

# Appassionato



## VAM's Echoes of Triumph and Artistry

JOURNEY TO RCM GOLD  
AND VAM EXCELLENCE  
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VAM'S INAUGURAL PIANO  
CONCERTO CAMP &  
COMPETITION (P. 14)

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HARMONY IN THE  
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## From the President & CEO

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of Appassionato, where we celebrate the remarkable achievements of our students, faculty, and alumni. As you turn these pages, you'll discover stories that embody the spirit of unity and the enchanting synergy born from a shared passion for music.

To herald the new academic year at VAM, we feature Chef Will Lew, an esteemed alum whose culinary creations beautifully intertwine with his musical heritage. We also shine a light on multi-instrumentalists like John MacLachlan, who represent VAM's vibrant and dynamic ethos. Further, we explore the impressive journey of Allen Ding, whose outstanding success in the RCM Level 10 exam and the Canadian National Celebration of Excellence

Recital are a testament to the exceptional standards our students achieve. Their inspiring narratives of transcending artistic borders and merging diverse disciplines paint a vivid picture of the boundless world of creative possibilities fostered at VAM.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all of you—our dedicated community. Your steadfast dedication to VAM and to the broader mission of music education is the cornerstone of our shared achievements. As we embark on the next chapter in VAM's illustrious history, I am brimming with optimism and excitement for the future that we will build together.

Musically yours,  
Joseph Elworthy,  
VAM President & CEO

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Chanel Zhang, *Writer*

# From the Board Chair

Dear members of the VAM community:

The academic year is well under way and on behalf of the Board, I welcome you to the latest edition of our news magazine. As we celebrate the accomplishments of the musicians featured in the Winter 2023 Appassionato, I am reminded of the ultimate purpose of our school. We are first and foremost a center of excellence for music education.



Mr. Allen Ding recently completed his RCM Level 10 exam and scored an extraordinary 97% score. His abilities were further recognized with an invitation to perform at the prestigious RCM Canadian National Celebration of Excellence Recital.

One of the enduring legacies of our school is that many of our students, alumni, and affiliates are “forever learners”. They not only master more than one instrument but study all aspects of music. Mr. John MacLachlan not only plays the trumpet, and the piano, but he has also diversified his portfolio to include the cello. At the recent VAMSO Orpheum concert, John’s latest composition, “Lost at C” was performed.

In addition to being musicians, our alumni can acquire mastery in other areas of life. One such Subject Matter Expert is Mr. Will Lew. He is the Executive Chef at Bruno Restaurant, and a true maestro of the culinary arts. Read about how his experience in studying the violin afforded him the skills to be a leader in conducting his “orchestra of the kitchen”.

Again, I want to extend to all of you my heartfelt thanks for your support of our students, faculty, the executive committee and our President and CEO, Mr. Joseph Elworthy.

Kindest regards,  
Raymond Dong, MD, ABIM, FRCPC.  
Chair, VAM Board

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VAM’s Orchestral Program is supported by:

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# Journey to RCM Gold and VAM Excellence

Allen Ding, scoring a remarkable 97% on his RCM Level 10 exam and receiving an invitation to perform at the RCM Canadian National Celebration of Excellence Recital, gives a glimpse into his life outside the practice room.



*Tell us about the RCM Canadian National Celebration of Excellence Recital and share a memorable moment during the rehearsal.*



I was really nervous! I was the last player, and I was really worried because RCM didn't provide a warm-up piano, so I hadn't touched one in almost two days. The first few performances, I wasn't really listening but instead thoroughly going through my piece in my head. I was mentally prepared for a very long concert, since there were 17 people going before me. However, something very memorable happened at one point. About halfway through the concert, I realized that almost an hour had passed without me noticing. Not because I had been practicing in my head, but because all the other performers were so musical that they drew me into their performance without even noticing. It was amazing to hear all these great performers. In the end, I gave a performance of Liszt's Liebestraum that I'm really proud of. That one moment stuck with me as an example of how moving music



can be, and I think I'll try to incorporate it more into my playing in the future.



*Congratulations on receiving 97% on RCM Level 10 piano exam and being the 2022 RCM National Gold Medal winner! What are some key elements that bring you to this success?*





I think musicality is really crucial to getting a good mark in an exam. Having good technique, dynamic contrasts, phrasing, or stylistic accuracy is great, but character is what really brings a piece to life. Being able to project all my emotions into the music and transmit that into the examiner was, I think, the step that pushed me to that mark.

The ability to adapt was another factor. The piano at the exam was, frankly, terrible. However, due to my experiences in chamber music, where unexpected situations turn up all the time, I was able to alter my game plan to adapt to the instrument. Sea to Sky Chamberfest was super intense, condensed, and exciting, and I think that also helped develop a focused practice ethos. I'd like to thank my former piano teacher Mr. Nicholas Rada for bringing me to this point by building a solid foundation of fundamental technique, phrasing, and style. I also had a masterclass during the Sea to Sky Chamberfest with Ms. Amanda Chan, who more fully developed my musicality. All together, a combination of unlikely factors led to my success: a wonderful teacher, experience with chamber music, an extensive understanding

of harmony and counterpoint, and a fortuitous masterclass that changed my entire viewpoint.



