

# Impromptu

## Motivating Musicians: Motivated Students

(Part 4 of 4)

BY KAREN KING

**T**he closing and arguably most important article in this series is how to motivate students themselves. First we explored types of motivation in general, then how to motivate teachers, and finally how to motivate parents. It should be dawning that motivated teachers and parents will likely produce motivated students, however students themselves need their own specific motivators. This article offers suggestions on achieving motivated students.

Let's be realistic: very few students roll out of bed each morning beaming with excitement about playing their instrument. It takes years of hard work in order to play effortlessly and fluently, and this long-term thinking is difficult to work towards in the short term. Most students know that playing an instrument will make them more persistent, better problem solvers, more empathetic, and overall expressive human beings. But thinking ten years ahead to their future selves is impossible when you have



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not even existed for ten years. Children are often short-sighted because they have not been alive long enough to think long-term. As such, they need small, immediate steps to provide accomplishment and motivation. This is where extrinsic motivation can be very effective. Extrinsic motivation is the sense of doing an activity to achieve some separable goal or outcome. For small students, a very simple but effective motivator during practice is moving five jelly beans, pennies, or tiny animals from one side of the piano to the other. Instead of simply saying “again” or “play this five times”, students pick up the object and move it from the bass to treble keys each time a segment of their piece is completed perfectly. At the end, they announce their favourite animal, keep the pennies, or eat the jelly beans. It may be painfully simple, but it works. Intermediate students love things which allow them to explore their developing personalities.

*Continued on P. 10*



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# ARMTA

## IMPROMPTU

### PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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#### FALL ISSUE

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Impromptu is the newsletter of the Calgary branch of ARMTA with the purpose of informing members of events of interest; providing summaries of Calgary branch general and executive meetings, and encouraging and supporting professional development through member-written articles.

### CONTACT:

#### Editor:

LISA NG

Email: [impromptu.editor@gmail.com](mailto:impromptu.editor@gmail.com)

#### Advertising inquiries:

SHARON OMURA

Email: [armtasponsors@gmail.com](mailto:armtasponsors@gmail.com)

#### Web Coordinator:

LINDSAY INKSTER

Email: [lindsay@pianocatmusic.ca](mailto:lindsay@pianocatmusic.ca)

# President's Message

**A**s teachers, it is ideal to put ourselves in learning situations so that we can understand the challenges facing our students. This summer I challenged myself to play some guitar and learn new piano repertoire. I had some frustrating moments!

It is so easy for me to play various chords in different inversions on the piano. My husband plays guitar chords without thinking. As I picked up the guitar, I could instantly play two or three chords that I learned thirty years ago. Gradually, I remembered a few more. As I tried to learn more chords, not only did my fingers feel like they were being pulled out of my hand but I could not retain the previous chords!

As for the piano repertoire, I was pushing my limits and getting discouraged with how slow and how much repetition I needed.

As I challenged myself with new guitar chords and new piano repertoire, it reminded me to be more understanding of the struggles of my students. We need to be patient, as we work with our students.

I attended the wedding of a former student this summer. In his “toast to the bride”, the father thanked me for playing such an important part in the development of his daughter. He reminded me about what an important role we have to our students, not just as music teachers, but also as life teachers and role models.

The positive reinforcement felt great. Imagine how much good we are doing if we can give our students encouragement. It is sometimes hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel when the practicing has decreased, (or ceased), over the summer. Now is the time to set some goals, motivate them, and stay positive!

I am so appreciative of our ARMTA Calgary executive. It functions on our behalf, thanks to volunteer teachers. They all have students, families, and personal goals, but continue to offer programs for the benefit of our members, students, and the music community. Since the March General Meeting, this dedicated group of teachers has offered student recitals, the Young Artist Recital, the May GM with speaker Adam Johnson and luncheon, representation at the Civic Symphony and CPO, communication at the provincial and national level, the Music Marathon, communication via e-mail and this *Impromptu* publication. We have had discussions on how best to honour our outstanding students, honoraria for

executive members, how to use Music Marathon funds, etc. We have established a new sponsorship guide for advertisers and for donations.

Looking forward, we hope to see you at the August workshop with Colleen Athparia, the forno party (an ARMTA social event), “The Carnival of the Animals” by Saint-Seans—a presentation by two of our members at our October General Meeting, studio teacher sessions at Music Conference Alberta, and Calgary/Alberta Composer Concert during Canada Music Week. Deadlines are approaching for the Honours Recital, and the Outstanding Student Recital.

Due to a few personal situations, we have made some adjustments to our executive committee. Thank-you to LaDona Ahenda who as secretary for the last 4.5 years has kept us organized. Nathene Arthur, president elect, will take over secretary duties. Thank-you to Madeline Hubbard, who before her move to Edmonton, organized our GM speaker and our Aug. 25 workshop with Colleen Athparia, and to Beth Olver, who as well as being provincial president, has stepped in to help. Thank-you to Marilyn Newbury who has chaired the Honours Recital and had Shaw broadcast it for the last three years. Michelle Everett-Faunt, VP, has already been working on the 2016 recital. I will continue as Acting President.

I am so grateful that executive members have been willing to take on additional roles. I know that many of you have already served on the ARMTA executive in past years, and I personally thank you for that. Perhaps, many of you are unable to help out at this time, but as you see, we are looking for more individuals to share the load. ARMTA Calgary continues to grow in numbers and in programs. I have met colleagues and made friends. Some of us ski together, travel together, and most importantly we support each other.

If you are interested in getting involved, I invite you to the September executive meeting. Please let me know if you would like to come and maybe you would find a niche that would interest you.

~**Barbara Robertson**



## A Letter from Nathene Arthur

### President Elect Becomes Secretary?

Hello all,

I am Nathene Arthur and was the ARMTA Calgary first Vice President for the 2014-2015 year. I was very keen to jump in and become the President at our AGM in March 2015. The executive members were all great, inspiring and hard-working music teachers, and I had some new ideas I hoped to work with them on in the upcoming years for ARMTA.

However, in February 2015, there was a horrible incident in my home studio in Cochrane. While this letter cannot contain all the details, I can say that one of my beautiful and talented little seven-year-old students was attacked and bitten by our five-year-old terrier cross dog as she entered the house with her mother and her little sister. I heard it happen, but did not see it. What then happened included a lot of stress, family drama, quarantine, fostering out and eventual relocation of our dog. All these were followed by phone calls from our amazing CFMTA insurance company, Intact Insurance, visits from Alberta Health officials and fines from municipal bylaw officer. But I also discovered humanity and genuine care from our ARMTA executive as I worked through the whole gamut: post-stress syndrome, counselling and even considering quitting teaching.

I hope to write up a longer article for a future *Impromptu* edition. But for now, Barb Robertson has agreed to continue on as acting President until the next AGM. I am feeling more comfortable handling the Secretary position for a few years while I get my feelings and focus back under control. I cannot thank ARMTA enough for being there for me. While I am truly sorry that Barb cannot yet “retire” to the post of past President, which she so richly has earned, I am blessed to know her. I hope in the future I also can exhibit her kindness, courage and compassion for others.

Thank you for now,

**Nathene Arthur**

## ARMTA CALGARY GENERAL MEETING

**October 19, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.**

**NEW Location: Steinway Galleries, 76 Heritage Gate SE, Calgary**

Linda Kundert Stoll and Eric Nyland present  
Camille Saint-Saëns—“The Carnival of the Animals” Duet

For more information,  
contact Barb Robertson: [barbrob@telus.net](mailto:barbrob@telus.net)

# Calgary Branch Fall Social Events

## Honens Piano Festival & Competition & Social Event

### Honens Masterclasses

Masterclasses with Ingrid Fliter & Janina Fialkowska  
September 5 & 6, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at Jack Singer  
Concert Hall (See honens.com for full details)

### Honens Semifinals Tickets Discount

Honens will offer ARMTA members a discount  
of 20% off regular priced tickets (\$30), for  
semifinals sessions V, VI, VII and VIII on Saturday,  
September 5 and Sunday, September 6. ARMTA  
members are to book their own tickets.

For details of the Honens Festival & Competitions,  
please consult their website at honens.com

### Social Gathering During the Honens Festival

We encourage you to meet and greet each other  
for drinks and snacks at the James Joyce Irish Pub  
on September 5th at 4:30 pm.

The James Joyce is located two blocks west  
of the Jack Singer concert hall along the  
national historic district of Stephen Avenue. For  
information on this district, please consult: [www.calgarydowntown.com/saw/Stephen-avenue-info.html#](http://www.calgarydowntown.com/saw/Stephen-avenue-info.html#)

For inquiries, please contact Dorothea Johanson:  
[dgjohanson@nucleus.com](mailto:dgjohanson@nucleus.com) or Barb Robertson:  
[barbrob@telus.net](mailto:barbrob@telus.net)

**Hope to see you there!**

## Forno Pizza Event and Games ARMTA Calgary Branch Social Event

**DATE:** SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, 2015

**TIME:** 2:30–3:15 p.m. WALK; 3:15–6:30  
p.m. FORNO PIZZA EVENT and GAMES

**LOCATION:** Cochrane, Alberta, at Nathene and Rick  
Arthur's House

**PURPOSE:** Fun and a little fundraiser

**DESCRIPTION:** We can welcome up to 30 or so  
ARMTA members and their guests.

Any donations to ARMTA are welcome, and will go  
towards ARMTA events. (Minimum donation \$25. If  
you wish a charity donation slip, then your donation  
will be applied to the Endowment account.)

### EVENT DETAILS:

2:30–3:15 p.m. Weather permitting: go along the lovely  
Bow River pathways for a little walk with other guests.  
See the lovely fall colours.

