



侯伯治教授

Professor Alec Bo Zhi Hou

一生一熱愛 琴弦譜出人生樂章

在這個追求多姿多彩、多才多藝、多元化、多功能的年代，像侯伯治教授這樣只有單一追求，並且把一生時間、精力與心血投入其中的人，實在是少之有少。他對小提琴藝術的熱愛，卻是多而又多；從演奏、教授、鑽研，以致親手製作小提琴，都超越了用獎項和名氣界定的“成就”。他的一生，就如一首由熱愛譜奏而成的美妙人生樂章，感染身邊的人，延展至下一代。

侯伯治是教授之中的教授，有50多年教授小提琴的經驗，19歲已開始收學生，桃李滿天下，他也是一位演奏家，早年就讀於上海音樂學院，畢業後即成為上海芭蕾舞團樂隊首席小提琴、上海交響樂團室內樂隊首席兼隊長；曾出任芭蕾舞劇《白毛女》的首席小提琴。

1981年移民加拿大以後，他曾擔任雷灣樂隊首席、尼亞加拉樂隊首席，然後受聘於北美頂尖音樂學府加拿大皇家音樂學院教授小提琴。

1991年，他參與創立多倫多華人藝術家中心，20多年來致力培育藝術新秀，增進各族裔間的文化交流，現為中心的理事長。

單是看以上簡介，也許沒甚麼傳奇色彩可見，然而，只要細聽侯教授娓娓道來他的人生路，如何一切從小提琴出發，走上艱辛的藝術旅程，沿路一直堅持理想，你會感嘆他用專一、熱愛和決心譜寫出的，正是一首豐富多彩的人生組曲。

走上艱辛藝術路

侯伯治教授的人生上半場，可說是有點生不逢時；1940年出生於音樂世家，時值八年抗戰，一家享受音樂的生活因而受到諸多限制。然而，儘管要等到14歲才開始拉小提琴，他馬上全情投入專注學習，很快成為出眾的學生；19歲考進了上海音樂學院後，成績幾乎每一年都名列全系第一，更成為第一位打破評分標準，拿到超過滿分的學生。

正當籌躇滿志，要踏上一片光明的音樂演奏大道，侯伯治即遇上席捲全中國的文化大革命。1965年，他被分配到上海芭蕾舞團樂隊，並為紅極一時的樣板戲《白毛女》擔任首席小提琴，還到北京為毛主席演出。豈料回到上海，竟被批為“反動學術權威”被隔離審查，一隔離就是33天，被關在一間狹小的儲藏室裡，他的樂隊首席資格也被剝奪。這個案子其後不了了之，也成為他後來決心移民加拿大的原因。

他自認是一個“白專典型”；除了對小提琴，其他一概沒有興趣，每次有政治運動，總感到壓力很大。這次政治衝擊，讓他感到切膚之痛；文革以後，儘管在國內獲得藝術界很高的評價，以及有許多演奏機會，可是想到與其在國內，將來再來一個甚麼運動，受整挨批，不如到外國去專心搞個人藝術，加上他哥哥已在加拿大，於是毅然申請移民到加拿大。

新大陸現曙光

剛到多倫多的那段日子，侯伯治教授跟許多新移民一樣，經歷不少艱辛與考驗，其中一個要面對的重大抉擇，是應否為現實而放下理想。

他回想剛從國內出來，付完行李托運費後，身上僅有一千

美元；支付醫療保險又用去了幾百元。當時能走的路無非是：教琴、開音樂會、或是加入一個樂隊。

他曾在報上登招生廣告，登出去三個月，才接到一個電話，對方還嫌費用太貴。當時他初來乍到，在本地沒有背景，所以無人問津。

開音樂會也勞而無功。他費了好大力氣，和幾個志同道合的朋友一起張羅，折騰了三、四個月，最後雖然演出效果還不錯，但收入方面卻不盡人意。

一次從報上看到一個芭蕾舞團要招小提琴手，他覺得很對口，就和人家約了去面試。對方讓他拉一段曲子，然後坦率地說：“你的琴拉得確實不錯，可你的風格聽上去太激進，對於本地人來說就顯粗糙一些”。他的意思是，對他的背景和中國風格有所顧慮。

一次又一次的嘗試與挫敗，使他的心收緊：“新大陸的曙光在哪裏？”

有人建議他改行做生意，但他還是堅持認為自己在小提琴方面的知識技能應是有所作為的，所以不願意背棄自己對音樂的追求。有一天，才三歲的女兒問他：“爸爸我可不可以學琴？”他因為付不出300元買小提琴，於是自己動手做女兒學琴用的第一把琴。

