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# NEWSLETTER

Gordon Institute for Music Learning

## GIML Launches Teacher Certification

by Robert Harper

This summer saw the beginning of yet another exciting chapter for the Gordon Institute. The first students in our new Teacher Certification Program in Music Learning Theory gathered on the campus of the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York for two weeks of ground-breaking instruction. Courses were offered in Music Learning Theory, Materials and Techniques, Musicianship Skills, Instrumental Music, Classroom Methods, and Preschool Music. These courses are part of the Level One certification program, developed by the Board of Directors of the Gordon

Institute over the past year. The members of the Board felt the time had come to provide a comprehensive training in MLT including theory, practice, materials, and musicianship. Three levels of certification were devised to meet this need. Each of the three levels of certification encompasses increasing levels of skill and content. A teacher who completes all three levels would be able to teach at any skill level with any content in Learning Sequence Activities and develop and coordinate Classroom Activities to reinforce those skills. In addition, course work will be provided to enable each candidate for

certification to "major" in an area of teaching music: Classroom, Instrumental, Choral or Preschool.

The Level 1 certification is designed to give the participant a thorough grounding in the concepts behind teaching using music learning theory. This 3 credit course, "Foundations of Music Theory," is required of all candidates. Two other courses are required at Level 1. These are "Materials and Techniques in Music Learning Theory" (3 Credits) and "Learning Sequence Activities Skills" (1 Credit). Emphasis will be placed on how to begin

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## Teachers: Making the Commitment to Change

by Debbie Rohwer

Our students are ready for change, but are we? Teacher readiness may be the greatest obstacle to a prospering music program. Even after a teacher has decided that singing, playing in tune, moving, and performing with a good sense of rhythm are valuable traits for a student to possess, there remains the obstacle of finding the best way to teach students to do those things.

Any teacher who has unsuccessfully had students sing a passage from their band music, who has been bombarded by the question, "How does this go?," before a rehearsal, or who has caught himself

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## President's Corner

### The Evolution of Certification

by Mitch Haverly

There have been concerns voiced by several who are interested in GIML's Certification Program about "starting over." In other words, they are concerned about having to attend courses that are similar to seminars that they have attended in past years. The concern is justified, given the expense involved (even though it would appear that our prices are more than reasonable given those charged by other colleges and universities).

Still, our deciding to accept no prior credit was thought through carefully. Here are some of the reasons for taking the position we have taken, even though it

may not be the popular one, i.e., that of not giving prior credit for seminars attended. Even after this explanation, we understand that we run the risk of continuing to offend some of our strongest allies.

The Gordon Institute for Music Learning originally began working in earnest on a certification program about one and a half years ago. The original proposal was drafted by yours truly, and bore little resemblance to what is in place today. However, the fact that we were able to negotiate an agreement with The College of Saint Rose to grant graduate music

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## On Learning to Improvise: Some Initial Steps

by Christopher D. Azzara

Audiation is to music what thought is to language. Improvisation in music is analogous to the extemporaneous expression of thoughts in language (conversation). To improvise is to understand and to express musical ideas spontaneously. With this definition in mind, what is a practical starting place for learning to improvise?

The first step toward developing improvisation skill is to learn a repertoire of songs by ear. Initial improvisatory music-making experiences take place when children spontaneously sing songs and move to music. As a part of our culture, children learn a repertoire of songs by interacting with their family and

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# President's Corner: A Closer Look at Certification

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education credit gave the program instant credibility and provided impetus to the GIML Board to rework the original proposal into a solid program with a high degree of validity.

Our Certification Committee, which basically consists of all of our faculty members, spent many long and tedious hours in several meetings to hone and refine the original concept. I'm sure they consider their efforts fruitful. They have produced a program that has integrity and will carry maximum clout in the industry. However, this was not done without sacrifice.

It was decided that substantial revisions had to be made to our seminar offerings to achieve conformity with our stated purpose. Of the important decisions made, two stand out. The first was that of establishing the curriculum. The second dealt with evaluation of seminar participants.

