

# APPASSIONATO

FALL 2015



## AMANDA CHAN

### NEW PIANO DEPARTMENT HEAD AMANDA CHAN BUILDS FROM HER OWN MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

VAM is pleased to introduce our new Head of the Piano Department, Amanda Chan, who takes on the role from long-time Head and Distinguished Professor Kum-Sing Lee. Born and raised in Vancouver, Ms. Chan started her piano studies with Edward Parker and had a highly successful early competitive career. Completing a Bachelor of Music degree at UBC under Professor Lee and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance at the University of Southern California with John Perry, she received the Top Graduate award for both degrees. She continued on with doctoral and post-graduate work at USC and the Glenn Gould School of Music in Toronto. She has also studied under Marc Durand, Andre Laplante, Jon Kimura Parker, Robin Wood and Karl-Heinz Kammerling.

Ms. Chan's association with VAM began at age seven, but surprisingly not with piano lessons:

"I was a 'bunhead', back in the day when there was a ballet program taught by Soo Nee Lee. I cherish the many years of training under such an incredibly beautiful and inspiring woman whose strength, grace and elegance I admire so much. It wasn't until years later that I met her husband, Kum-Sing Lee who became my long-time teacher and mentor.

"My relationship with Mr. Lee has been a very deep and important one in my life. Studying with a teacher at an intense level builds a unique and special connection. The fact I have been able to work alongside him professionally, following in his footsteps teaching both at UBC and VAM, has been very meaningful. I am honored to be the one carrying on his role.

"I can still remember the pivotal moment when piano lessons became a part of my life. Having an older brother whom I adored, I wanted to do

everything he was doing. One day when I was five years old and heard my mom on the phone with his piano teacher, I seized the opportunity to relentlessly chant, "I want to learn piano! I want to learn piano!" until my mom finally asked the teacher if I could start lessons as well. Although my initial motivation was perhaps not entirely musical, I very soon found my own enthusiasm for the instrument. I was an insatiable sponge and learned extremely quickly. I would play anything I could get my hands on and read scores and scores of music. You couldn't tear me away and I would even steal back to the piano between bites of dinner just to get in more playing time. I think it was the thrill of being able to make black dots on a page come to life and create musical sounds that would tell a story, not unlike reading books. In this way, 'practicing' piano was never a chore.

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### APPASSIONATO

Barbara Dominik, Writer  
Elyce Choi, Design



Welcome to the autumn edition of Appassionato as VAM launches another promising season packed with exciting concerts and events. The accomplishments of our students, faculty and alumni captured in this edition are worthy of celebration and speak to the culture of musical excellence that permeates at VAM.

The transformative benefits of music and its impact on the personal development of our students is a continuing narrative that links many of the articles in this newsletter. We are training not only first rate musicians but future leaders who will make an appreciable difference for the community they serve thanks to their engaged relationship with music and the performing arts. I look forward to greeting you at a future VAM concert and thank you for your support.

Musically yours,

Joseph Elworthy  
Executive Director



I would like to wish students and parents a successful year at VAM and extend an especially warm welcome to our new families—we are delighted to have you as part of our community of music learners. Special greetings also to our dedicated faculty who provide the highest quality teaching and mentorship, which is the reason for VAM's reputation as the leading community music school in British Columbia.

I hope you had a restful and rejuvenating summer. The management, staff and your Board of Trustees have been active during June-August thinking about VAM's medium- and long-term growth and development. In particular, the Board had a mini-retreat to discuss how VAM can position itself for continued success in the years ahead, especially in the areas of curriculum/programming, fundraising, partnerships, and infrastructure/facilities. We will continue with these discussions and work closely with VAM stakeholders to map a path forward. I invite you to contact me or any of our other trustees if you have any ideas for VAM or to find out more about our work. I would like to thank our volunteer trustees for the time, energy, and care that they put into the governance of VAM and planning for its future.

There is much going on at VAM and much to be proud of. It would not be possible without the active participation of VAM staff, faculty, students, parents, and supporters. Thank you.

Yuen Pau Woo  
Chair, Board of Trustees

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How could it be when the more I read, the easier it became which allowed me to play increasingly more complex and intriguing music?

"Although my parents are not able to play any instruments, their shared passion for music inspired my brother and me to devote ourselves to the violin and piano, respectively, embracing the knowledge that music could give great joy and beauty. From the age of eight, I became my brother's personal piano accompanist, or what I now affectionately call 'slave labourer', but actually it was some of the best 'on the job' training I could have received. Because of the skills I gained from this experience, I was able to work as a busy ensemble player right from an early age.

