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Inside this issue:

- *National Piano Competition Results*
 - *Student Composer Competition Results*
 - *BCRMTA Multidiscipline Competition*
- And so much more.....*





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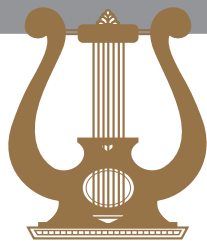
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www.bcrmta.bc.ca

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My President's Message



Barbara Siemens

president@bcrmta.bc.ca

Greetings to BCRMTA Members,

It's the start of a new year and I trust you are all replenished after a summer spent in your favourite holiday places.

Projects and events have been on going since my last message so to get members up to speed I'll start at the national level.

The CFMTA Annual Meeting was held in Montreal on July 2-3 and I attended as CFMTA 1st Vice President along with Elisa Rolston and Joyce Janzen, our BCRMTA delegates to CFMTA. The minutes have not been released as of the Progressions deadline but your Branch delegates will receive a full report from Elisa in advance of the upcoming BCRMTA semi-annual meeting. The CFMTA meeting went smoothly with much respectful discussion on a variety of topics. All Provincial and Territorial representatives were present in person with the exception of Newfoundland, who sent their regrets.

The CFMTA Conference, hosted by QRMTA, followed the meeting. It was packed with interesting presentations at the lovely L'École de musique Vincent-d'Indy and culminated with the Piano Competition on the Friday night in which our BCRMTA competition, Hamilton Lau, played as one of the finalists. You can read more on the conference and the competition later in the magazine.

In 1935, the CFMTA grew out of a movement started in BC, and the first meeting was held in 1936 with four member Provinces, BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. This Spring, Lillian Chan (Richmond), a member of the CFMTA Fund Raising and Grants Committee, spear headed the 90/90 campaign to the help celebrate CFMTA's 90th Anniversary. The project also focused on the presidents over the last nine decades, several of whom were from BC. The list includes:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| • Cynthia (Cindy) Taylor | 2015 - 2017 |
| • Darlene Brigidear | 2009 - 2011 |
| • Ernst Schneider | 1983 - 1987 |
| • Helen Dahlstrom | 1971 - 1975 |
| • Mary James | 1939 - 1941 |
| • Roy Robertson | 1935 - 1937 |

Things have been busy at the Provincial level over the last few months. The status of the Affiliat Member Teacher process was noted at the May Branch Presidents' Round Table meeting. After discussions with a BC Government official, the Executive decided to follow the recommended procedure and begin preparation of a revision to our Bylaws to avoid a conflict with the BCRMTA Act. At the same time, the inclusion of the Student Teacher Auxilliary member designation in the update will be investigated. Motions are being prepared for the Council meeting with a goal of accepting the updated Bylaws in April 2026. Although the delay in establishing the AMT designation is regrettable it is good to know that there is a path forward.

The Ad Hoc Competitions Committee has been working over the past months on the Multi-discipline and Junior Piano Competitions to be held September 18-19, 2026 at the Inn at the Quay in New Westminster. The specifics are listed later in the magazine and most likely the full panel of judges will have been announced by the time the Fall edition of Progressions is published. As of early July, the judge for the Junior Piano Competition has been confirmed, and one of the three judges for the Multi-discipline Competition. Pictures and bios for all will be released and posted at bcrmta.bc.ca and on our facebook page as soon as possible.

Over the spring, the Executive initiated a volunteer survey (closed June 30) to let members know where and how they might support the BCRMTA. The results will be collated in late July after my holidays and each member contacted by email. The goal is to place people in areas where their talents can be used best. Volunteers are always welcome but this year there were two particular committees of interest; the Canada Music Week / Student Composer Competition Chair which was vacant as of July and the Social Media Committee which is in need of members to support the Chair, Allison Starr, in posting on facebook and devising a long term social media plan.

Hello from the Editor & Webmaster



Dina Pollock
editor@bcrmta.bc.ca
webmaster@bcrmta.bc.ca

Further to this last item, the BCRMTA Facebook campaign is underway with a smaller portion of the allocated funds used to boost our listing in July and the bulk used for promotion in August and September. This is our first foray into the field of online advertising and we hope to do more in the future to make the BCRMTA increasingly visible to parents, students, and potential members.

The Semi-Annual Provincial Council meeting will be held September 14 online. Your Branch delegates will be able to report back on many issues after the minutes are released. In the meantime be sure to visit/"like" the BCRMTA Facebook page and refer to bcrmta.bc.ca for more information on programs and announcements.

I wish you all a smooth start to the 2025/2026 year.

Barbara Siemens - President

Hi Everyone,

I hope you had a great summer.

To work:

Magazine - Enjoy reading about the newest members to each branch. I have included their names, when they joined their branch, and their responses to the questions.

I am looking for members to help with book reviews. How does it work:

- I send you a book or two a month before the deadline.
- I am looking for your honest review, is the music interesting and suitable for students
- If it is not a good book, then don't do the review.

I want members to trust our reviews. Let me know -- editor@bcrmta.bc.ca

Website - Between the registrar (Joyce Janzen) and myself, we try to keep the website as updated as

possible with names, emails, phone numbers and unlinked websites. Please let us know when anything changes or any corrections.

Branches and members, do explore our program pages. Included are programs for branches, for teachers and for students.

I thought I would add something new. Technology has become a big part of our teaching and our lives. Musical terms we understand, tech terms - that may be a work in progress. I would like to start explaining a few terms that relate to websites and tech.

Tech terms - URL.

A URL is the address of a website. Our website URL is <https://bcrmta.bc.ca>

Have a great start to your teaching year.

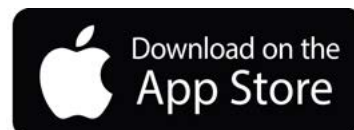
Thanks

Dina

Members,

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From the very start of the remote exam, I experienced the presence of the examiner as if in-person. The quality of the call was clear and was maintained without any interruptions throughout the exam. The part I liked best was that I was able to musically enhance my recital pieces with the stress-level being low.

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- RCM Student, Maya Krishnan



Meet some members from our Branches

As you know I have been looking for an idea of what we should include from the branches in the fall issue. During the President's round table, we decided to ask 5 questions to the newest member in each branch.

The questions were:

1. Can you tell us about the person or event that you encouraged to join BCRMTA?
2. Are there specific benefits to BCRMTA membership that interest you?
3. Do you have thoughts or skills you'd like to share with the more senior members?
4. Is there something you think the association can learn from your professional experiences?
5. Do you have a favourite hobby?

The response has been amazing.

Read the stories, the experiences - truly a great testimony to what we bring to our members, our students and their families.

Abbotsford

Emily Fulkerson - joined December 9, 2024

Chilliwack

Emily Eggert-Botkin - joined March 1, 2025

1. I recently moved to Chilliwack after many years of teaching in Quesnel, where I had grown up and had strong ties to the local music community. There, finding students happened naturally through word of mouth. Starting fresh in a new city was a different experience. I joined the Chilliwack Branch of BCRMTA to connect with local teachers, get involved in the music community, and support events like the local festival. Festival played a huge role in my own musical upbringing, and now that I'm a teacher, I'm excited to give back by helping the next generation of young musicians through volunteering.

2. Yes, especially the opportunity to connect with and learn from experienced teachers. I also value the sense of community, the chance to collaborate on recitals and events, and the ability to contribute to local initiatives like the festival. Being part of a professional network makes a big difference, especially when you are new to a city.

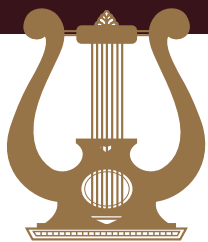
3. Over the past year, I've worked very hard to figure out how to get my name out there and reach new students in a new city. After moving to Chilliwack, I had to build my studio from the ground up with no prior connection to the local music community, other teachers, or musicians. With my marketing background, I've found it helpful to put on my business hat and adapt to how families look for lessons today. It can actually be fun to find creative ways to reach people. A simple website can go a long way. These days, anyone can build one. There are lots

of beginner-friendly platforms with drag-and-drop tools and ready-made templates that make it quick and easy. You do not need any design skills or tech experience to make something that looks clean and professional. Even something as small as having an up-to-date Facebook page or sharing occasional posts about your studio can help families feel more connected and informed. I think learning to reach students in the digital age is important, and it is something I have enjoyed exploring.

4. Starting from scratch in a new community has given me a different perspective on what it takes to establish yourself as a teacher without existing connections or word of mouth. It has pushed me to think creatively, approach things from a marketing mindset, and look for new ways to reach families and build trust. That kind of challenge can be overwhelming at first, especially without a built-in network. I think there's value in hearing more stories from teachers who have gone through that process, and in finding ways to support members who are navigating those early stages in a new place.

