

WINTER 2025

# Appassionato



Celebrating  
VAM's Community

VAM REMEMBERS GWEN  
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(P. 4)

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MEET ALLAN CRAWFORD:  
INTERNATIONAL  
BADMINTON PLAYER  
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# From the President & CEO

Welcome to the Winter 2025 edition of Appassionato, where we reflect on a tremendous year and celebrate the wealth of remarkable achievements from our community. In this year's edition, the passion and dedication our community shares for music will come alive through a series of stories about beloved members of the academy, both past and present.

To kickstart the new academic year at VAM, we take a moment to remember former VAM violin faculty Gwen Thompson and the legacy she had on our community. Next, we check in with talented VAM alum Andrew Beer, who acts as concertmaster for the Auckland Philharmonia. We also shine a light on multi-talented VAM student Allan Crawford, who is balancing his passion for music with his talents in sports, where he recently represented Canada in an international badminton competition. These heartwarming stories culminate in a nostalgic edition of our bi-annual newsletter, where the endless possibilities fostered at VAM are reflected in past members who have helped establish the community we cherish today and the bright futures of the gifted musicians that currently grace our halls.

I humbly extend my deepest gratitude to each of you—our steadfast community. Your dedicated support to VAM and our broader mission of inspiring and nurturing a love for music is the cornerstone of our shared achievements. As we turn the page onto the next chapter in VAM's magnificent story, I am filled with hope and excitement for the future that we will build together.

Musically yours,  
Joseph Elworthy  
VAM President & CEO

## VANCOUVER ACADEMY OF MUSIC

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## APPASSIONATO

Chanel Zhang, *Editor*  
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# From the Board Chair

Dear Members of the VAM Family,

Welcome to VAM's bi-annual newsletter, Appassionato. As the Chair of the VAM Board, it is my privilege to connect with you through this enduring showcase of our community's accomplishments and inspirations.

At the Vancouver Academy of Music, our commitment extends beyond training accomplished musicians; we are dedicated to developing leaders and innovators across a spectrum of professions. Appassionato reflects this broader mission by celebrating the diverse achievements of our students and alumni, who excel not only in the music industry but in various fields around the world.



This newsletter highlights these significant accomplishments, illustrating the profound impact of a rich musical education on personal and professional development. Our stories inspire current students and faculty, encouraging them to explore and expand the boundaries of their own potential.

By sharing these narratives, we foster a culture of excellence and aspiration that is central to the VAM ethos. Each feature contributes to the ongoing story of our institution—a story marked by a passion for the arts and a commitment to fostering versatile, forward-thinking individuals.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in our vibrant community. Together, we celebrate the transformative power of music and the remarkable achievements of our extended VAM family.

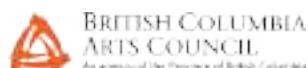
Kindest regards,  
Monique Wilberg  
*Chair, VAM Board of Directors*

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# VAM Remembers Gwen Thompson

*March 30, 1947 - December 5, 2025*

VAM fondly remembers a cherished member of our community, Gwen Thompson. Gwen was a remarkable violinist and served as the former head of the academy's violin department. Throughout her time at the academy and beyond, Gwen taught hundreds of upcoming musicians and became an icon and inspiration among students and faculty.

Gwen's musical journey began at the young age of four. She quickly progressed and was studying under Sophie Eckhart-Grammate by the age of 14. She spent each summer attending the National Yge of 16, she was accepted at Indiana University

by Josef Gingold, one of North America's leading teachers. After graduating, she continued her studies and went on to UCLA and the Juilliard School of Music. Her talents soon coveted her a position teaching violin at Western University, where at just 22 years old she became the youngest person to hold a professorship in the music faculty at Western.

In 2004, Gwen was appointed to the Order of Canada in recognition of her remarkable teaching and overall contribution to music in Canada.

VAM's President and CEO Joseph Elworthy remarked on the lasting impact Gwen had.

"Gwen was a larger-than-life figure who balanced her propensity to speak her mind with a wicked sense of humour," he said. "Gwen established standards for violin and string playing on an international scale. Gwen's stamp of approval was analogous to any legendary teacher - such was her knowledge and her expectations."

"Gwen is part of the Academy's origin story. To this day, after hearing an outstanding VAM recital or masterclass, I

ponder whether it would meet dear Gwen's standards, which epitomize her lasting legacy."