*What is your favorite piano concerto and why?*



This is a hard question! There are so many great concerti out there. Rachmaninoff 2, Ravel G Major, and Prokofiev 3 come to mind. I love Rachmaninoff 2 for its big, juicy, rich harmonies and beautiful melodies that just tug at your soul. I love Ravel G Major for the scintillating, bright colours, and jazzy influence. Prokofiev 3 is just so viscerally fun to play, especially when you're banging out the chords in the middle of the night and waking the neighbours up! I played the Mozart No. 21 in C Major for the Piano Concerto Camp, which I chose for its upbeat tone and technical brilliance. Honestly, if I had to choose, I'd go with the Rachmaninoff.



Not just for the deep richness of the first movement but also for the incredibly beautiful second movement and quirky, playful third movement.



*What is your favorite VAM memory?*



I think the first VAM memory that really stuck with me was playing cello in the Pre-Junior Symphony for the first time. Back then, I was amazed by how a seemingly simple and obviously banal part could become part of something so much greater than the sum of its parts. The repetitive bass notes that I had pooh-poohed while practicing intertwined with the melody, creating harmonies and resonances I never thought possible. I felt proud to be part of something so beautiful. The sound was filling up Mary Olson Hall, making the chair I was sitting on shake. I could feel the vibration of the C string against my neck, filling me with a sense of calm and groundedness. Of course, since then, I've come far in orchestral playing. Nowadays, I look back on my younger self and think my playing was terrible then. Still, that first feeling of awe and wonder remains my favourite memory of VAM.



*What's one thing about you that might surprise people?*



Not many people know that outside of music, I have a passion for linguistics! I've joined the school linguistics club and often work on practice problems from the North American Computational Linguistics Open, a contest held each year in Canada and the US. I'm particularly interested in morphology (trilateral roots!) and the origins of phonological / grammatical evolution. (I hope that last sentence made at

least a little sense to some of you). In addition to being fluent in English and Mandarin, I'm also learning French, Hebrew, and Arabic. I laugh at linguistics jokes that my classmates find unintelligible (glottal trills, anyone?). In my free time, I like to go through Wikipedia articles on grammar and things like that.



**Sea to Sky**  
CHAMBERFEST

**AUGUST 11-18, 2024**

VANCOUVER ACADEMY OF MUSIC | KAY MEEK CENTRE

A week-long intensive chamber music experience for advanced music students Play side-by-side with members of Chamberfest faculty Featuring visiting artists Viano Quartet.

[visit vam.ca/chamberfest](https://visit.vam.ca/chamberfest) to learn more

# Congratulations to VAM students who participated in Spring 2023 VAM Exams!

## GOLD MEDAL

Chen, Sophia (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Violin  
Guo, Ming Zhe (Lucas) (Joseph  
Elworthy) - Intermediate  
Performer's Certificate, Cello  
Kang, Aaron (Domagoj Ivanovic) -  
Senior Performer's Certificate,  
Violin  
Kim, Angelyn (Miya Otake) - Junior  
Performer's Certificate, Harp

Lam, Tyrion (Amanda Chan) - Junior  
Class 3, Piano  
Li, Quintin (Isabelle Roland) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Viola  
Liu, Carol (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Advanced Senior Performer's  
Certificate, Cello  
Liu, Mason (Paul Hung) - Intermediate  
Class 3, Flute  
St John, Lincoln (Isabelle Roland) -  
Senior Class 3, Viola

Suen, Noah (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate  
Class 2, Piano  
Tambellini, Savannah Sky (Joy Yeh) -  
Senior Class 3, Harp  
Tsang, Victoria (Amanda Chan) - Senior  
Class 2, Piano  
Wen, Phelicia (Joy Yeh) - Intermediate  
Class 1, Harp  
Winkler, Bear (Irene Senent) - Junior  
Class 2, Violin

## SILVER MEDAL

Ding, Allen (Amanda Chan) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Piano  
Han, Xinhui (Irene Senent) - Junior  
Performer's Certificate, Violin  
Hii, Miles (Cyrena Huang) -  
Intermediate Class 3, Cello  
Khamis, Merett (Domagoj Ivanovic)  
- Senior Performer's Certificate,  
Violin  
Ko, Ayla (Lawrie Hill) - Intermediate  
Class 2, Violin

Lan, Alice (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Advanced Senior Performer's  
Certificate, Cello  
Park, Jae (Lawrie Hill) - Senior Class  
1, Violin  
Peng, Angelina (Lani Krantz) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Harp  
Robinson, Amely (Rosanna Chiu) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Harp  
Yip, Rachel (Julie Lowe) - Senior  
Performer's Certificate, Piano

Young, Hallie (Isabelle Roland) -  
Senior Class 3, Viola

## BRONZE MEDAL

Chan, Charlotte (Isabelle Roland) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Viola  
Cheng, Wing Sum (Jocelyn Lai) -  
Intermediate Class 3, Piano  
Dimitrijevic, Sofija (Domagoj  
Ivanovic) - Senior Class 1,  
Violin  
Gong, Harry (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Violin

Gong, Max (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Violin  
Hii, Elizabeth (Cyrena Huang) -  
Junior Performer's Certificate,  
Cello  
Lam, Joshua (Teresa Ho) - Junior  
Class 3, Piano  
Suen, Enoch (Teresa Ho) - Junior  
Performer's Certificate, Piano

Tian, May (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Senior Performer's Certificate,  
Cello  
Wang, Valarie (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Junior Performer's Certificate,  
Cello  
Wong, Bonnie (Joy Yeh) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Harp

## DISTINGUISHED

Cai, Jasper (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Intermediate Class 1, Cello  
Choi, Erin (Lawrie Hill) - Senior  
Class 1, Violin  
Choi, Jean (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Violin  
Goulding, Joseph (Joseph Elworthy)  
- Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Cello  
Kang, Jeffrey (Domagoj Ivanovic) -  
Senior Class 1, Violin

