

Beating the concrete jungle

Four of U of T's finest on overcoming the system

BY KARL HANSEN



On a normal day, Linda Ippolito sits for seven hours at the piano, working melodies from the keys.

Ippolito, a budding soloist, is a fourth year student at the Faculty of Music. She chose U of T over Julliard and Mannes College in New York, giving up scholarships to both schools.

"I chose U of T because the teachers seemed more attentive to my needs. And the program here is more academically-oriented," she says. "I think the Faculty of Music is among the best in North America."

Her list of teachers reads like a who's who of musicians in Canada. It includes Boris Berlin, Pierre Souvairan, Irina Kygucheva, and, most recently, Patricia Parr.

Under their tutelage, she shone at local and national competitions, including the Kiwanis Festival, the Canadian Music Competition, the Baldwin Competition and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition. Now she is breaking into the international sphere. Already she has competed in Moscow, Montreal, and Sydney.

"Playing the piano gives me a real

sense of pleasure and discovery. It comes to you exactly what the composer had in mind, so it's like a window onto his thoughts in addition to my own.

"But studying music is different from studying book facts," says Ippolito. "On the one hand, studying book facts can be tedious. But you can walk away from books in a way that music students cannot walk away from their music practice."

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Ippolito was influenced by such diverse artists as Liberace and Rachmaninov.

"At eight, I went to hear Liberace play and that was it. I wanted to be a performer."

"I think one's attitude towards practice is very telling. You need real dedication to succeed.