In her personal life, Gwen married Dr. Oliver Robinow in 1975 and they had two children, Richard Alexander Robinow and Elizabeth Louise Robinow. After she retired in 2006, Gwen and her husband moved to Victoria. Here, she helped establish the Township Community Arts Council in Esquimalt which provides support for gifted young musicians.

Gwen will be deeply missed as her legacy continues to shine on in the musical community and beyond.



# Congratulations to VAM students who participated in Spring 2025 VAM Exams!

This page celebrates VAM students who achieved Excellent, Distinguished, and Medal Standings.

## GOLD MEDAL

Benson, Forest (Bogdan Dulu) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Piano	Lee, Irene (Rosanna Chiu) - Senior Class 1, Harp	Lu, Qiuzi Nini (Henry Shapard) - Senior Class 2, Cello
Chen, Skylah (Joy Yeh) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Harp	Le-Podeur, Vincent (Chad Emry Heltzel) - Senior Class 2, Piano	McLeod, Sithara (Rosanna Chiu) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Harp
Chow, Charisma Kate (Amanda Chan) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	Li, Jiayu Angela (Ji Eun Jenny Lim) - Senior Class 2, Violin	Sam, Joshua (Donna Lee) - Junior Class 3, Piano
Gao, Carlos (Frederick Robert) - Senior Class 2, Voice	Li, Quintin (Isabelle Roland) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Viola	Yin, Louie (Joseph Elworthy) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Cello
Ghazneiyni, Delaram (Caroline Jang) - Intermediate Class 3, Voice	Li, Race (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Cello	Zawadiuk, Hart (Kristy-Lee Audette) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Trumpet
Khamis, Merett (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Violin	Lim, Irene (Tawnya Popoff) - Senior Performer's Certificate, Viola	
Ko, Ayla (Lawrie Hill) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Violin	Liu, Mason (Paul Hung) - Senior Class 1, Flute	

## SILVER MEDAL

Chawla, Noele (Robyn Klassen) - Senior Class 1, Voice	Gao, Carlos (Brenda Fedoruk) - Senior Class 2, Flute	Intermediate Class 3, Viola
Cho, Yewon (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 2, Cello	Kang, Aaron (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Violin	Park, Jae (Lawrie Hill) - Senior Class 3, Violin
Chong, Chloe (Jocelyn Lai) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Piano	Khamis, Merett (Lorraine Ambrose) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Piano	Sum, Victoria (Rosanna Chiu) - Senior Class 1, Harp
Chow, Charisma Kate (Joy Yeh) - Intermediate Class 3, Harp	Lee, Adrian (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Performer's Certificate, Cello	Wang, Jimmy (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 3, Cello
Deng, Sophie Florence (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Intermediate Class 2, Violin	Leung, Isabella (Miya Otake) - Junior Class 2, Harp	Wang, Zixin Joyce (Chloe Hurst) - Intermediate Class 3, Voice
Fung, Jasper (Alex Cheung) - Junior Class 2, Cello	Nelissen, Annora (Isabelle Roland) -	Wen, Phelicia (Joy Yeh) - Intermediate Class 3, Harp
		Xue, Michael (Amanda Chan) - Senior Class 2, Piano

## BRONZE MEDAL

Chong, Connor (Bogdan Dulu) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Piano	Leung, Tsz Huen (Elyse) (Lani Krantz) - Intermediate Class 2, Harp	Xu, Arthur (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 2, Cello
Dai, Ziyan (Joy Yeh) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Harp	Li, Bella (Pui Tung) (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 2, Cello	Xu, Ellie (Donna Lee) - Junior Class 2, Piano
Gao, Darius (Brenda Fedoruk) - Senior Class 2, Flute	Okochi, Fumi (Alana Chan) - Senior Class 2, Piano	Yip, Rachel (Julie Lowe) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Piano
Guo, Chloe (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Cello	Wang, Zixin Joyce (Isabelle Roland) - Intermediate Class 3, Viola	
Kang, Jeffrey (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Senior Class 3, Violin	Wong, Bonnie (Joy Yeh) - Senior Class 2, Harp	