3:15–6:30 p.m. The eight-foot high outdoor forno oven  
will be hot and ready to go. You will assemble your  
pizza from homemade dough balls, add your toppings  
and see your pizza cooked within 45–70 seconds. There  
will be a large number of yummy toppings, including  
gluten free options (crusts and/or building your pizza  
on a portabello mushroom). There are also dessert  
pizzas...think...chocolate-smores, apple crisp, cherry  
cheesecake.... During the afternoon there will also be  
Italian, Greek and Canadian festive music playing. We  
will have a few games and getting-to-know-you skill  
tests. There will be prizes as well for the most skilled  
(luckiest?). A large punch will be provided. If anyone  
wants to bring along anything more "alcoholic" in  
nature, we will have an ice chest and a wine cork  
ready. Appetizers can be brought along if you wish.

This is our second ARMTA pizza forno party social.  
The first was very fun, and we look forward to trying  
this again.

For more information or to sign up, please **contact**  
**Nathene Arthur at [rnarthur@telus.net](mailto:rnarthur@telus.net); or at 403-**  
**851-9912..** I will keep a list of who is registered. We  
will cap this at around 30 people.

**Thanks and see you there!**  
**Nathene & Rick Arthur**

## Calendar of Events (Sept. 2015–Feb. 2016)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event &amp; Place</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Sept. 14, 2015	ARMTA Executive Meeting 9:30 a.m. 9 Tommy Prince Road, SW Calgary	Barb Robertson; barbrob@telus.net
Sept. 20, 2015	NATS GM 2:00 p.m. Katherine Ardo's house, Calgary	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com
Oct. 4, 2015	ARMTA Forno Pizza Social 3:00 p.m. 204 West Terrace Place, Cochrane	Nathene Arthur; narthur@telus.net
Oct 15, 2015	Contemporary Showcase Deadline Honours/OSR Deadline	
Oct. 19, 2015	ARMTA GM and "The Carnival of the Animals" Duet 9:30 a.m. Steinway Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary	Barb Robertson; barbrob@telus.net
Oct.22-24, 2015	Music Conference Alberta, ARMTA Provincial AGM Red Deer, Alberta	www.musicconferenceab.ca
Oct 30, 2015	NATS Chats 9:30 a.m. Good Earth, Aspen Landing	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com
Nov. 7, 2015	ARMTA Student Recitals, North 2:00 p.m. St. Davids Church, Calgary	Donna Murray; wmdamurr@telus.net
Nov. 7, 2015	ARMTA Student Recitals, South 2:30 p.m. Steinway Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary	Carol S. Moore; rhythmreader@shaw.ca
Nov. 13, 2015	Conservatory Canada Exam Registration Deadline	
Nov. 16, 2015	ARMTA Executive Meeting 9:30 a.m. 3 Ranch Estate Drive NW Calgary	Barb Robertson; barbrob@telus.net
Nov. 19–21, 2015	Contemporary Showcase Calgary	Katarina Thompson; kthompson11@hotmail.com
Nov 20, 2015	Deadline for Honours Recital Repertoire	
Nov. 22, 2015	Canada Music Week	
Nov. 22, 2015	ARMTA Composers Showcase St John's Music, 105-58 Avenue SE, Calgary	Beth Olver; soundsofmusic@shaw.ca
Nov 27, 2015	NATS Chats 9:30 a.m. Good Earth, Aspen Landing	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com
Dec. 6, 2015	RCM Alumni Holiday Special 6:30–8:30 p.m. Steinway Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary	Janice Dahlberg, 403-287-1856
Dec 11, 2015	Deadline for OSR Repertoire	
Jan. 11, 2016	ARMTA Executive Meeting 9:30 a.m. 223 Queen Charlotte Way, SE, Calgary	Barb Robertson; barbrob@telus.net
Jan. 16, 2016	NATS Teacher's Recital Fundraiser 7:00 p.m. TBA	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com
Jan 24, 2016	ARMTA Honours Recital 3:30 p.m. Parkdale United Church	Michelle Faunt; fauntpianostudio@shaw.ca
Jan 29, 2016	NATS Chats 9:30 a.m. Good Earth, Aspen Landing	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com
Feb 7, 2016	ARMTA Outstanding Student Recital 3:00 p.m. St. David's Church (TBA)	Ron Proctor; ronaldproctor@shaw.ca
Feb 26, 2016	NATS Chats 9:30 a.m. Good Earth, Aspen Landing	Melanie Cherniwchan; exploremusicstudios@gmail.com

At the  
March  
2015  
AGM



Clockwise from top left: Madeline Neufeld receiving 40-year Milestone Award; Bernadette Covey receiving 40-year Provincial ARMTA Milestone Award from Beth Olver; Janice Dahlberg receiving 30-year Provincial ARMTA Milestone Award from Beth Olver; PPG Scholarship Recipient Lisa Kiernan; Barb Robertson receiving the President's Plaque for her wonderful and inspiring presidency; Marian Parrott receiving 25-year Provincial ARMTA Milestone Award

# Meet Our New Members



**Naomi Williams** teaches beginner to advanced vocalists of all ages. She specializes in teaching classical, pop, rock and musical theatre genres. She also teaches beginner piano. Naomi's qualifications are comprised of a degree in Voice Performance from Wilfrid Laurier University; professional and volunteer experience, post-grad in Musical Theatre, Opera, Rock/Pop and Musical Direction; and 10 years of music teaching experience. She is the resident Musical Director/Vocal Coach of Morpheus Theatre's Gilbert & Sullivan Jr. Program, and is the lead vocalist for Calgary cover band Forty-Five, with whom she performs frequently. She has also worked as a clinician/vocal coach for Storybook Theatre, and an adjudicator for NATS Calgary. For more information on Naomi, please see her website: [www.aviddiva.ca](http://www.aviddiva.ca)



**Kyle Bennett** teaches guitar, piano, and composition from his home studio in central Calgary. His studies in Composition at McGill University led him to earn a Master in Computer Music Composition from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University on full scholarship. He has taught Composition through the Junior Bach program in Baltimore for underprivileged children and the Crofton School of Music, Maryland, USA. He earned his ARCT in Piano Performance under Brian Finley. He enjoys writing and singing songs with guitar and back country hiking in the mountains with the YCMA in the summertime.



**Nathan Chan** (ARCT, ATCL, B.Commerce, MEd., M.A.) manages a private studio teaching speech arts & drama and cello, with students aged 4 to 55. He has experience working and teaching people with disabilities. He is an active speech arts and drama adjudicator for Alberta and BC festivals. Outside of teaching, he is a member of the Calgary Civic Symphony, an accomplished visual artist best known for his signature Aurora Borealis series ([www.auroraborealispaintings.com](http://www.auroraborealispaintings.com)), a freelance consultant in HR projects, a doctoral student in Language and Literacy, and is a fertility consultant who facilitates surrogacy in Canada.



**Rachel Baljeu** is quickly establishing herself in the music community in Calgary. Since arriving in 2014, she has started a private teaching studio and is also active as an accompanist. In addition to accompanying high school and university students, she plays for the Calgary Opera Chorus, Ambrose University vocal program, and the EnChor Chamber Choir. Ms. Baljeu recently graduated from Michigan State University with Master of Music in both Piano Pedagogy and Collaborative Piano. Her Bachelor's degree was received from Grand Valley State University, where she had the invaluable opportunity to study piano pedagogy with Dr. Helen Marlais.



Composer, sonic artist, and music teacher, **Ali Nader Esfahani**, did his studies in composition at PhD level as a Killam Scholar at the University of Calgary. Ali is a music researcher and educator who always seeks to develop and try out new ideas in his composition and teaching methodology. Dr. Esfahani has over 10 years of experience in teaching a range of courses including composition, theory, aural skills, and music technology to students of all ages from arts-based secondary schools, music studios, and universities. His research and creative work in the recent years has focused on the development of several advanced techniques in composition and sound design which he has implemented in his compositions for soloists, chamber ensembles, orchestras, and the electroacoustic medium.



One of the most important things in **Juanita Stauffer's** life is sharing music with others, whether through teaching piano or collaborating to make music. She has taught piano since high school to a variety of students. Whether it is watching a beginner student blossom in lessons or working on the finer points of music making with more advanced students, Juanita enjoys all aspects of piano teaching. She has been challenged in recent years to expand her teaching style to include games and is enjoying seeing students discover and review musical concepts through play. Several years ago, she began studying the cello and loves the challenge of learning another instrument.

## Motivated Musicians: Motivated Students (continued from P.1)

Teachers, parents, and students work together to establish a practice chart where the student chooses the end goal. For example, if a student practices 1000 minutes, they are rewarded with a go-karting afternoon, a round of mini golf, or a pottery class. Encourage parents to stay away from food and clothing as rewards: these are basic human needs and not necessarily seen as exceptional. Advanced students often respond well to larger, longer term extrinsic goals such as recitals, festivals, or exams. During this tumultuous time in their lives, advanced students need the external confirmation from peers, parents, and teachers to nurture self-confidence and acknowledge that they are proficient, intelligent, and capable musicians. While there may be a begrudging attitude along the road to recitals, festivals, or exams, advanced students love the end result of “I did it”. Hearing from others how impressed they are with the accomplishment and how proud they are of the student is very meaningful to advanced players.

