

---

# The Penguin

---

March 2011

New England Conservatory

Issue XXXI

---

## Adapting to the American Classroom: Advice for International Students

by Yijuan Geng

It is never easy to be in a new country by yourself. As international students, differences in things such as language, food, and culture present us with several challenges. However, despite how hard it can be, there are plenty of ways for us to achieve our dreams. What are we doing during our four years of undergraduate study? What will we be focusing on? How can we make the best use of our time? How do we make big decisions, or deal with things that to others are trivial but to us can be very difficult?

### The Challenges of American Classrooms:

One thing I found to be challenging is digesting material from a class that contains too much information. There are many classes that require a lot of writing, and that is possibly the weakest skill for international students. Because writing is different from daily spoken English, it takes much longer than we think it will when we write. We can become easily confused by things like how to construct an essay, and how to use correct citation methods and bibliography markings. Often, the amount of help we need to get before we actually finish and hand in one paper feels unreasonable. Like American students, we get tired after practicing during the day, so it becomes difficult to find time to revise our papers and improve our writing.

Take me for example. I had to drop classes I liked because I realized my writing skills were not up to the right standards of American writing. I cannot afford to sit in the library for hours, facing piles of books and not feel like I am accomplishing anything.

Why do class assignments seem to be so difficult and time-consuming? Perhaps because we don't understand the class, nor do we always understand what we're supposed to do in the class, or how to balance it with other classes. Thus, we should ask ourselves this question first: What classes should we take that are challenging but not overwhelming?

### How to achieve a balanced schedule:

1. Preview and review. Talk to your advisor about your strengths and weaknesses during the academic advising period. Before signing up for the class, try to get a look at the syllabus and/or talk to the professor to see if it is a good fit. Once you are in a class, plan your work and studying in advance in order to make sure you will be able to absorb the material in the best way. A manageable workload is more important than anything else.

*International Students continued on page 6*

---

## The Audience: Left in the Dark?

by Zach Preucil

A cellist, a violist, and a second violinist all walked into a bar (specifically, Symphony 8). They had just finished a rousing concert at Symphony Hall, blasting the strains of Shosty 5 through the roof, and were in the most celebratory mood. As they sipped their drinks, and reminisced happily about the success of the program, an elderly gentleman approached them.

"Excuse me," he said tentatively, "Were you three just playing in the concert across the street?"

"Why, yes we were," the cellist smiled. "Were you in the audience?"

"Oh, yes!" the man smiled. "What a performance! You all sure did Dmitri proud up there."

"Oh, well, we tried our best," said the violist nonchalantly, sipping his sangria.

"But boy, I got so nervous," the man told them, shaking his head. "Sitting in the back row - my hands were shaking so much I nearly dropped the program in the first movement!"

The three exchanged a confused look; then the second violinist spoke up.

"Excuse me, sir, but why were you nervous? You weren't the one performing."

"Why was I nervous?!" the man exclaimed incredulously, as if the second violinist's question had been an insult. "Why *wouldn't* I be? I paid over a hundred dollars to see you guys play Shostakovitch's Fifth Symphony the way it was meant to be played! If you just played it like it was just another concert, that would be an awful waste of money, now wouldn't it?"

The musicians were taken aback; the violist compensated for the silence by taking a rather long slurp from his sangria.

*Audience continued on page 4*

---

## In This Issue:

Upcoming Concerts at NEC	2
Album Reviews: Radiohead & Disappears	3
Remembering Donald Miller	4
Short Story: The Tale of Isamu	7

## Upcoming Concerts

by Beth Blitzer

### NEC Chamber Orchestra presents Haydn

**Monday at 8:00pm in Jordan Hall**

All 106 symphonies of Joseph Frederick von Hammersdorf Haydn, presented without intermission.

### C.I. Department Presents: Ted Reichman plays the Bee Gees

**Tuesday at 8pm in Jordan Hall**

Faculty member Ted Reichman presents an hour of solo accordion adaptations of all your favorite Bee Gees hits. Includes a special guest appearance by internationally-renowned Bee Gees scholar Anthony Coleman!