"Music was like breathing or walking for me. From the first moment I sat on a bench, I have never stopped playing the piano. Although I had no idea what my career would eventually look like, I was dedicated and committed to the endless goal of honing my craft through years of education and toil. At some point, I looked around me and realized I had a career—it chose me, not the other way around. All the experiences and opportunities I collected along the way ended up shaping and building a career that suited me perfectly.

"I believe I was born to be a teacher! I have clear memories of giving very serious piano lessons to my brother when I was just eight years old. My mom still has the little notebooks where I've written down harsh criticisms and suggestions on how to improve his playing! In fact, it wasn't much long afterwards when I actually started teaching for weekend work. Although being fourteen years old could be considered young, having an ARCT diploma under my belt and the moral support of my teacher, I felt confident I would be able to do a good job. I was lucky to have the luxury of youth and time to learn the methods and the psychology of teaching. That said, performing was the path I initially pursued and I had no immediate plans for teaching full time. Focused on preparing for competitions and concerts, I was fortunate to achieve much success along the way. But after a while, I realized the direction I was taking was not leading me to a place I desired. In fact, the two things I was heavily involved with from a young age, namely ensemble playing and teaching, were the things I loved doing the most. I find collaborative performances so fulfilling for the challenges and intricacies of communication on all levels and teaching so rewarding for the relationship building with students and their families. I am as elated for

their successes, big and small, as if they were my own. Every day, I am grateful for a career that continually gives me energy and passion.

"In preparing to face our ever-increasing competitive world, I think VAM is a perfect training ground for students to learn important qualities such as discipline, dedication and excellence. Having a firm foundation in place helps students feel more capable when taking on life's challenges. We also provide many invaluable performance opportunities, from studio classes and school recitals to school competitions where students can gain assurance in their performance skills. You can learn and practice all you want, but being able to deliver under pressure is a vital skill one usually learns through trial and error much later in life. Here at VAM, we give constant guidance and nurturing support, allowing our students to learn and make mistakes without fear. Adding VAM's top faculty members and visiting international guest artists generously sharing their knowledge gained from hard-earned experience, our students will have a huge advantage from the education they receive here at VAM as they venture out on their career paths.

"I have a strong vision for the Piano Department of VAM that involves collaboration between teachers, parents and students. Ultimately, I want to create more opportunities for piano students to be active and aware of their peers in a supportive, fun and rewarding environment. With the full support and enthusiasm of the piano faculty, I have already initiated group classes and seminars such as my Wednesday Masterclasses and the Friday Drills Classes. Learning an instrument holds many challenges, requiring simultaneous coordination of motor, visual, auditory, intellectual and emotional skills. Feeling connected with likeminded peers provides encouragement and motivation when trying to master a skill involving not only musicianship and technique but also 'blood, sweat and tears'. Our students choose to devote countless hours of their lives to practising their instruments and I want them to know that VAM is a place where they can belong and share in their passion for music."

With her six-year-old son a busy VAM student, Ms. Chan's long and continuing association with the school, first as student; then as teacher, now includes being a VAM parent as well. She sends out an open invitation to all, "Please come by Room 2 for a visit and share your VAM story with me!"

## DANIEL MARSHALL, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

A member of VAM staff since January 2015, Daniel handles the marketing and communications of the school. His role includes managing promotion and ticket sales for VAM's major events, acting as one of VAM's ambassadors to its donor community, and working together with graphic designers to create materials such as brochures and concert posters. Outside of his desk at the front office, you will often see him working in the front of house at VAM Symphony Orchestra and Koerner Quartet concerts and, if he's not too busy, sometimes he sneaks in to listen!

Daniel loves to be active in the arts community—he holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music composition and his music has been performed in Western Canada, the United States, and Europe. Last year, his composition *such that I left a dream* was released on Redshift Record's CD PEP (Piano and Erhu Project) Vol. 2 performed by Nicole Li and Corey Hamm and 2015 saw the premiere of *Moods: Indigo to Carmine* by the Prince George Symphony Orchestra. He is a former board member of Vancouver Pro Musica and a current board member of Vancouver New Music.

In his spare time, Daniel likes to check out various arts events, ride his bike on the seawall, and eat lots of food at restaurants.





# MY VIENNESE ADVENTURE

by Alana Chan

This past summer, on an invitation from the Kapellmeister (Music Director) of the Vienna Boys' Choir, Jimmy Chiang, I had the most pleasurable opportunity to take part in a collaborative project between the Vienna Boys' Choir and the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra and give a conducting debut performance in Vienna. I received training from the Kapellmeister in the Vienna Boys' Choir's historical palace, the Augartenpalais, and conducted the HKCSO in their final concert to end their Austrian tour. This international educational adventure opened up a cross-cultural exchange of musical ideas between the two groups of young people.