In order to build the motivation to reach the advanced levels, it is important to establish consistent, positive, and constructive practice habits early in a student’s musical career. Rather than encouraging only advanced students to take lengthy lessons and practice every day, it should be the other way around. Teachers might consider hosting weekly group lessons for beginning

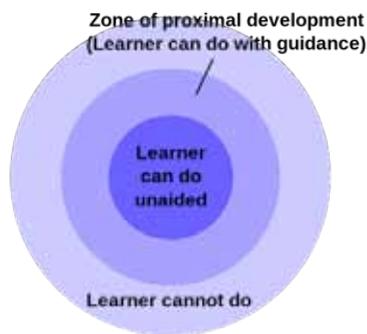
students in addition to private lessons to teach basic theory and performance skills. Further, by visiting your studio twice per week, students will build a peer group and see music more as part of their identity. Research shows that beginning students’ early skill development is a predictor of later success and motivation, and as skill develops, so does motivation. In a chapter of *The Child as Musician: a handbook of musical development*, Australian music researcher Gary McPherson writes that, “young children must invest reasonable effort and develop a modicum of proficiency before they will derive motivational benefits from the process”. Students must expend outward effort, daily practice, and develop musicianship before they will feel inwardly motivated. McPherson asserts that once children progress to an intermediate level, they will be able to draw on prior accomplishments to initiate motivation and in turn, to further enhance skills and ensure continued success. In other words, *effort* gives way to *ability* which produces *motivation*.

When students see themselves as capable musicians and embrace music as part of their identity, motivation moves from extrinsic to intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is simply doing the activity for the enjoyment in itself, for example, feeling the driving rhythm or loving the sound of a melody. However, very few



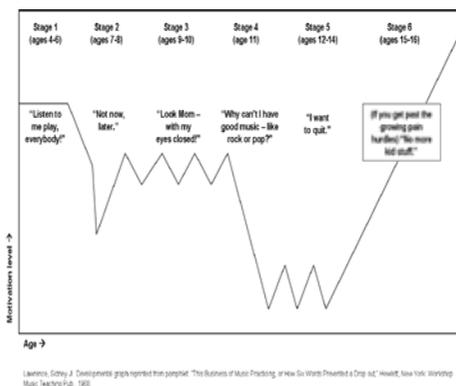
students start their musical journey as intrinsically motivated. Psychology theorist Lev Vygotsky developed a concept called the Zone of Proximal Development, in which there are three levels. The inner level is what a child can accomplish on his or her own unaided; the following level is what the child can accomplish when guided by a more established learner; and the outermost level is simply beyond the child’s capability at that moment. American psychologist Jerome Brunner further termed this phenomenon “scaffolding”. Like a building being constructed, it begins with many structural support points while the cement sets and the foundation is established. As the building grows, the scaffolding must stay one step ahead of the structure to ensure its upward mobility. Eventually, when the building is complete, the scaffolding is taken away, and the building stands unwaveringly on its own. The same concepts can be applied to motivating music students as parental support, teacher guidance, external goals, and outward guidance creates the student’s early learning foundation. As ability develops, the extrinsic motivators are slowly removed,

intrinsic motivators develop based on previous accomplishments and well-formed ability, and eventually the students stand tall on their own.



Unfortunately, this is a long path and many students lose motivation before they are able to stand on their own. Every teacher knows that motivation comes in peaks and valleys, and most recognise that if students can persevere through the tough times, motivation almost always returns. There is a distinct drop-off point usually around age 12 where students struggle with identity, peer-group influences, and wanting to distance themselves from their parents. Regrettably, if students have not developed a sufficient skill during their early years, have had minimal accomplishment, they likely will not see music as part of their teenage identity. Again, early learning is so important for later motivation such that when the motivation subsides, students still have those former accomplishments and skills to fall back on. During the teenage period, students usually request different styles of music, fear peer criticism and avoid playing in recitals, and will try anything to appear trendy. Parents and teachers must be flexible and accommodate any request—whether

playing Lana del Rey or taking a break from theory—for the larger purpose of continuity. Additionally, teachers might try assigning easier, immediately gratifying pieces such as chord charts, pieces from lower grades, or improvising and composing to find small successes during this rough patch. While this is not necessarily well-rounded teaching, it does provide a continuity that the student will later thank you for. Further, consider hiring your teenage student as an office or teaching assistant to demonstrate that they are a valuable part of your studio. Students can take on photocopying, book recital space, change humidifier filters, pick up music, or even teach small parts of beginner lessons as your protégé. Everyone needs to feel wanted, and your investment in them will be reciprocated.



In an article about motivating music students, it should be addressed what *does not* motivate music students. The first things that does not motivate music students is telling them to be motivated! Like someone who needs to relax, telling them to calm down never actually works: you need to show them. If parents and

teachers can show students how to be motivated and be excellent role models of motivation, they will likely absorb these behaviours. Next, forcing, manipulating or bribing does not bring motivation. No one likes being coerced to do something unnatural and forcing practice routines at unnatural times of the day or bribing students to perform uninspired styles of music will only end up in resentment.

As Suzuki teacher trainer Jane Reed describes, the surest way to kill motivation is to tell, but the way to uphold motivation is to ask guiding questions. For example, instead of commanding that student must practise for 40 minutes, ask where they feel their attention should be directed for that practice. Finally, forgetting to celebrate small accomplishments will kill motivation and raise frustration. Parents and teachers who celebrate learning by acknowledging specific improvements produce motivated students, for example by saying, “I loved how your thumb knew exactly which note to play and arrived on time!”. However, if you ask a student to replay a piece focusing on pedalling but then comment on phrasing, articulation, dynamics, and fingering, students end up confused, overwhelmed, and unmotivated to improve anything at all. When you celebrate small, daily successes, success is what becomes the biggest motivator.

If you only remember one thing from this series of articles, it should be

this: SUCCESS breeds more SUCCESS and is the most effective MOTIVATOR.

- When **teachers** feel appreciated, inspired, and *successful*, they produce motivated students.
- When **parents** feel included, valued, and *successful*, they encourage motivated students and develop positive relationships with teachers.
- When **students** feel accomplished, confident, and *successful*, they respect their teachers and cherish their parents.

**About the author:**

*Karen King is a third generation piano teacher completing research focused on motivation in piano students. She is currently working towards an M.A. in piano pedagogy with the University of Ottawa; her research is supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Alberta Piano Teachers' Association. She is the proud recipient of the 2012 CFMTA Memorial Pedagogy Award, winner of the 2015 CFMTA National Essay Competition, as well as 2015 Tech Teacher of the Year Runner-Up. You can follow her thoughts on pedagogy, studio business practices, teaching in general at [www.thecanadianpianoteacher.com](http://www.thecanadianpianoteacher.com).*

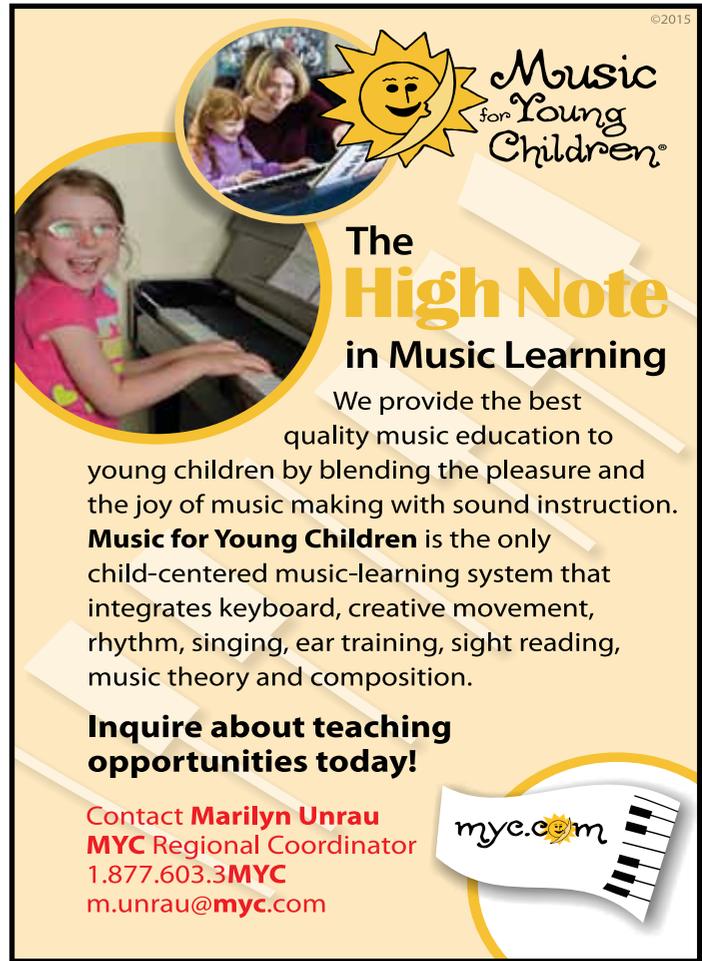
**CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Karen King is a University of Ottawa MA candidate doing research in piano pedagogy. She is currently seeking former piano students (students who have “quit” lessons) for a study on motivation. Students must have had one full year of piano lessons, be between the ages of 8 and 18, and have left the teacher’s studio within the previous five years.

Teachers will be contacted individually to connect Karen with some of their former piano students. Teachers will simply be asked to contact former parents and ask their permission to pass along contact information. Please be clear that having students drop out does not mean one is a poor teacher: there could be a thousand reasons in play and this is what the research is trying to discover. Since this is the first study of its kind (yes – ever!) finding participants is very important.

Thank you for your collaboration with this groundbreaking project!

For more information, please contact:  
**Karen King** [kking058@uottawa.ca](mailto:kking058@uottawa.ca)  
[587-284-1217](tel:587-284-1217)



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# Kevin Chen Launched New Music

BY LISA NG



Kevin Chen performing his own compositions.



**J**anuary 25, 2015 marked another exciting milestone for nine-year old Kevin Chen whose compositions were launched by Palliser Music Publishing. An eager audience of around 80 people assembled in Clark-Kirk Choral classroom at Ambrose University College in Calgary to celebrate the launch.