### Holy crap, RADIOHEAD!

**Tuesday at 8:00pm in Keller Room**

Yeah! It could be Radiohead! It's either them, or it's a sophomore viola recital. But I mean... just in case it is... do you really want to say that you missed seeing *Radiohead* play at NEC?

### Luke Varland Student Recital

**Wednesday at 8:00pm in Pierce Hall**

Presenting an hour of Baroque works for solo contrabassoon. NOT works for contrabassoon and piano. NOT works for chamber ensemble. Pure, unadulterated contrabassoon.

### "Euphinism"

**Thursday at 8:00pm in Williams**

There's no double entendre when it comes to NEC's top euphonium octet, *Euphinism!* [pause for laughter] Tonight, the octet plays all the major works for their ensemble, including works by Jimi Hendrix, Hector Berlioz, and Albert Oppenheimer.

### Aaron Gelb Student Recital

**Thursday at 8:00pm in the St. Boltoph Janitor's Closet**

Clarinetist Aaron Gelb presents a conceptual recital, featuring him slowly, sloooowly, playing over the break for about an hour and 45 minutes.

### Borromeo Quartet plays Feldman 2

**Friday at 8:30pm in Jordan Hall**

Borromeo celebrates the 75th anniversary of Morton Feldman's bar mitzvah with a performance of his 2<sup>nd</sup> String Quartet. For those of you who want to get home before the T stops running, this concert is definitely for you!

### Trombonists.

**Friday at 3:00pm in the Brass Priority Rooms**

Ride of the Valkyries. Then William Tell. Then probably freaking Tuba Mirum WE GET IT, YOU ALREADY KNOW THOSE EXCERPTS, STOP PRACTICING!!!

### The Loneliest Collaborator

**Saturday at 4:00pm in JH 124**

Come for an afternoon of piano accompaniments without some of your favorite chamber musicians. Featuring the Sibelius Violin Concerto, the Dvorak Piano Quintet, and the Hindemith Sonata for Flute.

### "G Force"

**Sunday at 12:00pm in G01**

The NEC Entrepreneurial Department proudly presents the first of a four-concert series by the Conservatory's only all-Kenny G cover band. Band leader Peter Negroponte has been hailed by Downbeat Magazine as, "a smooth and sultry saxophonist."

### Violin Recital

**Sunday at 8:00pm in Brown Hall**

In all likelihood, this is an actual event. It probably features... a Bach Partita. And maybe a Beethoven Sonata. And some Prokofiev. Oh, no, I mean Brahms. Am I right? Knew it.



*Beth Blitzer is a second-year graduate student in doppelganger cloning. The Penguin strives to keep this column free of factual accuracy. If you notice any truthful statements, please send an e-mail to beth.blitzer@gmail.com*

---

## The Young Artists Philharmonic Hits Its Second Season Big!

by Isaac Kramer

On Tuesday, March 1st the Young Artists Philharmonic opened its second season with a reading session in the Sinfonia Room. Musicians from NEC, Berklee, and Indiana University joined the featured soloists of the evening: cellist Marza Wilks ('14 Cello Performance), and pianist Jayoung Kim, a doctoral candidate at Indiana University. The repertoire was Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme.

The experience was positive and inspiring for both attendees and performers. "I had a great time supporting my colleagues," said Jonathan Randazzo, a senior Trombone major at NEC, "and I look forward to working with this great orchestra at my recital in May."

"The orchestra did show promise," said first-year NEC trombonist Zachary Jacobs. "There were some nice moments!" Ryan Shannon, a freshman majoring in Violin Performance at NEC agreed. "I had a lot of fun despite the lack of fellow string players. It was a great experience to sight read such great music, with such a variety of players."

The YAP is an orchestra for the community and it is one of Boston's finest rising orchestras. Last season the YAP played a tremendously successful performance of Handel's Messiah. The concert raised \$1,100 for Haiti and was a shining musical moment for the community both in Boston and abroad.

The orchestra is planning an action-packed season of four concerts. WE ARE IN NEED OF MORE PERSONNEL FOR ALL INSTRUMENTS! IF YOU PLAY WITH US YOU WILL BE GUARANTEED THE CHANCE TO PLAY A CONCERTO!

