

SPRING  
2016

# APPASSIONATO



## Transforming Koerner Recital Hall

VAM to inaugurate the  
Mary Buckerfield White  
Choral Program  
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Infinitus Makes a  
Splash in New York  
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Photos: Renderings of  
the transformed  
Koerner Recital Hall.  
Photo Credit:  
Klondike Contracting.





# TRANSFORMING KOERNER RECITAL HALL

Your participation  
can mean \$1 Million!

**AFTER FOUR DECADES** of continuous use, the 300-seat Koerner Recital Hall – the very heart of VAM – is poised for a transformation. On Sunday May 15, 2016 – almost forty years to the day since the official opening of the current facility – VAM will launch the largest fundraising effort undertaken since its 1976 relocation from 12th Avenue & Cambie Street to its current site at scenic Vanier Park. This ambitious \$1 Million renovation aims to celebrate a dramatic turning point in the life of Koerner Recital Hall and to bring it forth into the 21st century. The completion of this milestone project will transform the entire performance and concert-going experience for the students of VAM, future audiences, and the entire performing arts community of Vancouver.

The VAM Koerner Recital Hall Capital Campaign Committee, consisting of Mary Farris, Mary Olson, Isabelle Wright, Suzanne Scott, Monique Wilberg, and Yuen Pau Woo will spearhead the *Koerner Recital Hall – Transformed* Campaign with its launch at the VAM Symphony Orchestra's season finale concert at the Orpheum Theatre. The campaign goal is \$1 Million; of this, \$600,000 has already been secured in the Quiet Phase, with a

further \$400,000 to be raised in the one-year fundraising campaign spanning May 2016 – May 2017.

The renovation – expected to begin in July 2017 with a projected completion date of November 2017 – will include the recital hall stage and interior, new theatre seats throughout, a striking new foyer, re-designed theatre lighting, an upgrade of the backstage area, enhanced ancillary and amenity spaces, and the creation of a new Artist's Green Room.

“The combination of leadership commitments alongside hundreds of smaller gifts from the entire VAM community will, by the conclusion of this campaign, have a transformative and sustaining effect on VAM,” says Gloria Wong, VAM's Director of Development. “The fundraising dream is to achieve 100% participation from the VAM community of donors, parents, students, alumni, faculty and staff, regardless of contribution amount. Such a show of support with a gift that is meaningful to each person – 100% participation – will make a powerful statement of belief and community. The generosity of the collective community of donors

and their determination to help shape the future of VAM will be an extension of our founders' legacy – they would be truly proud to see how far their vision has been advanced.”

Koerner Recital Hall, along with the rest of the VAM facility, was officially opened on May 9, 1976 at the Vanier Park site. Set in motion in 1973 and spearheaded by VAM co-founders Iby Koerner and Elsje de Ridder Armstrong, a total of \$1.8 Million was raised to convert ‘Building 14’ of the former Royal Canadian Air Force warehouse into a world-class music facility that currently serves over 1500 students who fully utilize 36 small studios, 12 classrooms, rehearsal rooms, and not least, the auditorium that is the Koerner Recital Hall.

The Hall has been busy over the years: countless concerts, recitals, workshops, masterclasses, rehearsals, competitions, even full-production operas have been realized there. VAM students, Vancouver music organizations such as Music in the Morning and Vancouver Bach Choir, local and national artists, and musicians of international renown have shared the stage. VAM Executive Director Joseph

CAMPAIGN GOAL:

**\$1 MILLION**

**\$600,000**

SECURED IN THE QUIET PHASE

**\$400,000**

TO RAISE IN THE PUBLIC CAMPAIGN  
MAY 2016 - MAY 2017

## RENOVATION FEATURES:

- Striking new Foyer
- Elegantly enhanced Recital Hall stage
- Transformation of Recital Hall interior
- Re-designed house lighting
- New theatre seats throughout
- Backstage Area upgrade
- Enhancement of Ancillary and Amenity Spaces
- Creation of a new Artist's Green Room

## EYE WITNESS: BACK IN TIME

IN HIS COLUMN *It's All Music* in the Courier of June 17, 1976, Ian Docherty (baritone, teacher of voice, piano and theory, music critic and journalist) gave the brand-new Koerner Recital Hall a gold star when he wrote:

“For the second time in a month, I’ve had the exciting experience of enjoying a splendid new concert facility – first the renovated Orpheum Theatre, and last week the Koerner Recital Hall in the Vanier Park music centre.

The exquisite clarity of sound in this 300-seat hall is remarkable and, with its comfortable seating, excellent sight lines and convenient, scenic location it fills a long-standing need for such a facility on the West Side.”