## DISTINGUISHED

Cai, Jasper (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 3, Cello	Liu, Yanxi (Yancey) (Alejandro Ochoa) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Suo, Lucas (Rosanna Chiu) - Junior Class 2, Harp
Cheung, Sophie (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 3, Cello	Lu, Ariel (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 1, Cello	To, Hakuya (Aslan Aslanov) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano
Crawford, Allan (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Performer's Certificate, Cello	Lu, Sarah (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 1, Cello	Wang, Isabella (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Senior Class 2, Violin
Garrioch, Liam (Audrey Nodwell) - Intermediate Class 3, Cello	Ma, Tyler (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 2, Cello	Wang, Valarie (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 2, Cello
Hwang, Samuel (Ashton Lim) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Cello	Mai, Mengmeng (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 2, Cello	Wang, Yvonne (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 1, Cello
Kim, Angelyn (Miya Otake) - Intermediate Class 2, Harp	Mendoza Yu, Emilio (Rebecca Kelly) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Xia, Shitong Susie (Joseph Elworthy) - Senior Class 3, Cello
Kim, Anna (Miya Otake) - Junior Class 3, Harp	Ngan, Aden (Mary Thomson) - Intermediate Class 2, Cello	Xu, Chantel (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Cello
Lam, Joshua (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Class 1, Piano	Pavlovic, Yanna (Donna Lee) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Zawadiuk, Hart (Donna Lee) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Piano
Lau, Ellie Hin Yau (Rosanna Chiu) - Senior Class 2, Harp	Shum, Mackenzie (Donna Lee) - Junior Class 2, Piano	Zhu, Jayden (Alana Chan) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano
Li, Irene (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	St John, Nelson (Mary Thomson) - Intermediate Class 2, Cello	
Li, Stanley (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Senior Class 1, Violin	Suen, Noah (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Piano	

# EXCELLENT

Borins, Eva (Teresa Ho) - Senior Class 2, Piano	Huang, Chelsea (Rosanna Chiu) - Senior Class 3, Harp	Reddy, Shivaylin (Donna Lee) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Piano
Borins, Zoe (Teresa Ho) - Senior Class 2, Piano	Hwang, Esther (Lawrie Hill) - Intermediate Class 1, Violin	Rewcastle, Olivia (Teresa Ho) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Piano
Borins, Zoe (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Senior Class 2, Violin	Kasahara, Nanako (Paul Hung) - Senior Class 1, Flute	Shen, Miya (Amanda Chan) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano
Cave, Caspian (Janna Berg) - Senior Class 3, Piano	Kefalas, George (Joan Hurst) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	St John, Ashleigh (Isabelle Roland) - Senior Class 1, Viola
Cave, Laila (Janna Berg) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	Kefalas, Nicholas (Joan Hurst) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	Suen, Enoch (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano
Cave, Nadia (Janna Berg) - Junior Class 3, Piano	Leung, Kaitlynn (Miya Otake) - Senior Class 1, Harp	Wang, Alexander (Janna Berg) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano
Chandramohan, Arun (Isabelle Roland) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Viola	Lin, Frank (Teresa Ho) - Senior Class 2, Piano	Wang, Alice (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Class 3, Cello
Chen, Amelia (Rosanna Chiu) - Junior Class 3, Harp	Liu, John (Rebecca Kelly) - Senior Class 1, Piano	Wang, Donnie (Martha Brickman) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Piano
Chen, Lucas (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Piano	Liu, Ruth (Lawrie Hill) - Senior Performer's Certificate, Violin	Wang, Evie (Stella Zhu) - Junior Class 3, Harp
Chun, Heun (Noel McRobbie) - Intermediate Class 1, Piano	Lu, Felix (Joan Hurst) - Junior Class 1, Piano	Wang, Ziyang Tom (Paul Hung) - Senior Class 3, Flute
Cordingley, Alexander (Janna Berg) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	Ma, Aidan (Janna Berg) - Junior Class 3, Piano	Winkler, Bear (Irene Senent) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Violin
David, Liam (Isabelle Roland) - Intermediate Class 3, Viola	McRobbie, Sana (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Intermediate Class 3, Violin	Woolley, Rachel (Lawrie Hill) - Intermediate Class 1, Violin
Dezell, Thomas (Donna Lee) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Metcalf, Aria (Teresa Ho) - Junior Class 3, Piano	Wu, Emily (Paul Hung) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Flute
Dimitrijevic, Sofija (Domagoj Ivanovic) - Senior Class 3, Violin	Metcalf, Logan (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Xiao, Cynthia (Joy Yeh) - Senior Class 1, Harp
Erario, Evelyn (Joan Hurst) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano	Mohan, Arjun (Teresa Ho) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Yan, Seraphina (Noel McRobbie) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano
Fung, Jovan (Rosanna Chiu) - Junior Class 1, Harp	Mu, Geoffrey (Joseph Elworthy) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Cello	Yin, Justin (Er Da) (Rebecca Kelly) - Senior Class 3, Piano
Gao, Enid (Isabelle Roland) - Intermediate Class 3, Viola	Ng, Aidan (Donna Lee-Leung) - Intermediate Class 2, Piano	Yu, Peggy (Paul Hung) - Senior Class 1, Flute
Gong, Harry (Lawrie Hill) - Intermediate Performer's Certificate, Violin	Ng, Kylie (Paul Hung) - Advanced Senior Performer's Certificate, Flute	Yu, Shuya (Rosanna Chiu) - Junior Class 2, Harp
Han, Xinhui (Irene Senent) - Intermediate Class 2, Violin	Nolan, Sequoia (Janna Berg) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Piano	Zhao, Amelia (Alana Chan) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano
Haythornthwaite, Ashton (Janna Berg) - Junior Class 1, Piano	Park, Ella Jaein (Rebecca Kelly) - Junior Performer's Certificate, Piano	Zhao, Renjun (Mark) (Amanda Chan) - Intermediate Class 3, Piano
Ho, Madeline (Donna Lee) - Junior Class 3, Piano	Qin, Haochen (Paul Hung) - Senior Class 3, Flute	Zhong, Kylie Sam Ut (Stella Zhu) - Junior Class 1, Harp

