iMA Newsletter

Voted top 100 educators in the world by the International Biographical Centre
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Winner of the Royal Conservatory of Music Gold Medal for Teaching Excellence
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International Music Academy

Year XXX, No. 10 *October 2026*

WELCOMING OUR NEW STUDENTS

Sonja Ng, voice
Alan Ganendran, piano
Horace Arley Magdadaro, piano
Suruthi Nithyanandan, voice/piano

IMPORTANT DAYS IN OCTOBER

October 1	International Music Day
October 12	*Thanksgiving*. IMA is open.
October 9	Markham Contemporary Music Festival. **An evening of Musical Brilliance.** *(free tickets for IMA students and their families)*
October 17	Flato Markham Theatre. Kindred Spirits Orchestra. **Elegance and Imagination.**
October 26	PA Day (YR). IMA is open.





GET A $30 CREDIT ON YOUR NEXT MONTH TUITION

We are always very happy to welcome new students of all ages, levels, and instruments to the iMA. **Please tell your friends about your experience with the International Music Academy.** Do you know someone who is thinking of taking music lessons or who has **children** who may be interested in getting their hands on a musical instrument or singing?

Do you know a **teenager** who needs a high school OAC credit? Do you know an **adult** who has wanted for a long time to learn how to play a musical instrument but has never had the time or inclination? **Please tell them about the IMA.** As an appreciation for your referral, we will give you a **$30 credit** for each new family who registers at the International Music Academy as a result of your referral.

IMA STUDENTS' BIRTHDAYS IN OCTOBER

Theodore J., Sarah M., Caleb S., Alan G., Horace M., Samantha C., Dylan L., Thomas L., Marcus L., Chloe N., Alison Q., Luke Y., Mary P., Adam D.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



COMPOSERS' ANNIVERSARIES IN OCTOBER

1/10/1865	Paul Dukas born
2/10/1920	Max Bruch died
3/10/1931	Carl Nielsen died
9/10/1813	Giuseppe Verdi born
9/10/1835	Camille Saint-Saëns born
11/10/1896	Anton Bruckner died
14/10/1990	Leonard Bernstein died
17/10/1849	Frederic Chopin died
18/10/1893	Charles Gounod died
20/10/1874	Charles Ives born
22/10/1811	Frantz Liszt born
24/10/1725	Alexandro Scarlatti died
25/10/1825	Johann Strauss Jr born
25/10/1838	George Bizet born
26/10/1685	Domenico Scarlatti born
27/10/1782	Niccolò Paganini born

FEATURED STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Ovya Praba



1. What instrument do you play? I play the piano.
2. How long have you taken lessons? I have been taking lessons for the past 3 years.
3. Who are your favourite musical artist(s)? My favourite artist is Antonio Vivaldi.
4. What are your other hobbies, besides music? My hobbies include horseback riding and swimming.
5. What is your Favourite food(s)? My favourite food is sushi.
6. What is the coolest thing you've learnt in your lessons in the past three months? The coolest thing I've learned in the past is song Bingo.
7. Do you have any performance coming up? I'm looking forward to playing the piano at the IMA-Winter Music Festival.



FEATURED TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Olesia Marchuk, M.Mus., B.Mus.
Piano and voice studies, Music Theory



Olesia Marchuk is an accomplished professional pianist and singer whose career spans some of Europe's most prestigious opera houses and concert stages. Born in Ukraine, Ms. Marchuk pursued her passion for music at the Kiev Music Academy, graduating in 2004 with a Master of Music degree. For over 17 years, she was a distinguished member of the Kiev Opera House, where she performed as a choir soloist and took part in a wide range of acclaimed productions. Her versatility and artistry have brought her to the stage in internationally renowned projects such as *Notre Dame de Paris* by Luc Plamondon and Riccardo Cocciante, the rock opera *Mozart* by Dove Attia, and operatic masterpieces including Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*. Ms. Marchuk has toured extensively, sharing her art with audiences in Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, and many other European countries. Since relocating to Canada, she has continued to enrich the cultural landscape with her artistry. In addition to her work as a soloist, Olesia brings a wealth of skills to her artistic practice, including choir and ensemble singing, conducting, vocal coaching, piano accompaniment, piano teaching, and stage acting. Her broad experience and deep musicality continue to make her a highly sought-after artist, both on stage and in the studio.

Ms. Marchuk was happy to answer a few questions for our students and parents:

What do you like most about teaching? - What I enjoy most about teaching is seeing students grow – not only as musicians, but also as individuals. Music has a unique power to open hearts and minds, and it is incredibly rewarding to witness when a student has a moment conscious understanding a new concept or feels proud of their progress. Teaching allows me to share my passion for music and to inspire students to express themselves creatively. I love creating a positive and encouraging atmosphere where every student feels supported, challenged, and motivated to reach their full potential. Watching students gain confidence and develop their musical skills is one of the most fulfilling parts of my work.

