ontario Chapter **Fall Workshop** continued after lunch with a well-attended master class given by Wayne Strongman, Managing Artistic Director of Tapestry New Opera Works. With Dr. Christopher Foley at the piano, seven singers performed contemporary arias and songs for Mr. Strongman: Natalie Rogerson, Sara Papini, Vania Chan, Catherine Affleck, Rhonwen Derbez, Ashley Bedard, and Wallis Giunta. At the end of the class, Mr. Strongman answered questions from the room and spoke eloquently on the opportunities available to young singers in the field of contemporary music.

Christopher Foley
Co-Vice President of Special Projects

Elections **for the 2006-2008 Ontario Chapter Executive**

The current Ontario Chapter executive will complete its duties in March 2006 --- It's election time again! We will vote at the next General

Meeting in March. Date and location will be confirmed in the new year.

As District Governor, I have asked **Darryl Edwards** to act as **Chair of the Nominations Committee**, adding members as he sees fit. Please contact the Chair before Feb. 1, 2006 with your nominations, You can even nominate yourself ! darryl.edwards@utoronto.ca

Here are the duties of the various positions on the Executive.

NATS Ontario Executive **- Job Descriptions**

President: Plan & Preside at all General Meetings, encourage special events & arrange programming for some General Meetings in consultation with the rest of the Executive, enforce the by-laws, administer the overall policies adopted by the membership, appoint committees, prepare annual budget with the treasurer and submit it to the Executive for final action, sign contracts and cheques. Generally work towards attracting new members and Scholarship donations.

VP Membership: Keep accurate and current account of Ontario Chapter membership & contact information, encourage growth in Ontario Chapter membership, prepare and distribute Ontario Chapter Newsletter. NATscape. Some basic computer word-processing skills and email required.

VP Special Projects: (This office may be shared by 2 or more persons.) Chair the Projects and Public Relations committees, present projects to the Executive for final action, serve as director of social and public relations activities, assist with Student Auditions.

Secretary: Keep accurate minutes of Executive and general meetings, responsible for the issuance of all official notices and votes required, conduct other correspondence or record keeping as directed by the President. Issue, collect and exercise Proxy Votes from members so that business may be carried on in the absence of a quorum of members being physically present at the meetings.

Treasurer: Keep the financial records and handle savings and investments of the Ontario Chapter, supervise the receiving and disbursing of Ontario Chapter funds, send out dues notices and receipts, present a current financial statement at the annual Spring General Meeting & an interim statement at the Fall general meeting. Submit annual tax return (Expert help is available for tax matters.)

Auditions Coordinator; is an “ex officio” member of the Executive to make the running and decision-making process smoother, but is not elected. If you have an interest in learning this job for future years, I encourage you to contact Michelyn Wright and get involved this year.

Nominations for several offices have been received but more are encouraged. In the past, a two-person team has proved advantageous for the office of VP Projects. **Treasurer Kimberley Briggs** has agreed to stand for a second term for the office of **Treasurer**. Please contact Darryl Edwards for more information on any office or to nominate someone. Darryl will be approaching members as well.

November 2005 STUDENT **AUDITIONS RESULTS**

Student Auditions Nov. 26 at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

These Auditions were the second largest in our history. Thanks are due to the many people who helped prepare for them: **Judith Lebane-Kane** (Registrar), **Jennifer Higgin & Irene Ilic** (Schedulers), **Carol Hasek & Monica Zerbe** (Judges Packages) Diane & Ron Nelsen Concert Admission) and the wonderful volunteer and friend of NATS Ontario, **Jean Chorostecki** (Registration Desk) And to everyone who pitched in and helped with the many details on the day, it would not have gone so smoothly without your help. A number of Chapter members who did not have students entered graciously came along to judge: **Joan Heels Diane Loeb, Steven Chaiet, Tannis Vetter, Leslie Jost** as did some NATS members who are not in

Chapter: **Maria Kastellitz, Marcel van Neer and James Norcop.**

NATS Ontario is grateful to the members who donated \$1700 to our Scholarship Fund for these Auditions:

Donna Sherman	Joan Heels
Lynn Blaser	Torin Chiles
Mary Lou Fallis	Joyce Hutton
Irene Ilic	Joel Katz
Gwenlynn Little	Lorna MacDonald
Michelyn Wright	Kimberley Briggs
Linda Fletcher	Jean McDonald

Scholarships awarded were \$75 for 1st, \$50 for 2nd & \$25 for 3rd, except in Category 13 where Donna Sherman's donation gave \$250 for 1st, \$150 for 2nd & \$100 for 3rd. As there was a tie for 2nd, NATS Ontario matched the \$150 prize.