# Alumni Spotlight: Andrew Beer

Andrew Beer is a force to be reckoned with in the world of classical music. For the past 11 years, he has served as concertmaster of the Auckland Philharmonia, using his talents in the violin to lead his fellow musicians in delivering the breathtaking performances for which the orchestra is known.

Before landing the coveted role of concertmaster, Beer spent many years honing his artistry at the Vancouver Academy of Music.

“It all started at the Academy,” said Beer. “It’s actually the school I went to the most because I went there from age five to 18. So, there’s no other school that had such a big impact on me.”

Beer studied with violin teacher Lawrie Hill for eight years and says her guidance was integral in shaping his musical development. Earlier this year, he even brought his eldest daughter for a lesson with Lawrie and noted how nostalgic it was to be back in her classroom.

“My oldest daughter started violin this year, so I said it would be so amazing if we could go back and have her play for Lawrie. And we did, and it was just like a time machine. It’s almost 40 years later, but she’s still got the same energy and presence



in her room. It just reminded me that Lawrie’s amazing, and I wouldn’t be here without her.”

“I think at the beginning of every year, I was kind of asking my parents, ‘can I quit?’ And Lawrie said, ‘Oh, he’s got great ears. He’s got some promise, so he’s got to keep at it,’” Beer said. “She just gave me the passion and the love for it.”

Alongside Hill's encouragement, Beer says the Academy provided opportunities that broadened his musical world and pushed him to grow as a young artist.

"Remembering back to my academy days, you kind of just take it for granted as a kid, because you don't know anything else, but actually it was so unique and special," he said. "The orchestra probably started when I was 10, which is really young. Chamber music started, and then I did some string quartets, but also music history, harmony, and theory classes. It's so good for shaping a complete musician."

After studying at the Academy, Beer continued on to graduate school and then a fellowship at Carnegie Hall before securing his first orchestral position as second assistant principal of the second violins with the Montreal Symphony. It was there that he began building the leadership skills that would prepare him to become a concertmaster.

"At least a few times a year, I would have to lead the section. So I found it a great way to observe what it's like to lead, and I found that it was a really good way to gradually get into a more leadership mentality," he said.



Andrew Beer with his daughter Audrey before her lesson with his former violin teacher, Lawrie Hill.

Beer shared that two of the most important skills in being a successful concertmaster are being a good listener and excellent with time management.

"You're always in the middle between the conductor and the musicians, so you kind of have to be almost like a negotiator or a translator. If what the conductor is trying to convey is not really getting across the positions, I can stand up and try to help with that," he said.

"You have to be really good with time management, because things get busy. There's all the playing, but there's all the work outside of that - the meetings, the audition panels, and the bowings."



From left to right: Minglun Liu (violin), Ashley Brown (cello), Rob Ashworth (viola), and Andrew Beer (violin). The String Principal of the Auckland Philharmonia performing in the orchestra's chamber music series, *In Your Neighbourhood*.

“But I think being a good concertmaster always comes back to the number one thing - being really able to listen and adapt to help the orchestra play together better.”

Despite how naturally he now appears to lead, Beer said stepping into a leadership role wasn’t something he was immediately comfortable with.

