

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier String Academy offers unique violin program for youth

For Immediate Release

June 20, 2008

60-08

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WATERLOO – Violin hopefuls ages five to 18 will have the opportunity to study at Wilfrid Laurier University as part of its new String Academy. The academy will also provide a teaching lab setting for Laurier music students.

Laurier is the first Canadian university to offer the violin program, which was developed by Mimi Zweig of Indiana University and based on the philosophies of Shinichi Suzuki, Paul Rolland and Ivan Galamian. The program format has been successful at reputable American universities and musical conservatories throughout Europe.

The academy's students will learn musical theory and play the violin through both private and group lessons, which include master classes, chamber music and performance opportunities.

"The first years of musical instruction are the most important as they set the stage for everything that follows," said academy instructor Vanessa Mio, who studied under Zweig at Indiana University for seven years. "The philosophy behind the method is to establish a secure technical and musical foundation from the very first lesson in a relaxed and non-judgmental manner."

The academy's goal is to develop a love and understanding of music, whether or not students become professionals.

"The violin is quite difficult to learn," said Jerzy Kaplanek, associate professor in the Faculty of Music. "We are offering a well-established program with great principles and teaching methods that will allow us to develop one of the leading violin classes in Canada."

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Mio earned a Master of Music, Bachelor of Music and Performance Diploma from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, as well as an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music (ARCT) Teacher’s Diploma in piano. She has toured with orchestras throughout Canada and Europe, and developed her own class of violinists while working with Zweig.

In addition to instructing at the Laurier String Academy, Mio will teach the String Pedagogy course to Laurier music students.

“The String Academy will bring a whole new dimension to students in our pedagogy course,” said Kaplanek. “It will give Laurier students a teaching lab where they will have the opportunity to observe and assist in a teaching environment.”

The Laurier String Academy program will be offered during the fall, winter and spring terms. The program is 36 weeks long and incorporates a private lesson and a group lesson each week. No previous musical experience is necessary. Parents are required to attend lessons and practice with their children to encourage their training.

For further information and to register, visit www.wlu.ca/coned/strings or call 519-884-0710 ext. 6036.