More than the scholarship winners are eligible to sing at the Regional Auditions in March in Michigan. **All singers eligible for Regionals** will find **R** after their names. One "**Alternate**" is named who may sing if an eligible singer decides not to compete at Regionals. In parentheses: (Teacher / Previous Teacher if less than 8 months) In small categories of less than 3 entrants, not all of the winners are necessarily 'eligible' for Regionals.

The Great Lakes Regional Student Auditions will be held on **Sat. March 11, 2006**, at **Grand Valley State University** in Michigan in **Allendale, MI** about 170 mi w of Detroit, near Grand Rapids. <http://www.gvsu.edu> More information will be sent to teachers in 2006.

"Most Promising Singer" Awards of \$100 for each division:

Most Promising Young Singer:

Stephanie Domingues (Fletcher)
Donated by Joel Katz
for the Glenn Gould School, RCM

Most Promising Music Theatre Singer:

John-Michael Scapin (Ilic)
Donated by NATS Ontario

Most Promising Mature Singer:

Nadine Guertin (MacDonald/Desmarais)

Donated by Mary Lou Fallis

Most Promising Junior College Singer:

Michael Ciuffo (Sherman)

Donated by Joan Heels

Most Promising Senior College Singer:

Tied: Ambur Braid (Sherman) &

Jonathan Estabrooks (Edwards)

Donated by Joan Heels & matched by
NATS Ontario

Most Promising Advanced Singer:

Deanna Hendriks (Sherman)

Donated by Lynn Blaser

Category A Young Singers 12-14

1st Ashley Marques (Ilic)

2nd Gena Van Oosten (Ilic)

3rd. Nikki Ponte (J. McDonald)

This Category is not eligible for Regionals.

Category 1 HS age 14-16 Women

1st Stephanie Domingues (Fletcher) **R**

2nd Samantha Taylor (Ilic) **R**

3rd. Melissa Dutch (Fletcher) **R**

Karine White (Ilic) **R**

Alternate: Lauren Crowther (Ilic)

Category 2 HS age 14-16 Men

1st Kyle Merrithew (Ilic) **R**

2nd Daniel Van Winden (Garner van Winden) **R**

3rd. Matt Wilhelm (Dunn-Prosser)

Alternate: Matt Wilhelm

Category 3 HS age 17-19 Women

1st Larissa Swenarchuk (Dunn) **R**

2nd Tracey Buchanan (Garner van Winden) **R**

3rd. Christine Raftopoulos (Dunn) **R**

Erin Narancsik (Garner van Winden) **R**

Alternate: Amanda Bell (Ilic)

Category 4 HS age 17-19 Men

1st Conlin Delbaere-Sawchuk (Sherman) **R**

Category MT-A High School Music Theatre

1st John-Michael Scapin (Ilic) **R**

2nd Spencer Candy (Fletcher) **R**

3rd. Devon Dickinson (Ilic) **R**

Alternate: Greg Johnston (Hasek)

Category MT-B Post-secondary Music Theatre

1st Melanie Lamoureux (MacDonald) **R**

Category 5 First Year Post–secondary Women

- 1st Aviva Wilks (Edwards) **R**
- 2nd Catherine Rooney (Sherman / Sparks) **R**
- 3rd. Victoria Medeiros (Blaser / Hounsell) **R**
- Sarah Parkin (MacDonald) **R**
- Amie Debrone (Lichti) **R**
- Alternate:** Jocelyn Howard (Edwards)

Category 6 First Year Post–secondary Men

- 1st Keith Diplock (Lichti) **R**
- 2nd Giovanni Spanu (Edwards / Katz) **R**
- 3rd. Adam Miceli (Ilic)
- Alternate:** Adam Miceli