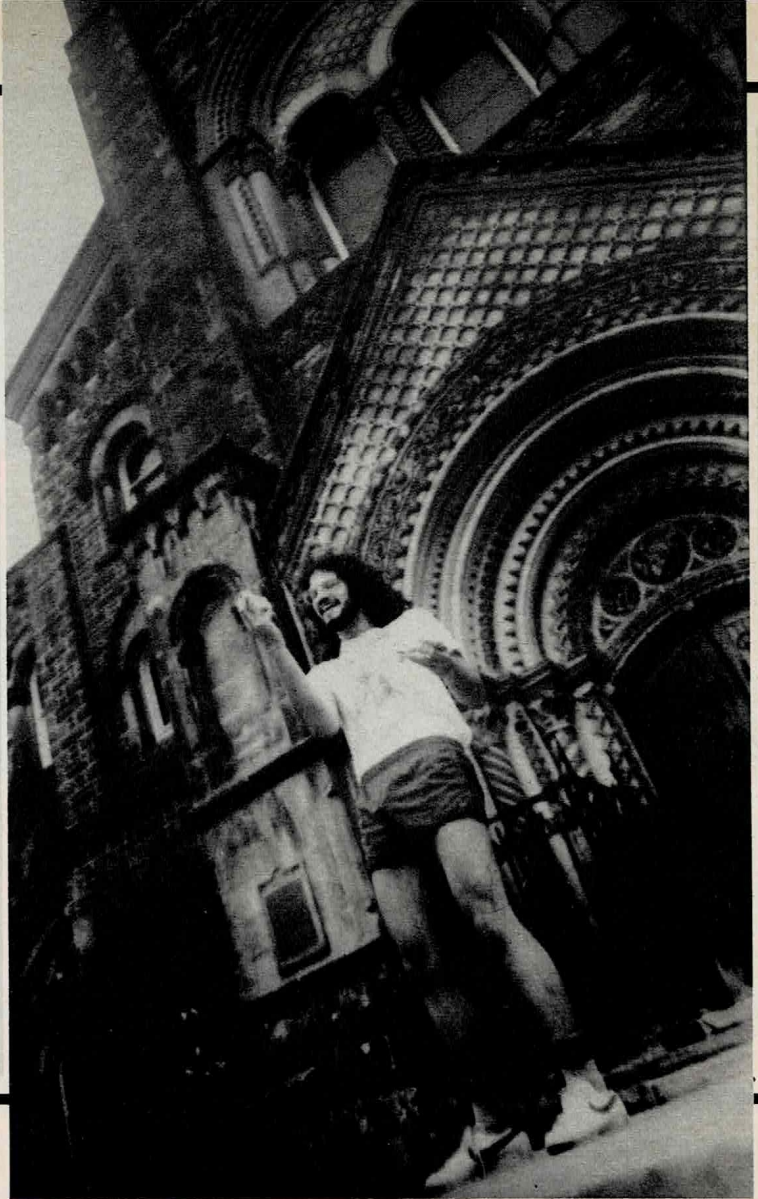
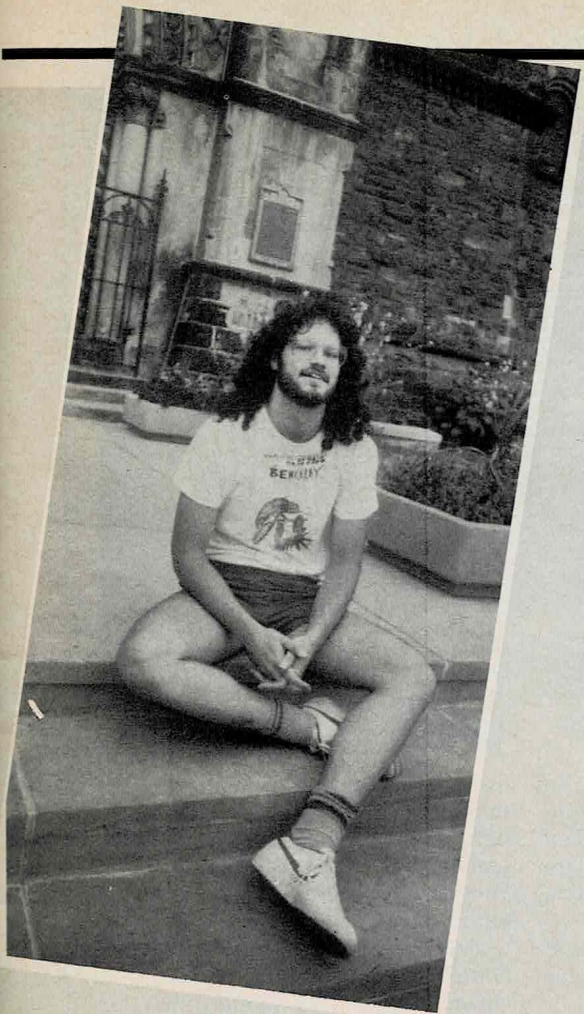
"It is very important that students meet the administration, so they get the most out of the services available. Especially if they are from out of town," she says.

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"Entrepreneurial spirit should not be suppressed," says Christian Berchem in his West German accent, as we sit on the patio of a Yorkville cafe. Tanned

and athletic-looking, he'll probably be in a boardroom ten years down the road.

Berchem is a Commerce student at Erindale College, and one of very few upper year students in the program with an A average. He is completing the 23 credits needed for the Bachelor of Commerce degree half a year earlier



than most other students. This means that during last spring he enrolled in eight courses instead of the normal maximum of six.

"I guess you could say I like a challenge," he says.

"Erindale is very relaxing and friendly. It gives me the time to take stock of my thoughts."

In West Germany, he played tennis at the highest junior level. But, ever the entrepreneur, he finances his education by teaching tennis.

Based on his scholastic experience, Berchem offers this advice. "Attend lectures. Take it seriously, but enjoy yourself. Also, choose your professors carefully. Ask around. An average course with an excellent professor is much better than an interesting course with a poor professor."

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Jeff Rosenthal is sitting cross-legged on a sofa, his long dark hair framing a relaxed face. He studies Mathematics but now we are talking about yoga.

"Yoga gets you more in touch with your physical self and with how you are feeling," says Rosenthal.