正因為想到跟他一樣愛上小提琴的女兒，他堅決認定對藝術、對人生有執著的追求，並且堅信再苦、再難的日子，一定會過去！

他引述《三字經》上說：“養不教，父之過；教不嚴，師

之情。”他既是父親，又是老師，責任是雙重的。

1982年，他在安省西北部雷灣的一個小樂隊被聘用為副首席小提琴手，可說是“騎馬找馬”。

幾年後，他去多倫多參加一個音樂會，沒想到多倫多皇家音樂學院的院長也在觀眾席，對他的演出非常讚賞，當場到後台找他，提出邀請要他到學院去工作。與小城樂隊相比，他想到回到多倫多，進入皇家音樂學院，當然吸引力要大得多，於是爽快地答應了。

任職多倫多皇家音樂學院，是他數年動蕩奔波的移民生涯的里程碑，也是對他堅持理想的最好回報。

延伸理想 作育英才

侯伯治教授對小提琴藝術的實踐很全面，除了作為小提琴手參加演出，也用心傳授小提琴技藝，教育培養年輕的小提琴手。過去50多年來。他教授過數以百計的學生，當中從5歲到70歲教授都有，而且不光在多倫多有學生，一些人還千里迢迢過來學琴，甚至紐約著名的朱麗婭(JULLIARD)音樂學院還推薦學生給他，因為他們都知道在北美教小提琴，他是很有水準的。從早年開始，他已從經驗中鑽研出自己的一套他形容為“科學性”的教學法；強調的是如何練好手部肌肉的運用，就像運動員一樣，要先鍛鍊好肌肉。

他的學生，有不少在多倫多及國際知名的音樂比賽中贏得傑出大獎；而其中佼佼者，當然是他的女兒——世界頂級小提琴家侯以嘉。

侯以嘉四歲開始隨父親學琴，短短幾年後就在多倫多皇家音樂學院和加拿大各種比賽中頻頻獲獎，並與多倫多交響樂團合作演出。當時的多倫多音樂界已普遍看好這位天才女孩，一致認為她日後必成大器。

1997年，當侯以嘉還是朱麗婭的學生時，就一舉奪得了西班牙帕比盧·薩拉撒蒂國際小提琴比賽的頭獎，成為歐美各大報章的報道對象。隨後，她的鋒芒更健，1999年連續奪得了意大利魯道夫·利派茲國際小提琴比賽和巴黎瑪格麗特·隆—雅克·蒂博國際小提琴比賽的兩項第一名，是有史以來第一次。從此，世界著名小提琴家的行列裏又增添了一個中國人的名字。當她從巴黎載譽歸來時，朱麗婭校園一片轟動。如今女兒的音樂事業如日方中，大家都拭目以待她未來的成就。

女兒的成就當然讓侯伯治感到驕傲和自豪；有感自己的藝術生命，在女兒身上得到了延伸！他也坦言在培養和教育女兒方面，付出了雙重的努力，其中的辛酸苦辣及無窮樂趣，也盡在不言中。難得的是，他的太太也是一位小提琴演奏家和教師；多年來同心教養女兒，且並肩走藝術人生路，不離不棄。

時至今日，侯伯治教授依然熱心培育下一代；在多倫多華人藝術家中心20多年來組織了各種演出活動，並且創立了青少年管弦樂團，希望把年輕一代音樂家推上舞台，推動多倫多華人音樂事業的發展，和培養青少年一代。

這位“白專典型”深信，只要專心為了自己的信念，怎麼做都是值得尊重的。他對藝術、人生，也有類似的體會：“只要肯付出，總會有回報！”



全家福
Family portrait



拍於出國前 (1979-80)
Before leaving China



於皇家音樂學院演出
At The Royal Conservatory of Music



於中國演出貝多芬小提琴協奏曲 (1978)
Performing Beethoven's Violin Concerto in China



到加以後，在皇家音樂學院演出
After arriving in Canada, at
The Royal Conservatory of Music



被邀返中國演出 (2006)
Invited to return to China for performance



表演後與音樂指揮大師董麟合照 (2001)
After performance, with master musician Ling Tong



女兒初學小提琴，用父親為她手製的
“小型提琴”
Daughter learning violin with handmade violin
by Dad



學生劉健1983年獲得全國青少年小提琴
比賽第一名
Student Liu Jian won First Prize at 1983 National
Youth Violin Competition

Professor Alec Bo Zhi Hou

In this age of tireless pursuit for the glamorous and glorious, it is rare to find someone like Alec Hou, who loves the violin so deeply that he invests his entire life and energy into this single musical instrument. His achievements as a violinist, as a violin teacher, as a father and family man, all go beyond the definition of "success" conventionally measured by awards and fame. His life, like a beautiful musical composition created through his love of the violin, influences everyone around him and extends to the next generation.