Highlights of our repertoire were works by Johann Strauss and *Symphony No. 2* by Brahms. Both Strauss and Brahms are closely associated with Vienna. Brahms composed his second symphony in the summer of 1877 by a lake in Klagenfurt, Austria, just a 3.5-hour drive from Vienna. We took a trip out to Klagenfurt to feel the atmosphere as well as to meet the Vienna Boys' Choir in their summer camp. As I stepped into the room, I was immediately surrounded by an excited crowd with tons of questions. The Vienna Boys' Choir, whose members are between 10 and 14 years old, has many international students. Jimmy told me that the choir holds auditions while on tour

overseas, accepting members from around the world. The boys are talented and smart; they have developed helpful memory tricks to remember the text by using hand gestures as aids.

At rehearsal, our orchestra and the choir rehearsed *The Blue Danube* by Johann Strauss. The boys sat professionally with their backs straight, yet once they started singing, their eyes lit up and the atmosphere sparked. Midway through the piece, Jimmy, who was conducting the rehearsal, stopped the orchestra and reminded them about the Viennese waltz style: "Always 1 – 2 – maybe 3, never just 1 – 2 – 3." Yes! The waltz immediately sounded so much better; the orchestra and the choir, two new dancing partners, harmonized musically!

From this expedition, aside from having the privilege to meet the Vienna Boys' Choir, studying with their conductor, and performing with the HKCSO, the core of it all was the take-home message to bring back for our students at VAM: to make music come alive, we can't just think about the theoretical aspects. We must add colours by using our imagination and by understanding the traditions. Viennese musicians appreciate history and culture very much. Typically, their playing is less

cautious; some people might call it sloppy yet organized playing. Viennese musicians play by feel to really enjoy the music, and this makes the musical language even more beautiful.

## ALANA CHAN

On the piano faculty at VAM, Alana Chan is an active music educator and performer across Canada, Hong Kong and Macau. Herself an alumna of VAM, she won numerous awards, performed in masterclasses, and gave her debut orchestral piano concerto performance with Maestro Victor Feldbrill and the VAM Symphony Orchestra at the Orpheum Theatre. In 2013, Alana received a scholarship from the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra to study orchestral conducting with Maestro Jimmy Chiang, Kapellmeister of the Vienna Boys' Choir.

She further studied conducting with Maestro Arthur Arnold, Chief Conductor of the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, at the Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy. Alana is the conductor and instrumental coach for the Hong Kong Elite Chamber Orchestra, with whom she made her conducting debut in 2013.

## ASHTON LIM

Born and raised in Vancouver, Ashton Lim studied cello with Audrey Nodwell at the Vancouver Academy of Music, where he completed the Certificate in Music Performance, and earned an ARCT diploma from The Royal Conservatory. He continued his studies at Mount Royal University and the University of Calgary, Northwestern University, and the Glenn Gould School in Toronto. In 2014, Ashton joined the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida.

# VAM ALUM EXPERIENCES THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAL ACADEMY

by Ashton Lim

The New World Symphony (NWS) is an orchestral academy located in Miami Beach, Florida, founded by Michael Tilson Thomas to provide the training and experience needed to be a seasoned professional orchestral musician. My first year flew by with a packed performance schedule. We played concerts nearly every weekend with world-class conductors such as Robert Spano, James Conlon, Roberto Abbado and Teddy Abrams, not to mention MTT, who works with us for about two months out of the season. Highlights for me included playing with soloists Yefim Bronfman, James Ehnes and Joshua Bell. NWS is designed and structured to be like a professional orchestra but with an educational component. This is how we can invite special coaches and teachers from institutions around the world. This past year alone, I have benefited from the guidance of cellists Eric Kim (Indiana University), Desmond Hoebig (Rice University), Eileen Moon (New York Philharmonic) and Tamás Varga (Vienna Philharmonic). At NWS, gaining professional experience alongside continuing education, we really do get the best of both worlds.

Another feature that distinguishes NWS is its innovative programming and use of visual technology. It was enjoyable and enlightening to work with composers John Adams and Peter Eötvös, who were both here to conduct new music concerts


that included their compositions. For the popular club concert series, our Frank Gehry-designed performance hall transforms into a nightclub: the stage is lowered, the orchestra is amplified, and we bring in a DJ—it is definitely a good time. We are constantly seeking ways to attract new and younger audiences—no small feat in the heart of South Beach where tourists go for the bars and the beaches.

At the end of last season, we went on tour to Carnegie Hall in New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Michael Tilson Thomas conducted the challenging program that included two 20th-century concertos featuring the extraordinary German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter. The reviews were enthusiastic and glowing. For my part, I truly enjoy the camaraderie of orchestral playing and look forward to another busy season with NWS.

# GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC



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Every day, VAM is enriching students' musical experiences and opening new vistas of creative imagination.

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# BRAVO TO THE VAM DONOR COMMUNITY!

Our loyal and valued donors make it possible to attract and support the excellence of our students and enhance our learning and performance spaces. Thank you for your fierce dedication in making the journey to advance musical discovery and creativity. Your generosity enriches, attracts, and sustains the exceptional training and innovative programs to develop musicians for the 21st Century.



Our donors offer their generosity to members of VAM's Orchestral Training Program in the form of scholarships. Recipients from last year (left to right): Ellie Froese, Monika Marshall, and Chris Blaber (not in photo: Olivia Myge)



Students of VAM's S. K. Lee College program thank the donor community for encouraging their studies through strengthening merit and financial aid. Pictured here are some of the recipients (left to right): Aleksandra Durin, Lyndon Jhuty, Dinah Ayre, Irina Kim, Chenyi Laura Jin, and Danielle Cyr.



Donor support has made it possible to install new audio-visual equipment in both Mary Olson Hall and Koerner Recital Hall, offering opportunities to enhance the performance and educational capacity of our spaces.



LUKE KIM

VANCOUVER SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA WELCOMES  
VAM ALUMNUS  
LUKE KIM

Former VAM student Luke Kim (cello, Joseph Elworthy) has been selected through a rigorous audition process to join the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra cello section. Kim, who just completed a Master of Music degree at the University of California at Los Angeles, describes the process:

"Auditions for professional orchestras, including the VSO, involve multiple rounds—at least three. The first two rounds are generally held behind a screen for anonymity purposes. Candidates perform a series of difficult, stylistically different excerpts from the standard orchestral repertoire and a solo excerpt from a standard concerto. After winning the audition, I had a probation period before obtaining tenure. It takes so much to win an orchestral position; it takes dedication, determination, honesty, and awareness."

Originally from South Korea, Luke began his cello studies at age eight, but didn't consider music as a career until he was 17: "That was when I attended the Aspen Music Festival.

I got to watch and work with wonderful musicians, and began to know wonderful music, especially symphonic works. Right then I felt there is nothing better than doing music, and I decided to pursue music as a career. I did my Bachelor of Music at UBC. In 2010, I participated in the Parisot Cellofest at VAM, and had the opportunity to play in masterclasses with Aldo Parisot and Joseph Elworthy. I really thought Joseph was a great musician and, as I felt I needed a different perspective, decided to study with him after finishing my studies at UBC. He gave me constant encouragement and helped me develop my technique and musical imagination." Luke went on to complete a Master of Music at UCLA. "I feel grateful for all the support from my parents, teachers, mentors, and colleagues over the years, and I am thankful and honoured to be part of the cello section in the VSO." In addition to his work with the VSO, Luke continues his solo career. In March he will perform Elgar's Cello Concerto with the West Coast Symphony Orchestra and appear in recital with the Bridge Musicians International concert series.

# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

In spring of 2016, LEONARD AND THERESA GAO (voice, Caroline Jang) will be featured in the roles of Matthew and the Station Master in the Encore Production of *Anne of Green Gables*.

BRANDON JONG and YOLANDA WANG (piano, Amanda Chan) received the distinguished score of 90% in the Canadian Music Competition this past spring.

EMILY LEUNG (voice, Caroline Jang) was awarded the Young Vocalist Medallion in the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival, Spring 2015.

ERIC XI XIN LIANG and AUGUSTIN WRIGHT (piano, Amanda Chan) placed in the Canadian Music Competition this past spring. Augustin placed first in Vancouver and third in Canada in his category (piano, 12 years old); Eric placed first for his category (piano, 15 years old).

ERIKA LIU (harp, Joy Yeh) participated successfully at the masterclass of the internationally renowned Australian harpist, Alice Giles, this past spring.

This past summer, MEGHNA LOHIA (voice, Caroline Jang) played the role of the Sorceress in Crofton House's Production of *Once Upon a Mattress*.

ZABRINA NG (piano, Saida Matyukov) will perform in forthcoming Good Shepherd Church Fundraising Concert on Nov. 7, 2015. Funds raised will support mission projects dedicated to refugee relief work in Myanmar and the care of disabled orphans in China.

This past summer, trumpeter EVAN WENDELL (trumpet, Al Cannon) attended the Stanford Jazz Institute and Chosen Vale Trumpet Seminar. Evan is a Grade 12 student at Lord Byng Secondary and is preparing to pursue a career in music.

This past August, AUGUSTIN WRIGHT (piano, Amanda Chan) was one of two students to be invited to study with the world renowned professor, Mr. Jean-Paul Sevilla (former teacher of Angela Hewitt), for two intensive weeks at his home in Normandy, France. The additional opportunity of performing on Maurice Ravel's piano was definitely a highlight! Augustin also had concerts in Paris and in Ibiza, Spain, where he spent the rest of his summer break.