***The completion of this milestone project will transform the entire performance and concert-going experience for the students of VAM, future audiences, and the entire performing arts community of Vancouver.***



Official Opening Day of the splendid new Community Music School of Greater Vancouver with its jewel – Koerner Recital Hall – at Vanier Park. *The Courier May 13th, 1976. Photo: Yunge-Bateman*

### ► continued from page 1

Elworthy notes, “Koerner Recital Hall is heavily used throughout the academic year for weekly masterclasses and as the ‘home’ rehearsal space for the pre-Junior Strings, VAM Junior Symphony, and Concertante – our newest ensemble of advanced string players. Reflecting on the recent production and performance of *Songs of the Wasteland* to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, it feels as though every year offers new high points for Koerner Recital Hall. That being said, standout KRH events must include legendary masterclasses delivered by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, Josef Gingold, Aldo Parisot, Menahem Pressler, and even Yo-Yo Ma! Speaking as a parent, however, I believe every child’s first note played on Koerner Recital Hall’s stage is the standout moment.”

Forty years of students have strong formative memories of Koerner Recital Hall. The planned renovation will not only be a transformation but a legacy to ensure that another forty years of students will have memories that will be as exceptional, formative and lasting. The transformed Koerner Recital Hall will be an inspiring space dedicated to community cultural service and music education in Vancouver.

We invite 100% participation from the VAM community in this most exciting and important new phase of the Vancouver Academy of Music’s development and to celebrate the building of a future that will be as remarkable as its past.

***For campaign details and to donate, visit [vam.ca/koernerhallcampaign](http://vam.ca/koernerhallcampaign)***



# REGISTRAR *Nicole Hurst* CELEBRATES 10 YEARS ON STAFF AT VAM

**NICOLE WAS BORN AND RAISED** in Vancouver and first came to VAM as a student at age 3. She studied piano, Kodaly, choir and music theory until about age 16. Also a singer and guitar player, she played in rock bands from age 14–32, touring and recording. “It was a blast,” she says, “but it was always a side job.” She tried teaching music at one point, but found it was not for her. Nicole joined VAM as an accounting assistant in 2006 and in 2014 was promoted to Registrar.

“I tie together student accounts, accounts receivable, and faculty payroll via an online platform that I am responsible for maintaining on a daily basis. I manage 1200+ student accounts, as well over 100 faculty members, in order to keep everything in sync. It is a challenge! I also review and advise incoming applications and ensure I accommodate each inquiry to suit the individual’s needs, hopefully culminating in registration.

One of the best parts of working here at VAM is that a lot of the faculty members who were here during my childhood are still here. It gives the place a real sense of family. I really loved coming to VAM as a child; I made a lot of friends and looked forward to all of the student recitals. As an employee, I also have made a lot of friends – faculty, families, even some of the students – and I still look forward to all of our events. I grew up here and now I get to watch VAM grow. It has changed a lot and it is amazing how the sense of community has been reborn. This place really is my second home.”

Nicole works from home a lot and also runs a nutritional consulting business specializing in plant-based and sports nutrition. She loves cooking, running, and sharing her life with her two dogs. “I also have a fantastic group of friends and a supportive family. I need about five more hours in the day!”





# PROFILE:

## KATHLEEN ALLAN,

### Director of Choral Studies & VAMSO Associate Conductor

Conductor, composer and singer Kathleen Allan brings a wealth of experience to her assignment as Director of the new Choral Studies program and Associate Conductor of the VAM Symphony Orchestra.

Kathleen grew up in St. John's, Newfoundland, where she was part of the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir, now called the Shallaway Youth Choir.

**“I LEARNED EVERYTHING,** my entire musicianship, in the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir, from the time I was eight until I graduated from high school. My first travel experiences were with that group as we toured and competed. It really formed me as a musician and I certainly draw from that when I’m thinking about what I hope to offer with the Choral Studies program.

As a child, I was totally terrified of singing by myself. While I wouldn’t open my mouth in front of anybody, I felt that choir was a

very safe environment so until I was a teen I was mostly a choral singer and pianist. I discovered my passion for solo singing only by chance: in junior high school I suffered a wrist injury and my piano teacher, who also taught voice, turned my 90-minute piano lesson into 60 minutes of piano and 30 minutes of voice. As my tendonitis got worse, my lessons became more focused on singing.

I’ve been writing music since before I started school, composing little songs and piano pieces. At my grade 6 graduation, the whole

class performed a piece that I wrote for violin, cello, piano and choir – I sometimes joke that I ‘peaked early’, as that was a pretty high point for me! The conductor of the youth choir, Susan Knight, was very encouraging from the time I joined as well and my high school chamber choir performed some of my music. By the time I graduated from high school, I had developed a sizeable portfolio of compositions. UBC was one of the only programs where you could start a composition major in your first year, and the opportunity to study with Stephen Chatman [UBC Head of Composition] was another big draw. Together with that, I had heard of people such as Diane Loomer, Morna Edmundson, and Jon Washburn, so I was very excited to come to Vancouver and experience the choral community. During my studies at UBC I found a voice and conducting mentor in Bruce Pullan, who taught me the value in rejecting the stereotype that choral singing is drastically different from solo singing.