The curriculum, in its original form, was an amorphous concept, totally undefined. In fact the original proposal never really presented a curriculum of instruction. The document focused instead on the certificate - the supposed outcome for everyone taking these courses that we planned to offer. It was like working from the outside in, from the end back toward the beginning. This certainly wasn't the most practical way to do things. When the Certification Committee first focused on the real issue of "what should be taught," it became obvious that our three levels of certification should be based on the skill and content learning sequences that are the cornerstone of music learning theory. This indeed was our curriculum and allowed the committee to specifically state our goals and objectives at each of the three certifica-

tion levels.

The infusion of a specific content into the three levels of certification brought with it the understanding that some of our courses would need modification and still others would need to be added in order to satisfy everyone's "individual needs" (another area that music learning theory prides itself in). Content in some courses changed or became more specific. Additional courses were added as "required electives." Participants must now opt to *major* in any one of four different areas: Classroom Music (a much better term than "general" music), Instrumental Music, Choral Music, or Preschool Music. Needless to say, our course catalogue has grown significantly with the addition of these major content areas.

The Committee next began the task of implementing evaluation procedures. Here, too, the job was not easy and two areas surfaced that needed attention. The first was evaluation for existing courses. Not all of the seminars GIML presented in past years were evaluated in the same way. For those of us who have been to past seminars, there sometimes were tests, and sometimes not. A lot of evaluation was done subjectively. And, if evaluation was not required for credit in past years, participants were not graded at all. This non-threatening procedure worked well in the past, but obviously needed to change if our program was to have credibility.

Establishing evaluation procedures meant that past seminars could not be treated the same way and credit could not be offered. It was a difficult decision to reach. However, with newly revised course content and the implementation of a more specific evaluation instrument, it was decided that we could not give credit

to any seminar taken prior to the summer of 1993 at The College of Saint Rose. The decision affects many of our most loyal supporters. Perhaps I am one of those most affected. I have taken 9 Sugarloaf Seminars and 2 Rensselaerville Seminars with Dr. Gordon in the past 13 years. If I choose to seek certification, I must take Dr. Gordon's class yet again! (However, such a dastardly fate is easily relished by someone who understands the importance and the complexity of music learning theory. One could indeed be subject to much worse.) For those who feel they have been financially robbed, I can only say that my several thousand dollars over the past thirteen years have been well spent.

The Committee also established an additional procedure that is now a requirement for certification. Everything discussed to this point relates to only part one of the certification issue: the course work. Part two relates the practical application of the knowledge gained, namely teaching. Once course work is complete in each level, the participant is eligible to apply for certification. There is no automatic granting of a piece of paper stating that you are now qualified in Music Learning Theory - Level I. The new procedure requires the participant to submit two video tapes of his/her teaching, coordinated lesson plans, and a support paper to the Certification Committee for review. The Committee will then make one of two possible decisions: 1) grant the certificate for the level applied for, or, 2) make recommendations for improvement by the candidate in areas deemed necessary by the Committee.

That's a lot to digest. However, careful thought should lead one to the conclu-

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**T**he Gordon Institute for Music Learning is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the research in music education pioneered by Edwin E. Gordon. The broad purpose of this Institute is to ensure that Dr. Gordon's work realizes its potential to serve as the foundation for future research and to revitalize music education for generations to come. The Institute supports research into how individuals learn music through research in teaching teachers, in teaching parents, and in teaching students of all ages.

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# Early Childhood Music at UNC-Charlotte

by Wendy Hicks and  
Janet Smith Overton

Last June, Edwin Gordon, Wendy Hicks, and Janet Smith Overton presented the first Early Childhood Music Education Summer Workshop sponsored by The Children's Music Development Center (CMDC) and the Office of Continuing Education and Extension at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The two and one-half day workshop, held at UNCC, was attended by 14 participants from Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. Participants specialized in early childhood music, elementary general music, church music, instrumental music, and college music instruction. Workshop participants were exposed to an overview of *A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children*, by Edwin Gordon, G.I.A. Publications, 1990, and they observed and participated in five music development demonstration classes for children who attend classes at CMDC. Due to the developmental nature of CMDC classes, Hicks and Overton consider themselves to be "music guides" rather than "music teachers," and they were pleased to be joined by Gordon as a "music guide" during the demonstration classes. According to most workshop participants, the observation of and participation in the demonstration classes at CMDC was enjoyable and informative.