Lee, Irene (Rosanna Chiu) -  
Intermediate Class 3, Harp  
Li, Stanley (Domagoj Ivanovic) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Violin  
Lin, Frank (Teresa Ho) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Piano  
Liu, Ruth (Lawrie Hill) - Senior  
Class 2, Violin  
Lu, Jayden (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 1, Violin

Lung, Ching Yau Wallace (Lawrie  
Hill) - Senior Class 1, Violin  
Ngui, Adam (Domagoj Ivanovic) -  
Senior Class 1, Violin  
Shen, Miya (Amanda Chan) - Junior  
Performer's Certificate, Piano  
Wang, Tom (Paul Hung) - Senior  
Class 1, Flute  
Wu, Jayden (Lawrie Hill) -  
Intermediate Class 3, Violin

## EXCELLENT

Chang, Moriah (Nathania Ko) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Harp  
Chawla, Noele (Robyn Driedger-  
Klassen) - Intermediate Class 3,  
Voice  
Dai, Ziyang (Joy Yeh) - Junior Class 2,  
Harp  
Dionigi, Chihiro (Hanh Nguyen) -  
Senior Class 1, Guitar  
Goharjoo, Melina (Lillian Liu) - Senior  
Class 1, Piano  
Guo, Chloea (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Intermediate Class 2, Cello  
Lau, Ellie Hin Yau (Rosanna Chiu) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Harp

Lee, Adrian (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior  
Class 2, Cello  
Louie, Joshua (Hanh Nguyen) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Guitar  
Ma, Tyler (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Intermediate Performer's  
Certificate, Cello  
Mohan, Arjun (Teresa Ho) - Junior  
Performer's Certificate, Piano  
Molotkov, Evan (Irene Senent) -  
Intermediate Class 1, Violin  
Mu, Geoffrey (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Intermediate Class 1, Cello  
Paredes, Aubrey (Isabelle Roland) -  
Senior Class 2, Viola

Shen, Wing Yu Chloe (Geronimo  
Mendoza) - Intermediate  
Performer's Certificate, Oboe  
Ting, Keiyshia (Robyn Driedger-  
Klassen) - Senior Performer's  
Certificate, Voice  
Wang, Joyce (Isabelle Roland) -  
Intermediate Class 1, Viola  
Xia, Shitong Susie (Joseph Elworthy) -  
Senior Class 1, Cello  
Zhang, Xuanchen (Geronimo  
Mendoza) - Senior Class 2, Oboe



# John MacLachlan and His Multi-Instrumental Mastery

John's latest composition, 'Lost at C,' recently performed by the VAM Symphony Orchestra, discussing John's journey in learning three instruments—trumpet, piano, and most recently, cello—at VAM.



*Your family has a rich history with VAM. How has that influenced your own experience here?*

My parents encouraged my sister and me to explore music when we were younger. I took a camp at VAM that introduced the orchestral instruments when I was five years old, and I signed up for a piano class and violin lessons when I was six. Although I found the violin interesting, I had the opportunity to play the trumpet a little with my grandfather and was immediately captivated. Every day for the first two years that I played the trumpet, my grandfather came to my house to practice with me.

My mother and grandfather encouraged my interest in classical music, while my father encouraged an interest in modern music. I admire my grandfather's devotion to music; he plays five instruments and practices for more than four hours every day.

*You're currently exploring multiple instruments - trumpet, piano, and most recently, the cello. How do you manage to juggle these diverse interests?*

It can be challenging to balance trumpet, piano, and cello, especially with other activities such as Scouts, computer programming, and music composition. I try to prioritize. If I'm organizing the next Scout meeting, then I might not do as much computer programming, or if I have a trumpet competition, I might not practice as much piano. I wish that I didn't have to make these sacrifices, but I often find that I need to prioritize in this way.

I'm homeschooled, so I have a little more time for extracurricular activities. Enjoying music is also important for motivation. Ellen Marple and I started a jazz band called

the Brass Tacks. We meet every Thursday night, and I always enjoy playing in jazz ensembles, as it is a great opportunity to stretch my creativity. My first foray into arranging music was when I arranged pieces for Ellen's jazz band in 2019.

Having a strong foundation in fundamentals of music, such as theory, which I currently take with Daniel Marshall, or ear training, which I take with Taka Shimojima, has also helped me to progress in other areas of music.



*Could you tell us about your experience spearheading activities at Marvel Camp? What has particularly stood out for you?*



For the Marvel Camp, I arranged all the music in consultation with Adam Junk, VAM's Orchestra Manager. Adam and VAM staff did everything else that made the camp so much fun, like organizing all the great activities, such as the composition project. Ian Parker came in to conduct, and his energy really brought the camp to life.

One day in September, during a rehearsal break for the VAM Symphony Orchestra, I mentioned to Adam that it would be great if VAM had a camp that played Marvel music. He agreed, but said there wasn't much music available for it, so I agreed to arrange some pieces. Over nine months, I arranged about forty minutes of music for the camp. If the camp happens again this year, I want to update my arrangements with what I have learned since the camp. It was a lot of fun, and I hope more people attend this year.