Conducting seemed to be a natural progression from my other musical activities; if I wanted to become a leader in the community it was logical to pursue conducting as a formal activity. Studying conducting at Yale caught my interest as I knew a few people who completed the program and one of Bruce Pullan’s colleagues was on faculty. The conducting program at Yale was the only graduate choral conducting program I applied to – I was happy with what I was doing in Vancouver and didn’t want to leave unless it was to attend my dream school, and I got in!

My experience at Yale totally changed my world, broadening my horizons beyond what I had ever thought possible. I worked and toured with some of my musical idols such as Masaaki Suzuki, whom I got to revisit this past December while conducting in Japan. My time at Yale opened the door to so many opportunities, giving me the tools and confidence to start my own groups.

While my degree is in choral conducting, I have also had the opportunity to work with orchestras and I am passionate about both kinds of ensembles. Sometimes conductors get boxed in, seen as only being able to work with such groups as children, choirs, or amateurs; I believe there is no reason you can’t do it all. I’ve participated in masterclasses in orchestral conducting with

all kinds of ensembles and repertoire. Since returning to VAM in September, I have worked with the VAM Symphony Orchestra and the VAM Intermediate Orchestra and I feel equally comfortable in front of these groups as I do in front of a choir.

My first involvement with VAM was as a voice teacher in 2011-2012, the year between my undergraduate and graduate degrees, and I was sad to leave after only one year. When Joseph called and offered me the opportunity to design the new VAM Choral Program, I was thrilled and decided to move back to Vancouver to take the new position. It is new for me to create a program like this from scratch, especially on such a large scale. To bring this dream to life with the support of VAM’s faculty and staff is a luxury.

The VAM Choral Program will be my focus and primary activity, but I plan to keep some freelancing opportunities open as well. It is important as a conductor and a composer, neither of which make any sound themselves, to keep performing as a singer. I enjoy singing and find it important for both my well-being and professional life. I co-direct a group with my husband called Arkora, a hybrid vocal chamber group with a fluid membership that hopes to cross genres in terms of orchestral, choral and jazz. It is a great outlet as a creative planner.

Aside from music, my hobbies include hiking and sailing with my dad – I hope to get home this summer as sailing season is much shorter in Newfoundland. In terms of my day-to-day, it is all music all the time. I am very lucky that my job is also my passion. There is always something else to be done and I never feel bored.”

# Mary Buckerfield White

## VAM'S

## *Mary Buckerfield White*

## CHORAL PROGRAM

## TO DEBUT IN FALL 2016

**IN FALL 2016**, VAM will introduce the new Mary Buckerfield White Choral program into the curriculum. Kathleen Allan, Director of Choral Studies, is clearly passionate about this initiative:

"I truly believe that singing is a crucial part of every musician's education whether you have goals to be a concert pianist, an orchestral violinist, or just hope to enjoy music for the rest of your life. Singing, especially ensemble singing, gives you something that you can't get studying any other instrument. The voice is the only instrument that you are born with; it is crucial for training your ear. If you can produce the sound from within you, you have no choice but to hear it and tune it; there is nothing between you and the music. It is literally part of your body. Training that part of you and connecting it with your musical ear is something I believe has great value for all musicians.

Last year, we received news of a significant gift from long-time VAM donor and ardent supporter of vocal scholarships, the late Mary Buckerfield White, to fund a new choral program. We have had lots of talks of what it might look like. I am working now to recruit, develop promotional materials, and get people excited about the program. I am holding some sessions this spring to orient people into the program and place them into groups."

The Choral Studies program will comprise four ensembles: Kits Point Chorale for children 8-12 years; Raincity Chorus for youth 13-18 years; Vanier Park Voices for adults; and VAM Schola Cantorum, a small chamber group for advanced singers of any age. Says Kathleen, "we are open to anyone who is interested because I fully believe that anybody can sing. We don't require any previous vocal training; we will work on vocal technique in order to make a beautiful sound with the instrument you were born with. Caroline Jang of VAM's voice and piano faculties has been appointed Head Vocal Coach and will be involved in taking people out and giving them the individual vocal attention they need. I think we are offering something unique in terms of vocal technique development, even for people who have ambitions in solo singing."

In its inaugural year, the VAM Choral Studies program will be free for VAM voice, piano, and guitar students and offered at a discounted rate for all other VAM private students. "We are really hoping that students who are already enrolled at VAM will take advantage of this opportunity! I don't think there is another institute in the country that offers a full choral program alongside a fully fledged orchestral and instrumental program, so I think we have something that is really exciting."



# VAM GRADUATING CLASS OF 2016

Kira Bennett  
Tamara Chang  
Sophia Cho  
Daniel Chung  
Ian del Rio-Wheatley  
Maria de Rosario Farinha  
Yu Xiang (Steven) Gong  
Jiwon Han  
Elizabeth Hemlin  
Celine Huang  
Kenneth Huang  
Sharleen YuYu Jwo  
Russell Kim  
Fergus Linley-Mota  
Daisy Liu  
Nina Ma  
Zachary Masri  
Ian MacCarthy  
Wonyoung Na  
Emma Nakamoto  
Zabrina Ng  
Albert Seo  
Joshua Su  
Amber Tsang  
Evan Wendell  
John Yu



## VAM CONGRATULATES

our students who are graduating from Grade 12 this year – the VAM 2016 Graduating Class – and celebrates their collective musical achievements!

