

impromptu

ARMTA Calgary Branch

Member Newsletter ■ September 2022

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



RACHEL MCLELLAN

STUDENT
POSTERS
INSIDE!

Hello ARMTA Calgary branch! I hope you've all had a great summer and had a chance to take some time off from teaching to enjoy this weather. Although I will miss the long weekends I've been taking through the summer, I am so excited to get back into my studio full time.

In this issue of Impromptu, we have a letter from our new chair, Frances Ewington. Thank you Frances for stepping up to this big role! We also have some great articles and we have a special treat inside this issue! This spring, we launched our inaugural Poster and Video Competitions. Everyone involved was highly impressed with the imagination

and quality put into the posters and videos that were received. They were all so amazing that the judges had a very difficult time choosing winners. As an homage to the students who participated in the poster competition, we have decided to publish all 33 posters inside. You will also find hyperlinks to the six winning videos, so you can see the outstanding work that these students produced.

Thank you so much to everyone who has submitted their work for this issue. We couldn't do it without you! We have some very busy volunteers in this branch, and I hope reading about everything they've been up to inspires some of you to share your own time with the various music groups around Calgary (ARMTA Calgary included of course!)

Thank you also to our advertisers,

who make the print edition of this newsletter possible.

If you are interested in writing for Impromptu, please contact us at impromptu@armta.ca - we would love to share your submission!

I hope you all have a great fall and start of winter, and we will have another issue printed in the new year.



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GREETING FROM THE BRANCH CHAIR



Howdy there, partner! The Calgary Stampede is in full swing as I write this, and I have been taking in all the music. Of course, as a Stampede band mother of 2, I have been watching a lot of parades and rejoicing to see all those wonderful band students pick up their instruments after a long Covid hiatus. The bands are marching, the singers are giving their all at the Grandstand Show, and the fiddlers are inspiring us all to square dance. Yahoo for music!

As a choral singer myself (Mount Royal Kantorei and CPO chorus) I know that being part of a musical group isn't just about playing an instrument or learning a skill - it's friendship, community, perseverance, cooperation, and so much more. As performing arts

teachers, we know the value of what we teach and its long lasting effects on a child's life. Whether you teach Speech Arts and Drama (like myself), Voice, or an Instrument, you know that actively participating in the performing arts requires and fosters all of our being. Those who learn through the arts do so in a fully immersed way. I am proud to be an arts teacher, and I hope you are too!

As the new Chair of Calgary ARMTA, I hope you get behind us and let all our association's offerings be a part of your studio. Calgary ARMTA isn't just another membership fee, we are a board of your fellow teachers, under the umbrella of the provincial ARMTA and the national CFMTA, who believe in our objectives:

- promoting the professional status of performing arts teachers in the Calgary community;
- supporting private studio teachers;
- nurturing excellence in

instruction;

- encouraging and upholding ethical standards of professional conduct among teachers;
- collaborating with like-minded organizations throughout the province; and,
- providing performance opportunities, as well as scholarships and bursaries, to our teachers and their students.

If you are passionate about what you do, ARMTA is pleased to support your teaching. We aim to help new and experienced teachers alike. We ask in return that you promote ARMTA to qualified teachers in your personal circle, and partake in the programs we offer. And, who knows, maybe you too can one day serve on our board and support quality instruction within this wonderful Cowtown of ours.

Happy trails my friends, I'll be seeing y'all ■

FRANCES EWINGTON



We'd love to publish articles from more members! Write about anything that you want to share with other music teachers.

Rotary Calgary Concerto Competition

By Barbara Robertson

The Rotary C3 (Calgary Concerto Competition) 2022 took place at Michael Lipnicki Fine Pianos, Saturday March 12 from 9:00-6:00 and Sunday March 13 from 9:00-5:45.

Manon Mitchell who represents both the Civic Symphony and the Rotary Club has for years done a superb job of organizing the competition. The jurors were Genevieve Micheletti, Jani Parsons and Rolf Bertsch. Live streaming was provided by John Robertson, with equipment and live stream account from the Calgary Folk club. The sound engineer for live stream and recording was Rob Bartlett – well done! Cathy Stephen volunteered one day. Thank you to all who shared your time and knowledge to help make this event possible.

9 teachers of 21 performers were ARMTA members



7 accompanists of 18 performers were ARMTA members

There were 42 participants, 11 more than last year.

2 cello 2 double bass 1 flute 21 piano 16 violin

The winners played with the Civic Symphony June 5, 2:30 at the Jack Singer Concert Hall. The runners-up also got to play a solo at the pre symphony concert in the lobby of the Jack Singer Concert Hall. ■

Visit <https://www.rotaryc3.com/winners> to read about these talented musicians AND to hear their performance pieces.

WINNERS

Riley Ngo, Piano
Alexa Brianna Manzano, Piano
Chanan Ngo, Violin
Jinghui Bie, Flute

RUNNERS UP

Matthew Craig, Cello
Serafina Olivia, Violin
Charlotte Giraudeau, Piano
Nicholas Ressi, Piano

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For the most updated information, visit the events page of our website <http://armta-calgary.com/>

