Living with Leukemia, Supported by Friends

By Andrea Kniss

Encore! Last week three students in the music department were among 117 student competitors from a group of five competitors to perform one movement of a concerto in concert with full orchestra. Rachel Bowman (soprano), Sara Brenneman (violin) and Daniel Stutzman (piano), will perform their solo selections with the EMU orchestra and there’s a reason for dent musicians can solo with an orchestra and there’s a reason for dent musicians can solo with an orchestra and there’s a reason for dent musicians can solo with an orchestra.

Three well-qualified judges praised the performances, and Bowman already knew the outcome for herself: “Every performance has its judges, even if they’re only the ones in your head,” said Stutzman.

Combining the performances helped, though. “Because I was so wrapped in everyone else’s music, I was spared from having to sit and worry about my upcoming solo,” Bowman said that since she is one of only two vocal performance majors at EMU (the other being a baritone), “competition isn’t a very big issue for me.”

Brenneman will perform the first movement of Summer from Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons. “You can really hear the thunder and lightning in the piece, she said. Brennan will be singing Je veux vivre from Gounod’s Romeo et Juliette. She called it a “short, happy and showy” aria with “lots of high notes and runs.”

Stutzman said he chose the Allegro movement from Grieg’s Concerto in A minor, op. 16 because “it’s exciting” and possibly a piece the audience might relate to with.

The soloists are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this concerto competition. “I guess I’m stuck with it now,” said Bowman. “I’d actually rather have an autologous transplant,” said Miller. “I’d be my own cells in my own body and I wouldn’t have to worry about all those complications like my body rejecting someone else’s cells.”

The possible rejection is called graft-versus-host-disease, a condition that many transplant patients endure for their lifetime. “It’s strange,” said Crosby, “because it’s almost like she’s not even performing.”

More information about bone marrow transplant and donation can be found at:


CONCERTO COMPETITION INSPIRES EMU MUSICIANS

By Rachel A. Swartzendruber

Just two weeks short of celebrating two years in remission, sophomore Caitlin Miller found herself again in need of her friends’ and family’s support in her new fight with APL, acute promyelocytic leukemia.

The idea of a transplant is to fight cancerous bone marrow cells with an infusion of healthy bone marrow. After a transplant, a patient has a better chance of being in remission or sometimes, even completely cured.

Miller’s EMHS classmate.

Miller returned to her suite with her APL was first diagnosed during her senior year at Eastern Mennonite High School. “It was a trying time,” said Joanna Goins, her monthly checkups.

While her friends were starved, they also realized the need to be supportive. “A bunch of friends and family’s support in her new fight with APL, acute promyelocytic leukemia.

Miller, “but other than that, it’s not terrible.” She also undergoes biweekly bone marrow aspirations that test for the presence of cancer in the bone marrow.

The clinic has been searching for a bone marrow donor through the National Marrow Donor Program, NMDP, and has more recently started searching through the international registry, Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide. “We haven’t found a donor yet,” said Miller’s mother. “I’d actually prefer to have an autologous transplant,” said Miller. “It would be my own cells in my own body and I wouldn’t have to worry about all those complications like my body rejecting someone else’s cells.”

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Presently, Miller receives daily chemotherapy treatments to fight the cancer and prepare for the possibility of a transplant. She is being treated with arsenic, one of the most aggressive methods to fighting cancer. “I have to be monitored closely because of [possible] heart problems,” said Miller, “but other than that, it’s not terrible.” She also undergoes biweekly bone marrow aspirations that test for the presence of cancer in the bone marrow.

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