Alec Hou is a teacher among teachers, with over 50 years of experience in teaching the violin. He started teaching students when he turned sixteen, and now, his students are everywhere in the world. But Alec Hou is first and foremost a solo violinist and concertmaster himself, having studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Following graduation, he was appointed the Leader, Concertmaster and Soloist for many orchestras in Shanghai, including title roles at Shanghai Symphony and Ballet Orchestras and Shanghai Film Board, and was sought after to perform violin solos in productions such as the "White-Haired Girl".

After immigrating to Canada in 1981, he served as concertmaster at Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra and later at Niagara Symphony Orchestra. He was then invited to be Faculty of Violin at one of the top music institutions in Canada: the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto.

In 1991, Alec Hou co-founded the Chinese Artists Society of Toronto, and for over twenty years since then, he has worked tirelessly to provide performance opportunities for young musicians, promoting cultural exchange amongst different ethnic groups. He is now Chair of the Board for that non-profit organization.

On the surface, Alec Hou's story might not appear to be legendary. However, when one listens to Professor Hou when he talks about his meandering life, how everything started with the violin, how he persisted in his vision and dreams during this arduous and challenging

journey, one could not help but find his life story a rich colourful composition crafted with love, dedication and determination.

One could say that Alec was not born at the right time in history. He was born in 1940 into a musical family during the eight-year war waged against Japanese aggression, when his family was severely limited in what they could do. However, despite beginning his violin studies at age fourteen, Alec immediately focused on it whole-heartedly, and became an outstanding student in just over 4 years. He won the coveted entrance to study at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music at nineteen, and placed first amongst the entire department nearly every year of his studies. He then became the first and only student in the history of the Shanghai Conservatory to ever be awarded 'above full marks' at his graduation, with great distinction.

In that same year of 1965, Alec was appointed to the Shanghai Ballet Orchestra (SBO), and performed as Concertmaster and Solo Violinist in the widely popular and newly adapted-from-opera ballet titled "White-Haired Girl", one of the only eight plays permitted for public performance in China. He led the SBO as they were invited to perform for Chairman Mao in Beijing.

Sadly it was during this period of time, as Alec's career was flourishing, when the Cultural Revolution swept across China. Almost overnight, his career came to an abrupt halt. Alec was accused as a "reactionary academic" and locked up in isolation – in a small storage room underneath the staircase in the school – for 33 days and forced to confess his alleged wrongdoings, amongst which was his tutelage of his fellow musicians in 'western classical music'. After 33 days of investigation, he was finally released without any explanation or closure, and was thereafter demoted, his leadership titles stripped away. This was tremendously disheartening, and ultimately became the primary reason for his subsequent decision to leave the country with his family.

Alec admits he has a singular-track mindset. He is not interested in anything else except the violin. Politics and political movements gave him a lot of pressure. The isolation was a particularly painful experience for him. After the Cultural Revolution passed, Alec regained highest accolades and acclaim from the community and his fellow artists, and

he even gave the first performance of “western classical music” in all of China (Beethoven Violin Concerto in Shanghai), but he never again stepped forward to lead musicians or orchestras, and continually turned down opportunities and promotions offered to him, for fear of another political upheaval. He did not want to risk ever being accused again. With his brother in Toronto, he decided to apply for immigration to Canada.

Like many newcomers, Alec faced tremendous challenges and hardships in the first days after landing in Toronto. After paying for the freight of their baggage and health insurance, he was left with only US\$1000. One of the most difficult decisions he had to make in his whole life was at this moment. His choices for starting a new life in Canada were limited and he had to support his family – his wife and 3-year-old daughter. So after long deliberation, he decided to give up his dream of becoming a world-class soloist and try to teach or join an orchestra.

He posted ads in the newspaper to recruit students for three months but there was only one phone call and the caller felt that the lesson fee of \$16/hour was too high. At that time he was an unknown entity in Canada, so no one wanted to hire him as a violin teacher.

Giving a self-promoted concert also turned out to be a futile effort. He and a few like-minded friends spent three or four months to prepare for the concert and although the performance was good, the income was not nearly enough to support a family of three.

Once Alec saw an ad in the paper for a violinist position with a ballet company, and it seemed like a good fit for him. The interviewer asked him to play a piece and said frankly, “Your playing is excellent, but Western Ballet is different from Chinese Ballet and...you don’t have any Canadian experience.”

Again and again he tried and was disappointed each time. His heartstrings tightened, he asked himself: “Where is the dawn of the New World?”