	ARMTA Provincial	ARMTA Calgary	CFMTA	EXAMS	FESTIVALS
Sep 2022	<p>ARMTA Bursary Application Deadline Monthly</p> <p>Music Conference Alberta Registration Open</p>	<p>Calgary Board Meeting Sep 19</p>		<p>RCM Dec/Jan Session Registration Opens Sep 13</p> <p>Trinity Drama Exams two-week windows throughout the year</p> <p>Trinity Music Theory Registration Deadline Sept 10</p>	
Oct 2022	<p>Music Conference Alberta Oct 20-22 Edmonton</p> <p>Violin Masterclass Dr. Veronique Mathieu Oct 30 Steinway Piano Gallery, Calgary</p> <p>Inaugural ARMTA Provincial Strings Competition Violin Oct 30 Steinway Piano Gallery Calgary (App deadline Jul 31)</p>	<p>Calgary Board Meeting Oct 17</p>	<p>William Andrews Canada Music Week® Awards Oct 15</p>	<p>Trinity Music Practical Exam Registration Deadline Oct 5 Online Exams Only</p>	<p>Contemporary Showcase Registration Deadline Oct 17</p>
Nov 2022		<p>ACRA Deadline 11:59pm Nov 6</p> <p>Calgary Board Meeting Nov 21</p> <p>North Student Recital Nov 26 @ 2pm St. David's United Church</p>	<p>E-Festival TBA</p> <p>Canada Music Week® Nov 20-26</p>	<p>RCM Dec/Jan Session Registration Deadline Nov 1</p> <p>RCM April Session Piano Practical Only Registration Opens Nov 8</p> <p>CC Winter Session Registration Deadline Nov 10</p> <p>Trinity Music Theory Exam Nov 5</p>	<p>CFMTA E-Festival TBA</p> <p>Calgary Contemporary Showcase 2022 Nov 17-19 Living Spirit United Church 629 49th Ave SW</p>
Dec 2022	<p>CFMTA National Piano & Vocal Competition Application Deadline Dec 1</p>			<p>RCM Theory Examinations Dec 9 & 10</p>	

	ARMTA Provincial	ARMTA Calgary	CFMTA	EXAMS	FESTIVALS
Jan 2023	Community Service Award Application Deadline Jan 31	Calgary Board Meeting Jan 16 ACRA (ARMTA Calgary Recital & Awards) Jan 28 3pm to 7pm Temple B'nai Tikvah		RCM April Session Piano Practical Only Registration Deadline Jan 10 RCM Practical Exams Jan 16-28 RCM May/Jun Session Registration Opens Jan 17	
Feb 2023		Outstanding Student Recital Feb 11 4pm to 6pm St. David's United Calgary Board Meeting Feb TBD		CC Winter Exams Feb 1-18	
Mar 2023	CFMTA National Piano & Vocal Competition for Alberta Finalists Mar 4 Red Deer	Calgary Board Meeting Mar 20	Call for Compositions Mar 1 Branching Out Mar 15 Submission Deadline Mar 31	RCM May/Jun Session Registration Deadline Mar 7 CC Spring Session Registration Deadline Mar 9	

CONFERENCE GRANT

Financial Assistance to attend Music Conference Alberta

Interested in attending the upcoming Music Conference Alberta, but not sure if it fits in your budget? We've been there, too! That's why the Calgary Branch Board is excited to announce our NEW conference grant.

The intent of this grant is to encourage ARMTA Calgary Branch members to attend the annual Music Conference Alberta (ARMTA is a co-host of MCA) and CFMTA National Conferences held in odd number years. These are valuable educational and networking opportunities, great for teachers at all stages of their careers.

Preference will be given first to applicants who are attending the MCA conference for the first time, and second to those who have not benefited from this grant in the previous two years. Up to \$1000 each

year is available in even number years. In non-CFMTA conference years, up to five Calgary Branch members attending MCA may receive up to \$200 each. If there are more than 5 applicants, applications will be placed in a draw.

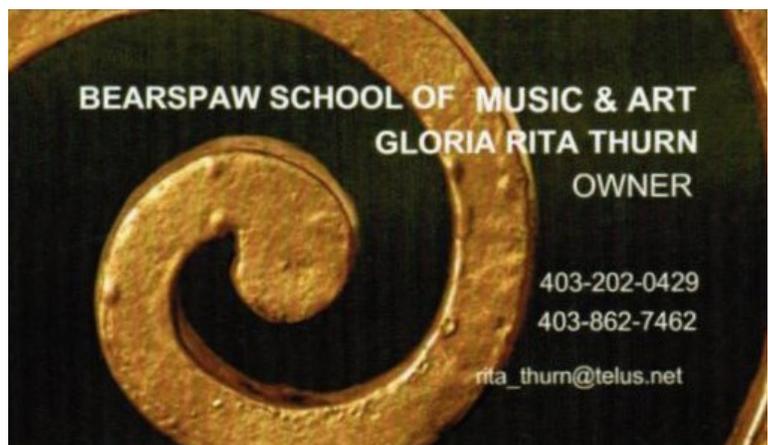
The application deadline is September 10 and is for the MCA conference that fall. The names of those receiving the grants will be announced by September 20.

Applicants must attend the conference in person.

Recipients will

be asked to provide an article to be published in *Impromptu* and posted on our website and social media pages.

For more information, including application process, visit our website at <https://armta-calgary.com/teacher-grants/conference-grant/>. ■



Music Conference Alberta is Alberta's premier professional development opportunity for music teachers, choral conductors, band directors, and studio instructors and it is back in-person from October 20-22, 2022 in Edmonton!

What to Expect

Showcase Concert featuring the [Alberta Youth Choir](#), [Youth Jazz Ensemble of Alberta](#), and soloists.

A guided tour through Small Beautiful Things—a charming and engaging cycle of 11 pieces for young and developing pianists—with one of Canada's most admired and respected composers, **Alexina Louie**.

An introduction to the choral music of Indigenous-Canadian composer **Andrew Balfour**, led by Andrew himself!

A panel discussion related to the conference theme of **diversity**, with panelists Alexina Louie, composer, and Cosette Justo Valdés, the Edmonton Symphony's Assistant Conductor and Community Ambassador.