All interested members must contact the orchestra no later than Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Our Website: [TheYap.webs.com](http://TheYap.webs.com)

Our Email: [youngartistsphilharmonic@gmail.com](mailto:youngartistsphilharmonic@gmail.com)



*Isaac Kramer is a sophomore trombone performance major. Send comments and questions about this article to [Isaac.Kramer@necmusic.edu](mailto:Isaac.Kramer@necmusic.edu).*

# RADIOHEAD—THE KING OF LIMBS & DISAPPEARS—GUIDER

by Neal Markowski

You know the story so I ain't gonna bother telling it. Why? Because Radiohead has hit a point where the way they release an album is more interesting than the content on it. I mean, let's look at it like this - 256 pieces of tiny artwork doesn't make up for 38 minutes of drum loops and special effects. Since when did Radiohead turn into the Michael Bay of popular rock music?

And yes, I know all about "Collector Scum." Sure, I paid \$15 for a one-sided Bill Orcutt LP, and yeah, one of my many reasons for justifying buying LPs rather than CDs is the larger artwork. So I get that part. But STILL! What is the deal with the music? They've taken noises that sounded interesting on *Amnesiac* and combined it with Thom Yorke's love of dub-step (which will soon be going the way of "grebo" I imagine).

**Song 1:** Drum loops with some skitterish piano stuff and mumbling.

**Song 2:** Same thing, no piano.

**Song 3:** This was on *Hail to the Thief*, wasn't it?

**Song 4:** More drum loops with some random stuff.

**Song 5:** Drum loops and hand claps with an actual melody somewhere in there.

**Song 6:** Sadly, not a Pere Ubu cover - rather a generic Radiohead piano ballad, but enjoyable enough. Also, this song sounds like a copy of "Sky Blue Sky" by Wilco.

**Song 7:** Hey! This one has guitar and it's about time...but the vocal melody sounds like "Videotape" from the last album!

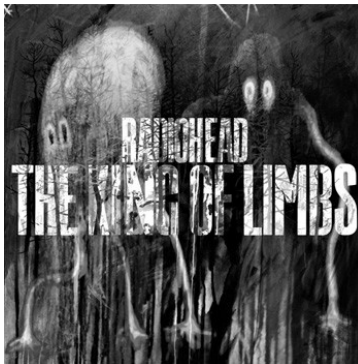
**Song 8:** Once again, a generic Radiohead song; nothing new to see here.

It's pointless for me to go on about *The King of Limbs* - you already own it and love it or hate it, and you probably knew that before you even heard it. So I might as well take the time to tell you about a recent album by a band you NEED to listen to.

The band? **Disappears**. The album? **Guider**.

Disappears hail from the rock 'n roll party town of Chicago, IL. They came from a few different bands in the area (most attention being drawn to the singer/guitarist who plays guitar on the most recent albums by the Ponys). This foursome combines everything that's great about rock and roll music - there's no more than 3-4 chords per song, motorik beats, inscrutable lyrics and it's all drenched in reverb.

Disappears actually have quite an interesting story that doesn't revolve around a car crash or their singer crying because his album has sold a million copies - their story actually has to do with the beloved record label Touch & Go. You see here kids, years and years ago (ok, so maybe 2 years ago), Touch & Go announced they were shutting down their distribution - most of their workers were laid off and bands were in limbo - did they stay on the label and not release anything, or switch to another?



## GUIDER

Disappears were the last band to be signed to Touch & Go before all this happened. As a result, their debut album *Lux* sat, completed, but not released for quite some time. When they were finally picked up by another label (Kranky), they released *Lux* and now only nine months later after an impressive touring schedule, Disappears are opening for everyone from the Jesus Lizard to the Thermals (which is where I saw them - don't worry, the Thermals are still terrible), we have this document.

*Guider*'s first song hits you and is over in 110 seconds. The rest of side one finishes within a brisk 13 minutes. Side two is the one everyone is talking about - it's just one 16 minute song that apparently has been closing their live sets. We could always tell that the band was heavily indebted to Neu! and others of the same ilk, but here it's really evident. But rather than coming off as a band that's just trying to sound like a second-rate krautrock tribute, they pull it off and make it their own. It shouldn't be any surprise - Michael Rother even asked them to open for his Hallogallo 2010 shows in the States.