Hailed as “prodigy” and “little Mozart”, Chen has completed his ARCT at the age of eight, and was the youngest Canadian to pass the ARCT practical exam. Chen made his orchestral debut with the Abbotsford Youth Orchestra and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra wind players in 2012. He won first place at the National Finals of Canadian Music Competition in the seven-year-old category in 2013. He was named one of CBC’s top 30 hot Canadian classical musicians under age 30 (and was the only one under 10). At this young age, Chen has already composed 70 works including two symphonies and many violin and piano pieces. This is the first time his music is in print.

In the opening speech, Colleen Athparia, the internationally renowned pianist and Chen’s piano teacher, described the publication as “a dream come true” for the young composer who has been dreaming of having his music published.

During the concert, Chen played his piano compositions, including “The Song of Perfect 5ths”, “Autumn”, “Tears” and “River Rhapsody”. Among these, “River Rhapsody” was first commissioned by the High River

Gift of Music Society in September 2014 to honour High River residents for their strength and resilience in coping with the ravaging flood. In his piece, Chen portrayed the devastation of the rising water until he reached a great climax, then a serene calm followed. Besides piano pieces, Chen accompanied violinist, Ali Bérubé, who played “Candlelight”, a profound, serene and beautiful piece, which Chen dedicated to his grandparents.

Colleen Athparia performed Chen’s Nocturne #2 in F# Minor, a well-received work in Athparia’s recent concerts in India; and she played the young composer’s new composition “Imagine”, completed before Christmas 2014.

One of the highlights at the concert was the question-answer session at the end when curious audience was given the opportunity to communicate directly with the young composer. When Chen was asked how he spends his day, he described his life as a typical school kid—school, homework, play and practice. He listens to all types of music including pop, country and classical in his parents’ car. When asked how he composes, he said he hears music in his head; remembering the ideas and writes them down whenever he gets to the computer. What would the young composer like to be when he grows up? Chen thought for a minute and said with a smile, “I would like to be in math and science.”

**For information on Kevin Chen’s compositions, visit [pallisermusic.com](http://pallisermusic.com).**

**Top:** Kevin Chen with Colleen Athparia.  
**Bottom:** Q & A session at the book launch.



# Joint Recital

BY KATRINA THOMPSON

**O**n Saturday, June 6, 2015, three ARMTA teachers, LaDona Ahenda, Lorna Sewell and Juanita Stauffer, held a recital for students doing an exam in June. We had 15 students; all performed three to four pieces. Two were voice students and the rest were piano students, ranging in levels from Grade 1 to Grade 8. All performers did very well, and it was a good preparation time for them. We appreciated the parents and students who took time from their busy June to be there.

ARMTA Calgary was pleased to sponsor this joint recital among teachers in the NW of our city. Three of our members collaborated on this recital to give their students a performance opportunity in advance of their conservatory exams. For more information on ARMTA's Joint Recital initiative, please visit our website [www.armta-calgary.ca](http://www.armta-calgary.ca) under "Member's Area".



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*Thank You ARMTA Members for your support*

# Laughter A Healthy Excuse for Not Cleaning My Office

By SHARON OMURA

**H**ow many times did you laugh today? Was it less than 400 times? If so, then you suffer from the unfortunate condition called “growing up” and you are probably an adult and not a child. The average adult laughs a measly seven times a day in comparison to 400 times a day for the average five-year-old child.

Laughter releases more than 37 chemicals in our body, helps us process information more effectively, simulates problem solving, develops abstract reasoning, improves our creativity and is good for our health. While laughter is good medicine, it is also good learning.

At the CFMTA/FCAPM Vancouver July 2015 Conference, Terry Small enlightened us with these facts and many other fascinating and thought-provoking ideas about the brain, the body and learning in his dynamic presentation, “Engaging the Brain—Using Brain Research to Improve Student Learning”. Terry Small is a master teacher and learning skills specialist who worked for many years as a public school teacher and has turned his energies to helping us better understand how to optimize learning. He believes that “learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire.”

There were many startling and novel ideas in Terry Small’s presentation but the two that most affected the way I think about my life, learning and those I care for are these:

**1** Sitting disease is the new chronic disease of this century. When we sit endlessly attached to our electronic devices, we are susceptible to this disease like no other generation before us. I especially worry about my children and students who have grown up with and used these devices since at least pre-school. I’ve listened to grandparents complain and worry about their daughter’s battle with disengaging their toddler grandchildren from iPads.

Sitting hampers our brains because physical exercise is the only thing that helps grow brain cells, and it jeopardizes our health because the number of steps we take connects to how long we will live.

Here’s a formula Terry described for remedying sitting disease and keeping our brains and bodies active and healthy:



Age plus 2 = the maximum minutes to sit at any one time (to a maximum of 20 minutes). Therefore an 8 year old should sit for no more than 8 + 2 or 10 minutes at a time and a 12 year old for no more than 12 + 2 or 14 minutes. After age 20, no one should sit longer than 20 minutes at a time.

**2** If you think being good at something equals having a good brain, think again. The opposite is true. Being good at something doesn’t lead to a healthy brain. A healthy brain needs to be kept on edge by constantly learning something new, putting it out of its comfort zone which all helps to grow new neural connections. This extra neural reserve is added protection against later decline such as dementia.

Clearly Terry doesn’t think smart phones have been good for our brains. He described how their use has led to significantly shorter attention spans. When we constantly use electronic devices, our brains get good at utilizing short attention spans and then rewire us to only operate with these shorter attention spans.

Terry ended by playing rapper and spoken word artist, Prince Ea’s YouTube video “Can We Auto-Correct Humanity”. Prince Ea’s moving and provocative video starts with, “Did you know the average person spends 4 years of his life looking down at his cell phone? Kind of ironic ain’t it? How these touch-screens can make us lose touch.” I later showed Prince Ea’s video to my teen daughter, who much to my chagrin can often be seen with a phone jammed into the back pocket of her jeans. Recently she told me about a few “cool” young people

who have made the unusual choice to leave their devices behind, which surprised everyone. This past week she decided to leave her phone at home when she went to play with my brother's cats, and again when we went for a family hike in the mountains. Change is possible!

As a teacher what are the take-aways from Terry's presentation? I am going to:

- find ways to bring something silly and fun into each of my lessons;
- pay closer attention to my youngest students because they naturally laugh a lot more than me and know how to have fun and be silly much more than my laugh-deprived-adult self;
- get my students up from the piano bench and do some physical activity every 10 or 15 minutes like dance, play or do yoga stretches even for a few minutes; and
- encourage my students to continually learn something new.

As a person interested in learning and staying healthy I am going to:

- put on a timer and try to get away from my computer at least every 20 minutes (easier said than done as I discovered while writing this article but awareness is a good start!);
- challenge myself to a bunch of new things including: learn another complete Beethoven sonata, dance the Samba, order my favorite Ramen noodles in Japanese, exercise more, watch more absurd comedies like 'Zoolander', which have nothing to do with music or teaching, but just because they are fun and make me laugh, and can move me far beyond the usual 7 times a day laughter.

And for my final take away... the next time I stare guiltily at the growing piles of paper heaped in my office that have waited since January for me to purge and sort, I can make a healthy choice and close the door. I can go for a walk or even better pop some popcorn, flop on my sofa and put on another 'dumb' comedy because Terry Small told me that laughter is good for me. Laughter is good medicine.

### About the author

*Before earning her ARCT (Piano), Sharon worked as a teacher in public schools and as a legal-aid lawyer. She has taught students of all ages and abilities for over 20 years. Besides music, her current passions include hiking, psycho-neuro science and watching comedies.*

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# Honours Recital 2014-2015

The Honours Recital is sponsored by the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association Calgary Branch to honour promising music students who have excelled in examinations taken in the previous calendar year. Students of keyboards, voice, strings, woodwinds, brass, guitar and accordion who achieved the highest marks in each category will be presented with a scholarship. This January recital offers a wonderful opportunity for these talented young people to perform in front of an audience.

Each fall, ARMTA Calgary Branch teachers are invited to submit the names of their top exam students to the Honours Recital Committee. Applications are available in the "Members' Area: Documents" section of the ARMTA website.



The Honours Recital on January 25, 2015 at River Park Church featured students of nineteen ARMTA-Calgary teachers who earned the top practical examination marks in their grade categories in 2014. Thirty-nine piano, string and voice students performed brilliantly at the event which was taped by SHAW TV. In addition to the presentation of gold, silver or bronze medals, over \$2000 of scholarship money was awarded to the winners, including three special scholarships for senior piano & voice students: the Eileen & Elgar Higgin Scholarship, the Peter Turner Memorial Scholarship and the Piano Diploma Association Scholarship.

The donors and sponsors for the 2015 Honours Recital are featured on the ARMTA-Calgary website home page. Thank you to all the Honours Recital Committee members and volunteers who were involved in the successful organization and team effort for this event.