5. Outside of music, I love to bake, travel and spend time outdoors. Paddleboarding is my favourite summer activity, and in the winter, I look forward to skiing. I find that time outside is the best way to recharge. 🌟





Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Coquitlam/Maple Ridge

Kelly Scyner - joined May 1, 2025

East Kootenay

Christine Wulf - joined March 1, 2024

Kamloops

Tomoko Uyeda - joined March 3, 2024

1. Actually, it was my husband who found the BCRMTA website and suggested that I should join.

2. First, having insurance coverage is a major benefit for me. Second, being part of the Kamloops branch allows me to connect and share information with other members.

3. I don't think I have anything specific to contribute at the moment.

4. I grew up learning piano through the Japanese method, which is quite different from the Canadian approach. I'm not sure if others would find my experience helpful.

5. My favorite hobbies are playing the piano and birdwatching. 🌸



Kelowna

Melodie Petersen - joined March 1, 2024

1. I first heard of the local chapter of Registered Music Teachers Association shortly after I moved "back" to BC. I previously spent twelve years in the natural gas industry in Calgary and had never contemplated a career in music, although playing the piano had been my passion in my youth. Upon moving to Kelowna in 1993 I decided to recommence my piano studies to obtain my ARCT, which took me many years. I knew I was not eligible for BCRMTA membership until I received this designation, so it left my mind altogether. In 2023 three colleagues (Paul Dykstra, Joe Berarducci and Claudia Kargl), each independently, suggested I join the BCRMTA. It was only after then-president Claudia Kargl followed up with a number of phone calls, did I seriously consider joining. Claudia stepped me through the process of application, and the approval for membership came almost immediately. I was impressed by the efficiency of the provincial chapter executive.

2. As most of us are aware, the group insurance plan is what initially interests us as independent music teachers! However, I soon realized the potential for continuing education opportunities. A case in point is last summer. As I recovered from surgery, I was able to watch every "Connecting Canada" presentation from the comfort of my home! I was very inspired by these and I must mention how efficient and patient Dina Pollock was in helping me with all the technological challenges encountered. As a result of these workshops, the local chapter now considers inviting speakers from this event to host in-town seminars/workshops/master classes. I've also enjoyed the insightful articles and new publication reviews in Progressions magazine. Through this organization I have not only connected with former colleagues, but have met many new teachers who share similar teaching experiences and challenges. Another positive thing has been forming a duet partnership. We play not only for our own personal enjoyment and growth, but perform at intimate small "salon" recitals. I believe the preparation and pressure of these performances enables us to become better teachers.

3. Having been with the organization for just over a year, I am still discovering all that membership offers. Speaking to this question, my first thought is that I would love to see even more continuing education (in-person and/or online). I also somehow feel the age of competitiveness in music may be becoming a bit of an outdated tradition in a viable private studio. It is my feeling, along with a number of RMTA colleagues, that we strive to applaud ALL students





Kelowna - cont.

on their accomplishments. Their skills are completely unique, as are their schedules and aspirations. As a returning adult student, I received the RCM medal for highest provincial mark (1997). *This award came completely as a surprise* and had I known I was competing for “first” I’m sure my performance would have reflected my nervousness around this. This type of recognition I totally support.

4. I have heard that the BCRMTA is striving to change the by-laws to be more inclusive to teachers with varying degrees of experience and accreditation. I am in support of the proposed “Affiliate Memberships”, and have enjoyed opening up our local chapter events to all teachers in the area (this has included educational and social gatherings).

5. I would have to say that my favourite ‘hobby’ is kayaking. We find small, remote lakes in the back hills of the Okanagan and get out for a day of nature...no traffic, no people, no distractions and rarely even a thought of an applied dominant seventh chord! 🌟

Mid-Island

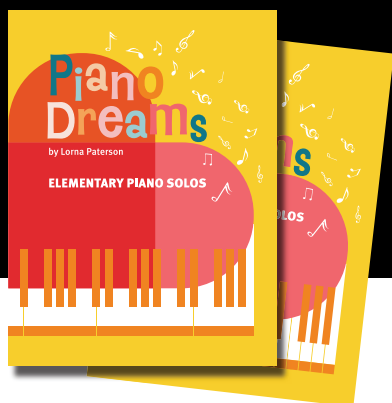
Lindsey Tromba - joined January 2, 2025

Mission

Elisa Wolff Butler - joined March 8, 2013

1. I took piano lessons from age 5 onwards and when I headed off to university I did what most of us did: stop lessons and focus on my degree. Fast forward a few years and I realized I wanted to start playing again, so I asked Lorna Yeates to teach me and guide me through my ARCT in Piano Pedagogy. Lorna has worn many “hats” in my life: prayer partner during my younger years at church, piano teacher, mentor, friend, and colleague. My involvement in BCRMTA is due to her encouragement and support. When I began taking on students, she was the one who encouraged me to start as an STA with the Coquitlam-Maple Ridge Branch, and then a full member when I achieved my full ARCT. I moved to Mission in 2018 with my now husband Keith, as we wanted a house with a yard, and I joined the Mission branch a couple of years later!

2. There are so many practical benefits: the incredible insurance policy, the workshops that are funded by our yearly fees and the connection to all the conventions and events across the province! There is also the benefit of having people to bounce ideas off of, or to go to for advice about a challenging student or situation. Our branch is small but mighty. With the three of us and our one STA member we’ve hosted Canada Music week recitals, several workshops, and many joint studio recitals! Collaboration and connection is such an amazing part of BCRMTA membership.

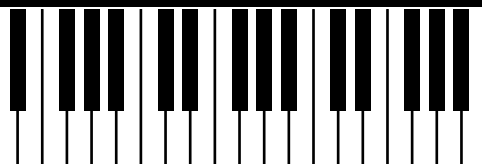


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Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Mission - cont.

3. I think that my skills in teaching children with ADHD or autism is one I have a lot of experience with, and I'd really like to expand on. I would encourage all our members, if they are open to it, to consider how their teaching styles and ideas can be used and adapted to benefit students with ADHD and autism, in particular. As teachers, we are all used to approaching teaching concepts in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles. That flexibility is easily adapted to teaching students with ADHD or autism, and the results are incredibly rewarding. In particular, I teach a student with autism who has been with me for several years and has now become comfortable enough to work more collaboratively with me on how I approach concepts or pieces with them. I know that I need to find a way to introduce the concept concisely, demonstrate it in small sections, and to make sure my instructions are very precise. Autism is different in each person, and it is challenging, rewarding, and just so amazing when you find the thing that gives any student their "AHA!" moment

4. Because I moved from teaching in one city to another (Coquitlam to Mission), it really highlighted to me how different the markets were in each city. It showed me that each branch faces very different challenges. My city is more blue collar; people here have less disposable income than Coquitlam and Vancouver, and piano lessons are very much a luxury. My marketing, my lesson fees, and my entire approach to attracting new students had to be re-thought. In Coquitlam, I had a waiting list! Word of mouth was enough for me to get all the students I could ever need. In Mission, I'm lucky to get one, maybe two new students per year. I have had to pivot in a number of ways, one being teaching online. The one gift of the pandemic was that it required me to develop my on-line teaching skills. I have students in Burnaby, Richmond, and even Vancouver Island now!

5. I think that everyone in my life would say the same thing: dogs. Dogs are my hobby. I have a beagle named Frodo and a treeing walker coonhound named Willow. They are simultaneously the sweetest, cutest, most adorable dogs and also complete agents of chaos. They are scent hounds, which means training and enrichment never stop. I do scent work with them, and they need tons of exercise. We hike, we do off-leash training, go 4x4ing, and all sorts of adventures. My husband once lost them for 7 hours in Campbell Valley Park. Frodo was found wandering in a field, covered in mud and happy as a clam, and Willow was found 10 km down the road at a winery (I too would seek shelter at a winery). Agents of chaos indeed. 🌟

North Island

Bridget Meagher - joined March 1, 2024

1. I joined the North Island BCRMTA branch because I am inspired by the members' dedication to providing opportunities for students and to building a strong community of local music teachers.

2. I find BCRMTA training and social opportunities beneficial, as well as the liability insurance.

3. I want to share my gratitude with senior members for lifting up our profession in a changing world and finding creative ways to spark the interests of our newest generation of students.

4. I like helping students compose electronic music using free online apps and Garageband. It's a fun and accessible way to teach form, rhythm and harmonic structure.