Essentially, what you have here is just a fantastic rock album. It won't change your life, but it'll certainly make you think that there's hope for music in 2011, but it doesn't live in England (unless of course, you meant the Fall).



Neal Markowski is a sophomore composition major. Send comments and questions about this article to [Neal.Markowski@necmusic.edu](mailto:Neal.Markowski@necmusic.edu). Visit his blog at <http://recordreviewandtacosalon.blogspot.com>.

**NOW THROUGH MARCH 21ST:  
\$27 ADVANCED STUDENT RUSH TICKETS FOR  
SELECT PERFORMANCES OF**

**HATR**

Offer valid in-person only at the box office of Boston's Colonial Theatre, 106 Boylston Street, during normal box office hours Monday-Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm.

**LEXUS**  
**BROADWAY**  **ACROSS AMERICA**  
BOSTON

# Remembering Donald Miller

by Jason Belcher

Donald Miller, a beloved local resident and friend to many members of the NEC community passed away on the weekend of February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011 after suffering from a heart attack at the corner of Gainsborough and St. Botolph Streets. He was 57 years old, and born in Brookline, Massachusetts. He is fondly remembered by NEC students for his love of our music, his ability to talk to just about anyone, and his art, which he worked on daily.

He could be seen on a fairly regular basis around the NEC area, and until about December of 2009 was in regular attendance of student concerts given here at NEC. I met Donald around 2006 when I began to come to concerts at NEC myself. Danilo Henriquez (B.M. '08) introduced us. He was always interested in my progress, and was eager to share his thoughts and work with all who were curious.

In 2006, a student named Jacob Zimmerman (B.M. '08) found two of Donald's drawings by the entrance of 33 Gainsborough. These drawings became the subject of two pieces of music by Zimmerman – their titles are *48a. Donald Miller September 2005*, and *48b. Donald Miller February 2006*. Though the numbers of the works are Jacob's cataloguing, Donald had labeled the drawing with his name, and the day of their completion.

"I actually became familiar with his artwork before I met him in person," Zimmerman said. "I found two of his drawings just lying around in the lobby of the dorms and was totally fascinated by them. I had no idea who drew them, and although the materials were very simple [crayons and markers] it was clearly not the work of a child." Moved by the artwork, Zimmerman explained, "I composed two short chamber pieces inspired by the drawings. After I performed a rough draft of one of these pieces, someone told me they knew who Donald was and so I introduced

myself to him...I think he was pleased that I wrote those pieces. I think he especially liked the harp."

Last year, I asked Donald about his process, and if he would be able to respond to hearing music by creating a drawing. He said that this would be impossible. "First, I see the drawing in my head. I don't know [about drawing with music] – I've never done that before!"

His work was even, clear, and mathematical in its proportion. Some have speculated that Donald had a career as an engineer of some kind, or that he worked in statistics with city government before he moved to our neighborhood. The details of Donald's earlier life and what has become of him since his death are still unclear, but we have been in contact with the manager of Donald's residence at 270 Huntington Avenue, and will do our best to post information about his final resting place, and the location of his artwork in the future.

Keep an eye out for information on a memorial event for Donald that will take place on the corner of Gainsborough and St. Botolph when the weather begins to cooperate. It will involve cellos, melodicas, and large pots of coffee.



Jason Belcher is a first-year graduate composition major. Send comments and questions about this article to [Jason.Belcher@necmusic.edu](mailto:Jason.Belcher@necmusic.edu).

---

*Audience continued from page 1*

Finally, the cellist spoke up once more.

"Well, I guess you do have a point, sir," he replied. "But there's no reason to get so - stressed about it."

"Oh, please, with the economy the way it is?" the man replied shortly. "All of us out there in the audience are paying to hear something that will do something for us! If you guys dropped the ball, it would be just like buying a fancy car and never driving it. Why, I could never forgive myself."

The musicians were silenced once more; then, the second violinist summoned for the bartender.

"Get this man a beer!" he exclaimed, and the three welcomed him into their group, trying to mask the guilty realization that had settled over them.