“I’m shy and being super social is maybe not my default, so it’s kind of stepping out of my comfort zone and doing my best to check in with musicians on a regular basis,” he said. “Of course, some of the other musicians in the orchestra might also be shy, but then, if neither of us are communicating, there can be a bit of a feeling of emptiness. So, having to initiate things which I wasn’t used to before has definitely been a learning and growth experience for me.”

Beer shared that consistently practicing and challenging himself helped him not only manage nerves but also evolve as a musician - advice he wants to share with the new generation of musicians.

“Just keep at it. Practice as hard as you can. Practice is the most important thing, but also play chamber music, play in an orchestra, go watch other people’s concerts, support your colleagues,” he said.

“We’re really lucky to do something that we love. Not everyone gets to do that. Always remember that, and use it to give you the fire and the adrenaline to find the energy that you need to practice and perform.”



Andrew Beer performing the Marsalis Concerto with the Auckland Philharmonia in November 2024 in Auckland Town Hall.

# Congratulations!

## COMPETITION WINNERS

JUNE - DECEMBER, 2025

### 2025 CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Pi Trio Adam Ngui, Violin Qiuzi Nini Lu, Cello Allen Ding, Piano	Elsje de Ridder Armstrong Scholarship (\$1,000)	Ian Parker
Owl Quintet Aaron Kang, Violin Jeffrey Kang, Violin Emma Ziyue Sha, Viola Joseph Wang, Cello Sunny Li, Piano	Provincial Chapter, IODE Scholarship (\$500)	Ian Parker
Star Lights Trio Athena Dai, Flute Nanako Kasahara, Flute Vivian Gardner, Flute	Iby Koerner Scholarship (\$1000)	Paul Hung
ECK Trio Emma Qu, Violin Chloea Guo, Cello Wing Sum (Kate) Cheng, Piano	VAM Scholarship (\$500)	Joseph Elworthy Ian Parker

### 2025 FESTIVAL OF SONG COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Debbie Lin, Voice	Adult Category Winner (\$400)	Kira Fondse
Manuela Shklanka, Voice	Intermediate Category Winner (\$400)	Emma Parkinson
Lunar Tan, Voice	Junior Category Winner (\$400)	Frédérik Robert

### 2025 GOLD MEDAL COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
Forest Benson, Piano	Diamond Award and \$1250 Scholarship	Bogdan Dulu
Ayla Ko, Violin	Diamond Award and \$1000 Scholarship	Lawrie Hill
Skylah Chen, Harp	Diamond Award and \$750 Scholarship	Joy Yeh

## 2025 VAMFP, VAMJS, AND VAMIS CONCERTO COMPETITIONS

Name	Award	Orchestra
Benjamin Lam, Violin	Chan Centre Prize	VAM Friendly Philharmonic
Ziyan Dai, Harp	VAM Prize	VAM Friendly Philharmonic
Claire Huang, Harp	VAM Prize	VAM Friendly Philharmonic
Laurence Yu, Violin	VAM Prize	VAM Friendly Philharmonic
Renee Zhao, Harp	Chan Centre Prize	VAM Junior Symphony
Esther Hwang, Violin	VAM Prize	VAM Junior Symphony
Chaeewon (Elly) Park, Flute	VAM Prize	VAM Junior Symphony
Jochebed Fan, Violin	Alternate	VAM Junior Symphony
Stephy Kim, Cello	Alternate	VAM Junior Symphony
Samuel Hwang, Cello	Chan Centre Prize	VAM Intermediate Symphony
Charisma Kate Chow, Harp	VAM Prize	VAM Intermediate Symphony
Quintin Li, Viola	VAM Prize	VAM Intermediate Symphony
Anna Lu, Violin	Alternate	VAM Intermediate Symphony
Zixin Joyce Wang, viola	Alternate	VAM Intermediate Symphony

## 2025 PHYLLIS SALTER PIANO COMPETITION

Name	Award	Teacher
<b>Category A (26 and under)</b>		
Laura Bras	\$500 Scholarship	Alana Chan
Katie Forbes	\$500 Scholarship	Chad Emry Heltzel
<b>Category B (18 and under)</b>		
Forest Benson	\$500 Scholarship	Bogdan Dulu
Merett Khamis	\$500 Scholarship	Lorraine Ambrose
Vincent Le-Podeur	\$500 Scholarship	Chad Emry Heltzel
Haoyuan Zheng	\$500 Scholarship	Amanda Chan
<b>Category C (12 and under)</b>		
Noah Suen	\$500 Scholarship	Teresa Ho
Yanxi (Yancey) Liu	\$500 Scholarship	Alejandro Ochoa
Connor Chong	\$500 Scholarship	Bogdan Dulu

VAM would like to acknowledge and apologize for a print error in the Phyllis Salter Piano Competition results in the previous Spring edition. The correct results have been reprinted here.