5. My favourite hobby, besides playing piano, is drumming in an 80s cover band. 🌟



North Shore

Dr Furee Sik Lai Sung - joined March 10, 2025

Prince George

Dustin anderson - joined June 1, 2023

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Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Richmond

Ivy Lin - joined January 1, 2025



1. My mom has been a member of BCRMTA ever since I could remember and she was the one who encouraged me to join. I grew up watching her planning the recitals, and attended many of them as well. I love the performance opportunities for students which helps them become more confident and build a stronger stage presence. The earlier they start playing for an audience, the easier

it will be for them when they're older.

2. The insurance is definitely a great bonus as well as the recitals that are hosted. The awards are great for encouraging and motivating students.
3. (skip this question *haha*. I don't know what to write)
4. Having just completed undergrad at UBC last month, I have some pedagogical concepts that are still fresh in my mind. With research on education and child development constantly evolving, I think it's great to be able to stay up to date with the newest findings and use that knowledge to refine the way we teach.
5. I like baking, especially when it's for other people :) My students all look forward to the treats they get after performing at my studio recitals.

With summer just around the corner, I'm looking forward to going on hikes in the mountains and biking around the city

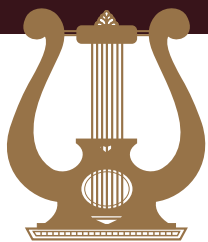
Instagram reels of cute ducks always makes my day. 🌸

South Fraser

Alison Nystrom - joined November 15, 2024



1. My long time friend and colleague, Gail Suderman, encouraged me to join. Gail has been an inspirational pedagogue, singer, pianist and conductor who has supported me all along my musical journey and I had the immense pleasure of teaching alongside her at Kwantlen Polytechnic University for many years.
2. Definitely the insurance. Collaboration with other members. I would love to see the Voice teachers represented more and develop singing masterclasses and competitions. I love how much the Piano teachers do and would love to see this take off with the Voice teachers as well.
3. It's likely that I have more to learn than to share. I have embraced technology and now store my music on my iPad. Although I have an extensive physical music library, I find it so much more convenient to have my scores in digital format. Less back pain:) In a time where many jobs could be replaced with AI, I'm thankful to be a part of a long lineage of musicians imparting knowledge to the next generation. We can never be replaced. The mentorship that I have received throughout my life has been invaluable and most of the things I teach in my lessons were not learned from books, but from other teachers and musicians.
4. I'm always happy to share whatever knowledge I have. My undergraduate degree is in Kinesiology so I know a lot about the human body. I have an ARCT and Masters degree in Opera. I have sung on almost every continent, with the exception of Australia and Antarctica. As a singer and pianist, I hope I can increase the participation of voice teachers. I grew up in Ontario so I performed a lot in ORMTA competitions and recitals, so I might be able to share how another province runs things.
5. I have so many hobbies! Crocheting, swimming, reading, but my favourite one right now is hanging out with my 4 month old granddaughter, Aliyah! 🌸



Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

South Okanagan

Jackie Klever - joined September 11, 2019

Sunshine Coast

Tegan Ceschi-Smith - joined September 13, 2021

Trail / Castlegar

Leslie Mahr - joined August 3, 2022



1. I moved to the Kootenays three years ago from Edmonton. The idea was to retire, but when I learned that the local violin teacher had recently stopped teaching, I felt compelled to fill the void. I arrived with 6 violins of different sizes not knowing what to expect in the way of resources. The most surprising gift was a brother and sister currently travelling to a violin teacher somewhere between Trail and Nelson. When they learned that I had moved to Trail they enrolled with

me. Here in the middle of nowhere, three hours from most big box stores, I had inherited not one, but two RCM grade 10 violinists! I definitely knew I wanted to connect with other professional musicians so I searched out the local BCRMTA. In Edmonton I belonged to it briefly, but found that I was the lone violinist among piano teachers.

2. Our Kootenay BCRMTA is tiny but we have a vocal teacher and myself in addition to 5 pianists. What I really like is the BCRMTA supported recitals in which our students are invited

to perform. The program is always interesting with the diversity of instruments and our mandate to perform works by Canadian composers during the Canada Music Week recital in November.

3. I spent most of my life performing as a professional orchestral musician in the U.S. and Canada. It was in my forties that I really started to teach a lot. For anyone taking a professional orchestral audition, I have the knowledge to prepare them for the ordeal.

4. When I was a violin performance student at UBC I really couldn't understand why I had to take composition, orchestration, score reading and ear training. Since moving to the Kootenays, I have used those skills many times to make a viola part for myself in a trio that performs several times a year. Sometimes I need to take a line from a piano part and most often from a cello part. I've also used those skills to take a piano piece and turn it into a duet for piano students.

5. As a watercolour painter, the vast and beautiful scenery here is a constant inspiration. As a former Albertan I am thrilled by what will grow in my yard and in my vegetable garden. Not much painting happens in the summer months, but there is a lot of pickleball. I am enjoying trips around the area in my recently acquired Kona EV. Note to others: there are many more charging stations in BC than in Alberta! ☀



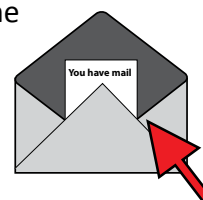
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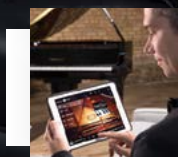




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Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Vancouver/Burnaby

Bill Costin - joined April 16, 2025

1. As a young jazz piano student (many years ago!) at what was then the Malaspina College Jazz Music program, my piano teacher was Louise Rose. I was very lucky to study with her. Her philosophy and feel for composition at the piano stick with me to this day. I visited her over spring break this year, and she suggested I join BCRMTA.

2. As suggested by Louise, the insurance is well worth the admission. Also, meeting other piano instructors at social events and concerts will be an asset for my teaching.

3. Access to music has changed over the last 40 years. The term "spotify" back then was a practice technique to go over and over a few bars of music that was difficult to play. Now it is a streaming application that pays composers very poorly.

Private music teachers are picking up the slack for music cuts in schools. This year, the Surrey school board cancelled the grade 7 band program. Music budgets are half of what they were in the 1970s. I saw my daughter's music opportunities in public school diminish each year she attended (she will be in grade 12 in the fall). The Sarah McLachlan School of Music has been very beneficial to her. She finally has a band room to play in with other students that fits her academic schedule.

I like to teach students who love music, even if they don't want to practice for hours a week. Recitals are a great place to ensure that playing and making mistakes in front of each other

is a special human experience.

Pre-recorded music that young people listen to is intimidating. What if they make mistakes at the recital? I always remind students and families that a music recording is like making a movie, and the musicians (or computer-generated AI) play it over and over until it is perfect.



4. When I work professionally, I am continually thinking on my feet (whether in front of an audience of 500, or one: a piano student). I am constantly shifting content to maintain the attention and focus of the audience. Also, the most important part of being a professional musician is having relationships with people. Stick to a fair fee, make yourself available to all, and practice to keep your skills up. This can apply to teaching as well as performing. I also belong to the Vancouver Musicians' Association. Like BCRMTA, it helps people who do similar work to be more efficient and get together to share their experiences.

5. I love my work. It's my hobby. Also spending time with my family, cooking, running, and watching old movies.

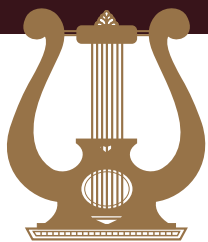
<https://billcostin.com/> 🌟

Thank you to all the branch members that answered the questions

In our next issue we will highlight Canada Music Week

Canada Music Week November 16 - 22, 2025





Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Vernon

Nataliia Belichenko - joined August 15, 2024



1. What influenced my decision to join BCRMTA most of all was the situation I found myself in after arriving in Canada just over a year ago. Because of the war in Ukraine, my husband, daughter, and I had to leave everything behind and flee from the sounds of explosions and sirens.

After such an experience, suddenly finding myself in a new country, I naturally began to look for a circle of like-minded people - those who shared my profession, could understand me, and could offer support. In that sense, joining BCRMTA became an inspiring step in my life.

I would like to sincerely thank Lisa Parson, the president of the Vernon branch, and all my colleagues for their kind support. It has been very meaningful to me.

2. At this early stage of my membership, the greatest benefit for me is the opportunity to express myself and to pursue my professional and creative interests. I also see great potential for enriching my previous teaching methods - especially when it comes to theoretical subjects such as Harmony, Counterpoint, Analysis, Ear Training, and more.