MARTHA BRICKMAN, TERESA HO, DONNA LEE-LEUNG and JUAN WANG (VAM piano faculty members) attended the National Conference by Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations in Vancouver from July 8 to 11, 2015.

JANNA SAILOR (violin faculty) will be featured in the Georgia Straight's Arts Preview of emerging artists under 30 on Sept 18th. Featured will be her recent positions as assistant conductor with the National Academy Orchestra of Canada and the Vancouver Philharmonic, as well as her upcoming engagements with her harp and violin duo, Cordei.

JOY YEH (Co-Head of Violin Department), was appointed to be the harp faculty of the Kwantlen Polytechnic University and was invited to teach at the Prince George Conservatory of Music in March 2016.



## FIRST CLASS HONOURS

### RECIPIENTS

### AWARDS

Tiffany Chang (Donna Lee-Leung)	Grade 10 Piano
Mary England (Teresa Ho)	Grade 7 Piano
John Farinha (Caroline Jang)	Grade 5 Piano
Carolyn Forward (Caroline Jang)	Grade 1 Voice
Tiffany Ho (Audrey Nodwell)	Grade 8 Cello
Matthias Kenton (Donna Lee-Leung)	Piano Preparatory B
Joshua Liu (Teresa Ho)	Grade 10 Piano
Vanessa Lu (Teresa Ho)	Grade 8 Piano
Adrienne McAlpine (Caroline Jang)	Grade 2 Voice
Keiyshia Ting (Caroline Jang)	Grade 1 Voice
Zachary Wong (Teresa Ho)	Grade 8 Piano

## FIRST CLASS HONOURS WITH DISTINCTION

### RECIPIENTS

### AWARDS

James Forward (Caroline Jang)	Grade 4 Voice
Henry From (Donna Lee-Leung)	Grade 9 Piano
Leonard Gao (Caroline Jang)	Grade 3 Voice
Brandon Jong (Amanda Chan)	Grade 8 Piano
Emily Leung (Caroline Jang)	Grade 1 Voice
Meghna Lohia (Caroline Jang)	Grade 4 Voice
Sruthy Loganathan (Caroline Jang)	Grade 1 Voice
Wonyoung Na (Audrey Nodwell)	Grade 10 Piano
Lincoln St. John (Angela Schiwy)	Grade 3 Piano
Chelsea Wen (Angela Schiwy)	Grade 6 Piano

# 2014/15 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

AWARDS	Kay Meek Scholarship	RECIPIENTS	Eric Xi Xin Liang, piano	TEACHERS	Amanda Chan
	Vancouver Academy of Music Scholarship		Daniel Chung, cello		Joseph Elworthy
	Vancouver Academy of Music Scholarship		Sean Gao, violin		Nicholas Wright
	Alex Drennan Scholarship		Albert Seo, cello		Ariel Barnes
	Vancouver Academy of Music Scholarship		David Lee, violin		Nicholas Wright
	I.O.D.E. Scholarship		Russell Kim, violin		Nicholas Wright

## EDITH LANDO GIFTED YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ON MARCH 1, 2015

ADJUDICATORS: HANNAH CHUNG (STRINGS), ALANA CHAN (PIANO), CHRISTOPHER LEE (WINDS)

AWARDS	Edith Lando Gifted Youth Scholarship	RECIPIENTS	Henry From, piano	TEACHERS	Donna Lee-Leung
	Eugenie & Edward Yeung Scholarship		Katie Purcell, viola		Anthony Cheung
	Eugenie & Edward Yeung Scholarship		Joshua Lin, violin		Andrew Dawes
	Malcolm G. Aikman Scholarship		Eileen Tian, cello		Joseph Elworthy
	Ann Lesley Bain Memorial Scholarship		Zi Hao (Tony) Li, piano		Rebecca Kelly
	Dr. & Mrs. Joseph H. Cohen Scholarship		Caitlin Wong, violin		Lawrie Hill
	Harold & Florence Morris Scholarship		Maryam Khamis, violin		Andrew Dawes
	Seymour & Janet Vineberg Memorial Scholarship		Corina Deng, violin		Andrew Dawes
	Tarum Damji Sidpra Memorial Scholarship		Ivy Lin, piano		Lorraine Ambrose