*Your recent composition, 'Lost at C,' was performed by the VAM Symphony Orchestra. How did it feel to hear your piece come to life, especially at such a prominent venue like the Orpheum?*



Hearing the VAM Symphony Orchestra play *Lost at C* was quite surreal. I'd heard the piece in midi form on my computer at least a few hundred times as I was composing it, but actually sitting in the Orpheum and getting hit by a wave of sound felt unbelievable. In particular, the solos that I'd written were performed very well by the horn and clarinet players. The orchestra sounded incredible. Furthermore, I overheard some people practicing bits of my piece, and it's always interesting for me to hear someone interpret the music I've written.

When I was listening to the piece, I couldn't help but visualize the score and to think about every layer of the orchestra and the things I would like to incorporate into my next composition. It was great to be there with my composition teacher, Edward Top, and the other competition winners. I also invited some of my friends and family, and I was very glad they came, and it was interesting to hear what they thought of the piece and what they got from listening to it.





*Where do you see your musical journey taking you in the next five years? Any aspirations or goals you'd like to share?*



Over the next five years, I would like to explore more orchestral instruments. I also hope to enter more trumpet and composition competitions and festivals. Although I'm still thinking about my future, I am considering doing a double-major at UBC in music composition and computer programming. I also hope to continue running the Marvel summer camp with Adam, and I'd like to volunteer with the VAM Intermediate Symphony next year.



*Lastly, do you have any advice for current or prospective students at VAM who aspire to dive deep into the world of music?*



I love making connections between different aspects of music. For example, connecting music history and music theory,

or connecting trumpet playing with music composition. I believe that each musical activity strengthens the other, especially with the amazing teachers working at VAM, such as my trumpet teacher, Ellen Marple, who always encourages me and helps me push myself and find new opportunities.

Playing in ensembles has been incredibly beneficial to me. In orchestra and jazz band, I often hear interesting techniques or beautiful tone that I can imitate. For composing or arranging, I recommend pursuing every opportunity or competition that you can. Although you may not succeed in everything you do, you can learn a great deal from these experiences.





# Congratulations!

## COMPETITION WINNERS

MAY - NOVEMBER, 2023

### 2023 PHYLLIS SALTER PIANO COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Allen Ding	\$500 Scholarship, Category C (12 and under)	Amanda Chan
Judah Williams	\$500 Scholarship, Category B (18 and under)	Ian Parker
Jonathan Weng	\$500 Scholarship, Category B (18 and under)	Ian Parker
Merett Khamis	\$500 Scholarship, Category B (18 and under)	Lorrain Ambrose
Valerie Tsang	\$500 Scholarship, Category B (18 and under)	Amanda Chan
Victoria Tsang	\$500 Scholarship, Category B (18 and under)	Amanda Chan

### 2023 ALTO CLEF COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Quintin Li	Distinguished Award (\$300 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Lincoln St John	Distinguished Award (\$300 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Hallie Young	Distinguished Award (\$300 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Liam David	Excellent Award (\$200 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Natalie Gadd	Excellent Award (\$200 scholarship)	Sarah Kwok
Claire Shen	Excellent Award (\$200 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Joyce Wang	Excellent Award (\$200 scholarship)	Isabelle Roland
Audrey Fan	\$100 scholarship	Sarah Kwok
Katie MacLachlan	\$100 scholarship	Tawnya Popoff
Marcus Tung	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Kaitlyn Ho	\$100 scholarship	Sarah Kwok
Adam Johnson	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Laura Johnson	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Ananya Srivalli	\$100 scholarship	Sarah Kwok
Annora Nelissen	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Aubrey Paredes	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Ashleigh St John	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland
Aaron Wang	\$100 scholarship	Isabelle Roland

### 2023 KAY MEEK COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Merett Khamis, Piano	Kay Meek Scholarship (\$1,500)	Lorrain Ambrose
Forest Benson, Piano	Alex Drennan Scholarship (\$1,300)	Bogdan Dulu
Justin (Junwoo) Ha, Violin	I.O.D.E. Scholarship (\$1,100)	Nicholas Wright
Julian Lee De Vita, Cello	Willie Shen Scholarship (\$1,000)	Joseph Elworthy
Bienne Wu, Flute	VAM Scholarship (\$1,000)	Paul Hung
Ekinsu Durgun, Voice	VAM Scholarship (\$1,000)	Robyn Klassen



## 2023 PROVINCIAL CONCERTO COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Vivienne Thamrin, Piano	Bjorn & Lori Hareid Scholarship (\$2,000)	David Fung
Cameron Chen, Piano	Michael & Mary Shields Scholarship (\$1,000)	David Fung
Forest Benson, Piano	Loyal Protestant Association Scholarship (\$750, tied)	Bogdan Dulu
Ryan Kim, Piano	Loyal Protestant Association Scholarship (\$750, tied)	Michelle Mares

## 2023 CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Pi Trio Qiuzi Nini Lu, Cello Adam Ngui, Violin Allen Ding, Piano	Iby Koerner Scholarship (\$1,000)	Ian Parker
Cobalt Flute Quartet Carlos Gao, Flute Darius Gao, Flute Tom Wang, Flute Mason Liu, Flute	VAM Scholarship (\$500)	Paul Hung
Cedar Quartet Johnny Huang, Viola Julian Lee De Vita, Cello Mio Nakajo, Violin Norah Mix, Violin	Elsje de Ridder Armstrong Scholarship (\$1,000)	Tawnya Popoff
Niagara Trio Phoebe Lan, Cello Edward Duan, Violin Justin (Junwoo) Ha, Violin	Provincial Chapter, IODE Scholarship (\$500)	Ian Parker