3. Certainly. I believe it could be interesting and useful to explore the differences between two well-established music education systems: the one in Canada and the one in the former Soviet Union, where students complete four levels of professional music education over a span of 20 years (school, college, university, and postgraduate studies).

4. I think that my years of teaching experience in the Music Theory Department at the Kharkiv University of Arts might be of some interest and value not only to my colleagues in the Vernon branch, but perhaps to other members of the association as well.

5. I wouldn't say I have a particular hobby, but I do enjoy reading the Bible. It gives me strength and encouragement in my life. ✨

Victoria

Emily Armour - joined August 27, 2024



1. Cowichan Valley Music Teachers Association.

2. Learning from members of the community, membership benefits like seminars, group insurance, guest speakers, and networking with other music teachers.

3. In 2021 I founded a not-for-profit that provides amazing opportunities to youth composers to contribute to commemoration and honour Canadian veterans. Music for Veterans Project (MVP) bridges generational gaps through original music directly inspired by, and composed in honour of, these brave individuals who serve our country. There is no other organization like MVP in the world. I am always happy to speak with other teachers who want to discuss opportunities for how they can participate as it has been immensely positive for my students as well as those of my colleague Catharina De Beer.

4. As a new member, I am most interested in learning from other members of the organization. My skills and passion serving as founder and president of the Music for Veterans Project (MVP) is where I feel I can be most valuable. MVP combines music, Canadian history, service, and incredible learning and performance opportunities for youth in such a unique way. I truly believe commemorative music has the power to heal and is extremely unifying in its inherent ability to place others before self. I hope to connect with other teachers who share this enthusiasm for commemoration and who wish to empower their own students to celebrate our Canadian veterans.

5. Motorcycling, volunteering for Music for Veterans Project, and Franz Liszt. ✨

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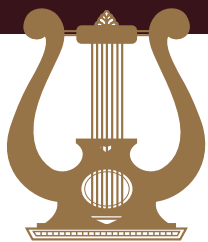
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Meet some members from our Branches - cont.

Provincial

Anne Hill - joined August 27, 2024

Multijurisdictional

Susan Barak - joined September 29, 2022



1. Being a long time member of ORMTA and the CFMTA, I wanted to join the BCRMTA to tap into another collegial community and also ensure that students could participate in festivals and other music-related opportunities on the provincial level.

2. As a string player, I have spent a lifetime collaborating with other musicians and believe in the power of connecting with groups of like-minded creative and artistic spirits.

I have really enjoyed the online social meetings, and being able to share ideas with other teachers on a wide range of topics. For a studio teacher, it is also a benefit to have access to insurance through the association. It is also important to have a listing in the directory so that people can find you when they are looking for a teacher!

3. I would just like to express gratitude and appreciation to all the senior members who are very approachable, kind, and welcoming to newcomers. You are a fabulous group!!

4. Please keep up the online gatherings and opportunities to include teachers and students who may be experiencing a bit of isolation due to the vast distances between remote areas and the lower mainland.

5. Favourite hobbies are yoga, dancing for fitness, appreciating all the Arts, travelling, writing poetry, reading, and walking—in nature, as well as exploring cities. 🌸

On a different note.....

Susan Evans

Canada Music Week / Student Composer coordinator

When in her 20's Susan Evans, (then called Sue Vester) was one of the film editors on Led Zeppelin's motion picture "The Song Remains the Same". Since then, she has travelled Asia, married and divorced twice, and raised two sons in Vancouver, Canada. In her 30s she returned to school to earn a Bachelor's degree in music from the University of British Columbia. That was followed by 30+ years of work as a very successful and respected piano teacher.

Last year, at age 79, Susan returned to UBC to do graduate work in Music Theory. Now she has been accepted to do Graduate Studies at Oxford University in the UK, and then at Cambridge University as well. Returning home to the UK was something that Susan never expected to come true. And, as a pub owner's daughter from Pontypool, Wales, attending Oxford seemed to be an even more unattainable dream.

Susan, BCRMTA wishes you all the best on this new adventure. 🌸





Heritage Fund

All branches are eligible for the \$300 Heritage Fund subsidy, to be used for a continuing education project from March 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026. The online application is on the bcrmta.bc.ca website under *Programs for Branches*.

Professional Development Fund

Branches with less than 40 members are eligible to receive a grant of \$300 every other year. This can be merged with the Heritage Fund grant. Branches that are eligible for the fiscal year March 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026, are:

- East Kootenay
- Kelowna
- Mid-Island
- Prince George
- South Okanagan
- Sunshine Coast
- Vernon

Five grants are awarded each year on a first come/ first serve basis.

The online application is on the bcrmta.bc.ca website under *Programs for Branches*.

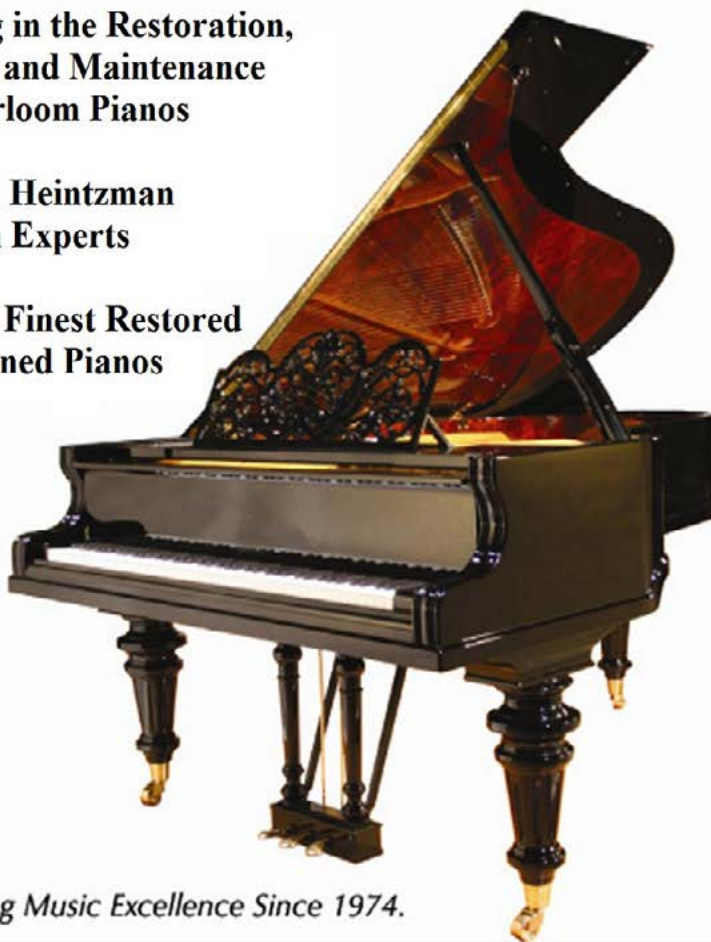
Liz Munro

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BCRMTA Multi-discipline Competition

September 18 - 19, 2026

New Westminster, BC

Deadline for entry - May 1, 2026 - online application

Deadline for any changes to repertoire order - July 1, 2026

1. The BCRMTA Multi-disciplinary Competition is open to competitors who are:
 - a. Canadian citizens or legal residents of Canada
 - b. instrumentalists who have not reached their 25th birthday by January 1, 2027
 - c. vocalists who have not reached their 33rd birthday by January 1, 2027
 - d. students of a BCRMTA member in good standing, at the time of application and competition
 - e. NOT previous 1st place winners of a BCRMTA Competition
2. Each Branch may send two competitors in two different disciplines; the Branch is responsible for the costs of accommodation, transportation, and any per diem.
3. General Repertoire Requirements
 - a. Repertoire must be at a senior concert level or higher
 - b. Competitors may select movements from a sonata; the entire work need not be performed
 - c. Repertoire substitutions are not permitted once the application is received
 - d. Memorization is strongly encouraged
 - e. Competitors must provide scores and/or legal copies for the judges, a second set of scores and/or legal copies will be required in the case of collaborators
 - f. Stage time is defined as the time between the first note of the performance and the last note of the final selection

SEMI-FINAL ROUND INFORMATION

- a. Competitors in the BCRMTA Semi-final Round should present a stylistically balanced program
Repertoire should be chosen carefully to reflect the experience and maturity of the student
- b. The overall programme must contain 25 to 30 minutes of stage time
- c. Program requirements:
 - i. Instrumentalists' programs must include:
 1. One Canadian composition
 2. One major composition from the Baroque or Classical Period
 3. A variety of shorter works to form a well-balanced program
 - ii. Vocalists' programs must include:
 1. One Canadian composition
 2. One operatic or oratorio aria
 3. A variety of shorter works to form a well-balanced program
- d. Three finalists will be selected from the Semi-Final Round of the competition to proceed to the Final Round of the competition