## NAMED SCHOLARSHIP—SUZUKI SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDS	Marguerite M. Echaus Memorial Scholarship	RECIPIENTS	Henry From, piano	TEACHERS	Donna Lee-Leung
	Walter E. Kelly Memorial Scholarship		Emma Nakamoto, cello		Cyrena Huang
	Stuart McCallum Memorial Scholarship		Joshua Liu, piano		Teresa Ho
	Marian Schreiber Memorial Scholarship		Charisma Chang, violin		Evelyn Creaser Rumley
	Chua Tiampo Memorial Scholarship		Andrew Park, violin		DeAnne Eisch
	Chua Tiampo Memorial Scholarship		Bradley Tang, violin		
	Chua Tiampo Memorial Scholarship		Rosalind Wang, violin		Evelyn Creaser Rumley

## PHYLLIS SALTER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PIANO

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD ON FEBRUARY 14, 2015

ADJUDICATORS: ALANA CHAN, GLORIA WONG, CHIHARU IILUMA | FINAL ADJUDICATOR: MAY LING KWOK

RECIPIENTS	Eric Xi Xin Liang	TEACHERS	Amanda Chan
	Yangyu Wu		Kum-Sing Lee
	Steven Yu Xiang Gong		Lorraine Ambrose
	Zabrina Ng		Saida Matyukov
	Teresa Bowes		Amanda Chan

## ELSJE DE RIDDER ARMSTRONG CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

AWARDS	Elsje de Ridder Armstrong Memorial Scholarship	RECIPIENTS	Esther Hwang, Trisha Doo, Linda Ruan	TEACHERS	Joseph Elworthy, coach
	Iby Koerner Memorial Scholarship		Simon Gidora, Olivia Cho, Eric Xi Xin Liang		Andrew Dawes, coach
	Provincial Chapter, I.O.D.E. Scholarship		Russell Kim, Daniel Chung, Xuan Qi		Andrew Dawes, coach
	Vancouver Academy of Music Scholarship		Caitlin Wong, Sarah Baek, Augustine Wright		Evelyn Creaser, coach
	Vancouver Academy of Music Scholarship		Rosalind Wang, Yoel Kristian, Teresa Bowes		Brenda Fedoruk, coach

## BARBARA CLAGUE FESTIVAL OF SONG AWARDS

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ON APRIL 12, 2015

RECIPIENTS	Keiyshia Ting	TEACHERS	Caroline Jang
	Andreas Dala		
	Twyla Pittson		Karin Plato
	Mary From		Chloe Hurst
	Tamara Chang		Caroline Jang
	Janet Lee		Caroline Jang
	Carolyn Forward		Caroline Jang

## JEROLD GERBRECHT WOODWIND & BRASS COMPETITION

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ON APRIL 10, 2015

RECIPIENTS	Yoel Kristian, flute	TEACHERS	Brenda Fedoruk
	Krystal Liu, flute		Christie Reside
	Yuji Zhang, flute		Brenda Fedoruk
	Sean Kao, flute		Brenda Fedoruk
	Jimin Kim, flute		Mark McGregor
	Shanti-Ella Cretu, flute		Mark McGregor

## VIOLIN SEMINAR SCHOLARSHIPS

### GUARNERI SEMINAR

AWARDS	Most Improved Award	RECIPIENTS	Andrew Park, Alexander Knopp
	Best Technique Award		Russell Kim, Sean Gao

### STRADIVARI SEMINAR

AWARDS	Best Technique Award	RECIPIENTS	Charles Cheung
	Most Technical Progress Award		Hanan Gerster-Sim





New Voice Department Head Robyn Driedger-Klassen has been learning vast amounts about dinosaurs lately. She is shown here measuring up to the leg bone of a *Camarasaurus* at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta.

# ROBYN DRIEDGER-KLASSEN:

## CLASSICAL TRAINING, HEALTHY VOICES, DIVERSITY OF OPTIONS ARE FOCUS FOR NEW HEAD OF VAM'S VOICE DEPARTMENT

This fall, VAM welcomes Robyn Driedger-Klassen as the new Head of the Voice Department, taking over from David Meek. About her new role, Robyn says, "David left an amazing legacy. So many fantastic singers went through the program who are doing wonderful things around the world. Luckily for me there are great people on staff here who know the ins and outs of the programs, TRU, how credits work, all these things that I have still to learn. They guide me through all this as the administrative side is very new to me. There are also many teachers on staff here who have lots of experience.

"I do have to take this on as my own, though—going through all the things that have been done, deciding whether we might want to do things a bit differently. Something new for this fall is what we call Vocal Theatre. This is based on work

that I have been doing with the Vancouver International Song Institute, a summer institute for singers and pianists from all over the world to focus on the performance of art song. One thing we do with VISI is staged performances of art song, sometimes even venturing to tie in a script written specially for that performance. We are working against the perception of the recital as the traditional 'one hand on the piano' setting, working on how to tell a story, stepping out of the box to give life to this enormous body of work. One of the most interesting projects was a song cycle by Libby Larsen, *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII*. It was fully staged—an actor playing Henry, an actress playing his jester. The director wrote lines in iambic pentameter and the songs were woven into it. It was exhausting to live the final words of these women!