\* \* \*

While perhaps not as extreme as our proverbial gentleman, the point remains that the audience is a vitally important, if not *the* most important, aspect of the performance experience, and the fact is that as performers, we tend not to think about them that often. Our perception of the audience from the stage is largely limited to their behavior, their reactions, and their quantity. We feel a thrill of excitement if the house is packed to its capacity; we feel a sinking sensation if there's only twenty-five people looking back at us. We grimace with displeasure as they all proceed to clear their throats loudly between movements (have any of these people even *heard* of cough drops??) and we grit our teeth as they unknowingly clap in the wrong places. We are vexed when they only give a great masterpiece a smattering of applause, and are

perplexed when they are standing in the aisles for a piece that we don't think very much of at all. But most of the time, they are a singular entity - *those* people, most of them over the age of fifty, sitting in the dark as we play that darn symphony for the twentieth time.

Yet, here we see irony as its finest - for the audience is what makes a performance a performance. What would be the point of a performance of Shostakovich 5 in Jordan Hall without anyone allowed in but the performers? The performers would enjoy it, for sure – but who are they conveying it to? Add in a thousand people, and are they playing it any differently? Probably not. But is the experience different? You bet.

The word "audience" as a general term is so ambiguous, because we never play for the same audience twice. Ever. Even if we are playing for the same people, they cannot possibly be in the exact same mood or state that they were in before - which has a profoundly different effect on how the music is perceived. We don't know who most of the people are, where they come from, or why they're there in the first place. But the point is that they're there. They're taking time out of their evening to dress up nicely, drive through foul weather into the city, and sit and listen to us play. They're there because they think that it's worth their time and money to hear this performance - to be intimately involved with the process of music making. Yet, ironically, we never meet them, we rarely talk to them, and most of the time we don't even see them clearly - despite the fact that we connect with them on a level of intimacy unsurpassed by any other form of human communication.

Of course, we often have the experience of being the audience ourselves. Growing up in a family of musicians, I was an audience member from an early age, often sitting in the back row doodling on the program while my parents played some brilliant masterpiece on stage. As I grew older, I began to recognize that, lo and behold, there was actually something special going on. I would ask my Dad if the pieces had any "good themes" I could listen for, after which point I could revert back to my daydreaming (obviously, I never did very well during contemporary works). And then, as I became more serious with my instrument and music in general, I began to appreciate more and more aspects of the performance, with each concert a revelatory experience about art, life, and expression. Now, the same three-year-old who used to draw detailed illustrations on programs is sitting in the back of Jordan Hall on a recent evening, listening to the Borromeo Quartet and guest artists play *Verklarte Nacht* and marveling at the awe and power emanating from the stage.

Yet, in the next aisle over, there's a kid doodling on the program; and in the aisle beyond him, there's another boy who perks up for the cello solo but is noticeably bored throughout the coda. The point? We are interacting with the audience on multiple levels of communication because each person is taking something different out of the music. Maybe a famous musician is up in the balcony, analyzing every detail, and thinking seriously about what it will mean if he stands up at the end; and maybe next to him is someone who is only there because she thought that the Boston Pops were playing *this* week. Some people may be judging the music; some people may be judging the quality; some people may even be judging individual players to see if they might work well for their upcoming gig.

But the bulk of audience members are often there because they just want to experience a performance. They might have never played an instrument, and hardly know the difference between Beethoven and Bartok. But they have their dedication, their loyalty, and a parking space in the Gainsboro Garage, and they're going to sit there and listen to the very last encore. It is those people who make performances possible.

It is an acute perspective, however, to think of an "audience" as a well-dressed crowd of people sitting in shadow. The "audience," from an anthropological standpoint, is literally anyone who is hearing and receiving the music. They are the guests at a wedding with a string quartet playing background music, the people catching a snatch of a recital as they walk past a concert hall, or picnickers catching the strains of buskers in the Boston Gardens. The guitarists and saxophonists performing in the Park Street T stop have a daily audience of hundreds of commuters. Our local Karaoke talent, described by Jason Belcher as "Special Elvis" and soon to be

*'But yet, when we really think about it, the most often unacknowledged audiences are ourselves. We play our instruments every day, but how frequently do we truly step back and listen from an audience's perspective?'*