2. How do you inspire students to practice more? - I believe students practice more when they feel connected to the music and understand why it matters. I choose repertoire that matches their interests and abilities, so practice feels exciting rather than overwhelming. I also set clear, achievable goals and celebrate even small successes along the way. During lessons, I explain how consistent practice builds skills step by step and makes music more fun to play. I encourage students by showing genuine enthusiasm for their progress and reminding them that every minute of practice brings them closer to performing with confidence and joy.

3. What roles does performance play in student's development? - Performance is an essential part of musical growth. It helps students build confidence, develop stage presence, and learn how to share their music with others. Preparing for a performance teaches discipline, focus, and attention to detail, as students work toward a clear goal. It also gives them the opportunity to experience the joy of expressing emotions through music in front of an audience. After each performance, students often feel a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue improving. I see performances as celebrations of progress, where students can be proud of their hard work and see how far they have come.

4. Who are your favourite composers? - I admire many composers, but some of my favorites are Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Giuseppe Verdi, Robert Schumann, Franz Schubert, Claude Debussy, and Maurice Ravel. I love Bach for his profound spirituality and perfect counterpoint, Mozart for his elegance and charm, and Beethoven for his emotional depth and power. Verdi's operas inspire me with their dramatic intensity, while Schumann and Schubert capture the beauty of human emotions in such a poetic way. Debussy and Ravel fascinate me with their colorful harmonies and impressionistic sound world that feels like painting with music.

5. What was the last piece of music (sheet music or recording) you purchased yourself? - I purchased the music books - The Royal Conservatory Level 5 Piano Repertoire and Technical Requirements for Piano.

FEATURED ARTICLE

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

Beethoven! His 21 greatest works, ranked

By Michael Tanner



Few composers have shaped the landscape of Western music as profoundly as Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827).

Straddling the Classical and Romantic eras, Beethoven's works are more than just monuments of musical craftsmanship: they are emotional odysseys, intellectual feats, and deeply human expressions. From the volcanic power of the 'Eroica' Symphony to the transcendental serenity of his late string quartets, Beethoven redefined what music could say and how it could make us feel.

But ranking Beethoven's greatest compositions is no easy task. His output is astonishingly rich and diverse: symphonies that shook the foundations of tradition, piano sonatas that reimagined the keyboard's expressive range, and chamber music works that still sound daring two centuries later. Some pieces were radical in their day; others grew in stature with time, as generations uncovered their layers of innovation and soul.

This list counts down twenty of Beethoven's most significant and enduring works, balancing artistic vision, emotional depth, historical importance, and sheer beauty. It includes orchestral epics and intimate miniatures, monumental statements of faith, and whispered late-style reflections. There's no single "correct" order, but here is a journey through the core of Beethoven's genius – an invitation to rediscover one of the greatest minds in musical history.

21. Six Bagatelles (1824)
These short pieces, which Beethoven wrote while in the midst of composing (with enormous effort) his last and most strenuous works, must have been as much a relief for him to write as they are for us to listen to. Only one or two of the Bagatelles are regularly played: but they are all delightful.

If you need something in between the sublimity of Beethoven's most demanding and rewarding works, and the routines of everyday life, these gently cheerful pieces provide the ideal bridge.

20. Violin Sonata in G, Op. 96 (1812)
This, the last of Beethoven's ten sonatas for violin and piano, is a piece so glowing with good humour and gentleness that it is almost unique in the composer's oeuvre. The two performers are on genial terms from the opening exchange of trills onwards, and when the violin takes off out of sheer high spirits, it is with the full support of the piano.

It ends with a set of variations that includes a typically Beethovenian fugue, dry and austere, which sets the benignity of the rest of the Sonata in relief.

19. An die ferne Geliebte (1816)
Beethoven isn't thought of as a major contributor to German art song, but to all intents he founded it. An die ferne Geliebte ('To the distant beloved') is his most striking achievement in this line, and the first German song cycle.

On the subject of more or less helpless love, these six songs may not be as agonised as those by Schubert or Schumann,

but they're plangent and equally melodious. They also show that Beethoven, whose music is almost never erotic, could express the urges he had in common with his fellow human beings, though he usually concentrated on what he regarded as nobler ones.

18. 'Eroica' Variations (1802)
These amazing variations, written when Beethoven was 32, are on a theme that fascinated him for many years and recurs in the 'Eroica' Symphony (see below). Here, the melody is subject to a series of ever wilder, often hilarious transformations, some of the later ones almost shocking in their audacity.

The composer, himself a great pianist, often liked to wrongfoot his audiences, especially with tender passages at which he roared with laughter.

