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PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

Musical dreams flourish

Two OC women dream of making it big!

BY KORI LEE GARNER

Megan Lynne Pace and Lauren Baba are two extremely talented Orange County women who have dreams of "making it big" in the highly competitive world of professional music.

Lauren, a jazz violinist who lives in Lake Forest, wants to perform "all over the place," teach music to elementary school students and eventually start her own arts school in a rural area that doesn't have access to the performing arts. Megan, on the other hand, lives in Irvine and is passionate about becoming an opera "diva," with the ultimate goal of singing one day at La Scala Opera House in Milan, Italy.



Lauren Baba

These aspiring musicians credit the nurturing environment at their local community colleges for giving them a comprehensive, cost-effective head start on the road to fame and fortune.

Lauren Baba

Surrounded by music and performance from an early age, Lauren Baba is a Mission Viejo High School graduate who is now a sophomore at Saddleback College in Mission

Viejo. Her family is full of musical creativity —her father and uncles perform together in a band, her mother played violin and is involved with art and dance. She also has three musical younger brothers. "They are my most loyal fans," she says, "never missing any of my performances."

Lauren credits her high school orchestra teacher for steering her in the direction of Saddleback College and says her experience there has "exceeded her expectations." She appreciates the many amenities for musicians, including an electronic piano lab, 16-track recording studio and an electronic music lab with EMU synthesizer.

But by far the most important aspect of her musical education at Saddleback has been the tremendously talented faculty. "There is so much personal attention here. They give students tons of encouragement and the opportunity to perform in so many programs!"

Lauren's schedule is very busy — she is currently taking two ballet classes, tap and jazz dance, and plays violin in a jazz combo, the jazz lab band and the Saddleback College orchestra. In the family tradition, she even met her boyfriend in a musical setting, the Saddleback College jazz lab band (he plays bass), and together they plan to

transfer to either CSU Long Beach or CSU Fullerton. Her long-term plans? "We'll be going wherever music takes us!"

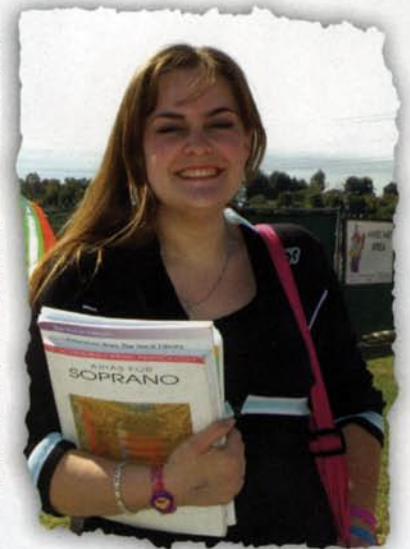
Megan Lynne Pace

Like Lauren, lifelong Irvine resident Megan Lynne Pace also knew what she wanted to do from a very young age. She dreamed of being a singer, teacher and missionary, but not necessarily in that order. The fact that she became a music major at Irvine Valley College is pure serendipity.

After graduating from Irvine High School in 2003, Megan planned on attending a community college located in central Orange County. Two weeks before registration began in the fall, she discovered IVC had a choir and could offer her personalized, one-on-one vocal training at a very economical cost. In a flurry of last minute "Add" slips during the first week of classes, Megan became a vocal performance major at Irvine Valley College. She's never looked back.

"IVC's music department is a place that nurtures its students and the faculty lets you grow as an individual. I am a hardcore classical soprano, but some of the other voice majors are at the opposite end of the musical spectrum and our amazing voice teacher put together unique repertoires for each of us."

"I seriously recommend Irvine Valley's music program to younger musicians who are looking for a wonderful place to explore their potential. In fact, I



Megan Lynne Pace

feel so strongly about this that I recently took a group of vocalists and musicians to Northwood High School in Irvine to show a group of high school seniors just what the possibilities are for a music major at IVC."

Megan recently graduated from Irvine Valley College and is now attending CSU Fullerton on a music scholarship. When she looks back at the years she spent at Irvine Valley College she remarks, "I got more personalized attention than I would have gotten at a four-year college. IVC gave me the technical foundation and the encouragement to set my goals high. Next stop — La Scala!"

There are wonderful opportunities in the Performing Arts at both Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College. Log on to www.saddleback.edu or www.ivc.edu. For more information on this article, please contact the author at kgarner@socccd.org. **tw**