FINAL ROUND INFORMATION

- a. Competitors in the BCRMTA Final Round should present a stylistically balanced program. Repertoire should be chosen carefully to reflect the experience and maturity of the student
- b. A completely new program must be presented
- c. The overall programme must contain 30 to 45 minutes of stage time
- d. The piano and/or multi-discipline winners must be prepared to continue to the July 2027 CFMTA National Competition in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

PRIZES Piano / Instrumentalist / Vocalist Prizes

1 st place	\$ 1000
2 nd place	\$ 700
3 rd place	\$ 500
Additional prizes to be confirmed	



BCRMTA Junior Piano Competition

September 18 - 19, 2026

New Westminster, BC

Deadline for entry - May 1, 2026

Applications online only - bcrmta.bc.ca/bc-junior-piano-competition/



1. The BCRMTA Junior Piano Competition is open to competitors who:
 - a. Are Canadian citizens or legal residents of Canada
 - b. Have not reached their 18th birthday by January 1, 2026
 - c. Have not passed the Level 10 repertoire portion of a practical examination as of August 31, 2026
 - d. Are studying with a BCRMTA member in good standing at the time of the application and the competition
2. Each Branch may send one competitor; the Branch is responsible for the costs of accommodation, transportation, and any per diem.
3. Procedures
 - a. Repertoire:
 - i. Pieces must be at a Level 10 RCM or equivalent
 - ii. Single movements from a sonata or larger work may be performed
 - iii. No substitutions once the application is received
 - iv. Memorization is compulsory
 - b. Competitors must provide scores and/or legal copies for the judge
 - c. Time limits will be strictly enforced. Any competitor whose performance goes over the time limit will not be stopped, however, they will be disqualified from proceeding to the next level or receiving a placement

SEMI-FINAL ROUND

- o Repertoire requirements:
 - At least two pieces of contrasting styles and/or periods
 - One Canadian composition
 - 10 to 15 minutes of stage time, defined as the first to last note of the performance
- o Three finalists will be selected from the Semi-Final Round of the competition
- o A prize for the best performance of a Canadian work will be selected from the semi-final round
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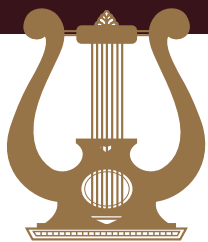
FINAL ROUND

- o Repertoire requirements
 - at least two pieces of contrasting styles and/or periods
 - 15 to 20 minutes of stage time, defined as the first to last note of the performance
 - A completely new program must be presented

PRIZES

1 st place	\$ 500
2 nd place	\$ 350
3 rd place	\$ 250





Musical Community Service Awards

May 2025

Mid Island	Dianne Bohn	Hongye Chen	Bronze
		Hongye Chen	Silver
		Hongye Chen	Gold 62 hours
		Shen Jia Qi (Jackie) Fang	Bronze
		Shen Jia Qi (Jackie) Fang	Silver
		Shen Jia Qi (Jackie) Fang	Gold 71 hours
		Abby Ge	Bronze
		Lucy Jiang	Bronze
		Lucy Jiang	Silver
		Lucy Jiang	Gold 70 hours
		Angel Ma	Bronze
		Everest Ma	Bronze
		Everest Ma	Silver
		Everest Ma	Gold 60 hours
		Phoebe Ma	Bronze
		Olivia Wang	Bronze
		Olivia Wang	Silver
		Sherry Yu	Bronze
		Sherry Yu	Silver
		Julia Zhang	Bronze
		Grace Zhao	Bronze
		Grace Zhao	Silver
		Olivia Zhou	Bronze
		Emma Chen	Bronze
Richmond	Lillian Chan	Emma Chen	Silver
		Lily Chen	Bronze
		Samuel Asis	Silver
		Chloe Javier	Bronze
		Tristan Kong	Bronze
		Adi Mohan	Bronze
		Jason Pinto	Silver
		Jenny Xie	Bronze
		Jenny Xie	Silver
		Lily Yuen	Bronze
		Olivia Ovington	Bronze
		Ian Richards	Bronze
Trail/Castlegar	Tammy Francis	Ian Richards	Silver

Thank you for your service to the community! The number behind the Gold certificate is the number of hours the student has volunteered. **60 volunteer hours** is required to achieve a Gold certificate.

35 volunteer hours is required to achieve a Silver certificate

10 volunteer hours is required to achieve a Bronze certificate.

Joyce Janzen - Registrar





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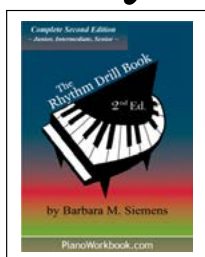
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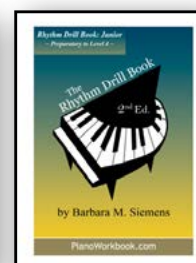
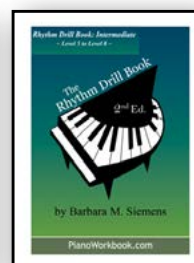
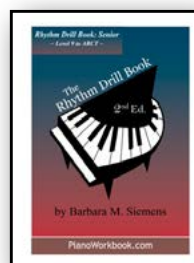
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CFMTA National Piano Competition

Hamilton Lau



The CFMTA National Piano Competition was held in Montreal on July 3 and 4 in the beautiful concert hall at L'école de musique Vincent-d'Indy. The BCRMTA was admirably represented by Hamilton Lau, winner of the September 2024 BC Piano Competition and the featured performer in our Spring 2025 Young Artist Series, supported in part by the CFMTA in honour of their 90th anniversary. Seven branches across the Province were able to hear Hamilton in the YA concerts, and I was privileged to attend the April event in Vancouver as well as some of the National semi-finals on July 3, and the final on July 4. What a treat!

At every performance, Hamilton exuded confidence and mastery. In Montreal, the concert hall presented both aural and visual delights. Hamilton's impressive tonal control was magnified by the high ceilings and fantastic acoustics, while the blue/white decor and stain glass windows delighted the eyes. In the semi-finals, his program was varied with a clearly defined Bach *Prelude and Fugue BWV 883*, a mischievous Mendelssohn/Rachmaninoff *Scherzo* transcription from "*Midsummer Night's Dream*" and a powerful Prokofiev *Sonata Op. 7*. Howard Bashaw's *Hosu* was a bold avant guard choice for the Canadian option. There were moments when the audience wasn't quite sure if Hamilton was producing the creaking sounds through an innovative piano technique dictated by the composer, or if it was the 100+ year old building shifting in the heat. Hamilton confirmed afterwards that it was the chair! Those of us who heard Hamilton that Thursday afternoon were thrilled by his playing and gratified to find out that he was chosen as a finalist.

The finals the next night showcased three very talented and dedicated pianists, Hamilton from BC, Julien Gagné from Québec, and Adam Zheng from Ontario. All three demonstrated musicality as well as professionalism and each had strengths in abundance. Still, there were considerations to be weighed and an unenviable decision to be made: I was grateful to be in the audience instead of behind the judging table. In the end, Adam took third place as well as the Canadian Chopin Society Award, Hamilton took second place and the Ernst Schneider Canadian Music Award, and Julien took first place. That night, each competitor deserved the ample applause they received, but I must confess to being especially enthusiastic for our BC representative. Hamilton, you captured the hearts of many of those present and you did your Province proud, thank you! The BCRMTA wishes your every success in your musical future!

Barbara Siemens



L to R: Hamilton Lau - BC, Julien Gagné - Québec,
Adam Zheng - Ontario.





Student Composer Winners 2025

PREPARATORY: 8 years & under

A1 An original work for solo instrument or any combination of instruments

No Entries

DIVISION A: 11 years and under

A1 An original work for solo instrument or any combination of instruments

1st Place	Nathan Syyong	<i>Don't Ever Underestimate the Smallest Elephant</i>
2nd Place	Filip Ilea	<i>Here I Come</i>
	Baye Lindberg	<i>Lazy Mary</i>
Honourable mention		
	Garrett Rostek	<i>Trash Panda</i>
	Nathan Syyong	<i>Sonatina in D Major</i>

DIVISION B: 15 years and under

B 1 An original work for solo instrument or any combination of instruments

1st Place	Will Zhu	<i>Aeris</i>
2nd Place	Will Zhu	<i>Souffle D'Aube</i>
	Will Zhu	<i>Aetherian Waltz</i>
Honourable mention		
	Noa Paster	<i>Regnboygn Tantsn</i>
	Will Zhu	<i>Solitude</i>

DIVISION C: 19 years and under

An original work for any instrument, voice, or combination of voices and instruments, with or without accompaniment

1st Place	Xavier Burgers	<i>Clearing</i>
2nd Place	Xavier Burgers	<i>Fluctuations</i>
Honourable mention		
	Alessio Dagostini	<i>Frozen Waterfall</i> (Violin and Piano)

DIVISION D: Open

An original work for any instrument, voice, or combination of voices and instruments, with or without accompaniment.