Category 7 Second Year Post–secondary Women

- 1st Meghan Lindsay (Bogle/Tanno-Kimons)) **R**
- 2nd Vania Margani (MacDonald) **R**
- 3rd. Leigh-Anne Martin (Robbin) **R**
- Jennifer Pyra (Mallon) **R**
- Alternate:** Justine Butkovitch (Edwards)

Category 8 Second Year Post–secondary Men

- 1st Michael Ciufu (Sherman) **R**
- 2nd Andrew Rethazi (Barber) **R**
- 3rd. Ryan Allen (MacPhail)
- Alternate:** Ryan Allen

Category 9 Third Year Post–secondary Women

- 1st Laura Klassen (Bentley) **R**
- 2nd Tied Vania Chan (Robbin) **R**
- & Xin Emily Ding (Blaser) **R**
- 3rd. Taylor Strande (MacPhail) **R**
- Charlotte Burrage (Edwards) **R**
- Moksha Serrano (Edwards) **R**
- Alternate:** Joanna Leung (Blaser)

Category 10 Third Year Post–secondary Men

- 1st Arthur Wright (Chiles) **R**
- 2nd Patrick Jang (Chiles)
- 3rd. Jeff Magee (Bentley)
- Alternate:** Patrick Jang

Category 11 Fourth Year Post–secondary Women

- 1st Ambur Braid (Sherman) **R**
- 2nd Lorelle Angelo (Blaser) **R**
- 3rd. Leslie Bouza (Golsband) **R**
- Alternate:** Heather Barnes (Morrison)

Category 12 Fourth Year Post–secondary Men

- 1st Jonathan Estabrooks (Edwards) **R**
- 2nd Jamie Hofman (Bogle)
- 3rd. Paul Silvestri (Bogle)
- Alternate:** Jamie Hofman

Category 13 Post-Graduate / Young Professional Women

- 1st Deanna Hendriks (Sherman) **R**
- 2nd Tied: Heather Jewson (MacPhail) **R**
- & Sonja Gustafson (Fallis) **R**
- 3rd. Olenka Slywynska (MacPhail)
- Alternate:** Olenka Slywynska

Category 14 Post-Graduate / Young Professional Men

- 1st Tyler Kuhnert (Nelsen) **R**
- 2nd Cory Knight (Bogle)
- Alternate:** Cory Knight

Category 15 Mature Beginner

- 1st Charmaine Gonsalves (Golsband) **R**
- 2nd ` Golnar Shaynar (Lebane-Kane)
- Alternate:** Golnar Shaynar

Category 16 Mature Singer

- 1st Nadine Guertin (MacDonald/Desmarais) **R**
- 2nd Ann Edwards (Sherman) **R**
- 3rd. Katharine Scavone (Bogle)
- Alternate:** Katharine Scavone

Congratulations to all the singers and their teachers.

TWO SPECIAL ARTICLES

**Impressions of ICVT 2005
by Darryl Edwards**



The vistas of Vancouver were an inspiring backdrop for the sixth International Conference for Voice Teachers from August 11th to 15th,

2005. The theme for the conference, *Sound and Nature: Celebrating the Spirit of Song* was echoed in the many performances and presentations that filled the five-day conference schedule (see www.icvt2005.com). From the moment in the Opening Ceremonies when parade of flags was presented by members of all the participating countries, the conference offered rich opportunities for friends and colleagues old and new to share their music, concepts, and ideas for our best singing, teaching, and performing. Members of the NATS Ontario Chapter who joined in the conference-celebration were: Tannis Fast-Vetter, Darryl Edwards, Steve Henrikson, Judith LeBane-Cane, Lorna MacDonald, Jean MacPhail and Catherine Robbin. Some of the conference highlights were:

- The *Bodymapping* sessions of Barbara Conable.
- The masterclass and pedagogy session presented by Carol Webber.
- The language presentation and masterclasses by Nico Castel, Carol Castel, Elly Ameling and Rudolf Jansen, and the energetic offerings of Alan Monk.
- The voice science and vocal health presentations of Linda Rammage, Tom Cleveland and Brad Story.
- The banquet and Opera Gala, with performances by singers from the University of British Columbia School of Music, under the direction of Nancy Hermiston.
- The Young Artists Recital given by Joslin Romphf, soprano, David DQ Lee, countertenor, Rena Sharon and Richard Epp, pianists, and the Chan Centre recital given by Donna Brown and Phillippe Cassard.
- The participation of members of the European Voice Teachers Association (see www.evta-online.com).
- The music publishers who provided an abundance of traditional publications as well as new and inventive offerings.