"That is the dream for VAM's Vocal Theatre program, but we won't start with something quite so ambitious. For this fall we will do cantatas, finding a storyline to weave them together. We have a new VAM faculty member, Alan Corbishley, who has done a lot of this. He is guiding me along and will be involved on the production side. Vocal Theatre will replace the operatic scenes workshops this year. There will still be stage craft, character study—the same classical training, only with different repertoire. We want to make sure that the students have really good technical training and healthy voices, but it is a really difficult time to be in opera; even a chorus job is hard to get. So we will try to offer something a bit off the beaten path, giving students the ability to do other things."

Robyn, who grew up in Saskatchewan, studied piano from a young age and started singing at age 16. "When I got to the point in music where I had to spend much more time on it, I developed shoulder pain that limited my piano playing, so I started singing. Lo and behold, it came so much more easily to me! I studied for a few years with Diana Woolrich in Regina. She has a fantastic studio of young singers. When I finally decided on a career in music, she was 100% behind me. I had actually started another degree in French education and had been taking singing lessons on the side. Then partway through the degree I decided I wanted to be a singer. In June I applied to UBC and was accepted."

After completing a degree in Voice Performance at UBC, Robyn obtained an Artist Diploma at VAM where she studied with David Meek and had the opportunity to participate

in the Opera in Schools program with the Vancouver Opera. In 2004, Robyn received critical acclaim as the Countess Almaviva in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Banff Centre. She also performed this role with the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program in 2005, followed by the role of the Governess in Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* in 2006. In 2007, she appeared with the Vancouver Opera as Sophie in Massenet's *Werther* and as Naiade in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In 2008, she appeared again with the Vancouver Opera as Mazeline in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and with Pacific Opera Victoria as Alexandra in the Canadian premiere of Marc Blitzstein's *Regina*. Also in 2008 she participated in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* as the Female Chorus at the Britten-Pears Institute in Aldeburgh, England. Of these performances, the London Times wrote, "The soprano of Robyn Driedger-Klassen was outstanding in its impassioned embodiment of the drama."

While doing her undergraduate work at UBC, Robyn had many opportunities to work with the collaborative studies pedagogue Rena Sharon. "She [Sharon] has been one of the most important people in my career development and any opportunity to study with her was great. I discovered a passion for songs. I love opera—the costumes, the social aspects—and when you do an opera you get to work very intensely with a larger group. On the other hand, I also love recital work, though I find them a lot harder; you don't have the costumes, the set, or the stage to help you out. Often the audience is expecting to sit for an hour and a half watching you sing. I am experimenting with new ways to engage the audience with the meaning of the words, such as through projected texts on a screen and exploring repertoire sung in English. I love to sing recitals in English; there is no barrier between me, the music, and the audience."

Recently, Robyn has been performing a lot of contemporary works: "It isn't something I sought out initially; it sort of fell in my lap. I took work that was offered and then I discovered a love for decoding the new music. Also, if I can't figure something out I can just pick up the phone and call the composer! With new compositions that I am premiering, if something really doesn't work, I can ask the composer what they want me to do. They are always very receptive. In general, composers aren't singers; they may not understand the technical details yet they know that their music cannot be performed if it is impossible. On the other hand, if they don't want something

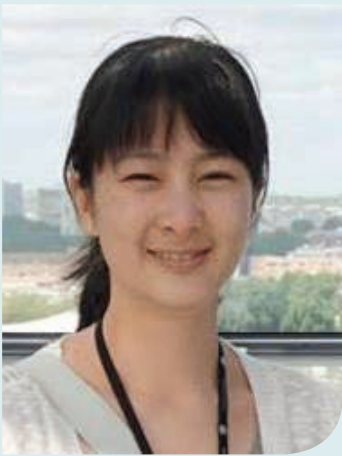
changed they often have a good reason for it and we work towards a solution. It is a very exciting time." Together with other members of the Voice Department, Robyn will continue her performance career. In January, she will participate in VAM's production of *Songs of the Wasteland*, a staging of the songs and experiences of Holocaust survivor Renia Perel.

## ROBYN DRIEDGER-KLASSEN

Robyn is mom to two young sons under the age of five. She enjoys reading, hiking, canoeing, cups of tea and a clean house, and looks forward to snatching additional practice time at VAM when duties allow.