1st Place	Max Francis	<i>Quartet Op. 6</i>
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Adjudicator for 2025 - Jennifer Butler

Thank you to all the composers - Congratulations to the winners for 2025

Student Composer Winners 2025 - cont.



DIVISION A: 11 years and under

1st place

Nathan Syyong

Don't Ever Underestimate the Smallest Elephant!

My name is Nathan and I have been playing piano for 7 years, studying under May Ling Kwok. I study at the Victoria Conservatory of Music. I began composing music two years ago under the guidance of Christine Donkin. The idea for this song began when I watched a documentary on elephants and I wanted to create a tune that fits with the personality of an elephant calf. The twist in my composition is to highlight an energetic elephant who is trying its hardest to be like the adults and to be noticed, but ends up getting into mischief.



Don't Ever Underestimate the Smallest Elephant!

With Expression ♩ = 92

Nathan Syyong

CFMTA/FCAPM
Competition
1st place

DIVISION B: 15 years and under

1st place

Will Zhu

Aeris

Will is a 15-year-old student and composer based in Vancouver, BC. Passionate about music, he enjoys playing the piano, singing, and composing both electronic and classical pieces. He works with DAWs to create unique soundscapes, blending his love for modern production with traditional composition. Outside of music, Will is an avid skier, golfer, and swimmer. He also shares his home with Milky, his beloved pomsky.

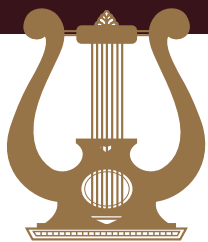


Aeris

♩ = 110

Piano

Will Zhu



Student Composer Winners 2025 - cont.

DIVISION C: 19 years and under

1st Place

Xavier Burgers

Clearing

I've been seriously composing since I was 16, however I fell in love with classical music at the age of 13. I enjoy snowboarding, programming, and playing/making video games in my spare time. This piece, "Clearing" is a piano trio and has two main sections: a slower, more "open" section and a faster more energetic one. This piece is not yet finished as I plan for there to be a final synthesis section where both sections interact and develop together (A, B, A+B). I feel like the piece needs some cutting down and some refinement to make the developments of each section more satisfying, as well as more repetition of motifs and harmony to familiarize the audience with the material before the synthesis.

A $\text{♩} = 34$ Still, clear, calm

Clearing

Xavier Burgers

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

harmonics

arco

p



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DIVISION D: Open

1st Place

Max Francis

Quartet Op. 6

Max Francis is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from Victoria, British Columbia. In 2022, at age 11, he became the youngest person in history to win the BC Fiddle Championship and to receive an invitation to compete in the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Competition, where he is a three time top-10 finalist, including a 3rd place finish in 2024. Max is also a US National Old Time Fiddle Champion in the 12-and-under and Youth Swing categories. In addition, Max is an accomplished classical violinist and has performed as a soloist with the Victoria Symphony and a featured artist with the Emily Carr String Quartet. His classical compositions have been awarded the highest honours at Canada's National Music Festival. Max also plays 6-string and tenor guitar, mandolin, banjo, piano, and bodhran. In December 2024, he released his debut album "Home", consisting of original fiddle tunes.



Max Francis

Adagio
(♩ = 50)

Quartet Op. 6

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Adjudicator - Jennifer Butler

Our adjudicator this year was Jennifer Butler, a composer, educator and flutist living in Vancouver. Jennifer completed her Bachelor of Music degree from Wilfrid Laurier University and holds both a Master's degree and Doctorate in Music Composition from the University of British Columbia. She is passionate about teaching music as a creative subject and was the Composer Mentor for the Okanagan Symphony's Young Composer Program from 2021-2024, worked as a teaching artist for Vancouver Opera from 2019-2022, and was the Composer-in-Residence for Vancouver's Sonic Boom festival in 2022.





Student Composers' Club's Masterclasses

The BCRMTA Student Composers' Club's Masterclass event, held on Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, at the beautiful Murray Adaskin Salon in Vancouver, was an uplifting and inspiring celebration of young musical talent. It was a day marked by artistry, collaboration, and community spirit.

The event was made possible through the extraordinary generosity of Sean Bickerton and the Canadian Music Centre, who not only provided the stunning venue, but also sponsored a delicious lunch for all participants and engaged professional musicians and a composer mentor to bring the students' works to life. Their commitment to nurturing emerging Canadian composers was instrumental in making this event a reality.

Spearheading the event was Kathleen Feenstra, Chair of the BCRMTA Student Composers' Club, whose leadership, vision, and dedication ensured a rich and rewarding experience for all. She was supported in her efforts by Pam Smirl and Mark Johnson, whose assistance helped bring the event to life with care and professionalism.

The afternoon opened with a warm welcome and social lunch, followed by remarks from Sean Bickerton and introductions by the BCRMTA team. Each student then participated in a live masterclass with composer mentor Elizabeth Knudson, receiving professional insights and encouragement while hearing their compositions performed live by acclaimed musicians **Tina Chang** (piano) and **Jennifer Moersch** (cello).

The featured student composers and their works were:

- **Nathan Syyong** – *Sonatina in D Major*
- **Jakob Constible** – *A Day at the Beach*
- **Derek Lowe** – *Impromptu-Romanze for Cello and Piano in B Major*
- **Cristen Bao Sicoli** – *The Ship That Sails the World*
- **Paolo Roland Self** – *The Inside Passage*
- **Bodi Minardi** – *Tableau*



Cristen Sicoli, Derek Lowe, Paolo Self, Elizabeth Knudson, Nathan Syyong, Jakob Constible, Tina Chang, Bodi Minardi, Jennifer Moersch

Each piece offered a unique perspective—ranging from classical inspiration to deeply personal and imaginative soundscapes. It was a joy to witness the passion and promise of these young composers as their ideas were brought to life on stage.

This Masterclass event was more than a performance—it was a powerful example of mentorship in action, a celebration of youthful creativity, and a testament to the importance of supporting the next generation of Canadian composers. We look forward to watching these talented musicians continue to grow and inspire.

Kathleen Feenstra - Chair



Sean Bickerton - Canadian Music Centre



Elizabeth Knudson, Tina Chang, Jennifer Moersch



Mark Johnston, Pam Smirl, Kathleen Feenstra



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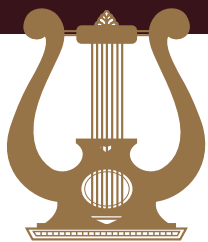
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Setting the Tone in September

By Dr. Merlin B. Thompson PhD, MA, BMus

September often arrives with a mixture of excitement and pressure for music studio teachers. We've got new repertoire to choose, returning students to re-engage, and schedules to sort out. To say the least - there's a lot on our plates that needs figuring out. So in the middle of all this planning ahead, I want to make sure music teachers also take the time to really connect with who our students are and what they'll need this year. September is the perfect time for us to set the tone for what will happen next.

Here's a three-part strategy I use to gather meaningful information. All it takes is five to ten minutes at students' first lesson and we're set to go.

Student's Musical Goals - I'm always amazed by what students have on their list of musical goals. Pop songs. Movie themes. Taylor Swift. Bruno Mars. Black Pink. Classical repertoire. Video game themes. Youtube highlights. You name it - and most likely we can find a student with interests in that direction.

Some students have lots of selections that pique their interest. For example my preteen student Alex often shows up with seven or eight selections he's interested in exploring. Recently he's been keen on numerous works by Hans Zimmer. What stands out for me is Alex's preference for short term goals. He's keen to explore numerous short selections that allow him the flexibility to move around musically. At this point in his development, he's not interested in long term commitments. In contrast to Alex, his younger brother Jonathan likes to move more gradually through his studies. He prefers to take his time - step by step. The two boys are good examples of how individual student's musical goals vary from one to another. Their differences shed light on how I'll need to tailor my approach so that I genuinely tune into the individuality of each student's musical journey.

To get students thinking, I ask the question - What songs can we add to your list for learning in the upcoming months? And for students who may be in their final year of music lessons I definitely want to ask - What music would you like to perform for your Final Concert?