**I AM HONOURED** to be given this opportunity reflect on my experiences at the Vancouver Academy of Music (VAM). Firstly, I am indebted to my piano teacher, Ms. Rebecca Kelly, for encouraging me to come and study at this wonderful school. When I expressed my desire to study music at the university level, she told me that VAM would not only help me to grow as a musician, but would also offer me specialized training and tutelage that would help me prepare for my future. In her opinion, VAM is the best music school in the city and I absolutely believe it!

Over this past year at VAM I have been able to further hone my musical skills. Not only has life been enriched through my private piano lessons with Ms. Kelly but it has also been enriched through the illustrious Chamber Music Program under Andrew Dawes as well as regular masterclasses with VAM Piano Department Head, Amanda Chan. These experiences have been both highly educational and a tremendous joy for me. I enjoy working, playing with others, and sharing ideas. Furthermore, through VAM, I have been given amazing opportunities including eligibility to enter the Phyllis Salter, Friends of Chamber Music, and Senior Secondary competitions, as well as masterclasses with influential figures in the musical world, including Richard Goode; for these opportunities I am eternally grateful. Moreover, VAM has given me a job – accompanying their young Suzuki violin classes. This has been without a doubt a great eye-opener for me; I enjoy seeing the young children progress each week and it is amazing how their little brains work!

The piano is a blank canvas on which I express my most colourful ideas and emotions. Because of my time and experience at VAM, I have developed as a whole person, both in maturity and in respect for the gift of music. The Vancouver Academy of Music has not only exposed me to the challenges of being a musician, it has also helped to broaden my imaginative palette and given me a broader perspective on the world. Therefore, I in turn, will continue to bring forth music as an expression of art in all its richness for the rest of my life.

Thank you.

*Joshua Su*

*VAM Graduating Class of 2016, Piano*

## RECIPIENT

## AWARD

## GRADE

Chloe Cheng ( <i>Donna Lee-Leung</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 3
Jessica Cheng ( <i>Donna Lee-Leung</i> )	First Class Honours with Distinction	Piano Grade 3
Kenny Cheng ( <i>Alana Chan</i> )	Perfect Score	Advanced Rudiments
Joy Xiran Duan ( <i>Amanda Chan</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 4
Maaya Gillham ( <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 1
Ella Gladders ( <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 4
Amanda Ho ( <i>Audrey Nodwell</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 8
Matthew Lee ( <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 8
Jasmine Lu ( <i>Teresa Ho</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 10
Daniel Ma ( <i>Donna Lee-Leung</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 10
Emilie Ma ( <i>Libby Yu</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 6
Davin Mar ( <i>Manti Poon</i> )	Gold Medal (Strings)	Viola Grade 8
Wonyoung Na ( <i>Audrey Nodwell</i> )	First Class Honours with Distinction	Cello Grade 10
Fumiyuki Okochi ( <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 1
Jeha Park ( <i>Angela Schiwy</i> )	First Class Honours	Piano Grade 6
Kyle Sum ( <i>Audrey Nodwell</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 9
Liam Yu ( <i>Joseph Elworthy</i> )	First Class Honours	Cello Grade 4

# PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

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Compositions written by **DINAH AYRE** (voice, Robyn Driedger-Klassen), **TERESA BOWES** (piano, Amanda Chan), **HENRY FROM** (composition, Edward Top; piano, Donna Lee-Leung; voice, Kathleen Allan) and **JANESSA O'HEARN** (voice, Robyn Driedger-Klassen) were featured as part of the 2016 Sonic Boom Festival.

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**DINAH AYRE**, **LYNDON JHUTY**, and **HOLLY MACLAREN** (voice, Robyn Driedger-Klassen) were all bursary winners from the Vancouver Opera Guild.

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**HEATHER BEATY** (faculty, flute) and **JOY YEH** (Co-Department Head, harp) performed the Mozart *Concerto for Flute and Harp* with the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra in April 2016. Joy also gave a solo harp recital at the Powell River Academy of Music in February.

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**YUYANG CAO** (cello, Joseph Elworthy) was accepted to prestigious Wellington College (Berkshire, UK) where she will complete high school.

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**BRENDA CAMPBELL** (faculty, piano) was the featured piano adjudicator in the 2016 Calgary Performing Arts Festival.

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The Royal Conservatory of Music has awarded **ALANA CHAN** (faculty, piano) designations as Advanced Specialist in Piano and Advanced Specialist in Theory.

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*Dragging Piaf*, created by **ALAN CORBISHLEY** (faculty, voice) will make its Vancouver premiere at the Queers Arts Festival at the Roundhouse Theatre on June 29th.

