

## Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute: Week Two, Day Four (Thursday, June 29)

by Daniel Hathaway



Skip Sempé was in rare form in Thursday morning's harpsichord class. In Lully's *Chaconne de Phaëton*, he noted that there are three possibilities of playing in triple meter: beat two can be on time, late, or early, and beat three can be long or short, depending on the second beat. He confessed that he didn't *really* read music until his 20s or 30s

because things didn't make sense to him on the page. And in discussing a Rameau Sarabande, he entered a long monologue about orchestral vs. opera conductors, the latter being more effective at accompanying voices and dancers.

He also noted — in a discussion of playing difficult trills — that he had stopped admiring effort over results (he related that to grant writing), and had less than complimentary things to say about the traverso, though he suggested trilling like a flute would.

One of Sempé's students on Thursday morning was 18-year-old Korean-born harpsichordist and recorder player Peter Lim (pictured above). He and his 14-year-old sister and traverso player Kayla are two of the young sensations of BPI this year, having been largely self-taught through watching YouTube videos. I caught up with both of them in the Con Lounge.

Peter, who just turned 18 in February, will enter Oberlin as a first-year student in the fall. His beginnings in music were both conventional and unusual.

“I started modern piano lessons at 7, then I picked up the recorder in Korea going into the second grade. I just fell in love with it,” he said. “My music teacher was especially fond of early music. I just kept playing, playing, playing. I never had a lesson, just watched a lot of videos and heard a lot of recordings and tried to get myself to play like them.” Astonishingly, from what I heard in a master class when he performed Royer’s *Vertigo*, he only began playing harpsichord a few months ago. He said he never thought that early music would become such a passion.



Kayla, who is 14, took up the modern flute two-and-a-half years ago, “and without much effort, she was the top flutist in our area,” Peter said. She began playing Baroque flute just last week, mastering it to the point of playing a very assured performance in last Saturday’s student ensemble concert. “I was amazed,” her brother said.



Peter, who just attended the Boston Early Music Festival before coming to BPI, would like to carve out a career in music, but he said he couldn’t bring himself to practice ten hours a day — though being able to go back and forth between two instruments makes things more interesting. Originally, he planned to get the highest degree possible in music as soon as possible, but now he’s decided to take his time and see how things go. His admission to Oberlin has changed his perspective, and with four years of high

school Latin behind him, he's also interested in studying the classics in college.

Kayla, on the other hand, immediately answered the career question with "I want to be an orthodontist and do music for fun." Her extra-musical interests are in sports — she's on the swim team and plays field hockey.

The Lim family — including Peter and Kayla's younger sister — moved from South Korea to the Eastern shore of Maryland five years ago, where the father works in floor tiling, and the mother is a housewife.

BPI has been valuable for both Peter and Kayla in terms of gaining experience and having access to fine instruments. Peter notes that it's also been stressful — he's doubled up on masterclasses and ensembles both in recorder and harpsichord — but that even with the limited time he has to practice and jam with his new friends, he'll definitely be back. "I wish I could come here for the next 20 or 30 years."



In addition to her stellar violin playing, Julie Andrijeski is a talented Baroque dancer who loves to introduce that kinetic art to others. She's done that in the late afternoon most weekdays during this year's BPI, and we dropped by Warner Hall on Thursday to watch her coach both beginning and advanced dancers in some moves for Saturday's student ensembles concert.



Thursday evening's continuo class ended the week in a crescendo of merriment orchestrated by Joe Gascho and assisted by Lucas Harris. We began by improvising divisions over some of the bass lines — Bergamasca, Spanish Passacalles, Ruggiero — that were stock-in-trade for Renaissance and Baroque improvisers.



Then, never at a loss for inventive parlor games, Gascho created a lexicon of affects and had us improvise different emotions over ground basses, calling them out at random and giving us only a few

seconds to come up with the goods. Eventually, we created a catalogue of musical techniques that should convey those feelings:

Longing = Suspensions  
Confusion = Dissonance  
Agitation = Jagged motives  
Rage = Fast notes and big chords  
Ecstasy = Upward arpeggios  
Playfulness = Off the beat



Then he turned the non-performers around and repeated the exercise, this time pointing silently at the feeling to be represented and polling the audience to see what the player in the hot seat had actually put across. Try this at home — you don't need four harpsichords, and it's much more fun than charades.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 5, 2017.*

*Click here for a printable copy of this article*

[Return to the Front Page.](#)