

CONSERVATORY NOTES

Balancing the scales: Music and school

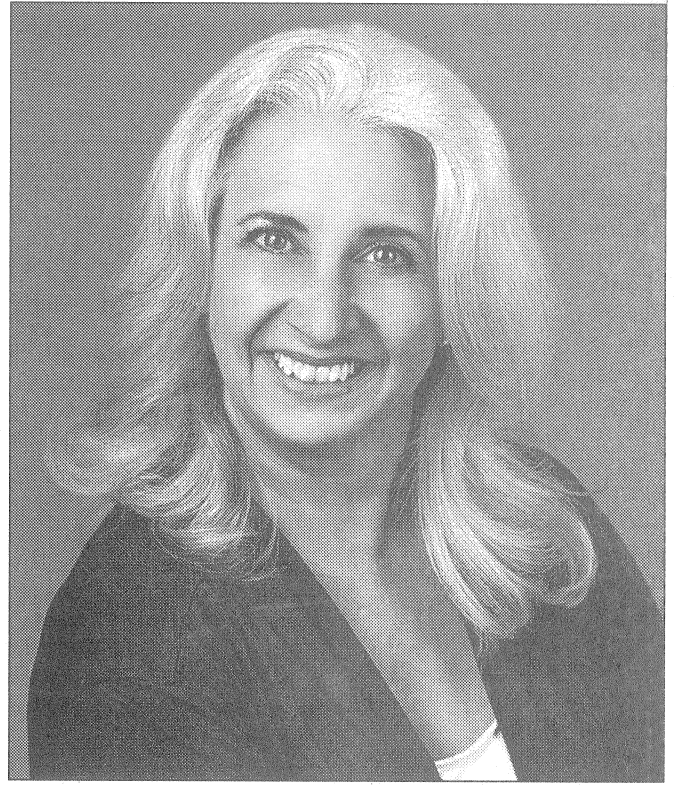
By Eve Montague

It's been over 35 years and I still remember both the joy and uncertainty I felt when I decided to go to music school. The journey was interesting and full of questions, discovery, and more than my share of worry. To this day, I'm not sure if I chose music or music chose me, but I do know I have had a great career as a music therapist.

The music career path, however, is tricky. Competition, capped admissions, choosing correctly for self, and being realistic about costs and programming all add up to anxiety and questions. We all know the way to get to Carnegie Hall is to practice, practice, practice, BUT, does that mean we give up everything else? Everyday I hear about the pressures of balancing practice and performance with the rest of high school life. I see the worry in parents' eyes as they talk about their child "getting in" to the preferred school, and I hear the anxiety in student voices and instruments.

At South Shore Conservatory (SSC), the Creative Arts Therapies (CAT) department is committed to wellness. We know that engagement in structured community-based arts programs has the power to increase feelings of well being. Why then, are so many of our students anxious even though they are engaged in arts programs? The competitive nature of getting in to the right school, understanding the dynamics of the ensembles, and needing to get everything "perfect" contributes to the music student's stress.

Many of SSC's dedicated faculty members have expressed concern about their students, and have asked for support for them and their families. Our CAT department supports the concept that wellness is a lifelong process of becoming aware and making choices toward a



Liz Bailey of Hingham helps high school music students navigate the stressful process of applying to music schools on April 29. [COURTESY PHOTO]

more balanced and fulfilling life.

Given the importance of wellness to SSC, how fortunate are we to find that music counselor Liz Bailey resides in our own backyard? Liz is a musician, former counselor with Berklee School of Music, and a licensed mental health counselor, with her own private practice right here in Hingham. She has the experience to help music students manage their stress, find balance, and problem-solve. Her wealth of experience also includes helping students navigate the stressors regarding getting into music schools, and helping parents understand more fully all the process requires of their children.

We invite music students and their parents/caregivers to join us on Saturday, April 29 for a conversation and Q & A with Liz about "making it" in music school and balancing performance with life. Start, or continue your wellness journey by looking at strategies to keep stress and anxiety manageable as you navigate the world of music schools.

Balancing Your Scales: Your Music and School

If You Go:

- Balancing Your Scales: Your Music and School
- With counselor Liz Bailey; Saturday, April 29, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at South Shore Conservatory, One Conservatory Drive, Hingham.
- Free; however, attendees should to RSVP to Eve Montague, Director, Creative Arts Therapies, at e.montague@sscmusic.org or 781-934-2731, x20 to reserve a spot.

(and maybe you're preparing for college!) with counselor Liz Bailey is Saturday, April 29, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at South Shore Conservatory, One Conservatory Drive, Hingham. There is no cost for this event; however, we ask attendees to RSVP to Eve Montague, Director, Creative Arts Therapies, at e.montague@sscmusic.org or 781-934-2731, x20 to reserve your spot.

To learn more about SSC's Creative Arts Therapies department, visit: sscmusic.org/creative_arts_therapies.html.

—Eve Montague, MT-BC, is South Shore Conservatory's Director of Creative Arts Therapies.

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