The **MCA Marketplace** with dozens of vendors from across the country! A **survival guide for beginning band teachers** led by Roberta Baril. A session with Dr. Shelley Jagow all about **building diversity in the band room**.

A unique **panel discussion on diversity, inclusivity, and appropriation in choral music** with Indigenous-Canadian composer Andrew Balfour, University of Victoria Professor of Music Education Dr. Adam Con, and Palestinian Jordanian artist, composer and educator Dr. Shireen Abu-Khader.

The presentation of the **Alberta Awards for Musicians and Music Educators**.

Music Conference Alberta is jointly presented by [Choir Alberta](#), [Alberta Band Association](#), [Alberta Music Education Foundation](#), and [Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association](#). For more information and to register, visit <https://www.musicconferenceab.ca/>. For the most up to date information please see the website. ■

See page 7 for Conferent Grant Info!



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Endowment Society Projects Poster & Video Competition Results

By Nathene Arthur

This past fall the Calgary ARMTA Board decided to do a trial of “something that all students of Calgary ARMTA teachers can participate in” new projects. Realizing that our usual fundraising goes towards the top students in exams and festivals, it felt right to also recognize all the other students who come to lessons and do not necessarily take exams, participate in competitions/festivals or if they do - do not score the top marks. These are of course the students who make up the majority of our studios.

So a Committee was struck to choose some potential competition ideas that all students could participate in. This Committee was made up of Laura Whitehead, Carolyn Steeves, Denisha Teichroeb and myself Nathene Arthur. We spent the first few months with zoom meetings to pick some agreed upon competition ideas for 2021-2022, keeping in mind that back in the fall of 2021 we were still under a lot of ever-changing health mandates and lockdowns.

We chose two competitions for the 2021-2022 year: a Poster Competition and a Video Competition with deadlines to enter by February 28 and May 31, respectively. It was wonderful to be on this inaugural committee, even with having to start from scratch.

POSTER COMPETITION. We had 33 entries from nine different ARMTA teachers. There were 24 students in the 12 & under category and 9 students in the 13 & over category (yes even including adults!). 28 students were Piano, three were Voice and two were Violin. Our amazing and fun volunteer Judges were Maryellen Pankratz and retired ARMTA members Maureen Hossack and Rosalyn Martin. We awarded one first place, one runner up and three random draw winners in each of the two age categories for a total of \$800.

VIDEO COMPETITION. We had 21 entries from seven different ARMTA teachers. There were 15 students in the 12 & under category and six students in the 13 & over category. 16 students were Piano, three were Speech Arts and two were Voice. Our amazing and fun volunteer Judges were Maryellen Pankratz, Cindy Speelman and Bronwyn Schumann. We did extend the deadline from May 31st to June 15th and gathered another nine entries (hurray!) but we were still able to meet all the notification of winners “deadlines” as advertised. We awarded one first place, two runners up and three random draws in each of the two age categories for a total of \$1,200.

All winning entries are on our Calgary ARMTA website. And you will also see all the posters in this issue of Impromptu. We were so amazed at the creativity and love the students poured into their entries. All entries needed to relate to a piece of music the students were currently studying, so thank you also to our Calgary teachers who inspired them to look at their pieces in new ways enjoying “fusion” with art forms and video.

Final thoughts? The idea of having competitions like this that all our teachers can encourage all their students to take part in is an excellent perk to belonging to our Calgary ARMTA branch. Initially some ARMTA events such as Music Marathon were indeed created to be participated in by (and raise funds for) just such “regular” students. Our Committee will return in the Fall with two members continuing on. We hope to keep the Poster and the Video Competitions for the 2022-2023 year (as the rubrics, guidelines and forms are already in place) and add in one new competition. We would welcome a few more Calgary ARMTA members on this fun committee. We have some cool new ideas already....but are open to others. ■

Video Competition Winners

13 and Over Age Category

1st Place Malia Penner

Nocturne in E Minor by Frédéric Chopin

Runner-Up Danica Fisher

Nuvole Bianche by Ludovico Einaudi

Runner-Up Sophie Liang

Mariage D’Amour by Richard Clayderman

12 and Under Age Category

1st Place Arwyn Gill

Adventures Of Isabel by Ogden Nash

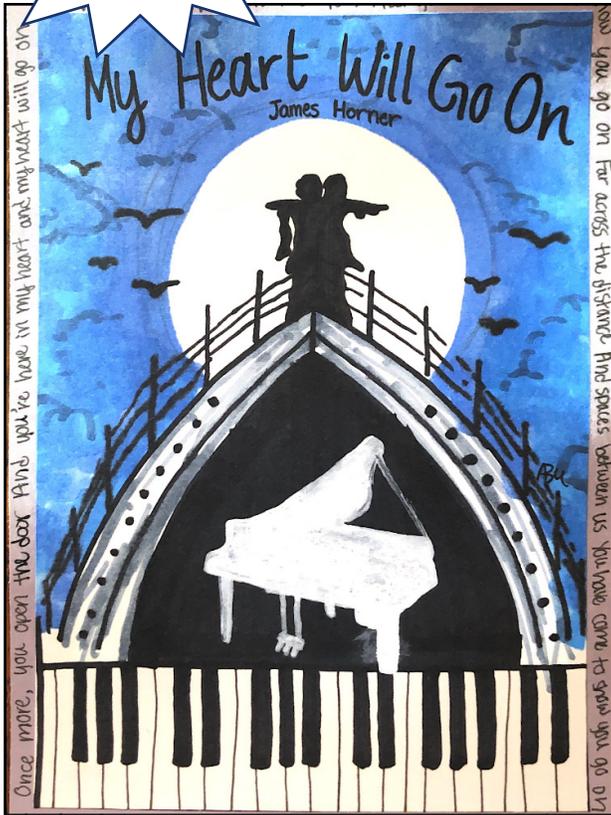
Runner-Up Stephen Lin

Prelude in C minor BMV 999 by Johann Sebastian Bach

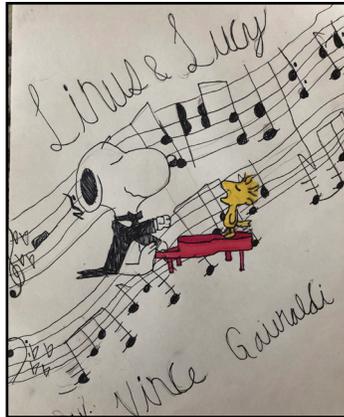
Runner-Up Megan Fisher

Maybe by Charles Strouse/Martin Charnin

POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS of the Endowment Society Projects 13 and Over Age Category