One measure of a successful conference is its balance of excellence, affirmation, innovation and challenge. Conference Chair Ingrid Suderman and Vice-Chair Arlene McIntyre worked with detail and care to surround us with that balance. We enjoyed strength after strength as we learned or relearned so many aspects that make our life in music so compelling. We now eagerly look forward to the July, 2006 NATS Convention in Minneapolis, the August, 2006 Conference in Vienna, Austria, and

the seventh ICVT that awaits us in Paris, France, in 2010!

Some Notes on RCM Examinations & the New Voice Syllabus

- by "an RCM Examiner"

I hope that these notes, which come out of my years of experience as a Voice Examiner, may be helpful to teachers who are preparing their students for January or June examinations. **These are the personal opinions of the author and not official policy of RCM Examinations.**

RCM now has a new **2005 Voice Syllabus** to replace the 2nd Edition syllabus of 1998. During the 3 examination sessions for the year 2006, **EITHER syllabus** may be used as the guide for examinations. But the examination must be **completely from one syllabus OR the other.** Repertoire, vocalizes and recitatives along with Technical Requirements should be from the SAME syllabus.

On page 20, there is a new and expanded **pronunciation guide for 6 languages** with the **International Phonetic Alphabet** symbols to assist in language pronunciation. **Dictionaries** for most languages, except Italian, give IPA in square brackets [] after each word to indicate proper pronunciation.

Singers often have difficulty finding good translations of song texts. Many have a "singable English version" below the original words. This fits the notes and rhythm but is often misleading as to what word means what. A very good website which translates many standard songs in the repertoire is The Lied and Song Texts Page www.recmusic.org www.NATS.org has a "Links" section <http://nats.org/links.html> which will lead to many sites of great use and interest, including the Aria Database www.aria-database.com with translations of opera arias.

Technical requirements

Right from Grade 1, singers are required to be prepared to sing the exercises on **six vowels, including [y]**. This last vowel is the French sound of "tu" and very close to the German sound of "ü".

Nico Castel, who coaches language pronunciation at the Metropolitan Opera, gives this explanation of the proper pronunciation: *form lips into an “oo” position but say “ee”*.

There have been improvements and changes to the writing of the Technical Tests **and congratulations are due to NATS Ontario Member Penelope Dale** and Tina Torlone for the many positive changes they made to the syllabus. Many of these were based on reports by RCM Examiners as to the misunderstandings that seemed to exist, Slur marks over pairs of eighth notes were often treated as breaks or ‘up touches’ as in piano. These have been replaced by **phrase markings** which indicate if an exercise should be sung in one breath or where a breath is acceptable. Singers should keep a legato line unless staccato is shown.

- Exercises are now **named**. e. g. major triad, chromatic scale, to assist in teaching these musical concepts.
- Avoid adding a beat to take a breath - it must fit into the rhythm as printed.
- Choose a tempo that allows singing the exercise with the breaths as marked.
- Inhale in the tempo of the exercise – especially valuable in setting the beat where there are triplets.
- Tempo should be steady throughout. Candidates are inclined to rush through the last part of an exercise, especially if 16th notes follow eighth notes.
- Encourage young singers to choose tempi that show the difference between half note exercises and those in quarter notes.
- Pure vowel sounds are expected, as is accurate pitch and rhythm. It is valuable to teach these exercises as “small melodies” and perhaps give them character and emotion.
- The examiner will play only the starting note – the tonic in all cases. Some junior candidates have expected to have the whole exercise played, not just the starting note.

The following notes apply to the new 2005 Voice Syllabus:

Gr. 3 Introduces triplet rhythm in the 6/8 time signature. Triplets must be very obvious – slight emphasis on the first note of each group of 3. This also applies to triplet exercises in later grades.