"There is a relation between your

physical and mental self that most people don't notice. But the intermanifestations between them make sense, really. The mind controls the body so when you are relaxed, your muscles relax. When you are tense, your muscles tighten."

Relations like these come easily to Rosenthal. One of U of T's brightest Mathematics students, he also excels in Physics and Computer Science, but remains modest about his grades to the

You get a really satisfying feeling of certainty from them. In fact, you really come to believe in them because you start to see all sorts of ways they fit into reality.

"Some people think Math is esoteric," he complains. "Well, applied math is very practical. And even pure math, which is more abstract, can be useful. There may be no applications for a while but sooner or later some will be found. That's

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point of being uncomfortable.

He prefers to talk about Math itself.

"Once you understand something in Math, it has a purity and truth about it that is hard to duplicate in other fields. Mathematical proofs are real proofs.

what happened to the math used in developing quantum mechanics."

U of T has been a positive experience for Rosenthal.

"I was excited by the intellectual feeling. In high school, I always felt



constricted. But here the professors will talk to you if you have questions."

Rosenthal's advice to other students is to maintain a balance in their university life.

"Go to class, but have fun with it. Otherwise you won't really learn. Overstudying gets people burned out."

He takes part in intramural sports and the Hart House chess and bridge clubs.

"I'm also surprised that more people don't go to the Hart House farm. It's a quiet place to get away to in the country and it is not very expensive."



Paul Paton is another high achiever at U of T, probably best known as U of T's "master debater" and as the winner

of this year's Moss Scholarship. An International Relations and History student, Paton is also keenly interested in music. He teaches piano in his spare time, and once even considered a career as a pianist.

Paton transferred to U of T from the University of Western Ontario for his second year.

"U of T was very different to Western," he says. "The class sizes were a big shock. People could really care less that you're here. They are not going to pamper you."

But Paton has adjusted. "I'm the type to go out and find the opportunities. You have to. It's the nature of the beast."

Blessed with a good voice, Paton once sang second bass in the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir. He began

his public speaking career in grade three. Since then, he has competed at debating competitions and Model United Nations at Western, Harvard, Yale, Dublin, and Edinburgh. Last year, Paton and Diane Brady, a Victoria College student, won the Canadian National Championships in Newfoundland. Last January they flew to Sydney for the World Debating Championships, where Paton placed fourth in the world.

Paton speaks fondly of Hart House, the focal point of his debating career.

"It's basically my favourite place on campus," he says.

His debating and extracurricular activities were a major part of Paton's U of T experience.

"There's so much more to U of T than marks. You are wasting your time if all you do is study. Pick something you've been involved in or want to get into. And go in and make people recognise you."

Paton also offered some study advice.

"No, you can't be number one all the time. But it helps to be organised, especially when there is lots of reading to do. Give yourself a system and work by it.

"But most importantly," he adds, his serious expression dissolving into a smile, "have a good time and take advantage of the opportunities here."



This fall, Rosenthal is off to Harvard and Paul Paton to Cambridge. Linda Ippolito and Christian Berchem are returning to U of T to finish off their final year.

Student Awards

The Office of Student Awards can help students obtain information about applications for the Ontario Student Assistance Program and other scholarships. Application deadlines vary for different loans and scholarships, so a stroll down to the Awards Office at the Koffler Centre could help avoid rude surprises. For instance, OSAP applications should ideally be sent away months before September rears its head. OSAP appeals are also handled through this office.

Many scholarships are awarded

automatically. However, there are a significant number for which students must apply. Watch the bulletin boards outside the Awards Office and at individual colleges and faculties to keep up-to-date on these scholarships.

College or Faculty registrar's offices also have scholarship information, and award bursaries on the basis of financial need.

The Office of Student Awards is open weekdays 9:30 am - 4:30 pm; and Tuesdays until 7 pm. 978-7950.

—Karl Hansen