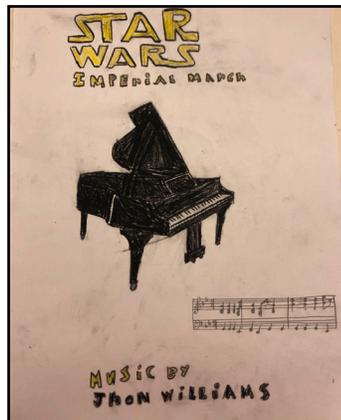
Audrey Montgomery



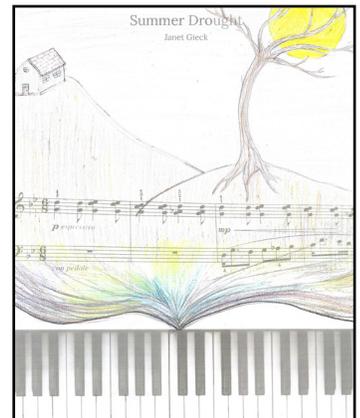
Molly Feagan



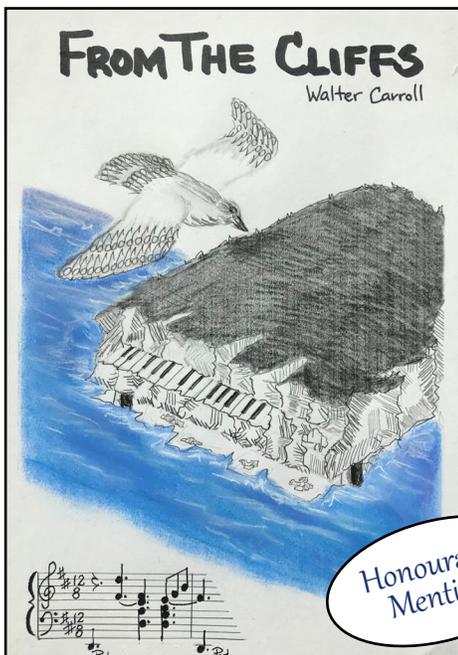
Parker Morrow



Jonathan Morrow



Roxanne Ritson-Bennett



Patricia De Boer



Danica Fisher



Sebastian Marks

POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS of the Endowment Society Projects

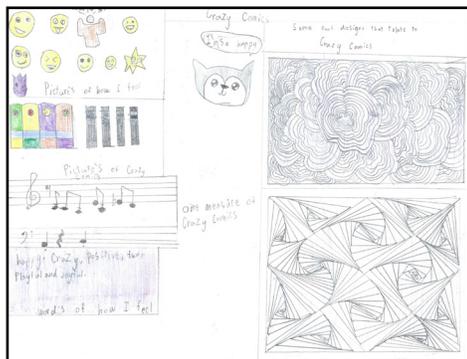
12 and Under Age Category



Madison Diller

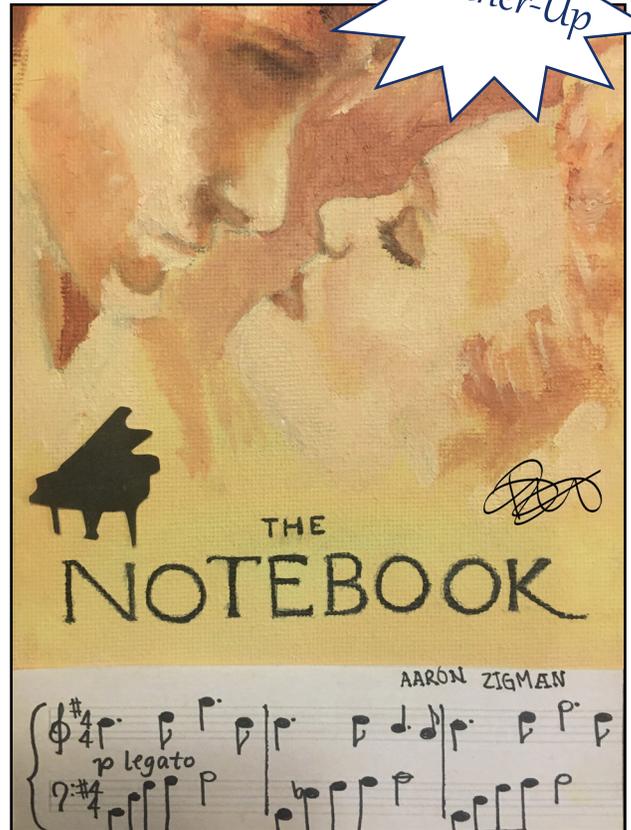


Andrew Widish



Candis Chung

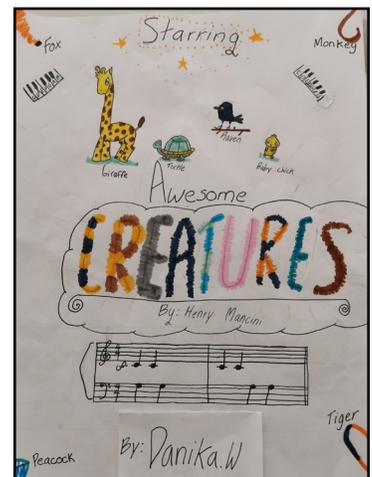
13 and Over Age Category



Rylee Montgomery



Levi Bygrave



Danika Wasylyk

POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS
of the Endowment Society Projects
12 and Under Age Category