17. Symphony No. 8 (1812)
For a long time there was agreement that Beethoven's odd-numbered symphonies were the big boys, while the evens were comparatively light relief. That's false, and in no case more than in Beethoven's Eighth Symphony.

This is a compact work, mischief in every bar. There is something demonic in its humour, as you might expect from Beethoven at this summit of his career: those who think that 'serious' and 'funny' are opposites have the shallowness of that view ruthlessly exposed by this arch-master of emotional disruption.

16. Piano Sonata No. 23 'Appassionata' (1804-05)
The 'Appassionata' represents the peak of Beethoven's "Heroic" period, a tempestuous masterpiece of structural perfection and raw emotional violence. It pushes the piano to its physical limits, utilizing extreme dynamic shifts and dark, percussive textures in F minor. Its greatness lies in its relentless momentum; from the haunting opening to the volcanic finale, Beethoven sustains a state of tragic intensity that redefined the sonata as a vehicle for profound, personal struggle.

15. 'Archduke' Piano Trio (1814)
This is the last masterpiece of Beethoven's 'middle' period, and if it had been his last work we would have felt content that he ended on so comprehensively embracing a piece.

The slow movement has a rapt beauty nearly unique in Beethoven's output, with a depth of feeling that presages what is to come. Often when this Trio is played, listeners don't talk for some time after.

14. Fidelio (1805)
Beethoven wrote just one opera, Fidelio, and it is a supreme masterpiece. The plot is in many ways absurd, the spoken dialogue inept, and Beethoven's writing for the voice is, to put it gently, inconsiderate. And yet it has the power to move the listener to tears and ecstasy as few pieces do.

The heroine Leonore's resolution, the agony of the scene where she thinks she is digging her husband's grave and the unrestrained rejoicings at the end are among the glories of drama, indeed of all art.

13. Piano Concerto No. 5 'Emperor' (1809-11)
This is Beethoven for once savouring the fullness of his powers with a work of celebration – not of anything in particular, but of the joy of creation as a whole. As with many composers, particular musical keys had connotations for him, and E flat – a key which meant much the same for Mozart – is a promise of richness and excitement.

The slow movement is an ecstatic dream (listen below), and the last bounds away with irrepressible energy, until it finally decides to take a rest.

We named this as one of the best piano concertos of all time.

12. Symphony No. 7 (1811-12)

Richard Wagner at his house, the Villa Wahnfried in Bayreuth, with his wife Cosima and father-in-law, the composer Franz Liszt. Wagner and Liszt were both admirers of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony - API/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images
Whenever Beethoven's Seventh Symphony is mentioned, Wagner's description of it as 'the apotheosis of the dance' is bound to follow. There's an interesting story of Wagner dancing his way through it while his father-in-law Liszt played his piano reduction of it.

Oh, to be a fly on the wall. Whatever, its most striking features are its pulverising energy in three of its movements, and its concentration on rhythm almost at the expense of anything else.

The other famous thing said about it was Weber's claim that it showed that Beethoven was ripe for the madhouse. Even the celebrated slow movement is more interesting for its rhythm than for its melody.

It almost seems that Beethoven was intent on exhausting the possibility of writing one kind of music – and subsequent composers seem to have agreed that he had, until Stravinsky arrived on the scene a century later.

11. String Quartet, Op. 59 No. 1 'Razumovsky' (1806)
Beethoven perhaps kept his deepest feelings for string quartets, of which he wrote three sets: early, middle and late. This first of three so-called 'Razumovsky' quartets is a work on a huge scale, once more breaking the mould of its genre.

Its soaring opening melody is utterly captivating, not least to its own composer who stole it, modified, for a later chamber work. The teasing Scherzo has the instruments interrupting one another, while the slow movement plumbs depths that nothing before in Beethoven's chamber music had.

10. Violin Concerto (1806)
Beethoven's genius was not primarily for melody; he was much more interested in development and transformation. His Violin Concerto is an exception. Though the basic motif of the huge first movement is five drum notes – as unthematic as can be, yet pervasive – when the full orchestra takes over it is

with a soaring melody, taken still further by the soloist who plays some of Beethoven's most serene, touching music. There is more drama, oddly, in the slow movement than in the outer ones.

We named this one of the best violin concertos of all time.

9. Missa solemnis (1819-23)
Beethoven had no fixed religious beliefs, although he liked statements of Eastern origin such as 'I am I'. But he had a religious temperament and, having written one rather routine mass earlier, girded his loins and produced this, his largest and most intransigent work.

Whereas Bach had no religious doubts, so his works have a comforting security, Beethoven seems to be trying to bring a religion into being with his assertiveness and even desperation. There are some beautiful, even sensuous passages, and it ends with a desperate cry for (earthly) piece.