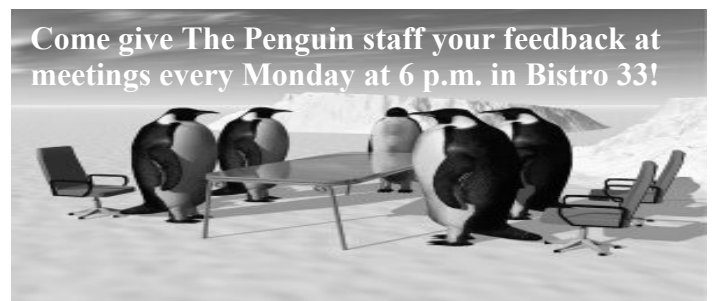
featured in an upcoming Penguin article, may very well have had a larger audience than any of us have had in a lifetime. Think through the last twenty-four hours and ask yourself - did you hear any music whatsoever during that time? The answer is probably yes - and thus you have been an audience member.

With the advent of broadcasting technology, audiences are no longer confined to receivers of a live performance. Audiences of the internet, radio, and television make us realize how truly unknowable our listeners can be. This past summer, I was lucky enough to be on both sides of this phenomenon. After spending four weeks at the Aspen Music Festival, I traveled with my family to the upper peninsula of Michigan, where we spent a week traveling in an RV from campsite to campsite. Through pure chance, we had the radio on one day, and were pleasantly surprised to hear one of my orchestra concerts from Aspen broadcast on the station we were listening to. Here I was, halfway across the country and in the middle of the woods - and I was an audience to myself. It was indeed quite surreal, and certainly reminiscent of several concepts I had learned in Jill Gatlin's Postmodernism class.

But yet, when we really think about it, the most often unacknowledged audiences are ourselves. We play our instruments every day, but how frequently do we truly step back and listen from an audience's perspective? The music we hear the most often really does come from ourselves - but do we understand it? It is prudent that we must, because if we cannot understand ourselves from the audience's perspective, the audience surely can't either. And then, we're *really* leaving them in the dark.



Zach Preucil is a junior cello performance major. Send comments and questions about this article to [Zachary.Preucil@necmusic.edu](mailto:Zachary.Preucil@necmusic.edu).



2. Set weekly goals and plan ahead in order not to fall behind.
3. Balance time appropriately between the required courses, ensembles and electives, and practicing.

When You Need Help:

1. DO NOT be afraid to ask questions!

I used to be afraid of stopping the teacher and asking questions because it is usually considered ‘impolite’ in Chinese classrooms. However, in order to understand as much as we can within the fast pace of the class, we need to overcome this barrier. If we keep questions inside, how will the teacher know whether or not we understand? Remember, you may not be the only one who has the same questions, so do not be hesitated to ask! Asking question is welcomed in the class, it’s also one of the best ways of showing engaged listening while interacting with your teacher and classmates.

2. Nearly every problem has a solution.

If you want something badly enough, then try your hardest to make it happen. Don’t forget that our school is a community with a great support system; it will be tremendously beneficial if we make good use of those resources.

3. Be patient.

We will all go through difficult situations. It takes time and effort to overcome all these things, so it’s important not to rush or give up. In time, the more you try, the better things will get. With an optimistic attitude, you’ll be happily surprised to find yourself making progress every day.

Adapting to American Life:

1. Go out and make friends.

I love most everyone I meet in school, and I have made more friends than I thought I would. American friends are funny and easygoing. A tip from me is that you need to open your heart and welcome new people. The more you reach out to other people, the more other people will reach out to you.

2. Be disciplined.

Late on Sunday nights, I frequently face this situation with homework:

Text from my friend: “Hey, when is the paper due?”

Text from me: “Tomorrow.”

Friend: “Tomorrow? No way. ...#@\$^%#”

Me: “Somehow we had a week to hand it in, didn’t we?”

Friend: “Oops. I should have planned better...”

Many of us are thousands of miles away from our parents and we have been looking forward to this independence. Therefore, the freedom we experience can be exhilarating. However, even though it is important to have a social life, partying too much may not turn out to be fun when you are pulling an exhausting all-nighter for homework assignments.