Bharath Mohan



Anika Smith



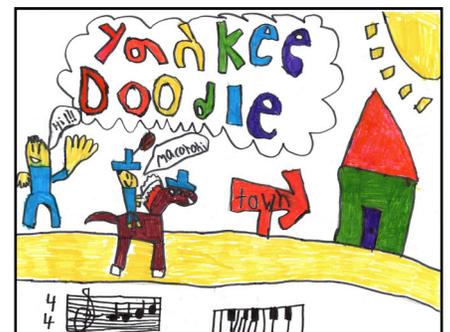
Parker Soo



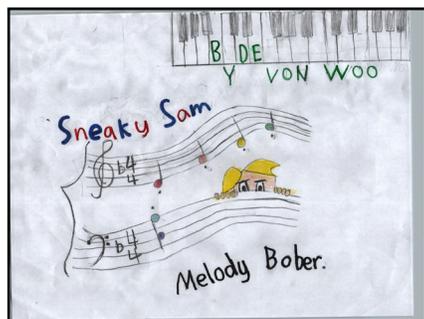
Olivia Chung



Andrea (Nia Jing) He



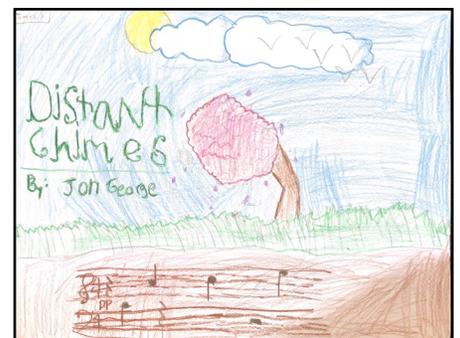
Henry Jones



Devon Woo



Jack Stahl



James Stahl

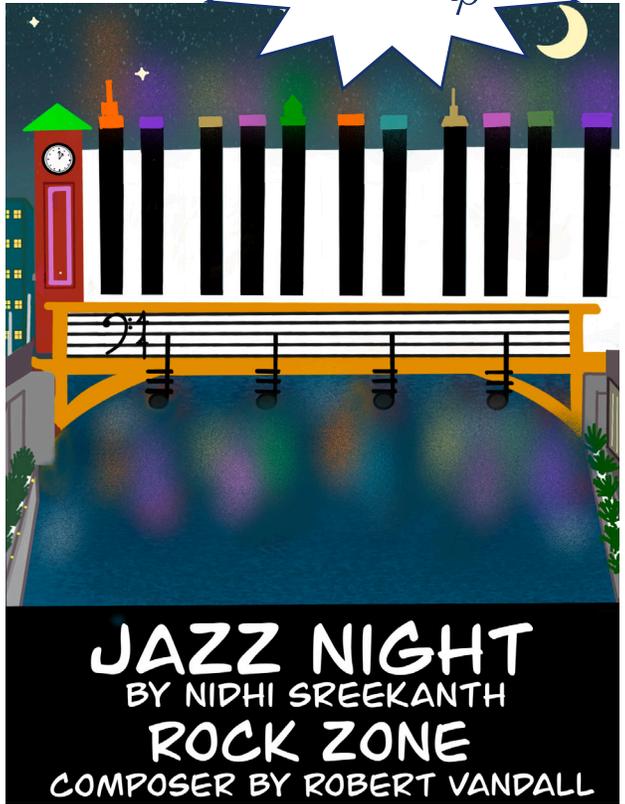


Annalina McDouall

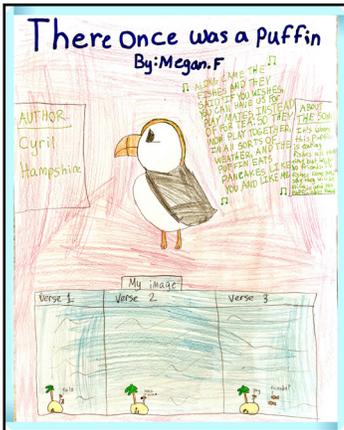
POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS

of the Endowment Society Projects

12 and Under Age Category



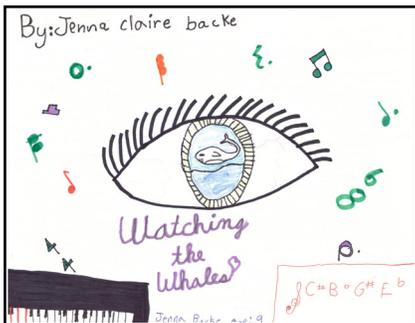
Nidhi Sreekanth



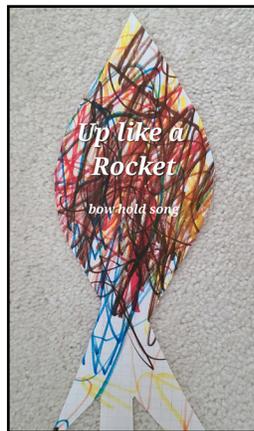
Megan Fisher



Vanessa Kwok



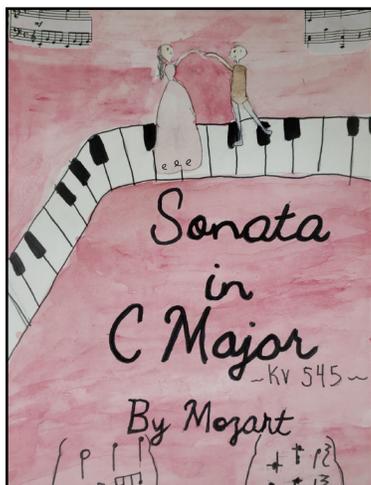
Jenna Backe



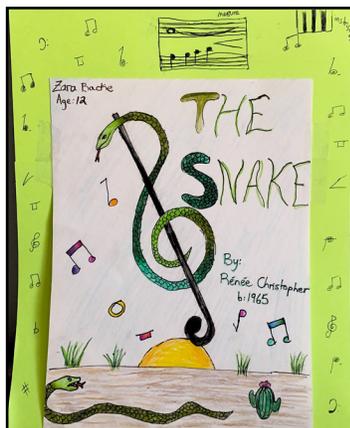
Joshua Chung



Penelope Cooper



Kaslyn Chan



Zara Backe



Ruby Day

FOSTERING INDEPENDENT LEARNING

The Five School Supplies of Trustful Teaching

By Bronwyn Schuman



Imagine that you were given a task at work: you must record a short piece of music for tomorrow. You have a few hours left at the office, during which your employer emails you every fifteen minutes, asking you to complete your task. He texts and calls you. He comes over to your desk and says, “Have you done your recording yet?” You want to speak but you can only do so when being called on after raising your hand. You raise your hand, and he says “Yes?” You say, “I’m sorry, but I haven’t done the recording yet. I wanted to get to some other work first.” He responds angrily that that was not the answer he wanted to hear. He reminds you to get it done tonight, or you will fail. He eventually lets you go home to your family. When you arrive at home, your parents are there, and they say, “Do you have a work assignment to do?” When you say yes, they say that you must do that before anything else. You wanted to get some fresh air while it’s still light out, but your parents insist that you stay in to finish your work assignment. Other family members are begging

you: “Please, can you just do this recording? We’ll all feel better when you get it done.” At this point, you are regretting having this assignment, having this boss, and having this job. You are not interested in doing this recording at all, let alone doing it well.

Does this scenario make you feel uncomfortable? It makes me feel uncomfortable. Yet, as an adult, it is easy to forget that many days in children’s lives can look very similar to the above paragraph. In our culture, children are often not trusted to do things on their own and in their own time. In our culture, teachers and parents are often compelled to become nags. At school, the teacher nags the child to focus, to do the assignment, to stop talking, to raise his hand when he has questions, and to ask permission for everything including to use the washroom. The child is sent home with homework assignments and report cards, triggering pressured and stressed parents to continue the nagging at home, and the cycle continues. As a piano teacher, I have

thought hard about whether I want to participate in this framework of mistrust and cyclical nagging. While some might believe that this framework is the only way that children can learn, I don’t. Nobody, at any age, can do anything well when he or she is nagged, pressured, rushed, bullied, and silenced, and nor does anybody want to.

All people learn best and do their best work when they are trusted and allowed to practice independence. I believe our goal as teachers is to teach so well that our students don’t need us anymore. We can meet that goal by seeking ways to foster independent learning, so that our students have the tools to lead their own development. In my opinion, the first step to encourage this independence in our students is to show them that we trust them. In this article, I outline Five School Supplies of Trustful Teaching, to help you encourage your students’ independent learning so that they have the ability, confidence, and motivation to teach themselves.



School Supply #1: The Frontal Lobe

The largest lobe of the brain, the frontal lobe, controls decision-making. This is an essential school supply, and one that teachers can encourage students to use both in lessons and during the week. To encourage students to use the frontal lobe, a



It is often more productive to have students teach themselves where to find the information than for us to simply teach our students what to do.

teacher must create opportunities for students to make significant choices related to their piano playing. These choices could include which pieces they want to play, what they want to focus on in the lesson, at what tempo they want to play a piece, and even whether they want to sit grumpily at the piano for the entire lesson. When trusted to make choices, students are granted greater agency, and this agency can foster more motivation for independent learning. **Hint:** With young children, rather than offering open ended choices, such as “What do you want to start with?” Provide options: “Do you want to start with rhythms or technique?” or “Do you want to focus on pedaling or dynamics?” or “Do you want to play this piece fast or slow?” **Warning:** To truly show students that you trust them enough to make their own choices, you must allow them to do so, even when you think a better choice could be made. The student’s choice reflects what they currently want to explore, and they will learn from having made that choice. These choices don’t have to remain for eternity; they can easily be changed the following week!

School Supply #2: The Voice

The voice is an essential, and all-too-often stifled school supply. As most

adults know from experience, verbal exploration of new ideas, challenges, and difficulties is a key factor in one’s growth. It is important to allow students to employ this school supply often, and it is okay, too, for there to be moments in which each voice is silent. Perhaps it is most trustful

to allow students to even talk for a minute or two off-topic. I have had students blurt out a spontaneous and off-topic story, only to simply turn back to their music and play without being asked. Sometimes students just need to get something off their chest and reset! When students are trusted to share the vocal space, they are granted the ability to verbally participate in their own learning, and this participation is key for the engagement required in independent, self-led learning. **Hint:** The “how do you know?” question is foolproof for creating independent learners; if they can verbally communicate their method back to you, they can certainly do so for themselves. For example, you might ask, “How do you know which

note to start on? How do you know what we are counting to?” It is often more productive to have students teach themselves where to find the information than for us to simply teach our students what to do. **Warning:** To encourage the proper use of this school supply, teachers must model its

appropriate use by asking questions and listening to the answers. Teachers must also model its appropriate use by moderating their own emotions and frustration, as well as by sharing the vocal space with those in the room.