## AWARDS: MEDALS & SCHOLARSHIPS

### Piano Grades 1-3

Jonathan Dong	Gold
Brian Tang	Gold
Tessa Nysetvold	Silver
Benjamin Yu	Silver
Patricia He-Gao	Bronze
Eileen Ngo	Bronze
Kelly Yuk-Yee Szeto	Bronze

### Piano Grades 4-6

Sarah Chen	Gold
Wing Yin Tse	Gold
Aaron Wang	Gold
Julia Wu	Silver
Mary Long	Bronze

### Piano Grades 7-9

Holly Lam	Gold
Matthew Wu	Silver
Frank Zhu	Silver
Jessie Chai	Bronze
Adrian Chen	Bronze
Jennifer Chow	Bronze

### Piano Grades 10/Diploma

Leila Lok	Gold
Madeleine Dickson	Silver
Julia Chen	Bronze
Matthew Chu	Bronze
Sohyoon Lee	Bronze

### Voice Grades 1-3

Nora-Jane Bonner	Gold
Natalie Marshall	Silver
Catelyn Lazorko	Silver
Julianne Smith	Bronze
Zachary Treleaven	Bronze

### Voice Grades 4-6

Madeleine Dickson	Gold
Gabriel Treleaven	Silver
Dominie Boutin	Bronze
Anais Dawes	Bronze

### Voice Grades 7-9

Lurene Bates	Gold
Kathleen Ahenda	Silver
Amy Melnyk	Bronze

### Strings Grades 1-6

Avery Krahn	Gold
Daniel Kang	Silver
Onyou Kang	Bronze

### Strings Grades 7-9

Jennifer Jeon	Gold
Dijun Zhang	Gold

### Woodwinds Grades 1-8

Helena Cherniak-Kennedy	Gold
-------------------------	------



# Honours Recital 2014–2015

## **EILEEN & ELGAR HIGGIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Lurene Bates

## **PIANO DIPLOMA ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP**

Matthew Chu

Madeleine Dickson

## **PETER TURNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Leila Lok

## **ARMTA Teachers Represented in Honours Recital**

Colleen Athparia, Paul Bagley, Patrice Barnes, Joan Bell, Fiona Carnie, Elaine Case, Laisee Cheng, Jan Cherniak, Gloria Chu, Rachel Hop, Denise Jamieson, Linda Kundert-Stroll, Winnie Ling, Jessica Lutzak, Allen Reiser, Peter Rudzik, Lorna Sewell, Jacqueline Serpas, Elisabeth Szojka

## **2014-2015 Honours Recital Committee & Volunteers:**

Melodie Archer, Nathene Arthur, Joan Bell, Sharon Carne, Laisee Cheng, Jan Cherniak, Madeline Hubbard, Lindsay Inkster, Karen King, Jessica Lutzak, Marilyn Newbury, Beth Olver, Barbara Robertson, Rita Thurn

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## Peter Rudzik Keeping Classical Music Alive

BY LISA NG

Many teachers strive to motivate their students with inspirational repertoire, but not many, like Peter Rudzik, would go as far as composing his own music to keep them engaged.

Approximately two years ago, after searching in vain for some piano duet variations based on a well-known theme; Rudzik, faculty member of Mount Royal University Conservatory, started creating his own compositions for his students. The result was a new album—*Truly Astounding Animals* and a never-ending artistic imagination. “I loved the creative process of writing music. All that accumulated knowledge about piano music simply started overflowing and there is no sign of it ever stopping,” the composer says.

With two piano albums composed—*Wild Rose Suite* and *Truly Astounding Animals*—Rudzik looks at his compositional process as gradual but inherent: “Single pieces came first. After writing two or three of them in *Truly Astounding Animals*, and giving them animal titles, it kind of dawned on me that I started the whole book. Even figuring out the titles was a fun process, it usually happened halfway through writing them. I wanted something original, memorable and slightly outrageous. That’s why a kangaroo is ‘boastful’ or a fly ‘annoying’. A similar thing happened with the *Wild Rose Suite*. I knew I had to separate the children’s pieces from the advanced ones, that’s why I created a different book for them. This year is my 25th anniversary of settling in Alberta,



hence the title “Wild Rose Suite”. Indeed, one of Rudzik’s pieces, “Hot Springs” in the *Wild Rose Suite*, was featured in the International Piano magazine as a selection for a recording contest.

Rudzik’s compositions are characterized by modern idioms—melody tinged with chromaticism, unresolved harmonies, and often, technical challenges. “I love the freedom that contemporary music gives you; there are no rules, right or wrong notes. But most of the pieces that I write are the ones that I personally like to play, listen to or teach. If I had to give it a name, it would probably be ‘bent tonality’”, Rudzik explains.

However, as much as he loves contemporary musical language, Rudzik reminds us that his compositions stand as a negotiation with his classical training and a reconciliation between traditional

and modern idioms. “All composers are influenced by what other composers wrote. I couldn’t write what I did if I wasn’t familiar with Barber, Prokofiev, Debussy, Chopin or Arcadi Volodos’ arrangements. This list has no end.”

Indeed, what sets Rudzik on the path of his personal style was his intense musical training. Being an award-winning pianist in his native Poland and scholarship recipient from the Chopin Society in Warsaw in 1984, making his appearances on national television and radio and in the National Piano Festival in 1987, Rudzik has received his music education under a highly competitive environment. Growing up in communist Poland where everything was state-run and private lessons are inexistent, Rudzik had to go through intense entry exams in order to get into music school to pursue his love of music.

Being one of the five candidates out of fifty to get into Piano Performance at the Academy of Music in Gdansk, Rudzik spent five years completing all the requirements for the Master in Music degree where he studied with well-known professors such as Zbigniew Sliwinski, Grazyna Fiedoruk-Sienkiewicz, Jerzy Sulikowski and Katarzyna Popowa-Zydron whose roots tie to names such as Moscheles, Tausig, Rimsky-Korsakov, Boulanger, Liszt and Chopin. Thereafter, Rudzik took post-graduate studies at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen, Demark where he focused on Granados and Albeniz under the instruction of Jose Ribera, who was himself a student of Alfred Cortot.

**“... being in a state of flow, losing track of time while writing a new piece; losing yourself in an activity that you really enjoy is also one of the definitions of happiness.”**

In reminiscences of his own training, Rudzik reflects on music education in Canada: “Music education is much less regimented and restrictive here in Canada. You can send your students for exams but you don’t have to. As we all know hundreds of thousands of children take private music lessons and only a small percentage of them will go professionally into music. I think it’s a huge advantage of this system, the sheer number of students studying music, this is how we make sure that classical music is alive and well and stays that way for generations to come. On the other hand, the RCM or Conservatory Canada requirements are less demanding so what I personally do is make sure that my students who are pursuing a career in music are at the same level as their counterparts in Poland, Russia or China, especially on a technical level.”

To Rudzik, art is what makes life worth living, and teachers play a very important role in making sure that classical music stays alive, “the only way to pass on this torch is through educating the young generation”, he says. When asked about his preference of being a teacher or composer, Rudzik says there is so much enjoyment

in being a teacher—discovering new ways to convey an idea to students; a lesson that was so much fun that ran half hour late; a thank-you card or letter that brings about the realization that those lessons were a huge part of the student’s life. But if he had to pick between one or the other, he would choose to be a composer: “...being ‘in the zone’, or as psychologists call it “in a state of flow”, losing track of time while writing a new piece; losing yourself in an activity that you really enjoy is also one of the definitions of happiness.”

It is no surprise that Peter Rudzik’s compositions have received validation from prominent teachers, music departments and students both locally and internationally.

To listen to the recording of Peter Rudzik’s pieces, visit [sheetmusicplus.com](http://sheetmusicplus.com), type in “Peter Rudzik” in the search box.

#### **About the author**

*Lisa Ng is the editor of Impromptu and Tempo. She holds a PhD in French Literature, a LRSM and A. Music in Piano Performance. She has taught at both the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University and has authored for McGraw Hill. She is actively involved in editorial work for the bilingual scholarly journal, Excavatio.*

**LISA NG**  
**PhD, M.A., B.A., LRSM, A. Music**

**Graphic & Publication Design, Editing**

**Ph: (403) 870-8714**  
**Email: [lisasyng@gmail.com](mailto:lisasyng@gmail.com)**

## Meet the C3 Winners

### **Yunzhi Han (piano) – Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini Op. 43 by Rachmaninoff**

I was born in 1998 in Beijing China. I started learning piano at the age of 4 - this will be my second time playing with the Calgary Civic Symphony, I am very grateful for this wonderful opportunity! I was the Rose Bowl winner of the 2014 Calgary Kiwanis Music Festival (now known as the Calgary Performing Arts Festival), first place winner at the Canadian National Competition in 2010 and placed numerous times in the following years. I have been studying with Natalia Molochnikov since 2007. My favourite composers are Chopin, Bach, Rachmaninoff. I was inspired greatly by world-leading pianists Krystian Zimmerman, Stephen Hough and Samson François. This would not have been possible without the diligent help of my teacher Natalia Molochnikov, parents and numerous other people who kept me motivated, Thank you all!

### **Nicholas Kwan (piano) – Concerto in A minor, Op. 16 (1st mvmt) by Grieg**

Fifteen-year-old Nicholas Kwan started piano lessons at age five with the Mount Royal Suzuki Program. In 2010, he became a pupil of Dale Jackson, and has been studying with him since then. Nicholas is a senior piano participant in the prestigious Academy Program at the Mount Royal Conservatory where he enjoys playing Chamber Music. Nicholas has played for several visiting Academy artists, including Marc Durand, Sasha Starceвич, Catherine Ordronneau, and Sara Laimon. He especially enjoys solo Romantic works and plays Chopin and Rachmaninoff as favourites. Nicholas is a consistent winner in the Kiwanis competitions, and he played trumpet in the school band. He is now preparing for his ARCT exam in piano performance. Nicholas is currently a Grade 10 (IB) student at Sir Winston Churchill High School. He is a member of the Keikos Swim

Club and volunteers as an assistant swim coach in his club and in the City of Calgary's swim programs. Nicholas is excited to be a winner in this year's concerto competition and thanks the C3 Committee and the Calgary Civic Symphony for this amazing opportunity to perform with the orchestra.

