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President's Message

by *Sandra Menard*

This summer, we took in some amazing concerts. One of the most memorable was a piano recital by Zhu-Xiao-Mei, who presented the Goldberg Variations. Not able to resist, I ordered her CD as well as her autobiography. Her story is both inspirational and humbling. She tells of her life as a prodigy and her experience as a pianist living through the Chinese Cultural Revolution. We learn about the truly appalling condition of her piano (it was once shipped in the coal compartment of a train to a shack in the woods), how she was banned from playing it for many years and how her music scores were destroyed.

As for me, my first piano came painted pink, so it was stripped, stained and also stripped of its player feature. It hasn't been tuned or played in over 30 years and has been subjected to basement flooding more than once. Hardly my dream Bosendorfer - but hopefully I brought out the best in it and it, the best in me.

Our students, too, may not have the best instruments, but the love of music comes from within. With support and encouragement and giving the best of ourselves as teachers, we can bring them a long way - no matter what the means. I wish you all an exceptional year of coaching and mentoring!

Another highlight this summer was the amazing Unisong concert at the NAC - a must-do Canada Day activity that was created by ORB member Lois Harper and her husband Don. Now past its 16th year, it has become an official Canada Day event.

This past July eight of our branch members arrived at the ORMTA Convention in Burlington to learn and enjoy, but also to congratulate and support our own Sue Jones as she took on her new role as Provincial President of ORMTA. We wish you much success Sue!

An organization like ours only functions as well as it does because of its exceptional volunteers. Welcome to all returning council members! It is also a pleasure to welcome Katarina Jovic and Kimberley Sundell to our team! The co-ordinators of our events have already been busy planning for the year ahead and you will find our calendar online at www.ormtaottawa.ca as well as in the ORBit throughout the year. We always need a helping hand at our activities, so please don't hesitate to offer your talent, time or constructive criticism - it is always welcome!

A warm welcome is also extended to our new members Gregory Drover, Wendy Petch and Julia Sankey.

Our annual September General Meeting and Coffee Party begins at 9:15 on Sept 10th at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Orleans. As always, looking forward to seeing you there!