

MUSIC MATTERS

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Convocation 2009

Celebrating Together: The Royal Conservatory Turns 125

By Dr. Jennifer Snow, Director of Teacher Pedagogy, Chief Academic Officer, Examinations

In 2011, The Royal Conservatory will celebrate its 125th anniversary with over a year of activities, experiences, and programs that focus on teachers and students in community. This will be a year to remember as we recognize a century and a quarter of achievement, reconnect with the millions of Canadians who have experienced music and the arts with us, and turn a new page in our history as we build an exciting future together.

When The Conservatory was founded in 1886, Canada was only seven provinces, and major arts organizations like the Montreal Symphony and Canadian Opera Company were decades away from being established. Only a handful of Canadian universities and private schools are older than The Conservatory. What started as a small, Toronto-based music school—a mere nineteen years after the confederation of Canada—has now grown to become the nation's oldest and largest arts organization, with examinations and classes offered across North America, world-renowned alumni, an internationally recognized pedagogical system, and generations of teachers consistently held in the highest regard amongst their peers across the continent.

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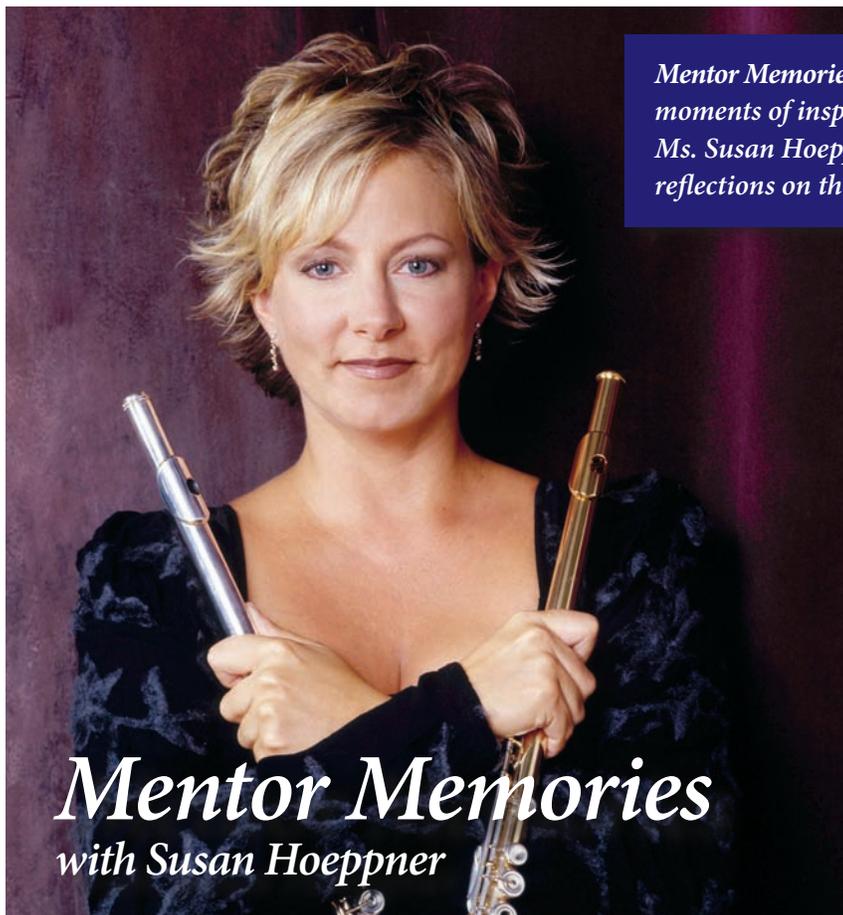
You Asked

Is April Session
returning?

Yes. We are happy to announce that April Trial Session is returning this academic year. See p. 6 for more information.

The Royal
Conservatory™
The finest instrument is the mind.