## 2023 BASSFEST COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Micah Xu, Bass	VAM Scholarship (\$500)	Maggie Hasspacher
Demi ZiHe Chen, Bass	VAM Scholarship (\$500)	Dylan Palmer
Allison Danielle Lee, Bass	VAM Scholarship (\$500)	Dylan Palmer

## 2023 VAMFP, VAMJS, VAMIS, VIVALDI SOLO/CONCERTO COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Adiel Asher Au, Violin	Orpheum Prize, VAMFP	Joshua Au
Renee Zhao, Harp	VAM Prize, VAMFP	Miya Otake
Esther Hwang, Violin	VAM Prize, VAMFP	Lawrie Hill
Matthias Lemeul Au, Violin	Alternate, VAMFP	Joshua Au
Nelson St John, Cello	Alternate, VAMFP	Mary Thomson
Enrelle Ashong, Violin	Orpheum Prize, VAMJS	Domagoj Ivanovic
Chloea Guo, Cello	VAM Prize, VAMJS	Joseph Elworthy
Joyce Wang, Viola	VAM Prize, VAMJS	Isabelle Roland
Otto McFarlane, Violin	Alternate, VAMJS	Sarah Kwok
Kristy Wang, Violin	Alternate, VAMJS	Xuefeng Wei
Stanley Li, Violin	Orpheum Prize, VAMIS	Domagoj Ivanovic
Valerie Lin, Percussion/Marimba	VAM Prize, VAMIS	Katie Rife
Joseph Goulding, Cello	VAM Prize, VAMIS	Joseph Elworthy
Isabella Wang, Violin	Alternate, VAMIS	Domagoj Ivanovic
Carlos & Darius Gao, Flute	Alternate, VAMIS	Paul Hung
Adam Ngui, Violin	VAMSO Vivaldi, Spring	Domagoj Ivanovic
Merett Khamis, Violin	VAMSO Vivaldi, Summer	Domagoj Ivanovic
Justin (Junwoo) Ha, Violin	VAMSO Vivaldi, Autumn	Nicholas Wright
Sofija Dimitrijevic, Violin	VAMSO Vivaldi, Winter	Domagoj Ivanovic



# VAM's Inaugural Piano Concerto Camp & Competition

What happens when you bring together a group of budding young pianists and immerse them in the world of concerti? The answer lies in VAM's inaugural Piano Concerto Camp, a cutting-edge camp focused on diving deep into the intricacies of concerti, elevating the standards of piano pedagogy.

Against the backdrop of a grand piano, Amanda Chan- VAM's Piano Professor & Division Chair, talks about this immersive week-long program designed to transform students' musical prowess and stage presence. "Our vision is to nurture the innate talents of young musicians and to bring them to their full performance potential," says Ms. Chan, "Not only are there daily masterclasses, students receive private lessons, coachings and focused practice supervision with myself and our excellent VAM instructors, Ian Parker, Aslan Aslanov, and Teresa Bowes. When hard work meets with exceptional mentorship, extraordinary things can happen."

The Piano Concerto Camp is an exquisite addition to VAM's expanding list of summer programs, catering to a rising demand for specialized concerto instruction in piano performance. "This is not just a regular 'summer camp,'" Ms. Chan notes with emphasis. "Out of this intense environment, there develops a unique bond and community where lifelong friendships are made. Students don't just learn; they lift each other up. This was especially evident during our evening competition, where students chose to stay backstage, forming a circle of support and cheer that is rarely seen and ever so valuable."





What is an added benefit of this camp? Ms. Chan lights up at the question. “At the end of the week, there is a competition where selected winners will have the incredible opportunity to perform with one of VAM’s symphonies in the following season. For some students, this will be their first experience to perform with an orchestra.”

“But the biggest reward,” Ms. Chan shares, “is seeing the trajectory of the students’ progress from day one of the camp to the final evening concert. Every one of these students come out on stage with professional presence and deliver thrilling performances. The joy and elation on their confident faces is indeed beautiful to witness.”



# RCM Exam Results

## Gold Medal

Ding, Allen (Amanda Chan), Grade 10 Piano  
Huang, Chelsea (Rosanna Chiu), Grade 8 Harp  
Lu, Eric Siyu (Hanh Nguyen), Grade 3 Classical Guitar  
Wang, Charles Key (Chloe Hurst), Grade 2 Voice

## First Class Honours with Distinction

Azizi, Ryan (Alana Chan), Grade 8 Piano  
Madadi, Darian (Alana Chan), Grade 1 Piano  
Quan, Jimmy (Hanh Nguyen), Grade 1 Classical Guitar  
St John, Lincoln (Alana Chan), Grade 10 Piano  
Wong, Bonnie (Joy Yeh), Grade 8 Harp  
Yang, Yiming (Alana Chan), Grade 8 Piano  
Yip, Rachel (Julie Lowe), Grade 10 Piano

## First Class Honours

Lin, Frank (Teresa Ho), Grade 9 Piano  
Ma, Tyler (Joseph Elworthy), Grade 8 Cello  
Reinhardt, Kallen (Teresa Ho), Grade 7 Piano  
Suen, Noah (Teresa Ho), Grade 7 Piano  
Tsang, Victoria (Amanda Chan), ARCT Piano  
Tuppurainen, Alex (Mary Thomson), Grade 8 Cello  
Xiao, Cynthia (Joy Yeh), Grade 8 Harp  
Xia, Susie (Joseph Elworthy), Grade 8 Cello

## Honours

Bird, Alison (Alana Chan), Grade 7 Piano  
Bird, Alison (Alana Chan), Grade 7 Theory  
Borins, Zoe (Teresa Ho), Grade 7 Piano  
Chen, Lucas (Teresa Ho), Grade 6 Piano  
Crawford, Allan (Joseph Elworthy), Grade 10 Cello  
Poon, Ethan (Juan Wang), ARCT Piano  
Qu, Serena (Amanda Chan), Grade 10 Piano  
Reinhardt, Vahla (Teresa Ho), Grade 9 Piano



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# Chef Will Lew - Harmony in the

## Kitchen:

An alum of VAM, Chef Will Lew is now the Executive Chef at Bruno Restaurant, sharing how his VAM experiences have shaped his leadership style and career in the culinary arts.