8. Piano Sonata No. 29, 'Hammerklavier' (1818)
The Hammerklavier Sonata is one of Beethoven's two most intimidating works (along with the Grosse Fuge, see below), and one of his greatest. It makes superhuman demands on its performer and listeners, and rewards them for a lifetime. Almost an hour long, it is ferociously compact, with a vast slow movement that plumbs the depths of agony or calm, depending on the listener.

The final movement is a gigantic fugue – a form Beethoven was by now obsessed with – on an immense, remorseless subject that virtually explodes before a few bars of peace lead back into the madness. There is no more astonishing music than this.

7. Diabelli Variations (1823)
Anton Diabelli was an ungifted performer who bet on immortality by writing a trivial little waltz which he sent to many composers, including Liszt and Schubert, asking for a variation on it. They obliged. Beethoven binned it, then fished it out and wrote 33 variations, his unbelievable peak of pianistic invention and inspiration.

The fecundity is such that you can listen to them daily and still find new things. The end never disappoints: after a stunning fugue, the pianist holds a chord for a long time and then moves into the most gracious, elegant minuet. This, from Beethoven!

6. Piano Sonata No. 32 (1820-3)
The last of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas, brings this body of work to a conclusion so ultimate that it's amazing that anyone has written sonatas since. It's in only two movements, the first of which is declamatory, energetic, and not even all that great. But following that comes a set of variations which it's hard to believe any mere mortal could have composed.

A slow and simple melody expands into the most extraordinary rhythms, even jazzy at one point, and ascends until the pianist is playing a triple trill, louder then softer, and the whole piece comes to rest. Have a listen:

5. Symphony No. 5 (1804-8)
If Beethoven's Fifth Symphony had a nickname, surely it would be 'The Unavoidable'. One almost comes to dread those four notes which begin the work and never leave it alone. Yet it remains astonishing in its ferocity and in the uneasy feeling it can – should – give the listener of uncertainty about whether he or she is being attacked or is indeed the attacker.

Whichever, in a fresh performance the Fifth should still knock your socks off. The Scherzo has goblins stalking the earth (or so the author EM Forster thought in Howards End) and leads thrillingly to the finale, the most convincing non-religious orchestral celebration up until then.

4. String Quartet in B flat op. 130 (incl. Grosse Fuge, op. 133) (1825-6)
The last quartets – five of them – are Beethoven's will and testament. They are original in every way, this one with six movements, including the gigantic and rebarbative fugue as the finale. There are no external criteria to assess them by, since they are like nothing else in music.

Op. 130 has a slow movement, the Cavatina, which made Beethoven weep when he thought about it. It's hard to envisage anyone responding differently. Listen below:

3. Symphony No. 3 'Eroica' (1804)
Beethoven arguably made his single most stunning advance with his Third Symphony, the Eroica. Not only is it the longest symphony written up to that time, it also has, in a vague way, a subject matter, as indicated by its title.

Beethoven initially dedicated the symphony to Napoleon Bonaparte, but later withdrew the dedication after Napoleon had himself declared Emperor of France in 1804, which Beethoven viewed as a betrayal of the democratic ideals of the French Revolution. So, forget Napoleon: this is about the heroic spirit in general, not one instance of it.

After its initial two hammer blows, the 'Eroica' surges into a prolonged movement in which passages of lyric beauty give way, time and again, to terrifying onslaughts. The second movement – the greatest of all funeral marches – shows who won. That movement itself ends by crumbling into silence.

The third movement, a simmering, rollicking Scherzo with a lusty trio for three horns, shows that Beethoven is not going to take death lying down; the last, a set of variations, takes the 'Eroica' theme and shows how many kinds of joy are possible. After this, nothing could be the same.

2. Symphony No. 9 (1822-4)
Many listeners will agree that the first three – purely orchestral – movements of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 work are the greatest symphonic movements he ever created. The first is crushing, the second a huge counter-attack of energy, the third a profound set of variations.

With four vocal soloists and a chorus added, the fourth movement, that great affirmation of brotherhood under a benign Father, has created the greatest division of opinion, not

least due to the public uses for which it has been deployed. Many listeners, however, find it deeply moving.

1. String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131 (1826)
Stravinsky wrote of this work: 'Everything in this masterpiece is perfect, inevitable, unalterable. It is beyond the impertinence of praise. The most affecting music of all, to me, is the beginning of the Andante moderato variation. The mood is like no other and the intensity, if it were to endure a bar longer, would be intolerable.'

It was another great composer, Wagner, who first celebrated the perfection of this work, perhaps above all the transcendental fugue with which it opens. At the end Beethoven writes a furious Allegro movement which brings us down to earth, realising that what we have been listening to earlier demands a purity of spirit which not many people can achieve or maintain.

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