## 2025 SPRING AND SUMMER THEORY SCHOLARSHIPS

Name	Award	Teacher
Eva Borins	\$300 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Nathan Pei-Chen Chen	\$300 Scholarship	Chloe Hurst
Joshua Cheung	\$300 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Seorin Choi	\$300 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Lincoln St John	\$300 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Aaron Ko	\$300 Scholarship	Chloe Hurst
Tyler Ma	\$300 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Grace Yu	\$250 Scholarship	Tiffany Lee
Christelle Chan	\$200 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Christopher Liu	\$200 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Enoch Suen	\$200 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Arthur Xu	\$200 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Chantel Xu	\$200 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Judy Zhou	\$200 Scholarship	Jacquie Leggatt
Edward Yang	\$150 Scholarship	Janna Berg
Simon Zimo Zheng	\$150 Scholarship	Jacquie Leggatt
Jayden Zhu	\$150 Scholarship	Alana Chan
Delaram Mehat	\$100 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Sanam Mehat	\$100 Scholarship	Daniel Marshall
Chloe Yip	\$100 Scholarship	Tiffany Lee

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# RCM Exam Results

## Gold Medal

Dionigi, Chihiro (Hanh Nguyen), Grade 6 Guitar  
Li, Quintin (Isabelle Roland), Grade 8 Viola  
Lin, Daniel (Tina Wang), Grade 3 Saxophone

## First Class Honours with Distinction

Beik, Kiana (Janna Berg), Grade 8 Theory  
Chan, Christelle (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Chang, Morris (Tina Wang), Grade 4 Saxophone  
Cheung, Joshua (Daniel Marshall), Grade 9 Harmony  
Kwong, Charlotte (Tiffany Lee), Grade 5 Theory  
Kwong, Theodore (Tiffany Lee), Grade 5 Theory  
Lau, Brittany (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Lau, Ellie (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Li, Quintin (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 8 Theory  
Li, Race (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Lin, Daniel Lin (Tina Wang), Grade 3 Saxophone  
Liu, Christopher (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Rad, Emma (Alana Chan), Grade 1 Piano  
Xu, Arthur (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Xu, Chantel (Daniel Marshall), Grade 8 Theory  
Young, Summer (Tiffany Lee), Grade 8 Theory  
Yu, Grace (Tiffany Lee), Grade 9 History  
Zheng, Simon Zimo (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 8 Theory

## RCM MUSIC THEORY & HISTORY

**RCM Theory and History exams are a valuable way to strengthen core musicianship skills and support overall instrumental development. VAM's close partnership with the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) includes its designation as the official Vancouver West exam centre.**

**Scheduling:** at the mutual convenience of teacher and student

## First Class Honours

Borins, Eva (Daniel Marshall), Grade 10 Harmony & Counterpoint  
Chen, Nathan Pei-Chen (Chloe Hurst), Grade 10 Harmony & Counterpoint  
Cheung, Joshua (Daniel Marshall), Grade 10 Harmony & Counterpoint  
Choi, Seorin (Daniel Marshall), ARCT Analysis  
Choi, Seorin (Daniel Marshall), ARCT Harmony & Counterpoint  
Fang, Frank (Tina Wang), Grade 10 Saxophone  
Gao, Ryan (Tina Wang), Grade 4 Saxophone  
Ko, Aaron (Chloe Hurst), Grade 10 Harmony & Counterpoint  
Lai, Kurtis (Alana Chan), Grade 5 Piano  
Lam, Joshua (Teresa Ho), Grade 7 Piano  
Lin, Frank (Teresa Ho), Grade 10 Piano  
Liu, Oscar (Tina Wang), Grade 8 Saxophone  
Ma, Tyler (Daniel Marshall), ARCT Analysis  
Mehat, Delaram (Daniel Marshall), Grade 6 Theory  
Mehat, Sanam (Daniel Marshall), Grade 6 Theory  
Metcalf, Aria (Teresa Ho), Grade 2 Piano  
Mohan, Arjun (Teresa Ho), Grade 3 Piano  
Moss, Caius (Hanh Nguyen) Grade 3 Guitar  
Mu, Geoffrey (Joseph Elworthy), Grade 8 Cello  
Quan, Jimmy (Hanh Nguyen) Grade 3 Guitar  
Reinhardt, Kallen (Teresa Ho), Grade 8 Piano  
Seong, Aeri (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 10 Harmony & Counterpoint  
Soong, Chloe (Tina Wang), Grade 4 saxophone  
St John, Lincoln (Daniel Marshall), Grade 9 Harmony  
Suen, Enoch (Teresa Ho), Grade 7 Piano  
Suen, Noah (Teresa Ho), Grade 9 Piano  
Vasic, Dragana (Tina Wang), Grade 4 saxophone  
Wang, Aaron Z (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 8 Theory  
Yamini, Sarina (Alana Chan), Grade 1 Piano  
Yang, Edward (Janna Berg), Grade 5 Theory  
Yip, Chloe (Tiffany Lee), Grade 7 Theory  
Zawadiuk, Hart (Donna Lee), Grade 10 Piano  
Zhu, Jayden (Alana Chan), Grade 8 Theory