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If you notice a student is fidgety in the lesson, you could ask him or her to walk to the shelf to get a book, pencil, or piece of paper.

School Supply #3: The Legs

The legs are a vital school supply, and unfortunately, much leg use during school days is done so without trust. Children walk in single file lines led by a teacher between classes, or they might walk with a chaperone to the office or the library. They run on the playground or in the gym under close supervision and scrutiny. Trustful music teachers can make good use of this school supply by not immediately rushing to have children sit down, and by allowing children to dance or walk for a minute or two if needed. As with adults, walking can calm children down and provide them with a change of scenery that refreshes their engagement. **Hint:** Getting up from

the piano bench and coming back is an essential part of at-home practice, where distractions are all around. If you notice a student is fidgety in the lesson, you could ask him or her to walk to the shelf to get a book, pencil, or piece of paper. You might ask him if he would be willing to go get the Kleenex box from the bathroom for you. Walking away from and back to the piano bench independently is essential for at-home practice.

Warning: You might fear that they will never sit down again. Be strong!

School Supply #4: The Pencil

Writing, drawing, and mark-making are key modes of independent learning and teaching. With trustful teaching,

teachers can let their students use the pencils themselves. Students can do their own circling of finger numbers, dynamics, clef changes, time signatures, and more. Teachers can allow their students to draw on their music pages. And, perhaps most importantly, teachers can allow students to take their own notes in their dictation books. Even young children can write some words in their dictation books, such as “play” and “count.” We can certainly fill in the rest! **Hint:** As your student is writing in his dictation book, ask him to think of three things that he could work on with his piece (for example, counting, saying note names out loud, and practicing hands together). I only

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spell words for my students if they ask me. **Warning:** This will take a few extra minutes in the lesson, and the final product won't look perfect. However, it might just be worth the extra time; I have found that, when my students contribute to their own notes, they remember what was written more clearly, and they look at their notebooks more frequently during the week.

School Supply #5: The Responsibility
Gifting students with the responsibility for their own development, including for their practicing, can be scary, but it is essential. As teachers, we can help our students devise plans for practicing, learn new and effective ways to practice, and work through difficult times when practicing seems impossible. However, it is often easy to let our pride or shame be tied to

our students' development; when this happens, our push for practicing can become ineffective and even harmful to our students' love of learning and love of music. In the long term, it is agency, responsibility, and independent practicing ability that will keep bringing our students to back to their instrument. These can be developed when we trust our students to truly take responsibility for their learning. **Hint:** Announce the shift of responsibility. "This month, I am not going to ask you to practice. Do you think you can practice without being asked this month?" You could even alternate weeks! Check in at the start of each week: "Were you able to get to the piano this week? What might make it easier this coming week?" **Warning:** Parents may not be on board with this approach. See if you can bring parents in: "This month,

Jane has the challenge of independent practicing. She is going to see if she can practice without being asked!"

Independent learning is essential for our students' continued love and joy of learning, and for our students' sustained relationship with music. Independent learning can be fostered through trustful teaching techniques. These Five School Supplies for Independent Learning might push and stretch us teachers to let go, to trust our students more, and to offer our students more and more independence. These tools might just give our students the space, the agency, the confidence, and the responsibility needed for them to learn on their own, whether today, tomorrow, or twenty years from now. ■

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CFMTA Connecting Canada Conference July 2022

By Barbara Robertson

After two and a half years of Covid, and numerous virtual professional development sessions and conferences, I really did not want to spend 2 full days of summer in front of a computer watching workshops. It was possible to spread the sessions out over the month of July and watch one of them a day, but I already have several recorded workshops to watch in my “spare time”.

So, I got the gardening done early, got



As we teach the Generation Z and Alpha, we need to be aware of their backgrounds with technology.

“dressed up”, did my hair and even added a bit of make up to make it feel like I was “going to a conference”. For two days, from 9:00-5:00/5:30, I watched, listened and learned (but did not get so “dressed up” the second day!). The sessions were so interesting, that since the conference, I have gone back and watched some of the sessions I missed as they conflicted

with other sessions, and also re-watched parts of some sessions that I had “attended”!

Was it worth it? How should we measure learning? I guess the best way to measure it is in our teaching. The first problem was that I had booked 4 lessons for the 2nd day of the conference ...and yes I had forgotten about them. The families were great and switched days at the

last minute. When I did teach those 4 students, I realized that “YES”, it was “worth it”. In fact, over the last 2 years, as the wrinkles have appeared, and my patience with students has lessened, I have been wondering how long I should keep teaching. These two days put a bit of a spark back in me.

We all need these sparks, no matter how they come. As an aside, my next spark was this week, when a long ago, long time former student phoned me to thank me for teaching him all those years and “putting up” with him. He is now a piano teacher and just had his first successful exam student.

Back to the conference sessions!

Most of the conference sessions were prerecorded. A few others were live. There was also a meet and greet session during which we were randomly put in groups of four for 9 minutes at a time, and were given the chance to connect with teachers from all over. This was great as I met teachers from across Canada, and discussed whatever we wanted to: music, teaching, lessons, even the weather. Every 9 minutes our groups changed.

Stephanie Archer presented a session that had valuable comments that pertain to my teaching. Simple reminders that I need to remember: I need to give the student time to respond to a question and avoid asking yes/no questions. I need to let the student verbalize so that I can understand why they are confused. Stephanie also had a session on injury prevention.

George Waddell presented research



on how a performance with a poor beginning/end or facial/body movements really does affect the listener. We start processing without even realizing. There are competitions in sports, and competitions in music. Do we really need “losers” in art?