### **Yan Li (violin) – Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 77 (1st mvmt) by Brahms**

Yan Li, 15-years-old violinist, started playing the violin at the age of five and is currently studying with William Van Der Sloot in the Advanced Performance Program at the Conservatory of Mount Royal University. She has participated in numerous concerts, chamber music, orchestra ensembles, summer camps, and competitions. Yan has had masterclasses with many respected musicians from around the world, such as Ian Swensen, Andrés Cárdenes, Gerardo Ribeiro, Yehonatan Berick, Tong Wei Dong, and Tadeusz Gadzina. She was a prizewinner at the Canadian Music Competition from 2010 to 2012. For many years, she has won many awards and scholarships including first prize in both the junior and senior categories at the provincial music festival. Her trio was chosen to represent Alberta at the National Music Festival last year. As a featured young artist, she was invited to perform at the "Canada's Rising Stars" concert in Canmore, Alberta. In November of 2011, she performed a violin virtuoso work in the Wyatt Artist in Residence Concert Series "Path to Virtuosity" along with the world virtuoso, Ning Feng. When she was 12, she was selected to attend the Young Artist Program at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. In 2011, she was the youngest participant in the prestigious Morningside Music Bridge International Summer Festival in Calgary and has participated consecutively for the past four summers. She was one of the few recipients of the Stuart Holland

Memorial Award. Besides her passion for music, she also enjoys reading, swimming, and travelling.

### **Peter Wang (piano) – Concerto No. 1, Op. 45 (1st mvmt) by Rautavaara**

15-year-old Peter Wang began studying piano when he was four and a half years old and has played in countless recitals since. He has won many classes and scholarships in the Kiwanis Music Festival. He traveled frequently between Canada and China, which means being taught by various teachers, before finally settling in Calgary and meeting Mr. Dale Jackson. Peter is excited to return as one of the honorable winners in the C3 again this year. In 2011, he was awarded a regional silver medal for his Grade 8 RCM piano exam. He attended the Alberta Pianofest in summer 2013. Last year Peter and his chamber group were selected to perform in the 2014 Stars of the Festival Concert, as well as nominated to the National Festival. He was placed 2nd in the CCMDA's Calgary Chinese Music Competition.

Peter began studies in jazz piano this year through his school jazz band at Bishop Carroll High School. He is also in his second season as principal trombonist of the Calgary Youth Orchestra. Peter also attended MRU's Drumset Educational Camp in summer 2014, and plays in various gigs as a drummer for jazz combos in his school. Peter has also experimented with many other instruments, including trumpet, euphonium, and the traditional Chinese suona.

Peter sincerely thanks the Calgary Civic Symphony and the C3 committee for this wonderful opportunity.

## RCM Alumni Association —Calgary Chapter

The RCM Alumni Association, Calgary Chapter, offers three categories of membership: Full Member for those who have the ARCT diploma; RCM Diploma Candidate for advanced level students who wish to acquire the ARCT; and Friends of RCM Alumni for teachers who have diplomas or degrees from other institutions but who support the RCM examination system.

We currently offer two student recitals each season: The Holiday Special in the late fall or early winter; and The Musical Arts Show in the spring, usually a date in May. We offer non-competitive student awards at the spring recital, i.e., all awards are “Teacher’s Choice”. A teacher may choose to reward a student for good practice habits, creativity, highest marks in an RCM exam, or a freshly invented prize. Full Members each have an opportunity to acquire some recognition for their students. All student recitals will include performances by RCM Diploma Candidates and students of RCM Alumni Friends.

In addition, we have had joint ventures with the Calgary Arts Summer School Association to offer recital opportunities for instrumentalists who help fund-raise. Last June, we jointly hosted a concert given by David Dixon, pianist: former CASS piano camper, ARCT, Honens amateur competition winner in 2013 and a member of the jury for the latest Honens Pro Am. Other concerts are in the planning stages. We offer professional development aid for members when and if there is money left over after student awards.

We meet three times a year, one of which is a social for all members and spouses or partners. We are building a dynamic new RCM alumni philosophy and we hope to encourage new members to join and take part in it. For more information and pictures, please visit the web site: RCM Alumni, Calgary Chapter.

Janice Dahlberg



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# New Publications

**Title: Melody Adventures and Keyboard Accompaniment**

**Author: Gail MacAuley Dunsmoor**

**Published by: Quenmar Music Inc.**

BY MICHELLE EVERETT FAUNT

**G**ayle MacAuley Dunsmoor, of Nanaimo, BC was motivated to write her own piano method books as a result of 35 years of teaching experience. She recognized a gap in traditional piano pedagogical approaches relating to teaching accompaniment skills. As a result, she has written two series: *Melody Adventures* and *Keyboard Accompaniment*. These books are the result of her experience and discussions with many students who followed traditional examination-based methods of learning piano. Dunsmoor was told time and again by students that had finished the highest levels of their piano education that they felt insecure playing melodies with an improvised accompaniment. They felt they couldn't "play by ear". Dunsmoor's newly revised *Melody Adventure* series and her new series of books entitled *Keyboard Accompaniment* is her contribution to filling that gap.



## MELODY ADVENTURES SERIES

The *Melody Adventures* series is a set of six coil bound books aimed at beginner piano students of all ages. The books may be ordered in black and white or color. Dunsmoor's goal is to "encourage a practical understanding of harmony that progresses concurrently with technical, interpretive, sight-reading and performance skills".

### Melody Adventures Primer Books

The two primer books A and B, are an introduction to playing the piano. Primer A introduces the fundamentals of piano playing with references to hand and finger shape, the organization of black keys, and the introduction of white key names centered around middle C. The book moves quickly through a variety of concepts including such things as note values (quarter, half, dotted half, whole notes) and eighth notes, rest values (quarter, half, whole), a large variety of dynamic markings, tied notes, times signatures and an introduction to rhythmic accentuation in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and 2/2 time signatures.

Major and minor tonality is also introduced, as is the concept of major and minor relative keys.

The primer B book continues to develop the concepts introduced in primer A. This book also introduces playing scales, transposition, intervals, and phrasing. Major and minor tonality is further explored through the presentation of pieces in the keys of F, G and C major and in A minor. Each piece in the Primer A and B books includes an accompanying duet which is very useful in nurturing the student's awareness of harmonic changes and tonality. In addition, every few pages there are questions for the student to answer to reinforce learned concepts. At the end of each primer book are note finding exercises and quizzes which can be used as students progress through the books to aid in the development of fluent reading skills. There is a lot of information packed into these two little gems. The books would be most effective when used by an experienced teacher. Younger students will likely need the teacher to adapt and reinforce the content based on their age and ability.

After the completion of the primer level books, students have the option of continuing to *Melody Adventures* Books 1 and 2 or *Melody Adventures* Basics A and Basics B books. Students that need more time to reinforce the concepts presented in the primer books, would find that Books 1 and 2 provide more time to internalize the concepts. Older students or students that have some background in musical concepts could begin the Basics A and B books directly after the primer books.

### Melody Adventures Basics Books 1 and 2

*Melody Adventures* Books 1 and 2 further develop the student's understanding of harmony through the inclusion of pieces with common chord progressions. In Book 1 the focus is on intervals of 3rds, 6ths and 10ths. This teaches students to become aware of harmonic changes and pleasant sounding blends of harmony. Roman numeral names are introduced for scale degrees and triads. This is intended to be an introduction to the ability to read "lead sheets". Towards the end of Book 1, there is a very useful introduction to pedalling, followed by a number of pieces that reinforce the pedalling technique.

Book 2 continues with a review of time signatures and note/rest values. More chords are introduced (I, II, IV, V, V7 and diminished chords) to further develop the student's appreciation and awareness of harmony. Dotted quarter note rhythms are included in this level as are harmonic and melodic scale forms.

### **Melody Adventures Books A and B**

The *Melody Adventures* Basics A and B books are also intended to aid students in understanding harmonic progression in an hands on way. Book A is a review of the primer concepts but includes those concepts in two additional minor keys (D and E minor). Book B discusses the dominant 7th chord in three major keys (C, F and G major) and continues the exploration of the keys of D major and B minor and I (i), IV (iv), V and V7 chords in those keys.

All six books in the *Melody Adventures* series are intended to help students understand harmony and to provide a foundation for creative skills at the piano. The *Keyboard Accompaniment* series was designed to further these skills and to develop students' accompaniment skills. The series consists of 4 books (with more levels to come in the future), to allow students to supplement their formal training, and practise hands-on, their keyboard accompaniment skills.

### **KEYBOARD ACCOMPANIMENT SERIES**

The *Keyboard Accompaniment* series consists of four coil bound, levelled books—Preparatory, Basics A, Basics B, and Basics C. The books can be ordered in black and white or colour editions. Dunsmoor describes the concept of “keyboard accompaniment” as the “ability to anticipate harmonic changes, choose appropriate chords and draw from a repertoire of chord-based techniques to provide your own accompaniment for melodies” (G. Dunsmoor, personal communication, April 23, 2015).

Dunsmoor has noticed a rise in the popularity of students taking guitar lessons. She feels that this is because beginning guitar students quickly learn to be able to play chord accompaniments to their favourite melodies. Traditional piano lessons don't facilitate this process and some students are turning away from piano lessons.

### **Keyboard Accompaniment Preparatory Book**

The *Keyboard Accompaniment* Preparatory Book is meant to be an introduction to the concept of accompaniment. It is suggested that this book be used with the *Melody Adventure* preparatory books. However, because the book moves very quickly it could be very challenging for young students. Younger children may benefit from progressing to the *Melody Adventures* Basic A and B books before they start the *Keyboard Accompaniment* Primer book. The Primer book reinforces theoretical concepts that are introduced in the *Melody Adventures* books. Melodies are introduced with some LH accompaniment and then the melody is presented without accompaniment, leaving it up to the student to fill in the appropriate harmonic accompaniment. The student learns to anticipate the harmonic changes based on what is presented before. At the end of the book, there is a section of folk song

melodies to which students are encouraged to add their own accompaniment. In these exercises, students are encouraged to try new hand positions, to facilitate smooth changes and add their own embellishments.