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VAM's **DAL RICHARDS SCHOOL OF SWING** will be hosting an afternoon student series at Ouisi Bistro (3014 Granville) on June 25-26 and July 2-3.

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**HENRY FROM** (piano, Donna Lee-Leung; violin, Edward Top; voice, Kathleen Allan) will be performing the Mozart Concerto No. 12, K. 414 for the Suzuki Association of the Americas conference in Minneapolis on May 28, 2016.

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**ERIC XI XIN LIANG** (piano, Amanda Chan) was awarded First and Top Prizes at the Seattle International Piano Competition (Oct 2015), Orchestre Symphonique De Montreal (OSM) Manulife Competition (Nov 2015). This summer, Eric is going to the Orford Arts Centre in Montreal for a two-week training program, which includes full scholarship and accommodation as a prize from the OSM competition in addition to the cash prize of \$5,000.

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**CHRISTIE RESIDE** (faculty, flute) and **JOY YEH** (Co-Department Head, harp) joined local clarinetist Jenny Jonquill and Koerner String Quartet (VAM faculty **NICHOLAS WRIGHT**, Violin Co-Department Head; **JASON HO**, violin; **JOSEPH ELWORTHY**, Cello Co-Department Head; Vancouver violist Byron Hitchcock) to record for CBC in February.

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**ALBERT SEO** (cello, Ariel Barnes) has been accepted to post-secondary music studies at the Curtis Institute of Music.

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**GRACE SOHN** (cello, Joseph Elworthy) is the only cellist, and sole Canadian, to advance to the semi-final round of the Stulberg International String Competition this May. Grace will proudly represent VAM at this prestigious competition where she will perform with other competitors who study at Juilliard, Curtis Institute, Colburn, Princeton, Cleveland Institute and Indiana University among others.

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Students of **NICKI STIEDA** (faculty, violin), accompanied by **BRENDA CAMPBELL** (faculty, piano), played an Outreach concert at Louis Brier House. The highlight was Bach's *Double Concerto* which will be played by the VAM students at the annual Suzuki Showcase Concert held at the Orpheum Theatre.

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**EDWARD TOP** (Department Head, composition) premiered his *Concerto for Bass Trombone and Orchestra* on April 23, 2016 in Nanaimo by bass trombonist Scott MacInnes, the Vancouver Island Symphony, and conductor Pierre Simard. His position as Composer-in-Residence for the 2016 Sonic Boom Festival was also featured in the Georgia Straight.

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**EVAN WENDELL** (trumpet, Al Cannon) has received scholarship offers from California Institute of the Arts and North Texas University.

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**AUGUSTIN WRIGHT** (piano, Amanda Chan; violin, Evelyn Creaser; cello, Joseph Elworthy) helped raise \$2,000 for the Shree-Mangal-DVIP School in Nepal in performing a solo benefit concert. He won second prize in the Junior category (under 18) of the Friends of Chamber Music Competition and performed in Carnegie Hall in April 2016 both as a soloist and a chamber musician with VAM students **SARAH BAEK** (cello, Joseph Elworthy) and **CAITLIN WONG** (violin, Lawrie Hill; piano, Lorraine Ambrose).

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VAM Alumnus **CALVIN YANG** (viola, Isabelle Roland) has been accepted to Carnegie Mellon University on a full scholarship.

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# CONGRATULATIONS COMPETITION WINNERS!

## VAM JUNIOR SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION

NOVEMBER 27, 2015

RECIPIENTS	Emily Lau, violin	TEACHERS	Lawrie Hill
	Aaron Kwok, violin		Cicely Nelson

## VAM INTERMEDIATE SYMPHONY CONCERTO COMPETITION

DECEMBER 4, 2015

RECIPIENTS	Charles Cheung, violin	TEACHERS	Lawrie Hill
	Heather Elworthy, viola		DeAnne Eisch
	Nathaniel Lum, viola		Heather Beaty

## 24<sup>TH</sup> BJORN & LORI HAREID SENIOR SECONDARY COMPETITION: PIANO

FEBRUARY 4-7, 2016

AWARDS	Bjorn & Lori Hareid Scholarship (\$1,500)	RECIPIENTS	Eric Xi Xin Liang	TEACHERS	Amanda Chan
	Loyal Protestant Association Scholarship (\$1,250)		Valerie Mok		David Vandereyk
	Vancouver Symphony Orchestra Volunteers Scholarship (\$1,000)		Joshua Su		Rebecca Kelly
	Renee Chen Scholarship (\$500)		Key Ruan		Bernard Duerksen
	Roderick H. McRae Memorial Scholarship (\$500)		Austin Con		Lorraine Ambrose
	Michael & Mary Shields Scholarship (\$500)		Courtney Cheung		Lorraine Ambrose

## PHYLLIS SALTER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PIANO

FEBRUARY 13, 2016

AWARDS	\$1,500 scholarship	RECIPIENTS	Yangy Wu	TEACHERS	Lee Kum-Sing
	\$1200 scholarship		Teresa Bowes		Amanda Chan
	\$700 scholarship		Austin Con		Lorraine Ambrose
	\$500 scholarship		Jiwon Han		Chiharu Iinuma
	\$500 scholarship		Joshua Su		Rebecca Kelly