3. Participate in on/off-campus activities.

Some may say that school is so busy between homework and practicing that they don’t have time for outside activities, but this doesn’t need to be true. Academic work is extremely vital, but it is equally important to achieve a balanced schedule of study and fun. As one American saying goes: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

Participating in different activities enables me to gain deeper understanding of American culture. I have recently become involved in a Bible Study at the Redemption Hill Church, and I’m very interested in taking part in the Night Homeless Ministry with friends. Moreover, I am taking exercise classes at the YMCA, where not only do I get to learn fun dance moves, but also greatly relieve my stress. I strongly recommend it since physical exercise can be just as essential as studying and practicing.

*‘Opportunity knocks at the door  
silently, but sneaks out  
right away.’*

Conclusion:

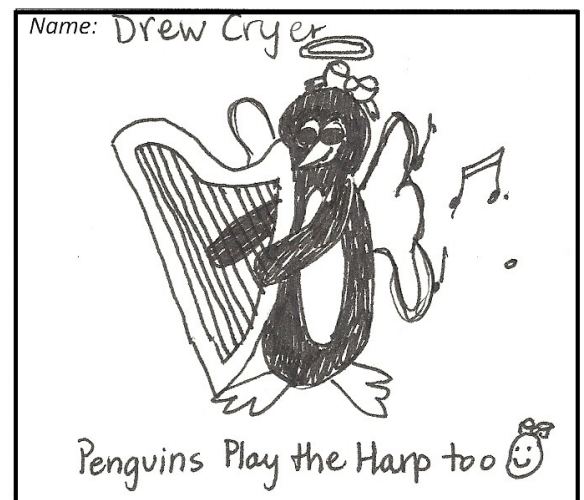
Opportunity knocks at the door silently, but sneaks out right away. Stay focused. If YOU choose to do something, then GET IT DONE.

It is our choices that make us who we are. So, have faith in yourself and be wise with your choices.

Good luck and happy studies.



Yijuan Geng is a sophomore piano performance major. Send questions or comments about this article to [yijuan.geng@necmusic.edu](mailto:yijuan.geng@necmusic.edu).



# The Tale of Isamu

*A short story by Wesley Chu*

There is an ancient story that, like so many others of its kind, tells of a journey undertaken by a solitary and brave soul. The hero of this tale is a young boy whose original name is lost to the annals of time and changed beyond recognition through countless retellings.

Here, his name is Isamu.

When Isamu was born, his family was poor, and his father had been weak for many years. One evening, when he was old enough to run, his mother gave birth to a daughter in the early dusk of twilight, after which she died from her own illness. The village searched for Isamu, who had run so far and fast that, for a time, no one could find him. At last, the old wise-woman of the village found Isamu as he wept through the night, and tried to console him.

“Do not weep, boy! Look up! A new star is there. Your mother’s soul rests in the heavens.”

Isamu did not know which star the wise-woman spoke of, although indeed no one could really tell, for the wise-woman was being kind, not literal. Still, this comforted the boy a little, and after a while, he began to pray to the stars in earnest, asking them to protect his mother who had now joined them. After that, he ran off on an adventure, and did not return for several days.

When he came back, he was greeted with terrible news. One night as his father and sister were sleeping, robbers stole into their home looking for treasure. As their family was so poor, there was nothing to steal, but the bandits decided that a young slave would be worth selling too, and so his sister was taken. Upon awaking, his father was filled with such a terrible sadness that he too succumbed to his sickness and passed away. Isamu was now an orphan, and it was then that he resolved to find the only family he had left.

The wise-woman gave him a small shard of an old mirror, saying it was enchanted and may prove useful.

For seven days and seven nights Isamu ran, eating nothing and drinking little, following the footprints of his sister’s captors. In the heat of the eighth morning he collapsed, weary and dying, by the side of a small pool. He cried out to the stars that they might not be so cruel as to take his sister away from him as they had his parents, but the stars could not hear him as it was now the sun’s time. However, the sun heard him instead, and took pity on him.

“Your heart burns fiercer than mine, boy,” the great light proclaimed. “Even I am warmed by its heat. For this astonishment I will aid you.”

The sun issued forth a ray of brilliant light that gave Isamu new energy, and imbued the magical shard with some of its power. Thanking the sun for his generosity, the stalwart young boy continued on.

