

# Rhapsody News

Rhapsody Arts Center is a non-profit community school of the arts

## STUDIO CALENDAR

### MARCH

- 3/3 Painting 101 begins
- 3/7 Creative Color Mixing begins
- 3/9 Kids N Keys
- 3/10 Babies Music-FREE!
- 3/10 Beginning Piano
- 3/11 T-Shirt and tie dye design begins
- 3/11 Toddler's Music
- 3/12 All Mixed Up begins
- 3/16 Spring Recital sign-up begins
- 3/20 Composition with Chris
- 3/21 Asian art for Early Childhood begins

### APRIL

- 4/1 Deadline to sign up for recital
- 4/6-4/12 Spring Break
- 4/6 Learn to Draw begins
- 4/7 Digital Photography begins
- 4/8 Go Green! Recycled Art begins
- 4/9 Wild Imagination begins
- 4/24-26 Recital Weekend!

**May 1** Priority deadline to sign up for summer private lessons

### \* OFFICE HOURS\*

The RAC office is open 9am-4:30pm  
Monday, 9am-5:30pm Wednesday, 9am-  
5pm Tuesday, 9am-2pm Thursday and  
10:30am-5pm Friday.

## Free Babies' Music Class

A big thanks to The Purple Goose for sponsoring our free Babies' Music class again this year. The sounds of baby sized drums, shakers, and tambourines will fill the halls of Rhapsody every Tuesday from 10:30-11am. This is a twelve-week class that runs from March 4-May 20.

Parents and babies participate in music, movement, and listening activities that help stimulate development and bonding. No reservation is required. Drop in whenever you like, and bring a friend or two!

## STUDIO NEWS

### Summer 09 information



Summer 2009 information was mailed out the first week of March. There are extra camp booklets and summer lesson registration forms in the lobby.

Summer lessons are designed to be a very productive time for music, allowing an opportunity for fun and creativity without losing the progress that was made during the academic year. With such a lengthy summer term (eleven weeks) we encourage students to enroll in summer lessons to keep up their skills. Students may sign up for a package of 6 or 10 private lessons during the summer. We hope you'll take advantage of all of the summer creative opportunities; please tell your friends!

### Little Amadeus

Have you ever watched Little Amadeus on public television? Whether you answered "yes" or "no", you must visit the website [www.little-amadeus.com](http://www.little-amadeus.com)! You can view a trailer for the popular television show and meet all the characters while visiting Mozart's home. There are also lots of fun games and a "walking" tour of the marketplace! The games reinforce topics such as identifying symphonies, string quartets, and concertos; learning about the instruments played in an orchestra; and information about Mozart himself. This fun and exciting website is aimed toward ages 6-10, but fun for all ages. Enjoy!

### Spring Recitals

The spring studio recitals are scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 24-26th at Rhapsody. A recital for adult students only will

be held Thursday evening, April 23rd. Students may perform either one or two pieces for the spring recital. Sign-ups for recital times are first come first serve and can be done between Monday, March 16- Wednesday, April 1.

### Spring Break

**Rhapsody Spring Break: April 6-12 2009**

Please note that Rhapsody's spring break may differ from your school's spring break. Please let your teacher know well in advance if you will be gone during a different week—we are happy to accommodate you!

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents should feel free to contact their child's teacher at any time to discuss lesson progress. Teachers are willing to talk over the phone or to arrange a conference in person.

### Guild Auditions

We have many students that will be entering Guild Auditions May 21-22nd at RAC. For students involved in Guild auditions, the schedule for the day will be given to you late March.

### Sick Days

Students have been sick, teachers have been sick, it's just that frustrating time of year. We haven't forgotten you though! Make-up lessons will be completed before the summer term begins. Thanks for your patience as both students and teachers recover from winter illnesses.



# Music News

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## Maintenance volunteer needed

Are you handy with tools? Like to fix whatever happens around the house? Rhapsody needs a fix-it man or woman to help out when maintenance issues come up at the studio.

Contact Katie at  
katie@rhapsodyarts.org  
or 848-2045 for details.



## Musicians' Brains 'Fine-Tuned' to Identify Emotion

EVANSTON, Ill. --- Looking for a mate who in everyday conversation can pick up even your most subtle emotional cues? Find a musician, Northwestern University researchers suggest.

In a study in the latest issue of *European Journal of Neuroscience*, an interdisciplinary Northwestern research team for the first time provides biological evidence that musical training enhances an individual's ability to recognize emotion in sound.