Mentor Memories with Susan Hoepfner

Mentor Memories invites leading arts professionals to share memorable moments of inspiration and motivation. For this fourth installment, Ms. Susan Hoepfner, internationally celebrated flutist, shares her reflections on the value of performance experience.

Susan Hoepfner

Appreciated for being “a born soloist” with “complete fluency in all registers, well-controlled technique and beautiful tone” (Toronto Star), Canadian flutist Susan Hoepfner is in great demand internationally. Her appearances span the continents of North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. She has performed at the Canadian Embassies in London, New York, and Tokyo, and has had a standing engagement with the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City since 2009. Ms. Hoepfner has numerous recordings on various labels, including Marquis Classics, EMI Classics, BIS Grammafón AB, JVC Victor, and King Record Labels, which can be heard frequently on Canada’s national broadcaster, CBC Radio 2, and in live broadcasts on Bravo! Television. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School and is a Canadian representative for Yamaha. Ms. Hoepfner recently launched *Overtones™*: *A Comprehensive Flute Series* for The Frederick Harris Music Co., Limited at the National Flute Association Convention in California this past August.

MM: *Dubbed a “musical ambassador of Canada,” you have performed in many prestigious venues around the world. How have these experiences influenced your teaching?*

SH: Sharing first-hand experience from being on the concert stage is invaluable for my students. Ideally each performance, regardless of the venue, should be as good as it possibly can be. There’s personal integrity at stake. And we want a return audience! It’s important to me to relay clear and realistic expectations of the performance world to each student. They need to know that what should look easy on stage actually requires incredible commitment and dedication.

MM: *As a Canadian Yamaha Artist, you participate in and conduct master classes extensively throughout North America. What is the value of the master class experience for a student?*

SH: Master classes are great for students! It’s like an open lesson that gives them a chance to hear their peers play. Students come away with new ideas and concepts they can apply to their own practice. From my personal experience, master classes exposed me to a lot of new repertoire and I heard many different musical approaches from numerous teachers. A master class can expand one’s understanding of new and standard repertoire. While it can be confusing to hear many different interpretations for the same piece, that’s how a maturing student/performer is able to eventually form their own opinion and develop their own personal interpretation.

MM: *You have collaborated with many soloists and orchestras. What is your favorite memory of a collaborative project or performance?*

SH: It’s really difficult to boil a favorite memory down to just one, but the first thing that comes to mind is a recital I did with Renée Fleming at Roy Thompson Hall. I remember there was a hushed atmosphere before she appeared for our rehearsal. She was so gracious, generous, “normal,” and kind. It was an incredible musical experience for me. I loved the collaboration with someone I completely trusted on stage and could count on in performance. There was nothing else to think about except making music. An ideal situation!

MM: *Your New York debut was at age twenty. What advice do you give young musicians as they strive for success as performers?*

SH: What young musicians see today is instant, so-called “overnight” success. There is absolutely no substitute for daily practice. Believe me, sometimes I wished there were! My New York debut came about from the recommendation of my teacher, Julius Baker, while still studying with him at Juilliard. As exhilarating and memorable as it was, I knew it was a stepping-stone—just the beginning of my career as a soloist. I guess my advice would be this: we can see success all around us, and we must be clear how we define success for ourselves. Ultimately, people will decide their own level of excellence. It’s important to remember why you’ve chosen music as a career, and to remember that (or why?) you love it.

MM: *With such an illustrious list of achievements behind you, performing must be second nature by now. How do you prepare for a performance?*

SH: I’ve always felt completely at home on the stage. What I do to prepare is the obvious physical practice, but also mental practice. I perform most concerts by memory, so it’s very important for me to know the music inside and out. When I don’t have my flute in my hands, I’m practicing in my mind, reading, and absorbing the music. Above all, just before any performance it’s incredibly important to keep one’s positive attitude and check any daily stresses at the stage door. I’m very big on students building themselves up rather than tearing themselves into mental shreds.

Learn more about Ms. Hoepfner at www.susanhoepfner.com