

One of the VNOB sopranos is a delightful young woman from Japan. Her husband is working with a company that has a branch in Ha Noi and they are here for 3 years, starting last year. Her common language with VNOB singers is English -- and most of them are rather limited in that department. The VNese VNOB singers like Ryoko a lot and help her get her lunch many days and they have lots of fun and laughs as they teach her more VNese. The singers are getting ready for 2 concerts - one where quite a few of them will sing arias and ensembles from Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" with the VNOB orchestra; and another concert in which some other singers will also sing Mozart arias and ensembles (with piano). Both programs rehearse with me - so they will know the accompaniments when they "meet" the orchestra soon. Yesterday several singers were gathered in the room where I do my piano work - and Michel was listening to Ryoko, who had prepared a recitativo and aria that Susanna sings in "Figaro". Ryoko has sung very nicely but now, with some exquisite help from Michel on her vocal production, she sounds really gorgeous!! I had rehearsed with her a bit previous to yesterday and was delighted with her sound. This singer knows how to work and retain the concepts she has learned. She also is very pleased and her pleasure is visible through her very reserved and reticent manner. She finished the aria and there was general applause from all. Michel was beaming. "It is O.K.?" Ryoko said. Everyone had much to say to tell her how beautifully she had just sung with her new skills working so well! Michel complimented her heartily. "It is good?" Ryoko asked. "It is very fine", he replied. "I want to adopt you and take you to Canada to study!" "adopt? ... adopt?.... as she tried to understand the English word, she looked at me uncertainly. I explained, "if Michel adopted you, you would be his daughter!" She grinned in understanding and joy -- , "oh! I must ask my husband! ... His company also has branches in the U.S. ummm maybe Detroit? Detroit! Is that near to Canada?" "Many kilometers" said Michel. "Oh ... but much nearer than from Japan? Yes?"

Several times recently singers gently refer to Michel and me as their mother and father. :) It is a very sweet compliment as family relationships are very important in this culture. Yesterday Binh ("bing"), a tenor, was talking with me when Michel arrived for a rehearsal. Binh, who is much smaller than Michel spontaneously gave him a big hug: "my father", he said. Smiles all round. Planned performances are gathering steam now and getting clearer and quite delightful!!

Share my joy!
Love,
Anne