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Ms. Shirley Stokes
Manager
Quality and Regulation
Higher Education Directorate
G.P.O. 33
Sydney. 2001.

05/04/04.

Dear Shirley

Thank you very much for your time and effort in our meeting of Thursday 1st April. In this letter, I have expressed my concerns, as discussed with you in the meeting. You will recall that there were three issues of importance that I felt needed addressing:

- i) Professor Makarov, Head of Piano at the Australian Institute of Music, is still teaching despite having several allegations of sexual misconduct towards minors, against him, pending investigation/trial and resolution.
- ii) The Institute has given him full support without any communication with parents or students on the subject. In fact, some students have experienced being coerced into supporting him, while others have not been able to continue their studies (despite full fees having been paid) because they have spoken up about the situation.
- iii) As a Masters student at the Institute (2001-2003), I experienced certain administrative flaws that indicated a lack of appropriate structure, planning and implementation. In addition, the teaching style of Professor Makarov, although always respectful and supportive to me personally, I noted was often of an emotionally and psychologically abusive nature towards students, many of whom were very young.

Regarding the first point, I find it extraordinarily irresponsible, reprehensible and totally unacceptable that Professor Makarov continues teaching when such serious allegations have been made. The welfare of the students should be the prime concern given the nature of the allegations. Teaching of any sort, requires standards of morality and boundaries of personal respect to be firmly in place. It is imperative that Government and Education Departments actively engage in the support and, if necessary, the protection of students if there is any risk of immoral behaviour towards them – especially if they are minors!

Secondly, the response of the Institute, indicates a severe lack of concern for the welfare of its students, by its whole-hearted support of Professor Makarov. Students have felt their voice has been denied them on this matter. No attempt has been made to communicate with parents and/or students regarding the action of the Institute. Three students who have brought considerable 'fame' to the Professor and the Institute by their piano performances, have needed to take out Restraining Orders against him. Two of these students were his teaching assistants. Legal action has been necessary for these young people to have their educational and financial matters considered and respected by the Institute. This is an appalling situation, for which the Institute should be accountable. It has failed to uphold the principles of a democratic society and to set an unequivocal standard of appropriate behaviour of staff towards students.

Thirdly, as I inquired about the accreditation of the degrees offered at the Institute, I was informed that this was available through Griffith University in Queensland. I have only recently learned that this is not the case. Despite several requests, no Handbook, nor Course Outline was made available to me when I enrolled at the Institute. (Of course, the draw- card was Professor Makarov, so I overlooked these inadequacies). It was extremely difficult for me to gain clarity regarding what I was meant to do to satisfy course requirements, including the suitability and length of my proposed thesis, which ranged from a suggested 5,000 words to 10,000 words. I did the latter. Quite often, information regarding work and courses required, was passed on to me at such a late stage, that I was under significant pressure to complete the assignments on time. This was especially difficult for me, given my work schedule.

Such was the case when I delivered a seminar paper on my thesis topic. Dr. Marcellino and Dr. Calvo's responses to my paper, were expressed in a somewhat overbearing manner that was certainly not in the best interests of academic research and discussion. Dr. Ron Smart, who has recently resigned and left the Institute, apologised to me after the meeting. I made several attempts to make an appointment with Dr. Marcellino and/or Dr. Calvo to discuss the matter. Neither was accommodating to my schedule to enable a meeting to take place. I resolved to proceed with my work and finish my degree and put the incident behind me.

Likewise, there were many occasions that I attempted to explain to Professor Makarov, that his teaching style was inappropriate for this country, as it was often verbally, emotionally and psychologically abusive to students and occasionally even physically abusive when he would push a student or hit at the student's hands. I frequently objected to his teaching in public and in private conversation with him. I wanted him to be successful in Australia, believing that he had much to offer, but I was not prepared to compromise my own evaluations of appropriate teaching methods.

Lastly, it needs to be noted that I have not at any stage, received any written notification of my results. I was denied a receipt for the copies of my thesis I handed to Administration and to date, despite frequent requests, have not had a response from Dr. Marcellino regarding my thesis nor indeed, the outcome of my degree. This is yet another example of the lack of professional responsibility of the Institute to its students. As a student, I met every deadline and always worked in pursuit of excellence. I am extremely disappointed that the Institute has not responded similarly.

It is with great regret that I report on a man and an Institution that were both capable of so much and of influencing for the better, so many.

Yours sincerely

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