## THE 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EDITH LANDO GIFTED YOUTH COMPETITION

MARCH 13, 2016

### AWARDS

Edith Lando Gifted Youth Scholarship (\$1,000)  
Eugenie & Edward Yeung Scholarship (\$500)  
Malcolm G. Aikman Scholarship (\$250)  
Ann Lesley Bain Memorial Scholarship (\$250)  
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph H. Cohen Scholarship (\$250)  
Harold & Florence Morris Scholarship (\$250)  
Seymour & Janet Vineberg Memorial Scholarship (\$250)  
Tarum Damji Sidpra Memorial Scholarship (\$250)

### RECIPIENTS

Augustin Wright, piano  
Corina Deng, violin  
Henry From, piano  
Megan Cheng, cello  
Christina Wei, piano  
Katie Purcell, viola  
Phoebe Cheng, violin  
Joshua Liu, piano

### TEACHERS

Amanda Chan  
Andrew Dawes  
Donna Lee-Leung  
Joseph Elworthy  
Amanda Chan  
Anthony Cheung  
Lawrie Hill  
Teresa Ho

# DALE BARLTROP TO JOIN AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET

**APPASSIONATO NOTES** that Dale Barltrop, who has headed up VAM's Concertmaster Apprenticeship Program, is moving back to his homeland of Australia to continue his music-making there full time. Together with his ongoing position as co-Concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (yes, that's quite a commute!) he will take up the chair of first violin with the Australian String Quartet.

"I have known and admired the Australian String Quartet for as long as I can remember", says Dale. "They have been Australia's pre-eminent string quartet since 1985. The violist in the group has been a very good friend of mine since my days as a student and we had toyed with the idea of forming a quartet about 15 years ago. That never eventuated but when he called me about this position he was utterly persuasive!

Although I have been lucky enough to play in countless chamber music concerts throughout my life so far, chamber music will now be front and centre in my life. It is an enormous privilege to be in a string quartet - to dedicate oneself to one of the most intimate and richly rewarding media of music-making. But for 16 weeks a year, I will get my fix of orchestral music as I continue in my role as co-Concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony. Wearing two very different hats will be a wonderful way to stay fresh and focused! It was a very painful decision to leave Vancouver, but

I was offered a career scenario that I just couldn't turn down - the chance to divide my time between playing in a string quartet and playing in an orchestra. After 18 years in North America, it seemed that the time was right to return to my homeland."

Dale will be playing with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra for the final two months of this season; his last concert will be on June 13, playing Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* (which he feels is quite fitting, given that he performed this piece when he was auditioning for the job!). After that, he'll be moving to Australia full time.

"I will always return to Vancouver. It has become my North American home and holds a very special place in my heart. I certainly hope to continue my relationship with VAM for years to come. It has been an honour to serve on the faculty here and I have loved every minute of working with the wonderful students and first class faculty. I will miss it very much, and you won't be able to keep me away!"

Appassionato and the VAM community wish Dale all the best in this new phase of his life – and will keep an ear to the ground for an ASQ North American tour!

**BOUNDLESS,**  
**LIMITLESS,**  
**INFINITUS**





**VANCOUVER'S OWN INFINITUS**, a beatboxing (yes, you heard it!) string trio that is rapidly becoming a North American phenomenon, has been invited to participate in the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (New York) Education in Schools 2015/2016 Meet the Artist Series. This educational outreach program provides schoolchildren the opportunity to experience theater, dance, and music performances with the added chance to meet the artists and ask questions. John Littlejohn, the trio's violinist, says, "A couple of Lincoln Center representatives saw us at a showcase in the States and had been waiting for the right time to book us. When they launched their Meet the Artist Series, they invited us to help them kick off their inaugural season."

To date, the group has done three Meet the Artist sessions, each one with 100-200 students from various schools around the NYC area, with the audience ranging from Grade 2 students through



secondary school. The group performs an interactive 45-minute show for each group of students, and each show is tailored to fit the age of the audience. "The main focus of our education show is to encourage students to listen more deeply to music", says John. "The repertoire consists of originals, classical standards, pop music, hip-hop, etc. With each selection, we challenge the students to find the stories hidden within the music. They loved it! We were a little nervous at first because the level of musicianship in NYC is so high, but they absolutely loved the show." The Meet the Artist residency will conclude with three further performances in May.

Infinitus consists of John Littlejohn (violin), Anthony Cheung (viola), and Alex Cheung (cello). The three, all on faculty at VAM, first came together at the University of Michigan. They formed Infinitus in 2008 and since then have performed across North America in concerts, masterclasses, workshops and seminars. They are dedicated to quality outreach and have done over 1000 performances in schools, nursing homes, juvenile detention centres, and hospitals. They have been featured on national radio, television, in numerous publications, and have released two albums.