"Quickly and accurately identifying emotion in sound is a skill that translates across all arenas, whether in the predator-infested jungle or in the classroom, boardroom or bedroom," says Dana Strait, primary author of the study.

A doctoral student in the [Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music](#), Strait does research in the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory directed by neuroscientist Nina Kraus. The laboratory has done pioneering work on the neurobiology underlying speech and music perception and learning-associated brain plasticity.

Kraus, Northwestern's Hugh Knowles Professor of Communication Sciences and Neurobiology; Richard Ashley, associate professor of music cognition; and Auditory Neuroscience

Laboratory manager Erika Skoe co-authored the study titled "Musical Experience and Neural Efficiency: Effects of Training on Subcortical Processing of Vocal Expressions in Emotion."

The study, funded by the National Science Foundation, found that the more years of musical experience musicians possessed and the earlier the age they began their music studies also increased their nervous systems' abilities to process emotion in sound.

"Scientists already know that emotion is carried less by the linguistic meaning of a word than by the way in which the sound is communicated," says Strait. A child's cry of "Mommy!" -- or even his or her wordless utterance -- can mean very different things depending on the acoustic properties of the sound.

The Northwestern researchers measured brainstem processing of three acoustic correlates (pitch, timing and timbre) in musicians and non-musicians to a scientifically validated emotion sound. The musicians, who learn to use all their senses to practice and perform a musical piece, were found to have "finely tuned" auditory systems.

This fine-tuning appears to lend broad perceptual advantages to musicians. "Previous research has indicated that musicians demonstrate greater sensitivity to the nuances of emotion in speech," says Ashley, who explores the link between emotion perception and musical experience. One of his recent studies indicated that musicians might even be able to sense emotion in sounds after hearing them for only 50 milliseconds.

The 30 right-handed men and women with and without music training in the *European Journal of Neuroscience* study were between the ages of 19 and 35. Subjects with music training were grouped using two criteria -- years of musical experience and onset age of training (before or after age 7).

Study participants were asked to watch a subtitled nature film to keep them entertained while they were hearing, through earphones, a 250-millisecond fragment of a distressed baby's cry. Sensitivity to the sound, and in particular to the more complicated part of the sound that contributes most to its emotional content, was measured through scalp electrodes.

The results were not exactly what the researchers expected. They found that musicians' brains lock onto the complex part of the sound known to carry more emotional elements but de-emphasize the simpler (less emotion conveying) part of the sound. This was not the case in non-musicians.

In essence, musicians more economically and more quickly focus their neural resources on the important -- in this case emotional -- aspect of sound. "That their brains respond more quickly and accurately than the brains of non-musicians is something we'd expect to translate into the perception of emotion in other settings," Strait says.

The authors of the study also note that the acoustic elements that musicians process more efficiently are the very same ones that children with language disorders, such as dyslexia and autism, have problems encoding. "It would not be a leap to suggest that children with language processing disorders may benefit from musical experience," says Kraus.

Strait, a pianist and oboe player who formerly worked as a therapist with autistic children, goes a step further. Noting that impaired emotional perception is a hallmark of autism and Asberger's syndromes, she suggests that musical training might promote emotion processing in these populations.

To learn more about the link between music, the brain and language processing, visit Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at <http://www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu>.

*Northwestern University Press Release*

# Birthdays

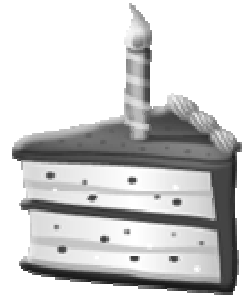
## Happy Birthday!

### March

Parker Berry, Emmet Herb, Max Kassel, Lauren Samz, Sean Bellissimo, Elaina Durnen, Cari Monroe, Randy Kessenich, Brandon Fitzwilliams, Sophia Caruccio, Anna Slukvin, Sydney Prall, Lily Fedler, Michelle White, Sam Averill, Sairoong Brunner, Anthony Arnn, Jaedyn Wozniak

### April

Sam Kessenich, Jack Micka, Haley Shoemaker, Carter Van Fossen, Hariharan Jayaraaman, Elena Watson, Ian Smith, Isabella Skalsky, Natalie Schad, Katarina Dovat, Jacob Storch, Jack Butler, Skylar Stecker, Marley Campbell, Nate Kiehn, Evan Dove, Sierra Teigen, Kate Cooney, John Fulton



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