### **Keyboard Accompaniment Basic A, B and C Books**

The *Keyboard Accompaniment* Basic A, B and C books progress in difficulty as they introduce more keys, chord choices and embellishment techniques. Each of these books is written in the same style as the preparatory book. Some accompaniment is initially presented and an opportunity to continue the pattern and explore the accompaniment independently is offered. There is also a section at the end of each book where the student can create his or her own accompaniment to the provided melodies.

Some of the melodies in the *Keyboard Accompaniment* books will be familiar to the student if they have progressed through the *Melody Adventures* series. Many of the melodies are repeated in the *Keyboard Accompaniment* series. Familiarity with these melodies helps the student develop the ability to anticipate harmonic changes. A fun component of the series is that in Book C, a variety of accompaniment styles are explored, such as Latin/South American music, Mazurka dances, Blues, Jigs, and Hawaiian style.

Overall, Dunsmoor's efforts have resulted in the production of two series that aim to fill a critical gap in piano education today. Dunsmoor has taken on the massive challenge of constructing a piano method that not only accomplishes the tasks of teaching technical, interpretive and sight reading skills along with encouraging a practical understanding of harmony and the development of accompaniment skills. The *Melody Adventures* series and the *Keyboard Accompaniment* series work together to accomplish this goal. Because of the complexities involved with effectively introducing harmonic concepts in an applied manner, seasoned teachers with a background in theory and harmony will likely find these series easier to implement in their studios. The books are chock-full of great information but may be overwhelming for many students without the guidance of an experienced teacher. Careful pedagogical analysis and preparation of lessons in conjunction with the use of these books will be necessary to garner the best results. Dunsmoor's ultimate goal is for her *Keyboard Accompaniment* series to become a supplementary part of music schools and conservatory piano curricula from beginning to advanced levels. In this way she hopes all piano students will learn the skills to be able to confidently play accompaniments to their favourite melodies. I think that in the hands of eager students and teachers, Dunsmoor's books can contribute positively towards the goal of producing well-rounded musicians.

**Christine Vanderkooy**  
**CD—Schubert and Schumann (Piano)**  
**Total Time: 80:16**

BY LISA NG

Recorded at the Banff Centre in the Rolston Recital Hall on Yolande, the nine-foot Hamburg Steinway piano, Canadian pianist, Christine Vanderkooy's newly released album (Dec. 2014) offers an exquisite performance and a thoughtful interpretation of Schubert and Schumann's work.



The first CD contains Schubert's Sonata in B-flat Major D.960, the conclusion of the composer's trilogy written before his death in 1828. This "farewell" sonata structured in four movements, depicts the emotional state in the final chapter of Schubert's life.

From the first movement—*Molto moderato*—Vanderkooy's delicate and fine performance accompanies us as we traverse the journey of Schubert's psyche landscape. From the serene and majestic hymn-like theme to his tender lyricism, Vanderkooy's sensual interpretation with an overwhelming sense of emotion carries us seamlessly from the grandeur and sublime beauty of Schubert's melody to the alien landscape of his inner turmoil.

In *Andante sostenuto*, Vanderkooy captures the tranquility of Schubert's thoughts, bringing the audience to a meditative space. Through the pianist's sensibility, the audience feels peacefulness, yet a sense of vulnerability, which reflects the composer's attempt to reconcile with his imminent death.

In Scherzo: *Allegro vivace con delicatezza*, a revival of energy is fully conveyed through Vanderkooy's agility in passages where different voices converse between hands. Schubert's vitality, even a sense of humour, suddenly comes alive through the pianist's vital dynamics. The sublime beauty of Schubert's melody mixed with delight and passionate thoughts are fully articulate under Vanderkooy's meticulous dexterity in *Allegro, ma non troppo*, especially in the octave passages where superb virtuosity is required. The audience can feel a sense of relief as the pianist arrives at this final movement where Schubert seems to finally pacify his soul.

The second CD contains Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, Opus 6. Composed between 1834 and 1836, this work captures the spirits of Schumann's passions for Clara Wieck and his thoughts of marriage despite the opposition of Clara's father. The 18 short pieces alternating in moods, reflect Schumann's alter egos—the two contrasting personalities of Eusabius and Florestan—the dichotomous sides of the composer's own nature, impulsive and the melancholic. The composer's impetuosity and tender lyricism are well contrasted under Vanderkooy's performance as she interchanges the jovial, ecstatic moods with the poignant moments from one piece to another. Vanderkooy's vital details, beautiful shaping and skillful techniques brought about an effective presentation.

The liner notes contains lots of essential details, providing succinct explanation of the two compositions. This recording is a valuable addition for both professional musicians and amateurs who are looking for a high quality recording of Schubert and Schumann's works. For more information of this CD, go online to [christinevanderkooy.com](http://christinevanderkooy.com).

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The advertisement features an orange background with musical symbols. It shows a hand using a tactile music aid on a piano keyboard. The aid has musical notes and numbers. Below the image are two handprints, one purple and one blue. The text 'T.A.M. TEACHING AIDS FOR MUSIC' is prominently displayed, along with the website and phone number.



Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association Calgary Branch

# Music Marathon

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Approximately 100 students had a lot of fun performing for their friends, family, and members of the public on Saturday, May 23, 2015 at Stephen Avenue mall in downtown Calgary.

We couldn't have asked for better weather: the combination of full sun and almost no wind made the day spectacular. Over the course of 8 hours, we heard everything from 4-year-old "Twinkles" to full ARCT programs, voice students, duets, teacher performances, and even a trombone! Students from 15 different Registered Music Teachers were represented.

It was so fortunate that we hosted our event the same day as the Calgary International Children's Festival which enhanced the lively atmosphere. For pictures of the event, go to Calgary Branch - Alberta Registered Music Teachers Facebook page and click "like".

Through generous pledges from participants, ARMTA Calgary will be able to fund many new programs to enrich students' learning. Discussions are in the works to bring in new initiatives for student scholarships, teacher development, and recital participation awards. More information about these initiatives will be available in the coming months.

Our association is looking forward to hosting this event again on **Saturday, May 28, 2016**. Please look for upcoming details about the 2nd Annual Music Marathon, and register your studio to play a part in eight hours of continuous music.



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### STUDENT'S RECITAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### Student recitals

All students of Registered Music Teachers, any level, any instrument, are invited to a fun and professional community performance opportunity.

Applications are accepted on a first-come-first-served basis and successful students will be contacted at least one week prior to recital. A \$10 fee is required from each family participating in an ARMTA recital.

#### South Recitals

**Location:** Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate SE (across from Costco).

**Dates:** Saturday, November 7, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. and March 5, 2016 at 2:30 p.m.

**Contact:** Please submit the South Student Recital Application Form to **Carol Moore: [rhythmreader@shaw.ca](mailto:rhythmreader@shaw.ca)**



#### North Recitals

**Location:** St David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW.

**Dates:** Saturdays, November 7, 2015 and Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

**Contact:** Please submit the North Student Recital Application Form to **Donna Murray: [wmdamurr@telus.net](mailto:wmdamurr@telus.net)**

#### Joint Recital

Organized by two or more teachers for their own students

Branch provides up to \$75 towards costs, see application form for details.

Please submit application form to **Katrina Thompson Fost: [kthompson11@hotmail.com](mailto:kthompson11@hotmail.com)**

Application forms, additional information & deadlines for all recitals are available in the member's area of our website **[www.armta-calgary.com](http://www.armta-calgary.com)**

## Composer Showcase

Sunday evening November 22  
St John's Yamaha 105 58 Ave SE  
Come enjoy refreshments, conversation and  
our colleagues' new compositions.

ARMTA Calgary Branch is planning an evening concert Sunday, November 22 during Canada Music Week, in which we plan to showcase Calgary and Alberta composers and their works. Depending on response, there could be 10 to 20 minutes allowed for each composer: time to talk about the compositions, the composing process, or just play the music.  
Kevin Chen, Stephen Rogers, Michalis Andronikou, Roberta Stephen, ...

## Syllabus Alternatives

In the spring the workshop plan is to review other music conservatories and what they offer studio music teachers and their students. Do you make extensive use of non-RCM syllabi in your studio? Would you be willing to share your knowledge at this seminar?  
Please contact Beth Olver (403 254 6008, [soundsofmusic@shaw.ca](mailto:soundsofmusic@shaw.ca))

Workshops  
Recitals  
Workshops  
Recitals

## HONOURS RECITAL & OUTSTANDING STUDENT RECITAL

The Calgary Branch of the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association sponsors the HONOURS RECITAL and the OUTSTANDING STUDENT RECITAL (OSR) in order to recognize students who have achieved excellence on their current practical examinations. Scholarship donors will be acknowledged on the program, and advertising opportunities are available for donations of \$200 and higher. There is also a possibility that the Honours Recital may be recorded and broadcast by SHAW TV.

### HONOURS RECITAL/OSR APPLICATION DEADLINE:

**Midnight, Thursday October 15, 2015**

### HONOURS RECITAL

Selected students will be invited to play at the **Honours Recital to be held on Sunday, January 24, 2016 at 3:30pm at Parkdale United Church**. Scholarships & medals are awarded to students who achieve the top three practical examination marks (minimum of 85%) in each category listed below.