## Honours

Suen, Enoch (Daniel Marshall), Grade 9 Harmony  
Taheri, Amytis (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 9 Harmony  
Zhou, Judy (Jacquie Leggatt), Grade 9 Harmony

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# Student Spotlight: Allan Crawford

At just 16 years old, Allan Crawford is proving that passion has no limits. Balancing music, robotics, and high-level sports, he has quickly distinguished himself as a multi-talented student, most recently earning a place on Canada's national badminton team and competing internationally.

Becoming a competitive badminton player wasn't part of Crawford's original plan. He was originally a swimmer, but when the pandemic hit five years ago and pools closed, he picked up a badminton racquet and quickly learned he had a talent for the sport.

"Just as a form of exercise, I started playing and then I found it really enjoyable. I started with an independent coach for about two years. I didn't really see myself getting into the competitive style of sport, but I ended up moving to a bigger club in Vancouver. I started playing these national tournaments in my third year," he said.

As his interest grew, so did his commitment. Crawford started training at least 15 hours per week on top of his schoolwork, orchestra rehearsals, and robotics tournaments. His hard work paid off. Last year, he won his first national gold medal in Quebec, and this year, he represented Canada in mixed doubles in the Pan American Junior Championship in Guatemala.



"I just felt really proud. Wearing Canada on the back of my shirt on court, it's not something you could experience every day," he said. "I've never played a sport and got to that level of being on the national team. I just took the moment in honestly, and it's something that'll be very memorable to me."



Allan Crawford representing Canada at the 2025 Pan Am Junior Badminton Championships in the mixed doubles category in Guatemala.

With high-stakes competitions and international crowds, Crawford learned to channel his nerves into powerful motivation.

“I enjoy having that nervous feeling on court, my heart pounding like out of my chest and stuff like that. It’s a very unique feeling that you can’t really get from anything else and learning how to harness that feeling and push down the pressure will help me in anything,” he said.

“The one main thing that I try to do to help push it away is thinking about what I have to do instead of what I shouldn’t do. Thinking about, ‘What’s my goal here?’ ‘What am I here for?’ That gives me something to look forward to instead of being worried about mistakes.”

This mindset doesn’t just serve him on the badminton court, it follows him into his life as a musician as well. Crawford has

been studying cello at the Academy for 11 years with Joseph Elworthy, and learning French horn with Nick Anderson for the past five. He brings the same focus, discipline, and emotional openness to his music that he brings to his sport.

Similar to his experience in athletics, Crawford shared that playing music has also become a place where he feels he can express himself.

“I feel like in the cello I’m really able to express my emotions and feelings. It’s unique because it’s a big instrument and I’m a pretty tall guy, so just having a big instrument along with me kind of makes me feel like I can put my whole body into it,” he said.

Throughout his musical journey, Crawford has performed in various competitions, solo recitals, and with the Academy’s Symphony Orchestra. He shared that the community he has made through the cello has become an incredibly important part of his life.



Allan Crawford in a cello lesson with his teacher Joseph Elworthy, President and CEO of VAM.

“Joseph has been a really big part of my cello life, and honestly, a big part of my life in general. I have a really close relationship with him. He’s been my first teacher since I was five, and he’s been the person that motivates me to keep playing and is just a really great teacher,” he said. “I’ve also known a lot of people in VAMSO since I started cello. So, just seeing them weekly is also another motivator to keep me playing.”

