

Calvin Sieb – In Memoriam

The Department of Music and international music community said goodbye to our colleague Calvin Sieb who passed away at his home in Quebec City on May 21, 2007.

Mr. Sieb was the concertmaster of the Montréal Symphony Orchestra for 20 years and concertmaster of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse for almost a decade.

Calvin was also a noted pedagogue, and it is in this role that those of us at the music department had the most recent memory of him and of his dedicated work. We were fortunate enough to have him as our colleague from 1989 until his retirement in 2002.

Calvin was totally dedicated to music, to performance, to pedagogy and to his students. He once told me that he wanted to be teaching violin until his dying day. I believe he was good to his word. Calvin would never have retired from the University of Ottawa if he was not caught by the mandatory retirement age law. He came to my office when he realized that he could not beat mandatory retirement; his mood was very dark. "John, I need to teach." In a moment of inspiration I said: "Calvin, you started teaching at the Quebec Conservatoire in Chicoutimi, let me call the conservatoire director in Gatineau and let him know that you are available." By the time he left my office, the contact was made and Calvin was off to teach once more.

Some of my warmest memories of Calvin as my colleague are of the work we did on establishing the expected course of study for both non-performance and performance violin students. The program was clear, it was demanding and the results were immediate. The standard shot up. Calvin, however, having spent so much of his career performing, knew how difficult it was to succeed in a live performance. While he pushed his students to their limit, he also had a deep and abiding compassion for their genuine efforts.

I always found his door open when it came to discussing the infinite subtleties of violin pedagogy. Once he showed me his fingering pattern for scales. I liked it so much that I started using it for myself and for my students. One day during a jury he asked one of my students to play a scale, and that student did. Calvin's eyebrows shot up, and he leaned over to me and said in an overloud whisper, "that's the same fingering that I use!"

Well, Calvin, we could go talking about you for a long time and we undoubtedly will, during those wonderful "remember when" chat sessions that musicians indulge in.

- John Gomez



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Another highlight for the Piano Lab is the newly established partnership with Routledge, the prestigious international academic publisher. Dr. Comeau recently signed a contract to publish *Piano Pedagogy: A Research and Information Guide*, which is slated to become an indispensable tool for any researcher in the field of piano pedagogy. The partnership is particularly interesting since several graduate students from the Piano Lab are contributing to the guide.

Creating a Difference

The Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory has received donations from generous benefactors who are helping to further advance the Lab and its activities. Canadian composer Ann Southam provided the Lab's first major gift of \$50,000 to establish the Ann Southam Music Reading Research Fund in support of research exploring how piano students learn to read and express musical notation through well-controlled gestures at the keyboard. In addition, Donald Himes, formerly of the Royal Conservatory of Music, helped to establish a workshop series exploring the subject of healthier approaches to playing the piano.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada has recently provided \$118,890 for a research initiative that will examine the development of music reading skills in young piano students. Three specific aspects will be studied: mastery of musical symbols, eye-hand coordination and control over movements at the keyboard while expressing the musical codes.

Gilles Comeau will be the principal researcher on this project, collaborating with co-researchers Alain Desrochers, School of Psychology and Ramesh Balsubramaniam, School of Human Kinetics.



Nouvelles du Laboratoire de recherche en pédagogie du piano / Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory News

Le Laboratoire de piano, le premier du genre au Canada, est une installation de recherche fascinante et il a reçu des commentaires élogieux depuis son ouverture en 2005.

2006-2007 Highlights

On February 15, the University of Ottawa welcomed internationally acclaimed pianist Jon Kimura Parker and Mrs. Aline Chrétien, wife of the former Canadian Prime Minister (pictured with Gilles Comeau below). As honorary co-chairs of the Friends of the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory campaign, they visited the Lab to learn about its latest activities. "Piano pedagogy hasn't really changed

in a long time," remarked Mr. Parker. "Here at the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory they're actually finding new information, bringing new data to teachers and pianists and teaching us new techniques. This is extraordinary."



Gilles Comeau, director of the Piano Lab, was invited to participate in the 2007 Collaborative Conference in Toronto, the first joint conference of the Music Teachers National Association, the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers'

Associations and the Royal Conservatory of Music. Dr. Comeau delivered a comprehensive presentation on the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory, outlining its main research concerns. After the conference, the Piano Lab received many positive comments. One conference participant said, "The presentation was particularly inspiring. I suspect that in the future we will be hearing a great deal from this project. . . This is exciting stuff, long overdue in my opinion!"

Dr. Comeau was the keynote speaker for the 7^e Journées francophones de recherche en éducation musicale. This international conference brought together researchers in music education from many countries around the world. He was a guest lecturer at the Indiana University Internet 2 Music Symposium participating, by videoconference, in a session called *Canadian Initiatives in Music Performance, Research and Teaching*. Dr. Comeau was also invited to present papers at McGill University, Université Laval and at Université de Paris-Sorbonne (via videoconference). In addition, he organised a round table at the Canadian Music University Society conference in Montreal on *Challenging 300 years of piano teaching practices with 21st century research*.

The proceedings of the conference held at the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory at the time of its official opening have been published in a special volume by *Revue de recherche en éducation musicale* and are available on line at http://www.mus.ulaval.ca/reem/sommaire_courant.htm. The on-going research in the Piano Lab has also been featured in 12 papers published in various academic journals. Over the last year, media coverage has included two television documentaries and four interviews for magazines and newspapers.

Des étudiants à l'honneur

Les étudiantes et les étudiants du Laboratoire de recherche en pédagogie musicale se sont démarqués par la qualité de leurs projets de recherche. **Nisreen Jardaneh** a présenté *The development of a scale to measure young piano students' degree of motivation* au symposium des étudiants diplômés de la University of Western Ontario, puis *Motivation: The challenge of young piano students* à la Société de musique des universités canadiennes. **Mélina Dalaire** a présenté *Ethnographic research design: Piano lessons and VC technology* à la Société de musique des universités canadiennes et *Étude ethnographique de cours de piano transatlantique* par vidéoconférence aux Journées francophones de recherche en éducation musicale. **Catherine Lemay** a participé à la conférence de la Société de musique des universités canadiennes avec *Music reading skills of young piano students: Taxonomy of the musical codes*.

Au cours de la dernière année, plusieurs étudiantes et étudiants du laboratoire ont complété leur programme d'étude. **Julia Brook** et **Nisreen Jardaneh** ont terminé la Maîtrise es arts, **Yifei Liu** et **Jason Ray**, Maîtrise en musique et **Mélina Dalaire**, **Leana Azerral**, **Hoadan Brown**, et **Erin Parkes** ont reçu le Certificat d'études supérieures en recherche sur la pédagogie du piano. Félicitations à tous nos diplômés de 2006-2007.