#### PIANO

Junior I	Grades 1 - 3
Junior II	Grades 4 - 6
Intermediate	Grades 7 - 9
Senior	Grades 10 - Diploma Level

#### STRINGS

Junior	Grades 1 - 6
Intermediate	Grades 7 - 9
Senior	Grades 10 - Diploma Level

#### VOICE

Junior I	Grades 1 - 3
Junior II	Grades 4 - 6
Intermediate	Grades 7 - 9
Senior	Grades 10 - Diploma Level

#### OTHER INSTRUMENTS/SPEECH ARTS

Junior	Grades 1 - 8
Senior	Grades 9 - Diploma Level

### OUTSTANDING STUDENT RECITAL

Selected students will be invited to play at the **Outstanding Student Recital to be held on Sunday February 7, 2016 at 3:00pm at St. David's United Church**. Certificates will be presented to students who achieved marks of 85% and higher on their practical examinations but were not selected to play at the Honours Recital. **\*\*Please note that students MUST apply for the Honours Recital in order to be considered to play at the Outstanding Student Recital.\*\***

## HOW TO APPLY

Please carefully read the Rules and Regulations on the following page for detailed information on dates, application process, supporting documentation and guidelines.

### STEP ONE – ONLINE APPLICATION FORM (one application for both recitals)

Click on the link below to access the application form or copy/paste the link into your web browser. Complete and submit the form online - **DO NOT PRINT**.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18esCyPLphRdsKJ1z1ZHNT9dk3q1BeknJqfUzaD\\_1Fs/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18esCyPLphRdsKJ1z1ZHNT9dk3q1BeknJqfUzaD_1Fs/viewform)

Please call or email Michelle Everett Faunt (403-615-7553 or [honoursrecital@gmail.com](mailto:honoursrecital@gmail.com)) if you have questions or concerns.

### STEP TWO – SUBMIT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Hard copies or electronic files of student marks must be provided in conjunction with the online application.

**\*\*Please note that documentation for theory co-requisite examination marks must be included along with documentation for practical examination marks for Grades 5 and higher.** Please consult the syllabus of the applicable examining board (RCM, Conservatory Canada or other recognized examining boards) to make sure you have submitted all applicable theory co-requisite marks.

Documentation can be submitted using one of the following methods:

a.) **Email attachment** (scanned image, photo or PDF of the official exam results) sent to [honoursrecital@gmail.com](mailto:honoursrecital@gmail.com)

**\*\*Please put the student's name followed by the word "Documentation" in the subject line.**

OR

b.) **Send via Canada Post** (must be received on or before Thursday October 15, 2015)

**Michelle Everett Faunt (ARMTA Calgary) 131 Tuscan Meadows Heath N.W. Calgary, AB T3L 2T9**

## RULES & REGULATIONS

**Please read the rules carefully. \*\*On the online application form, please agree when prompted, that you will abide by these rules and the decisions of the committee responsible for the organization of the recitals.**

1. Teachers may submit applications for students who earned a minimum of 85% on practical examinations from January 1, 2015 to August 31, 2015. (**Exception: Grade 9 to Diploma students may apply the following calendar year to accommodate completion of theory co-requisites.**)

2. The application deadline for both recitals is **midnight on Thursday October 15, 2015. All applications and supporting documents must be received by this date. \*\*Late, incomplete, or illegible applications will not be accepted.**

3. Supporting documentation for practical examination marks must be submitted for all grades. In addition, documentation for theoretical co-requisite examination marks is required for Grades 5 and higher based on the syllabus of the applicable examining board (i.e. Royal Conservatory, Conservatory Canada, or other recognized Examining Boards).

4. All teachers who submit students must be current ARMTA Calgary members.

5. Only students of members in good standing of ARMTA (Calgary Branch) at the time of the examination are eligible. \*Program credit will be given to the teacher at the time of the examination.

6. Teachers will be notified by email on or before **Friday, November 6, 2015** regarding the placement of their student(s) in either the Honours Recital or the Outstanding Student Recital.

7. Students who are chosen to perform in the **Honours Recital** will be sent a **Performance Confirmation Form** via email. This form must be completed by **midnight, Friday, November 20, 2015** in order to allow sufficient time to obtain copyright clearance in the event that Shaw TV agrees to broadcast the recital.

8. Students who are chosen to perform in the **Outstanding Student Recital** will be sent a **Performance Confirmation Form** via email. This form must be completed by **midnight, Friday, December 11, 2015.**

9. All successful applicants for the **Honours Recital** will be required to attend the recital to accept their scholarships & medals unless prior arrangements have been made with Michelle Everett Faunt, Honours Recital Committee Chair.  
*Contact: (403) 615-7553 or [honoursrecital@gmail.com](mailto:honoursrecital@gmail.com)*

10. All successful applicants for the **Outstanding Student Recital** will be required to attend the recital to accept their certificates unless prior arrangements have been made with Ron Proctor, Outstanding Student Recital Coordinator.  
*Contact: (403) 922-9917 or [ronaldproctor@shaw.ca](mailto:ronaldproctor@shaw.ca)*

11. It is the teacher's responsibility to communicate information about the recitals to their students.

12. The decisions of the Honours Recital Committee and the Outstanding Student Recital Coordinator are final.

13. Any complaints must be made in writing and addressed to the President of the Calgary Branch of ARMTA.

14. The Calgary ARMTA Code of Ethics applies to all aspects of the Honours Recital and Outstanding Student Recital and its organization.

## HONOURS RECITAL SCHOLARSHIPS ARMTA CALGARY BRANCH SCHOLARSHIPS

The Calgary Branch of the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association sponsors the **Honours Recital Scholarships** for students who have earned the top three practical examination marks in each category during the past year. These ARMTA awards are funded by donations. Donation cheques (made out to ARMTA Calgary Branch) may be sent to **Michelle Everett Faunt, Honours Recital Committee Chair, 131 Tuscany Meadows Heath N.W. Calgary, AB T3L 2T9**. Please direct questions regarding donations to Michelle Everett Faunt at [honoursrecital@gmail.com](mailto:honoursrecital@gmail.com)

In 1987, when Robert Hooper was president of Calgary Registered Music Teachers, the Endowment fund was created to provide scholarships. Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association (ARMTA) Calgary Branch continues to maintain investments through the Endowment fund for the purpose of funding scholarships. Each fall, donations are sought from businesses and individuals and received into the Endowment fund.

### EILEEN AND ELGAR HIGGIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The **Eileen and Elgar Higgin Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to a Senior Voice student.

Eileen and Elgar were giants in the musical life of Calgary, and their legacy lives on in the teaching and performing careers of their daughters, Elaine Case and Jennifer Higgin. Starting in the 1930s as soloists at Knox United Church, Eileen and Elgar were often heard in recitals throughout the city. In the late 1950s, Eileen formed the Calgary Theatre Singers in order to give up and coming singers opportunities to perform in operas and musicals, produced to a very high artistic standard. She also was instrumental in the start of the Singing and Opera Division of the Banff School of Fine Arts, where she taught every summer for several years. In 1969, in the last year of his life, Elgar Higgin taught Singing for that program. Eileen and Elgar donated trophies and scholarships to the Calgary Kiwanis Festival and were active with the Calgary Musicians' Union, the Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association, and National Association of Singing. Their students have been heard at the Saddlers' Wells Opera, Dusseldorf Opera, San Francisco Opera, Canadian Opera Company and Metropolitan Opera. A life-size portrait of Elgar Higgin, painted by noted artist H.G. Glyde, hangs in the National Music Centre. Each year the Banff Centre awards a scholarship in honour of Eileen Higgin. Elaine Case has donated the Eileen and Elgar Higgin Memorial Scholarship to ARMTA to honour her parents' devotion to the development of young musical talent.

## PETER TURNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The **Peter Turner Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to the student who earned the highest mark in the Performers' ARCT examination during the past year.

Peter Turner was a highly regarded teacher of piano for many years in Calgary. His students played at the highest level and were consistently successful not only in local but also national competitions. Peter Turner set a high standard for both his students and for other teachers. He was also a senior examiner for the Royal Conservatory of Music. He died in 2008.

### PIANO DIPLOMA ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP for SENIOR PIANO

The **Piano Diploma Association Scholarship for Senior Piano** is awarded to the Senior Piano Student in Grade 10 OR Diploma Level who has earned the highest mark based on both the practical and theory examination marks.

Criteria for the **Piano Diploma Association Scholarship for Senior Piano**:

1. Only those students who have achieved their Diplomas as PERFORMERS will be considered.
2. Grade 10 and Diploma level students who have been submitted for scholarship and medal consideration to the ARMTA Honours Recital will be eligible for this scholarship.
3. These students can be studying in either the Royal Conservatory curriculum or in the Conservatory Canada curriculum.
4. Tabulation of marks. The recipient of the scholarship will have the highest aggregate score using the following criteria:
  - a. For an RCM Grade Ten candidate - the Gr. 10 practical exam mark, Level II History and Level II Harmony
  - b. For an RCM ARCT candidate - the ARCT practical exam mark, plus the TWO HIGHEST marks from the three ARCT theory co-requisites submitted by that candidate
  - c. For a Conservatory Canada Grade Ten candidate - the Gr. 10 practical exam mark, Theory 6 and History 6
  - d. For a Conservatory Canada ACCM candidate - the ACCM practical exam mark, plus the TWO HIGHEST marks from the four ACCM theory co-requisites submitted by that candidate

The Piano Diploma Association, formed in 1958, is a group of piano enthusiasts who meet monthly to perform or discuss major classical piano works in an atmosphere of friendly criticism and encouragement. They endeavour, wherever possible, to contribute to the musical life of the community.

## Calgary Branch Executive Committee 2015 - 2016

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New Member Convenor	Melodie Archer	403-251-3805
Archives	Nathene Arthur	403-851-9912
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Outstanding Student Recital	Ron Proctor	403-922-9917
Student Recitals	Donna Murray	403-241-3395
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