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MIRIAM TIKOTIN, Soprano
*Puts Music
Into High Gear*

Going Green in Auto Parts

Harley-Davidson Tri Glide

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MIRIAM TIKOTIN Puts Music Into High Gear

Toronto's Very Own
Soprano Singer Shares
Her XFE Musical
Experience

Robert Saffer

Like the total overhaul of any fine automobile, some of us are quickly swept up by grand ambition. Driving her Peugeot 206 up the steep hills of Haifa eight years ago, Miriam Tikotin did what most of us merely dream of doing but rarely dare to do. She exited a promising career as an electrical engineer in search of not just a dream, but to fulfill what her soul was yearning. According to Miriam, "Music was calling and it had me on speed dial".

Miriam recalls that as soon as people left the room at work, a voice would spring from the soulfulness of an unordered design. It wasn't until others came back into the room that the inspiring diva even realized she had been singing, sometimes alone for hours. So at the ripe age of thirty, the Israeli born soprano singer packed up her circuit boards and schematic diagrams to study music full time in order to join the opera circuit.

"Music and singing was always part of my life, and things kept happening to steer me to the next stage where I belonged. Soon there was no time to work", recalls Miriam. From piano lessons to ensembles, she had intended only to take one year off to transfer her knowledge of engineering by studying voice and sound waves and

adapting musical theory to fit reality. She found that there was a harmony flowing with time that kept her alert to every moment. Pretty soon a new world began to emerge, "but not too different from engineering, a little more bohemian perhaps." Feeling the pressure to succeed, she returned to sheet music, to the original versions to find her own interpretations while using her classical training to get closer to her roots. "I began seeing the notes, not just hearing them or thinking about the music."

During my interview with Miriam, I got a taste of this inspirational drive within her especially when she leaped from a low-lining verse into a high-pitched chorus that could move an entire stadium to sing along with her. Miriam's philosophy of success is simple, quoting violinist Jascha Heifetz, "If I don't practice one day, I know it; two days, the critics know it; three days, the public knows it."

She's been in Toronto for just over a year preparing programs in various languages. Her past performances have been incredibly received and have touted her as the new and upcoming female version of Andrea Bocelli. Although she immediately and humbly discounted this compliment by saying, "I don't see myself

as a female Bocelli. Rather I just try to reach out to my audiences and maybe I'm less of a snob in the ranks of classical musicians."

As an inspired teacher, she is on a mission to transform classical music into the mainstream by making it more accessible to the average person. Talking with Miriam, one quickly gets the impression of, "it's not necessary to have the entire dealership in the orchestra, just a few good models".

Miriam was drawn to Canada by the teaching methods of The Royal Conservatory of Music and was not interested in discussing politics in the Middle East during her interview, except to say that it brings a lot of emotions to bear and singing without a message is pointless. Raised by Dutch parents, she sings in eleven languages, including French, German, Hebrew, Slovak, Spanish and Tagalog – a dialect close to Filipino. Her favourite is Italian. And if you never saw the comparisons between driving and Opera, Tikotin



has perfected a teaching philosophy, an Extra Fuel Efficient (XFE) turbocharged system of sorts, one she shares with all her students to significantly improve their overall performance. It is equivalent to having a good vocal ride; cruising the ideal vowel and winding through tight passages. Its success has even been approved by the Toronto District School Board. According to Miriam, "There are different registers in the voice, like gears of a car, you have to get them to resonate. What's your gas? What's your energy? It's your breath! It's the air." The air is the gas, the jump is the break in your voice and you have to use the clutch for constant air flow. For Miriam singing opera is an acquired taste like wine and she doesn't suggest sampling either while driving.

On a concluding 'note', she states, "I won't drive and sing at the same time. For this very reason I favour the new cell phone law, because talking while driving can be too distracting and it's simply not for me." But before Miriam drives away in her electric blue dream Porsche, she'll first have to make time to get her Ontario driving license. This leaves me to wonder if her passion for singing will surface while she enthusiastically waits in line at the driving test centre.

To find out about Miriam, Tikotin's upcoming concerts, to book her as a soprano singer for your next event or for more information on voice lessons and music theory please visit www.miriamtikotin.com.