



RIGHT NOTES: Malavika Gopal violin virtuoso, ready to take it to the world

Auckland University student wins first place at National competition

by Marcus Stickley

A young violin virtuoso has hit all the right notes with judges in one of New Zealand's biggest classical music competitions last month.

Malavika Gopal won first place and \$5000 in prize money in the Rotorua National Concerto competition.

The 20-year-old University of Auckland student is no stranger to success, having won the University Concerto competition last year and placing fourth in the Young Musician of the Year in March.

In the heat of competition she tries to not lose sight of her reason for playing music.

"The best feeling is not winning the competition. It's making people feel [emotion]. Making people cry, making people speechless, giving people shivers."

Gopal says it is this musicality that carried her through.

"Someone can play perfect notes not one note out of time, and the technique can be amazing. But, if they don't have musicality then there's no point, because its boring music it doesn't do anything to the audience," she says.

The Indian-born virtuoso migrated from Kerala in southern India to Stokes Valley in Wellington when she was one-year-old.

She started playing violin when

she was three.

"I actually wanted to start when I was two. My sister started when she was four and I was two. I was really jealous [of my sister] because I loved it so much.

"But when I was two the teacher said I was too young. They start you on tissue with rulers out the end and I was too small for that. I just could not handle the size," says Gopal.

She has been invited to attend Royal Northern College of Manchester on a half scholarship when she finishes her Bachelor of Music at the end of the year. Gopal was selected along with two other New Zealanders when staff from the college auditioned candidates from

around the world for 14 positions at the school.

She says she is still weighing her options and may continue her studies in Germany.

Gopal says the most important factor in choosing where to continue her learning is finding the right teacher.

"It's no good you being the most amazing musical person without the technique and going to the most amazing musical teacher because then you will never learn the technique. You need to go over there and find out what teacher fits you the best," says Miss Gopal.

She is set to take her beautiful music to the world.

Stardrunk but with Complete Control

by Jonathan Dow

Stardrunk bassist Dan Rubock is loving life and with good reason.

Rubock has quit his day-job and is looking forward to starting a nationwide tour.

Stardrunk are touring to promote their debut album *Complete Control*.

The tour starts with an album release party at The Studio on Auckland's K Rd on Thursday.

The band spent a couple of months recording and mixing *Complete Control* at York St studios in Auckland.

Fans will be familiar with *Coin* from the band's first EP, and *Fallen* from the second, both of which have made it onto the album.

Rip It Up says *Complete Control* is similar to Pacifier's self-titled album: "very raw, very kick ass and in your face" and gives it four out of five stars.

Stardrunk first turned heads in 2002 by winning the National Battle of the Bands competition.

Since then they have been busy. They toured Melbourne with Elemeno P, Grinspoon, Pacifier and Fur Patrol.

Rubock says Melbourne was awesome and it was great getting to know Pacifier who they still keep in touch with.

"In Melbourne we were a curiosity. We'd get people turning up just to check out this new New Zealand band. There's such a huge New Zealand buzz there," says Rubock.

"We sold out of everything we took over there: cd's, t-shirts, everything. We should have taken more."

Rubock rates last summer's tour with Blindspott as a highlight of the past couple of years.

Music critics have compared Stardrunk to Pacifier and Rubock is happy with this.

"Pacifier are definitely one of my favourite bands and I love their sound and energy."

At The Studio, Stardrunk will be supported by Milk Milk Lemonade and Ruptus Jack.

Dream realised after five years in production

by Peter White

New Zealander Welby Ings is taking his short film *Boy* to the Montreal Film Festival following a showing at last month's Auckland Film Festival.

The film was written, produced, directed and partly funded by Ings, an associate professor at Auckland

University of Technology's School of Art and Design.

Boy is about a 14-year-old male prostitute living in a small New Zealand town who discovers the truth behind a fatal hit-and-run accident.

The driver's family find out what the boy knows and through malicious gossip and a severe beating try to keep him quiet.

How the boy copes and what he decides to do create tension that Ings skillfully sustains to the end.

Despite the boy's public toilet activities, the film is not about a kid being gay but about a kid being marginalised, says Ings.

Ings grew up in a small town and realised that a lot of bad things happen to anyone who is a bit different in a small community.

He used the visual imagery of small town New Zealand as the backdrop to the film.

"The small town is a very rich culture but not one that gets nominated a lot in this country. Who photographs the back streets of small towns?" he asks.

"They have powerful images that talk — by their absence of people — about the nature of people in communities."

The 15-minute film, developed from his original drawings, took Ings five years to make.

It is a story Ings had wanted to tell for a long time, and the approach he took came from an analysis of television commercials and music videos and how they tell stories.

"They compress a narrative into 30 seconds and we can still understand it. I wondered if there was something you can transport into film to cause it to condense a large story but also to become far more hard-hitting than a normal piece of film."

Ings wants to feed his audience huge amounts of information and not allow them to emotionally deal with it until the very end.

The film is unusual in that it does not work from a script but from hundreds of drawings Ings made over three years in the small community of Arapuni in the Waikato.

"I went there and drew the town as a way of trying to understand what sort of lives existed there and trying to let the drawings talk about the kind of world that exists there."

The narrative seeps out of powerful images of the community and is told without any dialogue or subtitles.

The impact is enhanced by a typeface he created for key words displayed momentarily over the images.

The grading and coloring in the film are crucial to building atmosphere. Ings uses the images of the

open road and the boy's bedroom repeatedly throughout the film.

"Long open roads that seem to go on forever, into nowhere, are metaphors for the loneliness, isolation and dislocation of small towns. So I photographed roads and kids and put them together to show the isolation."

The boy has a shrine-like obsession with his bedroom. The dolls in his room are the centerpiece of Ings' design work and took him two months to make.

The dolls are shown before something bad happens and Ings uses them to represent the tension surrounding the boy's life.

Boy was filmed over three days in the North Island towns of Putaruru, Arapuni and Okoroire; and New Zealander Don McGlashan's "Anchor Me" is the feature of the brooding soundtrack.

Boy will appear at the Montreal World Film Festival from August 26 to September 26 along with two other New Zealand short films — *Fleeting Beauty*, directed by Virginia Pitts; and *My Father's Shoes*, directed by Samantha Scott.



BOY: Long open roads that seem to go nowhere