His brother suggested that a life in music was too difficult, and that he go into business instead, but Alec persisted, holding fast to the

belief that his knowledge and skills in violin would one day amount to something. And even if he could not have his dream career, he simply could not abandon his pursuit of art and music.

One day, his three-year old daughter asked him: “Daddy, can I learn to play the violin?” Alec could not afford the \$300 to buy a violin, so he told his daughter her hands were too small – which was true – and she had to wait.

Whenever he thought about his daughter, who fell in love with the violin just as he did, he firmly believed that he must persist in his pursuit of a life in music, and that these difficult days must come to pass!

He quotes the “Three Character Classic”: “The father is lax if he brings up a child without teaching her. The teacher is lazy if he teaches a student without being strict.” He is the father, and also the teacher, so his responsibilities are twofold. When his daughter was 4 years old, she could not wait any longer to start violin, so Alec carved her first violin out of a Canadian Maple fire-log using homemade tools.

In 1982, a letter came from Thunder Bay, Ontario. It was from Dwight Bennett, and he had heard of Alec and his wife – also a talented violinist – through Steven Staryk, a Canadian violin virtuoso. Dwight was the Music Director of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra and he invited Alec to be the Assistant Concertmaster. At last...a doorway to a life in music!

A few years later, the Dean of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto – Robert Dodson – happened to be in the audience when Alec performed The Butterfly Lovers’ Concerto at Toronto’s Massey Hall. Right after the performance, the Dean went backstage to look for him and invite him to work for the conservatory. Of course the offer was most welcome, as this enabled him to return to Toronto, a much warmer city, and closer to his family.

The post at the Royal Conservatory of Music was a key milestone in Alec’s tumultuous career after immigrating to Canada, and provided great encouragement and testimonial for his persistence in adhering to

his musical ideals.

Alec has a comprehensive approach to the art of violin. In addition to performing as a soloist, he openly shares all his musical and violinistic knowledge with his students.

Over the past 50 years, he has taught hundreds of students, ranging from 4-year-olds to seniors, including a 72-years-old retired professor from the University of Toronto. Today, Alec's students are not just from Toronto. Some travel from thousands of miles away. The late Dorothy DeLay, renowned violin pedagogue of the 20th century, recommended young talented musicians to study with Alec. She even asked him if she could 'steal' some of his fingerings and bowings for her music editions and teachings.

From very early on, Alec developed his own teaching method based on many years of playing experience, which he described as a "scientific" method. This method puts emphasis on training the muscles in one's hands like an athlete – it is very important for violinists to develop excellent muscular dexterity.

Alec's students have won awards at local and national levels, and at prestigious international violin competitions. Today, many of his students study, perform or teach at some of the finest institutions in the world, and Alec is very proud of them. Perhaps his best-known student is his daughter, Yi-Jia Susanne Hou, who is one of the world's top solo violinists.

Alec taught his daughter Susanne – practicing with her every day for 2 hours – starting at age 4. A year later, Susanne made her public debut performance when they played a duet together, and by age 8, Susanne was already recognized as a child prodigy, invited to attend the Royal Conservatory of Music. Driving her every three to four weeks to New York to study with Dorothy Delay, Alec and his wife Yvonne kept Susanne in a regular school to give her a well-rounded education.

In 1997, Susanne captured Gold Medal at the Pablo Sarasate International Violin Competition in Spain and became headline news in Europe and America. Subsequently in 1999, she became the first

person to win three gold medals at international violin competitions, winning both Concours International Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud in France and the Rodolfo Lipizer International Violin Competition in Italy back to back. When she returned with her victory from Paris, she became a campus sensation at the Juilliard School. Now his daughter's musical career is approaching its zenith, with everyone watching her every move and success.

Alec is certainly proud of his daughter's achievements. She is now extending the musical journey that he undertook so many years ago. In some way, she is now living the life that he could have lived. He says frankly that he has put in double the effort in bringing up and teaching his daughter at the same time, and it is hard to describe the mixed feelings of joy and sorrow that he experienced all these years.

Today, Alec Hou is still enthusiastically nurturing the next generation of young artists. Over the past twenty years, the Chinese Artists Society of Toronto has organized numerous fundraising performances for many worthwhile causes. He also co-founded the Youth Orchestra, in efforts to develop an incubation program for young musicians by surrounding them with excellent professionals and giving them a stage to perform on. He has actively promoted the development of arts and culture in the Chinese Canadian community, and he has done this all voluntarily for his non-profit organization.

Alec Hou, with his singular-track mind, is convinced that if one is truly dedicated to one's beliefs, whatever one does is worthwhile. In art, as in life, he believes: "There will always be a return if one is willing to contribute!"