



Opinion

Viewpoint: All aboard the PRISMA train

[Print Page](#)

by Michelle Hignell

Published: Tuesday, June 4, 2013 5:37 PM PDT

For the past few months I've been swept up by a part of Powell River culture I'd previously only admired from the outside—our music scene—and consider me hooked.

I was brought on board the newly built PRISMA (Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy, try saying that when you answer the phone) train for my ongoing experience organizing arts events and educational programming for Powell River Film Festival. Getting to know the talented people behind PRISMA, without whose ambition and tireless work ethic a project of this scale could not take place in a community of our size, has been inspiring.

I love meeting new people through my work, and PRISMA has introduced me to a whole new batch of society directors, event volunteers and patrons of the arts. As the main point of communication for the student musicians arriving on our shore June 17, I get a kick out of hearing their anticipation and excitement. For some of them, this is their first time travelling—how lucky that our community can play host. Whether flying in alone from Taiwan with perfect or stumbling English, making the first stop on a cross-Canada tour, finishing up a father-son road trip from Texas, or simply carpooling from Victoria, these students are going to make memories of a lifetime while preparing for professional music careers under the mentorship of spectacularly accomplished guest artists. I'm excited and a little nervous to host violinist Soyoung Yoon, a soloist with such international stature that my more-informed colleagues practically swoon.

You see, I am all too familiar with the heaps of logistical details that wake event organizers in a cold sweat in the middle of the night. It's the musical side I have so much to learn about. From names of obscure instruments I encounter while recruiting students, to the basics of knowing the difference between an orchestra (the people) and a symphony (the music), I am like a babe in the woods. I tried in vain to find a reference book to school myself with, and in the end was best-served by the children's picture book section of the Powell River Public Library.

Local audiences can rest assured that the creative direction of PRISMA is in supremely better hands than my own, and the lineup of student recitals, masterclasses, faculty chamber concerts and symphony orchestra concerts is going to sweep us off our feet. After getting this barrelling train to its station June 18 to 28, you can bet I'll have my tired feet propped up in the theatre, eyes closed and be totally immersed in the music.

Michelle Hignell is the administrator of Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy and co-director of Powell River Film Festival.

Copyright © 2013 - Powell River Peak

[\[x\] Close Window](#)