*Will, you were a science guy pursuing a degree in Animal Biology from UBC, which seems like a far cry from the culinary world. Can you share the pivotal moment when you realized that your true calling was in the kitchen, despite your scientific pursuits?*



From my very first day at VAM at age 5, music was my soulmate. My grandfather, both a chef in Chinatown and an artist, planted the seeds of creativity in me. Weekends with him were filled with cooking and crafting, setting my artistic inclinations early on.

VAM amplified my passion, introducing me to the realm of musical artistry. As I grew, so did my interests, intertwining animals, nature, biology, and music into my own unique form of artistic expression.

When I reached Grade 12, the dilemma was clear: pursue Science and Biology or chase a dream in music? A consultation with my family led me to Animal Biology at UBC. College life broadened my horizons, allowing me to dabble in music courses, art history, and theatre, further fueling my creative spirit.

The pivotal moment came one summer after my 3rd year at UBC. On a whim, I distributed resumes in Yaletown's

blossoming restaurant scene. I landed in Glowbal Restaurant's dish pit, realizing for the first time that food could also be an art form. The intensity, the creativity, the sense of ensemble—it felt like an orchestra, but in a kitchen.

That night, my culinary path was set. Food became my new canvas, integrating elements of art, music, and science. I continued with my biology degree, all while working my way up from dishwasher to cook. Now, decades later, I'm a chef. This journey has taught me that all these disciplines—music, art, and science—are interconnected in the craft of cooking,



which I continue to explore with a mission of significance and purpose.



*As a VAM alumni, you've stated that your time at the academy "completely altered and derived the trajectory" of your career. Can you elaborate on how VAM has helped shape your career and passion?*



Thanks to VAM I discovered how music and performance could captivate an audience, bring people together through a common purpose, preserve traditions but at the same time compose new ones, learn that one has talent- ability- and worth, that music has significance beyond the notes and auditory perception, create life long friendships, discover new talents, understand that through one art form it can translate to so many other diverse interests and studies, and allowed one to find their own voice and own identity through a creative artform that allowed for oneself to learn and grown as an individual finding their voice and place in this world. I learned that the significance of music played so many roles to lead me to achieve and continue to achieve the goals and dreams I have as a human and a professional.



*In your interview with Stir, you drew a vivid parallel between grooving with a band and creating a harmonious kitchen environment. Teamwork seems to be a theme that runs parallel in both an orchestra and a kitchen. How has your experience of playing in orchestras have shaped your leadership style as a chef?*



To be an effective and positive leader one needs to understand and see everyone as an individual who in their own selves all learn, understand, grow, and express themselves uniquely.

Everyone has their strengths and everyone continues to grow from their weaknesses. If you don't take the time to learn and grow a respectful relationship with your team no matter if its in the kitchen, in a band, in an orchestra, or anything else on this earth that requires comradery and teamwork then the effectiveness of a leader becomes void to each individual who has their own mindset- history- and philosophies.

To be empathetic and to empower others is the only way a leader can find meaningful connections to their team. As everyone plays an essential role may it be in a kitchen or orchestra, finding that balance of harmonious collaboration is the key to getting the best version out of not only the individual but the team. If its leading a kitchen, leading a band, or being part of an orchestra all these skills and experiences for me tie into each other seamlessly. Leading the kitchen feels just like leading a band or leading an orchestra. We all have a common purpose and passion and to allow each person to express themselves respectfully together and to the craft at hand allows the team to evolve.



Today, I integrate Biology, Fine Arts, and Music into my culinary mission, focusing on issues like Ocean Conservation and Seafood Sustainability. Many thanks to VAM for instilling that mindset and nurturing one's unique talents through all of my teachers. They have all played an integral role in my development as a professional that has a platform to share and inspire significant messages.



*As someone who's continually innovating in both the culinary and artistic fields, can you give us a sneak peek into what's next for you? Any exciting new projects, restaurants, or collaborations we should be looking forward to?*



The world of art continues to evolve and find purpose. That is the same with me and all my ventures. The core to my passion is teaching, empowering others to see them grow, create new and innovative restaurants/ concepts/ and creative storytelling focused cuisine, and to commit to my missions of supporting seafood sustainability and ocean conservation through Ocean Wise as well as various other non-profit organizations that help share and perpetuate the arts in our communities. At Club Versante we have opened 4 restaurants in a span of less than two years and our newest restaurant 'Acre Through the Seasons' is currently the epitome of the concepts I truly have passion for by tying in Nature, Art, Conservation, Sustainability, and sharing conceptual cuisine that allows us to appreciate what is so beautiful and special about British Columbia. Cooking and creating never stops and the initiatives that present themselves and those that we have a strong mission towards happen continuously. I believe that because artists/ chefs have such a significant platform in society we also bear a responsibility to be leaders and inspirations to our culinary and creative choices and how we utilize these talents to help better our communities and our environments!