Infinitus performances are a combination of classical standards and original jazz/hip-hop compositions and arrangements, and improvisation, embellished with vocal percussion – all performed from memory – resulting in a high-energy spontaneous performance filled with a limitless variety of sounds, rhythms and musical textures. "It's important to let students know that our instruments are still relevant. Also, by showing the audience our unique approach to music, we hope to inspire each student to find a constructive way to express their creativity," says John. As their unique approach includes, together with great musicianship, a large measure of straight-on fun, and a sense of camaraderie and connection (with each other and with the audience) – arguably the essence of chamber music – they can indeed hardly fail to inspire!

# ABOUT INFINITUS

- Infinitus draws inspiration from artists who have used their unique gifts to change the sound of music. To name a few: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Shostakovich, Stevie Wonder, Bobby McFerrin, Take 6, Timbaland, Chick Corea, Lalo Schiffrin, and Michael Jackson.
- Twins Anthony and Alex both have double majors in music and kinesiology (movement science).
- John's acronymic 'middle name', A.d.i.d.a.m., stands for *All Day I Dream About Music*.
- The three perform regularly together in other musical configurations, such as the Vancouver Chamber Players, who are dedicated to performing lesser known works of classical chamber music, as faculty for the Thrive City String Boot Camp, and on the faculty of Saint James Music Academy.
- Although all three compose and arrange for their shows, Alex handles the financial/business side of the group, Anthony is in charge of logistics and programming, and John takes the lead on marketing/promotions.

# SONGS OF THE WASTELAND

## *A Journey of Survival, Remembrance and Healing*

*Guest Writer: Anthony Boone*

**ON JANUARY 26, 2016**, the Vancouver Academy of Music staged *Songs of the Wasteland*, a haunting and evocative remembrance of Holocaust survival. The tribute opened with a powerfully simple composition for violin and voice inspired by King David's Psalm 23. Its message of good overcoming evil set the stage for the twelve pieces that followed and shared the journey of healing and transcendence by the composer and Holocaust survivor Renia Perel.

"I wrote *Songs of the Wasteland* first and foremost to honour the memory of my family and the millions of Jews who perished at the hands of the Nazis," said Renia. "But it is more than a work of death and decimation. If I were to have stopped there, then, in a way, I too would have become a victim. Instead, *Songs* is also a tribute to the supremacy of human goodness and its inherent relentless urge towards survival and healing."

The seeds of Renia's expansive humanity were planted decades earlier, long before *Songs* and before the horrors of

Nazi Germany arrived at her doorstep. Music, language, faith, family – these were the pillars of life for the young Jewish girl growing up in the Polish village of Malnow. They would nurture an insatiable appetite for learning and knowledge that would not only help her survive, but more than half a century later provide a path to rebirth and salvation.

"As a little girl, even though I was not yet old enough, I begged my parents to let me go to school," said Renia. "I was so insistent they finally gave in and by the time I was seven I had reached Grade 3 and was able to speak three languages." She also discovered a love of words and language in the poet and children's author Marja Konopnicka. "I wanted so much to be a poet and writer just like her."

Every Saturday she would sidle up to her grandmother and listen as she read aloud stories from the bible. "The story of Abraham and Isaac scared me but I loved to hear about the heroic exploits of Moses and Joseph."

Music was an ever-present early influence thanks to her father who played the violin and composed his own music. After Shabbat dinners, he would gather the family together in the sitting room for impromptu choir recitals. “My earliest memories of him are standing on his feet, and waltzing around the room as he hummed a traditional Viennese waltz,” she recalled. Renia would study some of the same music in her voice classes at school.

All would come to a shattering end in 1941 when Nazi Germany had begun its campaign for genocide. Fearing for their lives, Renia’s mother made the heart-rending decision to send her daughters off to what she trusted would be safety, intending to follow shortly after with Renia’s little brother, David. In the small hours of the morning, armed with false birth certificates, Renia and her sister Henia were spirited away to join other war refugees. She was 12 years old and it would be the last time she ever saw her mother and brother.

Renia understood the necessity behind the decision. “How tormented and torn she must have been,” she said. “I knew that however difficult, the decision was borne out of the deepest love so I had to be just as strong for her as she was for me.”

She held onto this deep love over the next four years while on the run, hiding her true heritage and staying one step ahead of authorities and capture. Delivered by cattle car into forced labour at a textile factory near Kaiserslautern, Germany, she joined other war refugees under her new identity, Marja Kozowa. “You didn’t know who to trust,” said Renia, – “but I was blessed. A young woman, Kaska Lazar, took me under her wing and together with my sister and another girl, Hanka Cholod, we managed to escape.” Escape brought more challenges before eventually being shipped off to work as a farm labourer in Barrien Bei Syke, near Bremen, where conditions proved worse than at the textile factory.