Music development classes at CMDC, such as the demonstration classes presented by Gordon, Hicks, and Overton at the UNCC Early Childhood Music Education Summer Workshop, are organized as intensive, once-a-week sessions of exposure to a variety of tonalities and meters for children between the ages of 1 month and 6 years. At least one caregiver accompanies each child and participates in each class as a "music model" for his child. Caregivers are encouraged to become "music models" by imitating the songs, chants, movements, tonal patterns, and rhythm patterns demonstrated by Hicks and Overton. The demonstrated songs, chants, movements, tonal patterns, and rhythm patterns are designed by Hicks and Overton to provide unstructured and structured informal music guidance to each child through the types and stages of preparatory audiation. Because children are merely exposed to a variety of tonalities, meters, and movements performed by teachers and caregivers at CMDC

classes, and they are not expected to perform specific responses to music content, that exposure is considered unstructured informal guidance. When children naturally begin to move, sing, and chant, however, tonal pattern and rhythm pattern exposure is structured as prescribed by Gordon (Gordon, 1990).

Following is an outline of the types and stages of preparatory audiation as

language. That is, a normal child is acculturated to language by listening and building a listening vocabulary. He then begins to babble in the sounds of language as he continues to expand his listening vocabulary. Later, his babbles become inaccurate imitations that are naturally shaped into more accurate imitations that the child understands, assimilates, and begins to use in the syntax of his

## Summary Outline of the Types and Stages of Preparatory Audiation (Gordon, 1990)

Type	Stage
<b>ACCULTURATION</b> Birth to age 2-4: engages with little consciousness of the environment.	1 <b>ABSORPTION:</b> hears and aurally collects the sounds of music in the environment.
	2 <b>RANDOM RESPONSE:</b> moves and babbles in response to, but without relation to, the sounds of music in the environment.
	3 <b>PURPOSEFUL RESPONSE:</b> tries to relate movement and babble to the sounds of music in the environment.
<b>IMITATION</b> Age 2-4 to age 3-5: engages with conscious thought focused primarily on the environment.	4 <b>SHEDDING EGOCENTRICITY:</b> recognizes that movement and babble do not match the sounds of music in the environment.
	5 <b>BREAKING THE CODE:</b> imitates with some precision the sounds of music in the environment, specifically tonal patterns and rhythm patterns.
<b>ASSIMILATION</b> Age 3-5 to age 4-6: engages with conscious thought focused primarily on self.	6 <b>INTROSPECTION:</b> recognizes the lack of coordination between singing and breathing and between chanting and muscular movement, including breathing.
	7 <b>COORDINATION:</b> coordinates singing and chanting with breathing and movement.

described by Gordon. Children who attend CMDC classes at UNCC are informally guided through these natural stages of music development so 1) that their music aptitudes will stabilize as high as possible, and 2) that as early as possible, they may begin to realize and to teach themselves that participation in music is a natural and enjoyable part of life.

As one can see, a normal child's progression through the types and stages of preparatory audiation is much like the early stages of a child's acquisition of

environment. Caregivers who accompany their children to CMDC classes are informed of the similarities between a child's music development and his language development as they and their children are exposed to and encouraged to participate in the syntax of music. One mother of an 8-month-old CMDC enrollee recently wrote on a questionnaire that the CMDC classes have changed her understanding of her child's music development, "by suggesting and support-

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# Summer '93 Sizzles at Saint Rose

by Mitch Haverly

The summer days were mostly hot. The evenings were only slightly cooler. And yet, the people came. The rooms were not always air conditioned. The food sometimes was and sometimes wasn't. And yet, the people came. Teaching and classroom conditions varied from day to day. Yet, they came.

They came from New York, from Pennsylvania, from Maryland, and from North Carolina. They came from Ohio, from Illinois, and from Missouri. They came from Massachusetts, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and California. And they learned.