Crawford has many hopes for the future. He hopes to pursue a degree in biomedical engineering while continuing to play badminton and the cello.

“I’m hoping to stay with cello, badminton, and everything in the future. Just having them as hobbies, especially post secondary, I think will keep me happy and relaxed.”



Allan Crawford in a cello recital with his teacher Joseph Elworthy, President and CEO of VAM.

# RCM Speech Arts & Drama

Led by Kimerica Parr



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# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**MORRIS CHANG** (Saxophone, Tina Wang) won the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival Woodwind Baroque Composers Medallion. Morris won first place for Baroque 14 years and under and first place for Concerto 14 years and under at the 2025 Kiwanis Music Festival.

**CHLOE CHONG** (Piano, Jocelyn Lai) made her piano concerto debut in Berlin. Performing with Evan-Alexis Christ and the Camerata Fiestravaganza Orchestra at the Berlin University of the Arts, Chloe performed Mozart's Concerto No. 23 in A Major to enthusiastic applause from a large audience of music lovers.

**CONNOR CHONG** (Piano, Bogdan Dulu) made his piano concerto debut in Berlin. Performing with Evan-Alexis Christ and the Camerata Fiestravaganza Orchestra at the Berlin University of the Arts, Connor played Bach's Concerto No. 1 in D Minor to enthusiastic applause from a large audience of music lovers.

**CHIHIRO DIONIGI** (Guitar, Hanh Nguyen) won 1st place at Provincial 2025 Kiwanis Music Festival. Chihiro was also selected to perform at the RCM 2025 gold medal ceremony.

**KAITLYNN LEUNG** (Harp, Miya Otake) received Gold Standing at the 2025 Vancouver International Music Festival and was featured at the VIMF Gala to perform Nataliana by Deborah Henson-Conant.

**BELLA LI** (Cello, Joseph Elworthy) participated in the Cremona International Festival and Academy this past summer in Italy.

**OSCAR LIU** (Saxophone, Tina Wang) was selected as a saxophonist for the 2025 Musicfest Jack Long National Honor Band, and was selected as alto/soprano saxophonist for the 2025 BCMEA honor band.

**SERENA QU** (Cello, Joseph Elworthy) participated in the Cremona International Festival and Academy this past summer in Italy.

**TENUUN XIA** (Cello, Joseph Elworthy) participated in the Vancouver Island Music Academy this past summer.

## VAM Thanks Retiring Faculty



**KUM-SING LEE**  
*Piano*

Professor Lee was the former VAM Piano Department Head, taking up the role in 1971. He has left an invaluable mark on the academy, passing on his expertise to multiple generations of our students.



**TERESA HO**  
*Piano*

Teresa Ho joined VAM faculty in 1982 and has been Head of the Suzuki Piano Department at VAM since 1988. The academy is incredibly grateful to Teresa for all her wonderful years of teaching and the energetic spirit she brought into our halls.



# Upcoming Events

## BON VOYAGE: VAM STRADIVARI PLAYERS SEND-OFF CONCERT

February 11, 7:30 pm | Koerner Recital Hall  
Free Admissions

## VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY NO. 6

March 1, 2:00 pm | Orpheum Theatre  
Tickets: [vamso.ca](http://vamso.ca)

## EDITH & EDMOND LANDO GIFTED YOUTH WINNER'S COMPETITION RECITAL

March 8, 2:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall  
Open to Public | Free to Audit

## ORCHESTRAL PROGRAM SPRING CONCERTS

March 15 | Koerner Recital Hall  
2:00pm: Friendly Philharmonic  
3:00pm: Junior Symphony  
4:00pm: Intermediate Symphony  
Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## VAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: JAEDEN IZIK-DZURKO PLAYS RACHMANINOFF

April 26, 2:00 pm | Orpheum Theatre  
Tickets: [vamso.ca](http://vamso.ca)

## ACADEMY CHAMBER PLAYERS: PRODIGIOUS FELIX

May 3, 7:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall  
Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## ORCHESTRAL FESTIVAL

May 16 | The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts  
11:00am: Youth Symphony Orchestras  
4:00pm: Adult Symphony & String Players  
Tickets: [vam.ca/events](http://vam.ca/events)

## STRADIVARI & AMATI STRINGS PROGRAM CONCERT

May 30, 7:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall  
Free Admissions

## BARBARA CLAGUE FESTIVAL OF SONG

May 31, 2:00pm | Koerner Recital Hall  
Open to Public | Free to Audit