On April 8, 1945 she awoke to shouts of ‘The Tommies are coming! The Tommies are coming!’ as the allied forces arrived to liberate the village. She was 15 years old and although she might have been freed from the farm, it would be a year before she was able to shed her alias and publicly reclaim her Jewish heritage. “It was such a true spiritual liberation to be amongst other Jews and to openly proclaim our faith and observe the Sabbath. I cried tears of joy and pain for days and days.”

At the last stop before leaving Europe, at a survivors hostel in Backnang, she would meet the man whom she would later marry, Morris Perel. “By the time it came for me to leave the hostel, I was in love with Morris. We were both destined for immigration to the U.S. or Canada so when it came time to part, I was extremely sad.”

Boarding the ship that would take her to Canada, Renia’s instinct was to rein in her joy. “Truth be told, I was afraid to be happy – my experience told me this could all be taken away in an instant. But once we set sail, I knew then that this was the true new beginning for me.”

After three weeks at sea, the young landed immigrants arrived in Halifax in time for Rosh Hashanah with their host Jewish families. “I felt there was something beautifully symbolic about this and wanted to celebrate, but the previous seven years had conditioned me to be apprehensive.”

Two days later she was on a train that would take her clear across the country. While some in the group got off at stops along the way – Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina – Renia decided to stay until the end of the line. By the time they reached Vancouver in mid-October 1948, only six of the original 40 remained.

In Vancouver, life finally began again for Renia. Making up for lost time, she earned her high school diploma in less

than two years. “At the graduation ceremony, the Principal singled me out for my efforts and achievements – I was humbled and overjoyed as the crowd gave me a standing ovation.” In the audience was her escort, Morris Perel, with whom she had reunited and would marry that same year and later move into a house near Cambie and King Edward and raise a family.

Renia went on to graduate from UBC and become a schoolteacher. She would also earn a Master’s degree in children’s literature. With Morris, she spearheaded an initiative to commemorate British Columbia’s community of Holocaust survivors, interviewing 188 families throughout the province who represented 924 family members and loved ones who perished in the death camps. A memorial in their name was dedicated at Schara Tzedeck Cemetery in 1987.

It was only after Morris passed away, in 1999, that Renia gave in to the music that had been growing inside her and began to write what would become *Songs of the Wasteland*. Borne out of horror and love, out of loss and hope, the music spilled forth as a personal testament of remembrance and the power of human kindness and resilience.

“Persecution is more harmful, painful, cruel and destructive than even death itself,” said Renia. “I am sharing my journey because we must never forget the grotesqueness man is capable of perpetrating. But nor must we ever forget that mankind is also capable of goodness, kindness, compassion. And so we have a choice – mine has been to choose light over darkness, healing over pain and above all, music over silence.”



# VAM PIANO STUDENTS FIND COMMUNITY IN MASTERCLASSES AND GROUP PIANO DRILLS

**AMONG THE NEW COURSE OFFERINGS** of the 2015/16 school year are opportunities for VAM piano students to go beyond the traditional setting of one-on-one musical instruction, coming together in monthly masterclasses and weekly group piano drills classes. *Appassionato* asked Piano Department Head Amanda Chan about her motivation behind spearheading these new initiatives:

“When I first set out to have monthly masterclasses and weekly piano drills classes, I merely wanted to create opportunities for piano students to gather and learn together. Always having to practice in isolation can get pretty lonely! But VAM students, being so friendly, bright and talented, have added an unexpected learning dynamic. Within the safe and comforting classroom walls, these like-minded students are sharing their thoughts, fears and knowledge. What has become abundantly clear is that these classes are providing a place for VAM students to make strong connections. These enthusiastic young students are absorbing with much laughter and enjoyment. Thank you to the wonderful students, their teachers and parents for making this experience go beyond my highest expectations!”

## HERE IS WHAT VAM'S PIANO STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THEIR CLASSES:

### JOY XIRAN DUAN, 7

“Mr. Christopher Wong is a cool teacher. He teaches us scales, ear training and much more. I like sight reading most! Each one of us gets a chance to go to the front and get drilled separately. We all listen along and try to be helpful too. Everyone has an electronic piano in our classroom to play with and we have lots of fun! I even learned how to take musical notes - back home, I share it with my mom and she helps me to review the lessons on my piano. Many thanks, Mr. Wong and Ms. Chan, for organizing the drills classes!”

### LUKE MANTLE, 14

“Being in the masterclass, I've been able to do things I'd never tried before. One of the highlights was performing on one piano with two other people. It was fun trying to fit all six of our hands on one keyboard and bumping elbows every other bar. We learnt how to navigate score, sound and bodies--with our arms adjusting at funny angles!

Thanks for having a class where we can explore fun and creative things!”

### MICHELLE QU, 15

“What I particularly enjoyed about the class were the fun ideas for studying Ms. Chan brought to the class each week. On different occasions we were asked to learn to transpose a piece of music, rearrange a piece in different styles, and most recently had the opportunity to play with other instrumentalists. However, what was most memorable for me was the first class when we had a contest to see who could find the most number of ways to play a single note. This encouraged us to re-examine our fundamental approach to playing the piano, and on top of that it was a hoot! “



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