*You've mentioned how your musical journey has not only shaped your career but also impacted the culinary industry, charity initiatives, and sustainability efforts. Can you elaborate on how your time at VAM played a significant role in shaping your mission and passion in these areas?*



My culinary career has been deeply influenced by my artistic background, nurtured by years at VAM. Here, I learned violin, and that experience propelled me into various creative endeavors—from orchestras to self-composed music and even musicals. The self-assurance I gained at VAM became the cornerstone for my later successes.

One defining moment came during my Art History courses in college. The question "What is the significance of this piece?" became a touchstone for my professional aims. VAM's influence re-emerged as I connected the dots: food is more than sustenance; it's a form of communication, an art that brings people together and tells meaningful stories.





*Lastly, if you were to create a dish that captures the essence of your musical journey at VAM, what would it be and why*



It would not just be a single dish, but a “symphony” of a Tasting Menu - a culinary narrative of my journey shaped by VAM. Courses would be paired with live performances from students, alumni, teachers, and virtuosos, underscoring that every musician, at any stage, contributes something valuable—that would highlight the history and journey that VAM has allowed me to have and evolve from.

Each dish would be a collaborative creation, inspired by my experiences at VAM, reflecting our shared history and individual memories. We might craft dishes that speak to specific composers, celebrate a memorable time at VAM, or even pay tribute to the school’s building or snack stand—all embodying the importance of learning, performing, and teaching music.



This culinary concert wouldn’t be possible without a deep collaboration with those who have shaped my experience and those of many others at VAM. It would be an honour and privilege to one day create a dinner such as this with those so connected in the evolution of artist like myself and so many other individuals whose lives were bettered because of the experience that music played in ones life thanks to those at VAM.



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# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**FOREST BENSON** (piano, Bogdan Dulu) is the Grand Prize Winner of the Piano Category at VIMC 2023 and performed at the Winner's Gala at the Vancouver Playhouse.

**KEHAO CAI** (composition, Edward Top) performed his own piano composition as a winner of the Steinway Piano Competition Canada at the Carnegie Hall in New York in October 2023.

**MEGAN CHENG** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to McGill University.

**EMMA CHO** (harp, Joy Yeh) was awarded the bronze medal in the string category (18-35 years old) at the Vancouver International Music Competition and the "Best Performance of a Canadian Work" award.

**CHARISMA CHOW** (harp, Joy Yeh) was awarded the silver medal in the string category (9-12 years old) at the Vancouver International Music Competition and the "Best Performance of a Canadian Work" award.

**YANNIE ZIYAN DAI** (harp, Joy Yeh) received the Harp Renaissance & Baroque Composers Medallion from the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival.

**OWEN HUANG** (saxophone, Tina Wang) has been accepted to Canada Music Fest's National Denis Wick Wind Orchestra. He was also accepted to the Interlochen Centre of Art's Summer Saxophone Intensive studying under Dr. Timothy McAllister. He is the recipient of the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival Saxophone Scholarship in his respective age category.

**CHELSEA HUANG** (harp, Rosanna Chiu) recently helped lead a harp workshop together with **ROSANNA CHIU** (harp faculty) for **EDWARD TOP**'s (composition faculty) orchestration and composition classes.

**KAYLIN LAM** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to Choate Rosemary Hall Prep School in Connecticut, USA.

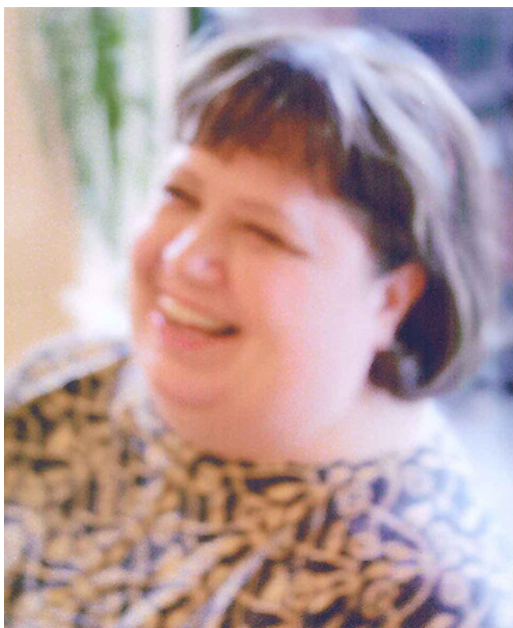
**ALICE LAN** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to the University of Toronto.

**ELLIE LAU** (harp, Rosanna Chiu) and **ALICE HAN** (harp, Rosanna Chiu) won the audition for the Christmas in Wales musical production and will be performing 8 shows each throughout this December at the Jericho Arts Centre.

A group of student cellists were asked to accompany Sheku Kanneh-Mason for his performance of Pablo Casals' *Song of the Birds* as the grand finale to his concert, held at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts on Sunday, October 29. The VAM students involved were: **ADRIAN LEE** (cello, Joseph Elworthy), **HAROLD WANG** (cello, Jonathan Lo), **RACE LI** (cello, Joseph Elworthy), **LEO VAN JARRSVELD** (cello, Audrey Nodwell), **PALOMA MARTINS** (cello, Mary Thomson), **OSTIN WONG** (cello, Judith Fraser), and **THOMAS CHEN** (bass alumnus, Dylan Palmer).