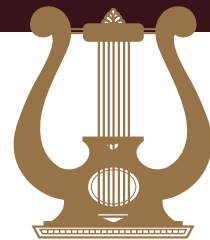
Student Life Skills - As music teachers, we recognize how learning to sing or play a musical instrument builds and exercises many life skills. I keep my eyes on persistence, reflective thinking, and aiming for excellence, because these three skills have a reciprocal effect on each other. Just consider how persistence may be required in order for students to achieve excellence - but without reflective thinking, students may end up getting further from, instead of closer to, their desired destination. In other words, persistence, reflective thinking, and aiming for excellence are each valuable in themselves, but their greatest value comes in combination with the others.

At the same time, not all students come equipped with the same skillset of life skills. For example, my student Angie really excels with persistence. Once she has her mind made up, she's off and running. The problem is that she can be so consumed by persistence that she forgets about reflective thinking. So it's not unusual for Angie to get stuck on a plateau every now and again. When it comes to excellence, I'll return to Alex and Jonathan for a moment - because they're good examples of how excellence looks different from student to student. Alex is a champion of short term excellence whereas Jonathan demonstrates how persistence, reflection, and excellence contribute to his gradual development.

I appreciate how a quick discussion on life skills (persistence, reflective thinking, and aiming for excellence) helps with getting students and myself both on the same page. In this way, we develop the language to talk to each other about routines, tools, and strategies that will support them on their musical journey.

Student Home Life - We all know the value of supportive home environments. After all, that's where the bulk of students' musical development takes place. Home routines, family values, time for practice, extracurricular activities, and parental support all influence how students engage with music. So I like to take a few moments to encourage student home life with three simple musical activities:

- Students perform duets/ensembles with other family members (parents and siblings).
- Students learn the favourite pieces from other family members (especially parents and grandparents).
- Students remind family members about celebrating their achievements big and small with home concerts.



My goal in suggesting these activities is to help students feel supported and recognized in the environment where they spend the most time - at home. Of course, music lessons and formal studio concerts contribute immensely. But I want to make sure that student's musical journey isn't something separate from their home life. I want students to feel like their musical involvement is something they take pride in outside of the studio. They experience how making music fits into their whole life—not just as an activity they do once a week, but as something that belongs to them, something they can share and enjoy with the people around them. When music becomes part of their home story, not just their studio routine, it becomes more meaningful and more likely to last.

And I remind myself that every family's musical life has its own character. Some students naturally experience various types of family involvement - like Peter who regularly enjoys playing duets with his mother, or Linda who most recently learned to play a favourite Cold Play selection of her parents. Whereas other students may need encouragement with ideas from me - like Joyce and Arthur who are the first generation in their family to take music lessons. That's why small prompts like duets, family favourites, or informal home concerts can go a long way in building meaningful home connections.

Students as Whole Persons

For music teachers, taking ten minutes in the first September lesson to gather information sets a clear tone: we value our music students as whole people. We're doing more than just getting students through their method book. We're here to build music making relationships that span student's entire lifespan.

When we make space to ask about musical goals, life skills, and home life, we give value and validation to what matters to our students. We discover and explore music alongside them. That kind of understanding and involvement doesn't just make us better teachers. It makes our students stronger, more connected, and more invested music makers.

So as your new teaching year gets underway, consider starting with a few simple questions. Make time to listen. Gather the information that will help you teach the massive world of music AND inspire the next generation of lifelong music makers. ✨



About the Author:

Recognized internationally for his leadership in changing the tone of music studio lessons, Dr. Merlin B. Thompson brings musical practicality, flexibility, and excellence to the challenges facing today's music teachers. Merlin's teaching approach is based on nearly 50 years of testing things out, throwing out what didn't work, and refining what did. Now as founder and creator of Teach Music 21C, his goal is simple - to help music teachers expand and enhance their teaching with 21st century tools and strategies. For more information on how Merlin is inspiring music teachers to rethink what successful music lessons look like, please visit www.TeachMusic21C.com.





Ask Lori: Teaching Tips for Everyday Lessons

By Lori Elder

Q. How do I help a student to play two against three?

A. Playing two against three is like trying to pat your head and rub your stomach: you have to be able to do two different things at the same time and not get thrown off.

First, do separate hand practice, and get the notes, fingering and rhythm of each hand completely secure and fluent. Check that the hand playing the two 8th notes and the hand playing the triplets are steady with no stumbles. Then, to get the hang of putting the passage hands together and playing two against three, I like to use two types of practice: slow and fast.

Slow Practice:

Explain to the student the math involved. The first two notes of the LH and RH go together, then the second of the two 8th notes goes in between the second and third notes of the triplet. I usually write this out for them to see. Next, tap this on your lap, with one hand tapping the triplet and the other hand tapping the two 8th notes. Count aloud, saying “one two and three”. Go over and over this, counting aloud the whole time.

R.H. tap		
	1 2 + 3	
L.H. tap		
Say:	Not dif - fi - cult	

Another good trick is to do the tapping and say, “not difficult.” This step helps to overcome a barrier that this is not as hard as you think! Notice that the only time the hands tap together is on the word “not”.

Then, go back to the musical passage you were working on and play hands together, counting aloud, or saying, “not difficult”. Watch that the student’s hands and arms are not too stiff and tight. I assign this for home practice then check on it at the next lesson. Generally, this slow practice helps to get the process rolling.

Fast Practice:

For this, the student must memorize each hand. This is very important, as each hand must be totally secure and fluent. Next, get each hand alone fully up to tempo. Do each hand with the metronome, starting slow and building up the tempo.

Next, put the passage hands together, memorized, and up to tempo. To do this, alternate the RH and LH hand over and over, then play together. Play two times RH / two times LH / two RH / two LH. Then play RH / LH / RH / LH / RH / LH / together / together /together. This may take a few tries but, believe it or not, this works!

Here are more tips:

- Play lightly – no banging!
- Line up the main beats.
- Listen for the triplet to stay steady.
- Play the two against three passage in the same tempo as the piece.
- Check that the hands and arms are flexible, and not stiff or tight.



Lori Elder is well-known as a pianist, teacher, adjudicator and workshop presenter. She holds a Masters Degree in Piano Performance, a Bachelor of Music and an ARCT. Lori has performed in many regions of Canada and the United States, and she teaches senior piano and pedagogy in Prince George, BC.

Members,

Do you have a question you would like to ask Lori . . . email your questions to lorielder@shaw.ca





RCM Elementary Theory Quiz

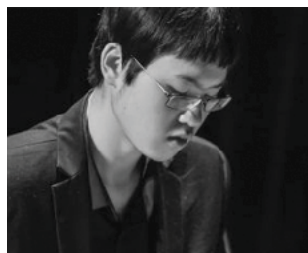
Aligned with The RCM Curriculum, the *Elementary Theory Quiz* is a digital test designed to reflect students' current understanding of elementary music theory at their respective levels upon completion of their theory books with their teacher.

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THE VANCOUVER CHOPIN SOCIETY - 2025 / 2026 SEASON



ERIC GUO

Sunday, Sep 14, 2025, 3pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



CHARLES RICHARD-HAMELIN

Sunday, Sep 28, 2025, 3 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



KYOHEI SORITA

Sunday, Nov 9, 2025, 3 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



**GOLD MEDALIST OF THE 19TH
INTERNATIONAL CHOPIN COMPETITION**
Monday, Feb 16, 2026, 3 pm
THE ORPHEUM



RONALD BRAUTIGAM

Saturday, Feb 28, 2026, 7:30 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE

Welcome to The Vancouver Chopin Society's remarkable 2025 - 2026 season. Once again, we have devoted much time and effort to arrange for this stellar lineup of artists for this season.

The season kicks off in a spectacular fashion with two Canadian artists – Eric Guo, winner of the 2nd International Chopin Competition on Period Instruments in 2023, and Charles Richard-Hamelin, silver medalist of the 2015 International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, and Artistic Director of The Vancouver Chopin Society.

Japanese superstar Kyohei Sorita will make a return visit to Vancouver. You may remember the excitement of his sold-out debut recital for us in 2023. Get your tickets early!

The excitement continues in 2026 with an Orpheum concert presenting the winner of this year's **International Chopin Competition in Warsaw**. Who will be crowned winner of this, one of the world's most prestigious competitions, in October this year? Stay tuned!

With our friends at Early Music Vancouver, we will present Ronald Brautigam, highlighting the beautiful and intimate sound world of the forte piano.

