

## IMMA PEDAGOGY AND CURSUS

### INTRODUCTION:

The International Menuhin Music Academy, a unique string academy, was founded in 1977 by Yehudi Menuhin. It was his last and perhaps, as he said in several interviews, his most accomplished project.

Lord Menuhin was more than a musical genius. His influence as a great humanist, as a thinker and as a believer in peace and harmony in the world, reached far beyond the world of classical music.

But of course, music was his main instrument and he used it to leave his legacy: “Music creates order out of chaos: for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the divergent, melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed, and harmony imposes compatibility upon the incongruous.”

A man of great discipline and strong life principles, he believed that the European humanistic ideal was best expressed through the great composers of classical music. He believed that this musicianship represented a unique and precious heritage that had to be preserved.

Lord Menuhin therefore decided to create the Menuhin Academy, with the help of the great violinist Alberto Lysy, in Switzerland, his last place of residence and a country he admired for its values. The Academy was conceived from the very beginning as a unique institution for learning music, which would help spread his vision of musical excellence worldwide, thus continuing the uninterrupted line of composers and masters who had passed on this cultural heritage.

The fundamentals of the Menuhin Academy were therefore designed to serve this mission:

### **Music Excellence:**

No more than 16 students at a time in order to allow the formation of a chamber orchestra, recruited on the basis of exceptional talent. Post-graduate education or, as he put it himself in his understated ways: ‘A finishing school’. Its program was designed to focus entirely on music practice with no additional or secondary courses.

An original cursus based on:

- intensive individual lessons and master classes,
- acquisition of repertoire,
- Intensive individual practice
- stage performances as soloists, when playing with the Menuhin Academy’s chamber orchestra and the Menuhin Academy’s chamber music groups.

### **International overture:**

In order for Lord Menuhin’s legacy to be shared, we encourage the recruitment of students from all over the world. In turn the Menuhin Academy’s alumni as soloists, members of orchestras worldwide, professors, could perpetuate and become ambassadors of this legacy.

### **Economic independence for the students:**

This makes the Menuhin Academy unique in Europe and, perhaps, in the world. During their 3 year stay, the Menuhin Academy's students are entirely supported financially: Free lessons, free accommodation and a monthly stipend. Their capacity to concentrate and progress in their cursus is therefore second to none, their devotion to music undisturbed. This has allowed the most talented students, from all social origins, to join the academy and pursue a career.

### **Group discipline and harmony:**

Lord Menuhin believed the Menuhin Academy to be also a 'school for life'. Learning to live together whatever the gender, origin, religion or instrument is to this day an important factor for the Menuhin Academy's student's evaluation. He saw the world of music as a universal family and wanted the Menuhin Academy to reflect that. He always emphasized that being a great violinist was only part of the equation and that without helping others and giving back, an artist will never be accomplished.

### **Well-Being & Long Term Physical & Psychological Health:**

Lord Menuhin was a disciplined Yoga practitioner, which accounted for his great resilience and ability to remain in good spiritual & physical health during his long career. The Academy's priority is to equip young soloists with a coherent mental & physical health program.

## **ACADEMIC CURSUS**

### **Recruitment:**

The Menuhin Academy's candidates are asked to submit a full CV and recorded performances. After careful analysis by the Menuhin Academy's professors, the candidate will be asked to come for an audition. If accepted, the candidate will be offered a place for the full 3 year course.

Places are offered based on the need of filling the chamber orchestra of the Menuhin Academy: 8 violinists, 4 violists and 4 cellists.

The level required is equivalent to a BA or MA combined with awards at international competitions.

Duration of the Menuhin Academy's cursus: 3 years starting 1<sup>st</sup> October finishing 30 September of the following calendar year.

### **Year 1:**

- Further assessment of each new student and the in-depth knowledge of their technical and musical knowledge.
- A personally tailored individual study plan in order for the new student to acquire improved specific technical skills and musicianship through:
  - Scales
  - Etudes
  - Exercises for the left and right hand

- The culture of:
  - Choice of fingering
  - Intonation
  - Sound
  - Interpretation choices
  - Phrasing and the study thereof
- Personally tailored choices of new repertoire
- Learning of the Menuhin Academy's musical conception
- Lessons:
  - At least 4 to 6 hours of individual lessons per full calendar month during school year
  - Approximately 4 hours of chamber music lessons per month
  - Up to 20 hours of orchestral ensemble rehearsals and concert preparation per month
  - Up to 6 hours of lessons with International guest professors per quarter
- Public performances:
  - Approximately 20 chamber orchestra concerts per academic year
  - Approximately 3 concerts of chamber music groups (duets, trios, quartets etc..) per year
- Assessment of successful integration in the group
- Intense personal instrument practice

During year 1, two examinations shall take place to assess all the above and in particular Etudes and scales for the technical side and Repertoire for musicianship, thus enabling them to pursue, or not, their studies at the Menuhin Academy:

- The first one at the end of December.
- The second one at the end of June.

## **Year 2**

Once a student has passed the first year he or she shall enter a consolidation program over the two last years of the cursus:

- Main focus on acquisition of repertoire
- Consolidation of technique
- Lessons:
  - At least 4 to 6 hours of individual lessons per full calendar month during school year

- 4 hours of chamber music lessons per month per student
- Up to 20 hours of orchestral ensemble rehearsals and concert preparation per month per student
- Up to 6 hours of lessons with International guest professors per quarter
- Public performances:
  - Approximately 20 chamber orchestra concerts per academic year
  - Approximately 3 concerts of chamber music groups (duets, trios, quartets etc..) per year per student
  - Some concerts as soloists with the Camerata per year
- Preparation and participation in international competitions
- Acquisition of teaching techniques: Coaching of young music students
- Chamber music with piano students of the HEM of Lausanne and Geneva to consolidate and widen recital repertoire
- Acquisition of professional recording techniques in state of the arts recording studios

### **Year 3**

Same consolidation program with the addition of the ‘Professional Insertion Program’ designed specifically for the Menuhin Academy’s students:

- Preparation of repertoire for orchestral auditions
- Meetings with Artistic directors and leaders of major symphonic orchestras
- Meeting with professional artist agents

During year 2 and 3, students are assessed twice a year by exams in December and July on all aspects of the cursus.

At the end of year 3:

- Graduation Recital
- Award of the Menuhin Academy Diploma

### **Academic degrees**

The Menuhin Academy also cooperates with the Haute École de Musique, *Kalaidos* (Zurich) to enable some selected students to acquire a bachelor's or master's degree.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Menuhin Academy's Pedagogy and Cursus are demanding. They require intense work and discipline. They are accompanied by a detailed set of rules called 'The Menuhin Academy's Rules' which are given to them in a separate document.

The aim of the Menuhin Academy's pedagogy is to allow students, in a unique environment, to reach their human and musical best whilst preparing them for their professional lives as soloists and/or successful members of orchestras and music ensembles. The track record of the Menuhin Academy's students is a tribute to this unique pedagogy; obtaining prominent positions in orchestras and music schools around the world.

It also gives them the extraordinary chance to familiarize themselves with European musical tradition and culture.

The final and superior aim of the pedagogy is to make every Menuhin Academy alumnus an Ambassador of this tradition of excellence and musicianship, to preserve this unique cultural heritage defended so strongly by its Founder, Lord Menuhin.