**YEKAJIELINNA LIAN** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to the McDuffie Centre for Strings in Georgia, USA.

**CAROL LIU** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to Oberlin College in Ohio, USA



## VAM Remembers

# Tonia Allen

TONIA ALLEN (former VAM faculty) has passed away. She was a staple of VAM's Orff program for many years and her students and their parents still remember her fondly. Tonia will be greatly missed as she has left an indelible mark on those fortunate to have known her.

**KAI MASON** (guitar, Hanh Nguyen) won First Place at the 2023 Northwest Guitar Festival in Bellingham Washington.

**SOPHIA MYLES** (composition, Edward Top) has been selected for this year's Jean Coulthard Readings and Mentorship Program with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

**ADAM NGUI** (violin, Domagoj Ivanovic), **QIUZI NINI LU** (cello, Joseph Elworthy), and **ALLEN DING** (piano, Amanda Chan) of the **PI TRIO** (coach, Ian Parker) recently hosted a charity concert for Doctor Without Borders that was a resounding success and raised over \$4,600 for a global charity. Over their four years together as a young ensemble in VAM's Chamber Music Program, this award-winning trio has grown not just in musical prowess but also in their community spirit. Recent achievements include receiving the First Prize at the Canadian Music Competition National Finals in Toronto and winning First Prize in the Junior Category at VAM's Elsje de Ridder Armstrong Chamber Music Competition, both in June 2023.

**MELISSA PURNELL** (alumna, David Meek) performed as La Dama in Macbeth and performed in La Traviata.

**LAWRENCE QIAN** (saxophone, Tina Wang) was selected as the tenor saxophonist for the 2023 National Youth Band of Canada and is the First Place winner of the Sonata class at the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival.

On January 12, 2024, a new set of songs by **EDWARD TOP** (composition faculty) for countertenor, Chinese instruments and baroque ensemble will be premiered during the Luminous Festival of Early Music Vancouver by countertenor Reginald Mobley, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and members of the Sound of Dragon Ensemble.

**VICTORIA TSANG** (piano, Amanda Chan) was chosen by Vancouver Kiwanis as the Intermediate Representative at the BC Provincial Festival Competition

**CHARLES KEY WANG** (voice, Chloe Hurst) won Gold Medal for his RCM Level 2 Voice exam and was invited to perform at The RCM British Columbia & Yukon Celebration of Excellence Recital on November 4.

**JUDAH WILLIAMS** (composition, Edward Top) performed his own piano composition as a winner of the Steinway Piano Competition Canada at the Carnegie Hall in New York in October 2023. He has also been commissioned by the Chilliwack Symphony Orchestra to compose a piano concerto for them for the spring of 2024.

**ARTHUR WONG** (alum, Joseph Elworthy) has been accepted to the University of British Columbia.

**BOWEN XIAO** (saxophone, Tina Wang) has been accepted to Carnegie Mellon University, majoring in physics and minoring in music on saxophone with Dr. James Houlik. He is also the recipient of the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival Saxophone Scholarship in his respective age category and First Place in the Concerto and Sonata class.

**HARRY XIE** (alum, Tina Wang) is currently doing a Diploma in Music Performance at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and is the section leader in the UBC Symphonic Winds and also plays in the UBC Symphony Orchestra. He completed his undergraduate degree on saxophone at Northwestern University.

**JOY YEH**'s (harp faculty) innovative quartet, "88 strings", featuring a unique blend of traditional Chinese, Persian, and Western plucked instruments, has been awarded the Explore and Create Grant by the Canada Council for the Arts.

**GRACE YU** (violin, Edward Top) started Grade 8 in the strings programme of Byng Arts Mini School in September 2023. She will take her RCM Level 9 violin exam in January 2024.

**AARON YURKOWSKI** (alum, Caroline Jang) has been accepted to the Opera Performance Program at the University of British Columbia.

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- Reach out to the community with VAM's signature VAM Symphony Orchestra Series at the Orpheum Theatre.





VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

# Upcoming Events

## VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

### HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

December 10, 2:00pm | Orpheum Theatre

Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## STRAWBERRY & TEA STUDENT CONCERTS

January 21, 1pm & 3pm

Koerner Recital Hall | Free Admission

## VAM CHAMBER PLAYERS:

### BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE

January 28, 2:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall

Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## EDITH LANDO GIFTED YOUTH COMPETITION:

### WINNER'S RECITAL

February 24, 7pm

Koerner Recital Hall | Free Admission

## VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

### TCHAIKOVSKY'S SYMPHONY NO.4

February 25, 2pm | Kay Meek Arts Centre

March 3, 2pm | Orpheum Theatre

Tickets: [vamso.ca](http://vamso.ca)

## ADULT BEGINNER STRINGS

March 4, 7:30pm

Koerner Recital Hall | Free Admission

## SALON SERIES: RECITAL & MASTERCLASS

### STEFAN JACKIW & KEVIN AHFAT (VIOLIN & PIANO)

March 10, 2:00 pm | Koerner Recital Hall

Tickets: [vancouverchambermusic.com](http://vancouverchambermusic.com)

## YACP SPRING RECITAL

April 5, 7:30pm

Koerner Recital Hall | Free Admission

## VAM CHAMBER PLAYERS:

### PARIS IN SPRING

April 13, 7:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall

Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

### NEW WORLD SYMPHONY & RHAPSODY IN BLUE

May 25, 2pm | Kay Meek Arts Centre

May 26, 2pm | Orpheum Theatre

Tickets: [vamso.ca](http://vamso.ca)