Erin Parkes, Jeff Sabo, Erin MackAfee and Nisreen Jardaneh gave a discussion on anxiety, especially in a lesson. This included defining what is happening in the body, potential behaviour it can cause and possible responses. I was able to take a slightly different approach with 2 of my students the next week and look forward to helping them work through their lessons and practicing. Merlin Thompson discussed “Time and Rhythm”. He had research on the development of the frontal cortex which continues to develop until about age 25, which maybe explains the problems that some of our students

have. The normal tempo which we use is approximately 96 beats per minute...if a piece starts slower, it often will end up there, and faster, it will slow down.

As we teach the Generation Z and Alpha, we need to be aware of their backgrounds with technology. Generation Z uses the latest technology and is ambitious and open to change. The Alpha generation has had screens in front of them from day one, with continuous stimulation. Suggestions to engage these students involved adding backing tracks, and gamifying instruction. They need immediate reinforcement and a constant flow to keep them engaged.

Amy Boyes interviewed Jacques Arsenault, originally a pianist who is now a singer. Some of you may know him from Edmonton. He had high praise for one of our Calgary

accompanists who he had while he was there. Amy also presented on indicators about whether a student is ready for an exam or not.

John Burge suggests we find the heart of a piece with a student, analyze it and then start the learning from here.

We had three Calgary teachers present. It is a huge commitment to present and we are very fortunate to have such high quality presentations coming from our community. If you have not seen their presentations, they will hopefully offer them again to Calgary members in the future.

Esther Bing had extensive information on the importance of injury prevention and mitigation as it pertains to the life of a pianist, teacher and student.

Gloria Chu talked about forming intentional habits to help our students



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stay on track practicing. It is interesting because as I have practiced this summer, I have been easily distracted by other things happening around me...need to form some intentional habits.

Karen Gerelus presented her research on musical identities and how it affects

student retention. I had seen this presentation earlier this year, but still benefitted.

We have had so many opportunities for virtual learning the past two and a half years. I do look forward to attending conferences in person. I hope you all keep finding sparks from

your students, listening to music, making music, reading, discussing with colleagues, and continuing with your own professional development, in person, or virtually. Maybe I will see you at Music Conference Alberta in the fall, or the CFMTA national convention in Edmonton next July. ■



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The applicant must not be also benefiting from another ARMTA assistance.

The application deadline is September 30 of the current year, and is for exams taken between September 1 (of the previous year) and August 31 (of the current year), such that the grant given in fall 2022 will be based on exams taken between 2021 September 1 and 2022 August 31.

We want to celebrate your achievement: Recipients will be asked to provide information to be published in Impromptu and posted on our website and social media.

For more information, including application process, visit our website at <https://armta-calgary.com/teacher-grants/affiliate-grant/>. ■

Music Marathon June 4, 2022

By Laura Whitehead

The Music Marathon is an annual fundraising event sponsored by the Calgary branch of the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association. The event's main purpose is to raise money for scholarships and programs for ARMTA students of all abilities. As well, the event showcases the benefits of taking lessons from a registered music teacher and provides students with an opportunity to share music with the community at large.

The 2022 Music Marathon was held at Heritage Park on June 4. The event took place outdoors in the Town Square and was largely a success. 15 different teachers registered for 7.25 of the 8 available performance hours.

The disciplines represented were piano, violin, voice, guitar and speech arts, with the majority of performances on the piano. The level of music varied from beginner to ARCT. Most

of the seated audience were there to support the performers (teachers, family members, studio mates), but we did have park visitors stopping to listen. One gentleman sat with his dog for a couple of hours. Afterwards, he stopped by the tent and asked how he could donate. We also had a few park visitors asking about ARMTA and how to find an ARMTA teacher.

All students who participated were eligible for one or more prizes. The 2022 Music Marathon had draw prizes of \$25 and \$50, as well as CPO tickets for the students who raised the most money.

Heritage Park was wonderful. They provided a tent, tables, chairs and audio equipment at no charge. They also had staff to assist throughout the day with the setup and monitoring of the sound system. As the weather conditions and performance types changed throughout the day, they

were able to adjust microphone and speaker settings for us. At the end of the day, the staff said our event was a wonderful addition to the park and that they would be happy to host us again.

Steinway Gallery was also fantastic, giving us a discount on the rental and arranging for the piano. It was great that they were willing to provide a grand piano for an outdoor event. RPM Piano Movers worked outside of their normal hours in delivering and collecting the piano the same day, as it could not be left outside unattended.

Calgary Philharmonic has been extremely generous. I asked if we could get one additional pair of concert tickets because we had multiple students go above and beyond in their fundraising. They responded by offering us three pairs of concert tickets for the top three fundraisers. ■

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Laura Whitehead & Kaylee Read at volunteer booth

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LAURA WHITEHEAD

would like to thank

I want to give a huge shout out to the lovely Calgary Branch member, Mrs. Laura Whitehead!

Laura single-handedly made the 2022 Music Marathon happen - after a pandemic and before her summer wedding! Not only did she pull off this huge task, Music Marathon raised a whopping \$4370!

Now that is something to shout about!

Frances Ewington, Calgary Branch Chair



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to the following people who contributed to this issue

Nathene Arthur
Frances Ewington
Rachel McLellan
Maryellen Pankratz
Barbara Robertson
Bronwyn Schuman
Laura Whitehead

Articles by members are welcomed and encouraged! Attended a great workshop or concert? Read an inspiring book? Share your thoughts with ARMTA Calgary members. Inquiries and submissions can be made to the editor at impromptu@armta.ca.

Submissions must be in Word file format (no pdf files) and corresponding photographs will be greatly appreciated.

Rachel McLellan
Impromptu Editor