For seven more days and nights Isamu ran, carried by the light he held within him. In the deep of the seventh night he was overtaken by a pack of wolves, which was in turn besieged by demons of the wilderness. Though the wolves had fled, Isamu took the shard, which burned with the fierce heat of the sun, and slew all the demons. However, his injuries were so great that he fell, unable to stand or move. He begged the stars once more that they must not allow his mission to falter now, but the stars could not hear him as it was now the moon’s time. However, the moon heard him instead, and felt great sympathy.

“Your cries are colder than my realm, boy,” the pale face declared. “Yet, in the face of death, your bravery outweighs your sorrow. In my amazement I will aid you.”

The moon sighed, breathing down on Isamu a wave of cool night air, soothing his injuries, and imbuing the magical shard with some of its power. Thanking the moon for her kindness, the brave young boy continued on.

Now guided by the mirror shard, which pointed the way with soft beams of moonlight, Isamu ran for seven more days. Finally, on the seventh evening, he discovered the camp of the robbers. He clutched the shard that had aided him on his journey and prepared to rescue the captives, but was struck by a stone shot by the bandits, who had noticed him. He reeled from the blow, and was captured, but not before hiding his treasure in his pocket.

As Isamu was taken into their midst and searched, a bandit rummaged through his pockets, looking for valuables. The shard cut his finger and the robber leapt back and screamed, burning with the same flames that had destroyed the demons. The other bandits prepared to attack Isamu, but were struck and scattered by a pack of wolves, coming in aid to their rescuer.

Isamu found and unbound the body of his sister; with the last remnant of the moon’s power he healed the injuries she had sustained from the cruelty of her captors, but her spirit was already leaving. For a third time he beseeched the stars to aid him, crying out that he should not have ran all this way only to fail. At last, as the early dusk of twilight appeared, it was the time of the stars, and they heard his pleas. The spirit of his sister was granted safe passage back to her body, which now was mended. As soon as she was well enough to walk, they began the long journey back to home.

Not many have heard of this story, and many of those that do doubt its veracity, which is indeed questionable concerning so many others of its kind. Although it speaks of magnificent strength and strange magic, there is at last the courage, which to a blessed few, remains true.



*Wesley Chu is a sophomore piano performance major.  
Send comments and questions about this article to  
Wesley.Chu@necmusic.edu.*



---

## What's up, weather?

*A poem by Julia Partyka*

brisk feeling of air  
you can't see  
you know it's cold  
how can it be  
joker, she is  
laughing free  
spring one day  
then snowing, drink some tea  
back and forth  
skies are cloudy  
what's tomorrow  
well, it's rainy  
because it changes  
quite constantly  
sickness takes over  
can you pass the honey?  
then we sit  
asking pleadingly  
when will the weather  
finally decide to be warm and sunny?



*Want to see your name here?*

<b>The Penguin Staff</b>		
Co-Editor	Elizabeth Erenberg	Elizabeth.Erenberg@necmusic.edu
Co-Editor	Neal Markowski	Neal.Markowski@necmusic.edu
Co-Editor	Zachary Preucil	Zachary.Preucil@necmusic.edu
Staff Writer	Jason Belcher	Jason.Belcher@necmusic.edu
Staff Writer	Yijuan Geng	Yijuan.Geng@necmusic.edu
Staff Writer	Beth Blitzer	Beth.Blitzer@gmail.com
Staff Writer	Isaac Kramer	Isaac.Kramer@necmusic.edu
Staff Writer	Wesley Chu	Wesley.Chu@necmusic.edu
Staff Writer	Julia Partyka	Julia.Partyka@necmusic.edu
Penguin Portrait	Drew Cryer	Drew.Cryer@necmusic.edu
Penguin Portrait	Talya Buckbinder	Talya.Buckbinder@necmusic.edu
Staff Photographer	Jesse Weiner	Jesse.Weiner@necmusic.edu
Faculty Advisor	Thomas Handel	Thomas.Handel@necmusic.edu
Faculty Advisor	Suzanne Hegland	Suzanne.Hegland@necmusic.edu

***Write for The Penguin!***  
***Drop us a line at***  
***thepenguin@necmusic.edu!***