

**“A Journey on Improvisations and Variations:  
From Bach to Jazz”  
by Fabiana Claire and William Villaverde**

Fabiana Claire and William Villaverde are Doctor of Musical Arts candidates in piano performance and teaching assistants at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music. They both study with pianist and composer Dr. JB Floyd, a Yamaha artist. In addition to their doctoral studies in classical piano, Fabiana is pursuing cognate studies in music business and William is pursuing cognate studies in jazz performance.

Their Yamaha In-Residence project consisted of organizing and performing a series of three lecture-recitals entitled “A Journey on Improvisations and Variations: From Bach to Jazz.” These were designed to target a wide audience consisting of children, college students, and senior citizens in Miami. The purpose of the program was to expose three distinct audiences to a wide variety of musical styles in an engaging lecture-recital format. Taking into consideration that Miami has a large Cuban and Hispanic population, the musical program included Classical music, Cuban music, and Jazz. In this way, the program created an effective connection with the local community. Fabiana played the Classical repertoire and Cuban music while William played Jazz-influenced music and also improvised on a standard song. In addition, they each gave a series of introductory remarks before the pieces, pointing out musical elements the audience should listen for during the performances. They also demonstrated the different uses of variations and improvisation within the works. The purpose of the remarks was to engage the audience to be involved as active listeners during the performance. To end the program, Fabiana and William performed four hand Cuban dances together.

A series of marketing and promotional strategies were employed in order to select the most appropriate venues and promote the lecture-recitals. Fabiana researched local retirement homes, colleges, and children’s music programs and selected different concert locations accessible to these specific age groups. To further publicize the fellowship recital series, she contacted the various local media outlets including local community newspapers, web-based newsletters and online newspapers. As a result, she was able to publish several articles in media outlets, including the South Miami Community Newspapers, the Coral Gables Gazette, and the Florida Concert Flyers website.

The first lecture-recital was held on November 17, 2009 at the Palace Suites, a local senior living community. The event was very well received and the residents showed great appreciation for not only the musical program but also the remarks that were made prior to each performance. The success of this Fellowship lecture-recital resulted in Fabiana and William being invited back to perform recitals during the Palace’s monthly recital series in the spring of 2010.

The second lecture-recital, held on November 18, 2009 at Miami Dade College’s Kendall Campus, was a part of the

music department’s recital series, “On Stage.” The recital was attended by all of the undergraduate music students, both classical and jazz majors. The diverse audience welcomed the wide variety of musical selections of the program. At the end of the event, several students and faculty members approached the performers to show their appreciation and support. As a result of their lecture-recital at Miami Dade College, Fabiana and William were invited to judge the Music Department’s Annual High School Piano Competition and Scholarship Audition.



The third and final lecture-recital was held on November 20, 2009, at the University of Miami. The University’s Frost School of Music Piano Preparatory Program, an elementary through high school piano program, hosted the event. The audience consisted of younger students and their parents. The program was slightly modified, taking into consideration the young audience’s shorter attention span. The musical selections were shorter and the remarks were designed to address the interests of the children. Response was very positive and the children remained thoroughly engaged during the event.

The Yamaha In-Residence Fellowship allowed Fabiana and William to have the financial support to make the project that they had envisioned a reality. The music business skills implemented from Fabiana’s cognate studies allowed them to organize and effectively promote the events. Likewise, the combination of Classical and Cuban music with Jazz music from William’s cognate studies, made the recitals innovative and engaging, and increased the stylistic variety of the musical program. The combination of all of these factors enabled Fabiana and William to share their talents while successfully completing a unique community outreach project that impacted several diverse communities in Miami. ♦