We have arranged for two additional concerts – the debut of Ukrainian-Canadian Dmitry Levkovich and the return of Sofya Gulyak, who last played for us in 2013. In May of 2026, there will be a concert featuring another prizewinner of the upcoming International Chopin Competition.

Finally, a concert that will surely heat up our ticketing system – a solo recital by Daniil Trifonov – his first solo recital in Vancouver since 2013.

The Vancouver Chopin Society is one of the few musical organizations in the city to offer a **25% discount for seniors, students and B.C.R.M.T.A. members** for subscriptions and 20% discount for single tickets. **The price for youth (grades 1 through 12) is again an incredible \$15 per ticket.**



DMITRI LEVKOVICH

Sunday, March 22, 2026, 3 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



DANIIL TRIFONOV

Sunday, April 19, 2026, 3 pm
THE ORPHEUM



SOFYA GULYAK

Sunday, April 26, 2026, 3 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE



**PRIZE WINNER OF THE 19TH
INTERNATIONAL CHOPIN COMPETITION**
Sunday, May 14, 2026, 3 pm
VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE

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Consulate General
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Review of **New** Publications

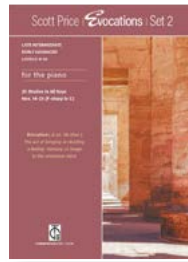


Evocations Set 1 - Set 2 **Intermediate/Advanced**

By Scott Price

Tom Gerou TGM00048 TGM00049

Together, these two publications comprise 25 studies in all keys.



Set 1 includes Evocations 1 – 13 in the keys C to G^b. **Set 2** includes Evocations 14 – 25 in the keys F[#] to C. On the cover of each book, there is a definition of the word evocation:

“The act of bringing or recalling a feeling, memory, or image to the conscious mind.”

I would say that these short pieces do a fantastic job of doing just that! Performers are invited to exercise a great deal of freedom in their performance interpretations.

Dynamic and articulation markings are minimal, again allowing for personal expressive freedom. Some pieces have no time signature or bar lines, and other compositions contain notes with no note stems. All of this allows for even more freedom in rhythm, phrasing, and overall interpretation.

The pieces are pleasing to the ear and quite enjoyable to play. The suggested level is Levels 6 – 10. From **Set 1**, I enjoyed playing Evocation No. 1 in C Major. It’s a warm-up exercise in double notes of 4^{ths} and 3^{ds}. Every so often an unexpected B^b occurs, punctuating the music. This ensures that the player pays attention; additionally, the B^bs add tension to the piece. Evocation No. 3 is in D^b Major with two lines of E major on the first page. The repeating triplets in the right hand combined with interesting, often accented left hand notes allow the imagination to soar. For me, the music evoked a scene in my mind of floating in a cool pool while I looked up at the blue sky. As I write this it’s a hot summer day today; perhaps if I play it again in the winter, the music will evoke a different scene.

Evocation No. 6 in D (Modal) is another interesting piece in Set 1. It’s a study in tremolos and scales. The player is challenged to give great care to the voicing of lines and balance between hands. Evocation No. 12 in F Minor is “a cry in anguish” according to Scott Price, and I must agree. This one-page piece is very emotional. The player must observe the L.H. over R.H. occurrences, the changing clefs at times, and making sure that the inner voices are clear.

From Set 2, I particularly enjoyed playing Evocation No. 25, which is a lovely, slow waltz in C played as if one were drifting off to sleep. And Evocation No. 22 in B^b Minor is one of the longer studies as it is five pages long. In this piece in ¾ time, the left hand maintains a steady tempo of quarter and half notes. Meanwhile, the right hand starts with eighth notes, then moves to triplets, then 16th notes, then five and finally six notes to a beat. This is an excellent challenge for students; the metronome is definitely recommended here.

Are your students bored with their regular etudes? Try these interesting, thought-provoking etudes instead by Scott Price, especially if you teach mature students who appreciate “soundscape” music. I highly recommend both of these very well-written publications.

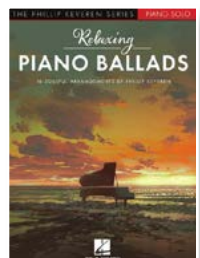
Celeste-tina Hernandez



Celeste-tina Hernandez
Chilliwack
Piano

RELAXING PIANO BALLADS **Arranged by Phillip Keveren** **Hal Leonard HL01303099**

This collection contains 16 arrangements of relaxing contemporary tunes. Some are taken from movies such as *The Greatest Showman*, *Top Gun: Maverick*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Interstellar*. Others are stand alone pop tunes that have recently been recorded by artists such as Lauren Daigle, Miley Cyrus, Lewis Capaldi, and Ed Sheeran.



These piano pieces range from two to four pages long, and include songs such as *All Creatures Great and Small*, *Another Love*, *Flowers*, *Easy on Me*, *How Far I’ll Go*, and more. All the basic time signatures are employed, including ⅝ and 12⁄8. Key signatures up to four flats and four sharps are used in these very lyrical tunes.



Review of **New** Publications

RELAXING PIANO BALLADS - cont.

Hal Leonard HL01303099

I played through them all, and the arrangements are gorgeous. They sound very lush, and the melodies are clear. Although they are meant to be piano solos, I still wish that lyrics to at least the first verse had been included. Some dynamics and pedalling have been marked; the rest is up to the performer to interpret. I estimate this music to be at a solid Intermediate level.

One of my favourite pieces to play is *Someone You Loved*, recorded by Lewis Capaldi. This three-page arrangement, in ¾ time and in the key of C, features the same simple piano introduction as heard in the radio version of this song. The melody remains in the right hand while the left hand employs simple eighth note patterns, root, fifth, octave patterns, and harmonic fifths. There are some clef changes for the student to contend with, but nothing that an intermediate level student couldn't handle.

Another favourite of mine in this book is *Cornfield Chase* by Hans Zimmer. It's from the Paramount Pictures film *Interstellar*. I'm not familiar with the piece or with the movie, which is why I was curious to try it. Without any background knowledge at all, I can truly attest that this two-page piece in ¾ time sounds to me like a beautiful starry night sky. There are sections of ascending 16th notes that remind me of a shooting star, there are repetitious sections made interesting by crescendos and decrescendos, and there is a section with many right-hand octaves that sound like something big is looming in the galaxy. Students who play this piece may have their own story to go with this music, but that's my interpretation.

There is something for everyone in this book. I recommend it as a supplement for Intermediate Level students who want to take a bit of a break from their regular lesson material. These songs would also make excellent recital pieces. I thoroughly enjoyed them all!

Celeste-tina Hernandez



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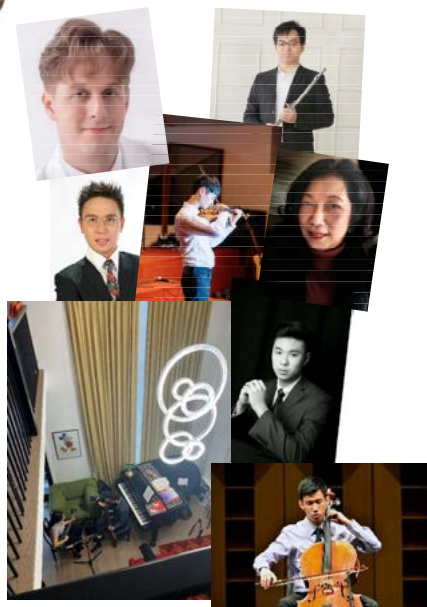
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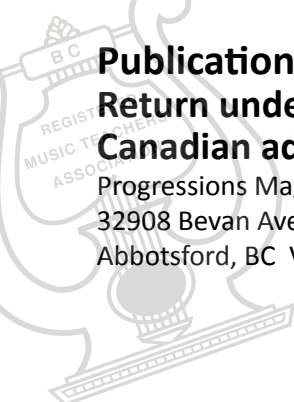
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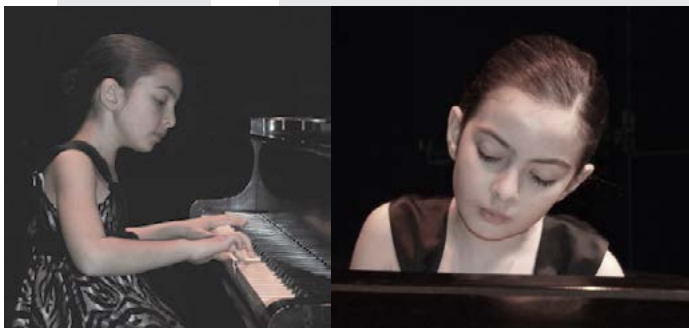
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