They learned from some of the best teachers in the music education field. Courses were met with enthusiasm. Teachers were lauded and the subject matter praised. Teachers were enthusiastic about the students. "Some of the best they had ever taught," was a frequent comment. The combination sizzled in the summer sun and suddenly, some of the inconsistencies seemed bearable, at least for the moment.

Some thirty five participants attended the total of six courses offered by the Gordon Institute for Music Learning on the campus of the College of Saint Rose in

Albany, New York, during the last week in July and the first week in August. The faculty consisted of Dr. Edwin Gordon (Temple University), Dr. Richard Grunow (Eastman School of Music), Dr. Christopher Azzara (Hartt School of Music), Dr. Wendy Hicks (University of North Carolina at Charlotte), Dr. Cynthia Taggart (Michigan State University), Beth Bolton (Temple University), and Robert Harper (William Floyd School District). The seminar offerings included the following courses from the new GIML Certification Program Catalogue:

MLT - 310 Foundations of Music Learning Theory

MLT - 311 Materials and Techniques in Music Learning Theory

MLT - 411 Learning Sequence Activities Skills

MLT - 501 Classroom Methods and Techniques

MLT - 511 Instrumental Methods and Techniques

MLT - 531 Preschool Methods and Techniques

Reflecting on the seminar evaluation forms returned by participants, there seems to be an unwavering acceptance of what these courses (and GIML) are all about. It

appears that we are indeed doing something right and that we must keep on doing it. Comments like "This really opened my eyes! I can't wait to try what I've learned..." "It is a shame that more music teachers don't open up and attend one of these," and "This has been a wonderful, mind opening experience that has stimulated me to make children's learning experiences more meaningful and more comprehensive," are proof that what we are offering the music education community is an answer that should not be overlooked. Music learning theory is worth the effort.

A few glitches remain to be worked out for next year. However, dates have been reserved at Saint Rose again for 1994. "First Semester" Seminars will likely begin on Friday, July 22, 1994 and the "Second Semester" will finish on Sunday, August 7, 1994. It is also likely that course offerings will be expanded next year along with the addition of new faculty. The exact schedule and list of courses to be offered will be approved at GIML's Fall Board Meeting. Expect information to be forthcoming by the end of December. All of us at GIML hope to see many of you in Albany next year.

## Initial Steps for Learning to Improvise

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friends. That is not unlike the process in which a child acquires a speaking vocabulary. Because a music instrument is an extension of the human mind and body, singing and bodily movement are central to instrumental music activities. Familiar songs form the basis for much of the learning that occurs in beginning instrumental music; familiar songs also provide readiness for improvisation.

Instrumental music students should develop a large repertoire that they can generate spontaneously on their selected instrument. This repertoire should be stylistically diverse, e.g., folk songs, classical themes, jazz standards, popular standards, and original compositions. Their repertoire also should include a variety of tonalities and meters. The students should begin by singing the songs and then develop the executive skills necessary to play the songs on their instrument. As the students engage in the following Musical Enrichment Activities (Grunow, Gordon, Azzara, 1993), they will also enhance their understanding of harmonic progression.

A. Sing the song.

- B. Perform the song on your instrument.
- C. Perform the song in a second keyality.
- D. Perform the song in a third keyality.
- E. Perform the song with a friend who plays the same or a different instrument.
- F. Perform the song in a different meter.
- G. Perform the song in a different tonality.
- H. Perform the roots of the harmonic progression to the song.
- I. Perform an improvisation or harmony part for the song.

Individuals improvise daily with language when engaging in conversation. Like an individual's contribution to conversation, improvisation in music is generated from an internal source. To understand music, one must think musically. Improvisation skill allows students to express musical thought and ideas with meaning as a manifestation of audiation. Learning to improvise also promotes the acquisition of higher order music thinking skills. When thought of in this light,

improvisation is at the heart of musical expression and is basic to all forms of music instruction and curriculum."

Musicians "play by ear" when reading, writing, creating, and improvising music. To play a music instrument is to develop the "play instinct" that is inherent from birth. Improvisation is a form of play, and as such, a primary element of humanity. Improvisation, therefore, is fundamental when learning to "play" a music instrument. Improvisation helps teachers understand students' musical thoughts and, as a result, teachers can better attend to students' individual differences.

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