# MUSIC FOR LIFE

As an institution that sees a large part of its role as serving the community, VAM is proud of the many students who have gone through its programs and, although not choosing to follow a career in music, still keep a place for music in their lives and hearts. VAM piano faculty member Teresa Ho recently followed up with a number of students who have gone on to study in the faculties of medicine and dentistry at UBC. Here is what they have to say about the role of VAM and music in their lives:



## MELISSA NG:

### MOTIVATION, PERSEVERANCE, APPRECIATION OF MUSIC

Hello! My name is Melissa Ng and I am currently a 3rd year student in UBC Medicine. I started piano lessons at age 4 at the Vancouver Academy of Music and received my ARCT diploma in piano performance in 2011. My studies in piano at VAM have taught me not only about music theory and history, but also the significance of motivation and perseverance, which have guided me in my academic studies and various pursuits. While I may no longer remember all the Italian terms and historical dates that I memorized over the years, my studies have certainly given me a much greater appreciation for music. Currently, I sing in a choir and attend concerts whenever I can—most recently, the VSO Pokémon Symphonic Evolutions concert!

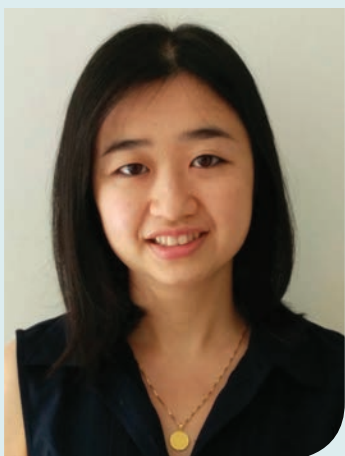


## JAIME KWOK:

### PATIENCE, DEDICATION, PERSEVERANCE, HUMILITY

My name is Jaime Kwok. I began studying at the Vancouver Academy of Music at the age of three and continued to do so for the next twelve years. My interest in the sciences and the human body, coupled with the desire to impact others' health and well-being, led me to pursue a career in healthcare. I am currently a second year student with the Faculty of Medicine at UBC. Studying music has been a gift and privilege. While learning the language of music, I also became familiar with patience, dedication, perseverance, and humility, all of which are important to the person I am today and the path I have chosen. Nowadays, I appreciate music by listening to tracks as I study, but when time allows, I love to attend musical theatre performances.





## VIVIAN CHOW:

### TECHNIQUE, ARTISTRY, PERSEVERANCE, WORK ETHIC

My name is Vivian Chow. I studied piano at the Vancouver Academy of Music for ten years under the skilled guidance of teachers Joan Hurst, Rena Ling and Julie Lowe. They taught me the techniques, artistry and perseverance necessary to make better music and by extension, instilled in me an early appreciation for classical music. The diverse skills I gained have shaped other areas of my life: the way I perceive and engage in fine arts (another cherished hobby) and the work ethic that has driven my academic studies and career as a dentist. I am pleased to say that I continue to work at my passion for music through lessons, participation in festivals and competitions (including the BCCM, Kiwanis, SPG and AFAF) and performance gatherings in more intimate settings with other adult amateur pianists who value music as a lifelong journey. This December, I will perform Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13 in the American Fine Arts Festival's winner's recital at Weill Recital Hall in New York.



## AMANDA HO:

### DEVELOPING CONNECTIONS AND COMMON GROUND

I studied piano at the Vancouver Academy of Music for over ten years. I am currently in my fourth year of Medicine at the University of British Columbia and aspire to become a family physician. Having a deeper understanding of music has enabled me to develop connections with the people around me, whether they are fellow colleagues or patients. The musical language can be a common ground and starting point to understanding a person as a whole, which is essential to providing good healthcare. Music can mean so many things to different people, whether it is for leisure, socializing, recreational therapy or rehabilitation from illness. Although my time for playing the piano is scarce, I appreciate my ability to sight-read on occasions where I would like to learn a new piece, and continue to listen to music as a means of clearing my mind at the end of the day.



## RACHEL LIM:

### DISCIPLINE, EXPRESSION, TEAMWORK, PURSUIT OF PERSONAL GOALS

I've had the privilege of studying piano with Mrs. Teresa Ho at VAM from age 4 until completing my ARCT at age 18. Music is an integral part of my life, and many foundations were laid during my early years at the VAM. Music taught me discipline and gave me direction, and despite many sulky practice sessions, those experiences were undeniably shaping me. In university, I developed a greater love for music, taking up the oboe in band and orchestra while pursuing my science degree. I learned to work well with others and to appreciate art and beauty. Currently, I still enjoy trying new pieces on the piano or oboe, jamming with friends, and attending VSO concerts. Discipline, expression, teamwork, and pursuit of personal goals: these musical principles continue to shape my work as an emergency medicine resident, and help me maintain a joyful and healthy lifestyle.

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FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE.**

*I choose to live and tell. I am no longer the victim  
but the survivor who is blessed.* Renia Perel

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