Gr. 6. Exercise #1 often gave problems in the old syllabus as well. Be sure to choose a slow enough tempo for the quarter notes so that the 16th notes fit the value of the beat. This exercise is often sung too quickly so the last half becomes 8th notes.

Gr. 9 Exercise 3 & 4 Choose a tempo that will allow clean and comfortable staccato articulation in the second half. Many candidates begin at too fast a tempo.

Exercise 7 should keep the same tempo for the quarter note in both lines.

Exercise 8 Some turns descend a semitone but others descend a full tone. Be sure each is accurate.

Gr. 10. Exercise #1 The small notes should not be sung too slowly as their size indicates they are ornaments, not a scale.

Exercise #6 the interval of a fourth is often sung as a third in bars 2 & 4

ARCT –Teacher Exercise #6 The pitch given will be adjusted for lower voices but should be in the upper part of each voice range.

Ear Tests

Intervals: stress should be placed on the intervals which are **new to the grade**, both above and below, as these are likely to be requested. Work on recognition of these new intervals on the page and expect them to appear in the **Sight Singing** test. These should be sung out loud (not hummed) to any vowel, syllable such as “la”, or any solfeggio or tonic sol-fa name. Until Gr. 5, the candidate may sing the given note, but from Grade 6, **ONLY** the answer should be heard by the Examiner.

Melody - Gr. 7 & up “Sing back a melody in 4/4 time while clapping the basic beat”. The singer must clap the 4 beats per bar, not the rhythm of the notes.

Gr. 8, 9 & 10

Scales: “sing a one octave scale from a specific degree of the scale between Tonic & Dominant” (depending on the grade). These do not seem to be clearly understood by many candidates. They can expect that scale requested will probably **NOT** be from the tonic. The note given by the Examiner will be the degree of the scale requested.

Example 1: sing a major scale from mediant to mediant. Note given **is** the mediant.

Tonic sol-fa:

mi fa sol la ti doh re mi re doh ti la so fa mi
-----ascending----- . -----descending-----
E F G A B C D E D C B A G F E
Would be the notes in C major scale.

Too often, the candidate will sing an ordinary major scale using the given note as the tonic or *doh*.

Example 2: sing a major scale from supertonic to supertonic. Note given is the supertonic,

Tonic sol-fa:

re mi fa sol la ti doh re doh ti la so fa mi re
-----ascending----- . -----descending-----

Reminder: the degrees of the scale ascending are: **tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant.**

In a C major scale those notes are:

C D E F G

A suggestion for teaching these: the candidate should think (or lightly hum) the scale down from the given note to the tonic, then use that orientation as a basis for the scale sung out loud.

Example: sing a major scale from the mediant. Note given is the mediant so the candidate can think or hum down to tonic to establish the scale and back to the mediant (mi-re-doh-re-mi) and then sing on a vowel, syllable or note names the scale requested.

The same applies to minor scales in Gr. 10. (Note: depending on the degree of the scale used to start, minor scales can *sound* almost like a major scale.) Solfeggio or tonic sol-fa names may be used and errors of these will *usually* not be counted if the pitches are correct. A minor scale could be thought to start on either *doh* or *la* as the tonic, depending on what system the singer has been taught.

Unaccompanied Sight Singing tests may be sung to any vowel or syllable such as “la”. Solfeggio or “tonic sol-fa” names may be used – errors in those are usually not counted against the singer if the pitches are correct, and are some singers discard these in the middle if the pitches continue to be accurate.

- Expect that the new Intervals for the grade will be used in the Sight.

- Accurate rhythm and a steady tempo is expected. It is better to go slowly and be steady than to rush and have to stop.

From **Grade 8 onward**, expect **modulations** and **accidentals** in the Sight. Interval recognition is essential, whether with fixed or movable “doh”. Keep the tonic chord in mind.

Accompanied Sight Only the tonic chord will be given. Text will be in English unless French is requested. At least 2 pages of the song are usually required. If a singer makes an error of note or rhythm, they should expect to continue and do their best to get back on track. There is usually a very short piano introduction but the singer must make the first entry of the voice part. Modulation & accidentals should be expected.

Best wishes for your next examination.

=====

NATScape is published twice a year for Members of NATS Ontario Chapter. Deadlines for submissions are May 1st & Nov. 1st.